

BRIEFING

# National Standards for Adult Safeguarding

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Following a review of national and international literature on adult safeguarding, the Health Information and Quality Authority (**HIQA**) and the Mental Health Commission (**MHC**) have jointly published National Standards for Adult Safeguarding (the “**Standards**”) – practical guidelines to enhance safety across the all health and social care services.



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The Standards have been established to provide a framework for safe and effective person-centred services, as well as helping users to know what they can expect from the services. They aim to compliment legislation, other national standards and service provider policies and procedures already in place, to establish a consistent approach.

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Unlike existing standards developed by HIQA, these Standards focus specifically on the area of safeguarding to support service providers to understand what it is, to identify ways to prevent harm, and to respond proportionately when harm does occur.

### Underlying Principles

The Standards are underpinned by six principles, which are to be reflected in the delivery of care:

1. **Empowerment** of individuals to protect themselves;
2. **A Rights-Based Approach** for the promotion and protection of rights of service-users by the service-providers;
3. **Proportionality** in action taken in response to risks presented or harm caused by individuals;
4. **Prevention** before harm is caused;
5. **Partnership** between the service-user and the service-provider to achieve effective safeguarding; and
6. **Accountability** from services for the support and care they provide

### Structure of Standards

The Standards are organised within a series of eight themes, half of which relate to safety and quality in a service, with the latter half relating to a service's capacity and capability. Below is a summary of each of these themes and the standards within.

#### Quality and Safety

1. Person-centred Care and Support
2. Effective Care and Support
3. Safe Care and Support
4. Health, Wellbeing and Development

#### Capacity and Capability

5. Leadership, Governance and Management
6. Responsive Workforce
7. Use of Resources
8. Use of Information

### Conclusion

- Being the first joint publication of standards of this type by HIQA and the MHC, these Standards are likely to reach across most of the health and social care services used by adults. Unfortunately some vulnerable areas remain unregulated and outside the remit of both the MHC and HSE. These may include private hospitals and other care arrangements which are unregulated, such as single person placements.
- They point towards a greater focus on patient-centred care and autonomy, combined with more efficient management of staff and resources to reduce risks.
- It is unclear how these principles will be implemented or if they will be enforced in any way.