

Mr. Phelim Quinn,
Chief Executive Officer,
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Irish Association of Social Workers
Cumann na hÉireann um Oibríthe Sóisialta

14 June 2021

Re: HIQA/HSE reported discussions regarding future of adult safeguarding services

Dear Phelim,

I have recently taken on the role of Chair of the Irish Association of Social Workers (IASW). I write to you now with concerns raised by IASW members regarding discussions which are reported to have taken place between representatives of HIQA and the HSE in relation to the future delivery of adult safeguarding services.

If these reports are accurate, you will appreciate that social workers, acknowledged in the Workplace Relations Commission and by the HSE in writing, as the *lead profession in adult safeguarding*, are disappointed to learn of these apparent developments through unofficial channels.

The IASW now request the following:

- Clarification regarding any planned changes in Adult Safeguarding service delivery structures and responsibilities.
- Clarification around the nature and purpose of any past or planned discussions on this.
- Immediate consultation and clear communication with all stakeholders about this process.
- Acknowledgement from HIQA that social work *is* the lead profession in adult safeguarding, including within the nursing home sector.
- Full representation of social work at any relevant discussions between HIQA & the HSE. Service users should also be represented.

We also wish to meet with Chief Inspector Mary Dunnion in relation to the reported 71% increase in concerns from members of the public, about the quality of care in nursing homes, received by HIQA in 2019 and which is of significant concern. IASW members are also concerned that some safeguarding issues arising have at times, been framed as poor or substandard care in HIQA reports. It would be helpful to meet with you to understand how the decision-making process used by HIQA to determine whether an issue should be referred to safeguarding social work teams, particularly in light of the apparently large increase in reports of concerns received by HIQA in 2019.

I look forward to your response, as a matter of urgency.
Kind regards.

Vivian Geiran

Chair, Irish Association of Social Workers

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