

A large, dark blue circular graphic occupies the lower two-thirds of the page. Inside this circle, there are several white, curved lines of varying thicknesses that sweep across the space. Additionally, there are four white squares of different sizes and orientations scattered within the circle, some appearing to be part of the curved lines or floating independently.

Statement of Information  
Practices

# National Care Experience Programme

## Statement of information practices – Standard Operating Procedure

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## **About the National Care Experience Programme**

The National Care Experience Programme seeks to improve the quality of health and social care services in Ireland by asking people about their experiences of care and acting on their feedback. The National Care Experience Programme is a joint initiative by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA), the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Department of Health.

The National Care Experience Programme includes the National Inpatient Experience Survey — an annual survey providing patients with the opportunity to describe their experiences of public acute hospital care in Ireland. The purpose of this survey is to learn from patients’ feedback to find out what is working well in our hospitals, and what needs improvement. The results of the National Inpatient Experience Survey inform the development of quality improvement plans at hospital, hospital group and national levels and informs regulation and national legislation.

The National Maternity Experience Survey offers women the opportunity to share their experiences of Ireland’s maternity services. The aim of the survey is to learn from the experiences of women to improve the safety and quality of the care that they and their baby receive. The first National Maternity Experience Survey will be carried out in early 2020.

A National Care Experience Programme competency centre is currently under development in order to provide support, guidance, information and leadership on the appropriate collection and use of care experience data for all engagement programmes in the health and social care services.

The National Care Experience Programme will expand to include two further surveys of health or social care services by 2021.

### 1. Purpose of this document

This document outlines what information is collected by the National Care Experience Programme, how it is used, with whom it is shared and for what purpose it is collected, as well as the safeguards that are in place to protect it, and how people can access information held about them.

The National Care Experience Programme takes a person-centred approach, which ensures that

- the privacy and confidentiality of survey participants is protected
- all data is collected, used and stored in a safe and effective way.

Our Statement of Information Practices demonstrates our commitment to openness and transparency about the way in which we collect and use information.

### 2. What are the governance structures of the National Care Experience Programme?

A National Care Experience Programme Steering Group provides strategic direction for the programme. The Steering Group is comprised of representatives of the partner organisations and people using services. The role of the Steering Group is to ensure that:

- the development and expansion of the programme is in line with national policy and legislation
- resources are in place and objectives identified in the National Care Experience Programme Strategic Plan 2019-2021 are met
- survey responses are used at a local, regional and national level to improve the experience of people using health and social care services in Ireland.

In addition to the Steering Group, each survey has a Programme Board, which is responsible for operational decision-making in the development, administration and reporting of each survey. Programme Boards are composed of representatives from each of the partner organisations, subject matter experts and representatives of people using services.

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A National Care Experience Programme Technical Group provides statistical expertise on the development and implementation of surveys and includes representation from the three partner organisations.

The Oversight Implementation Group (HIQA/HSE) and the National Care Experience Programme team (HIQA) are responsible for the routine operation of the programme. In addition, the National Care Experience Programme Team is responsible for analysing and publically reporting on the responses to surveys as directed and informed by the Steering Group, Programme Boards and the Technical Group.

Figure 1 illustrates the roles of the National Care Experience Programme governance groups and team.

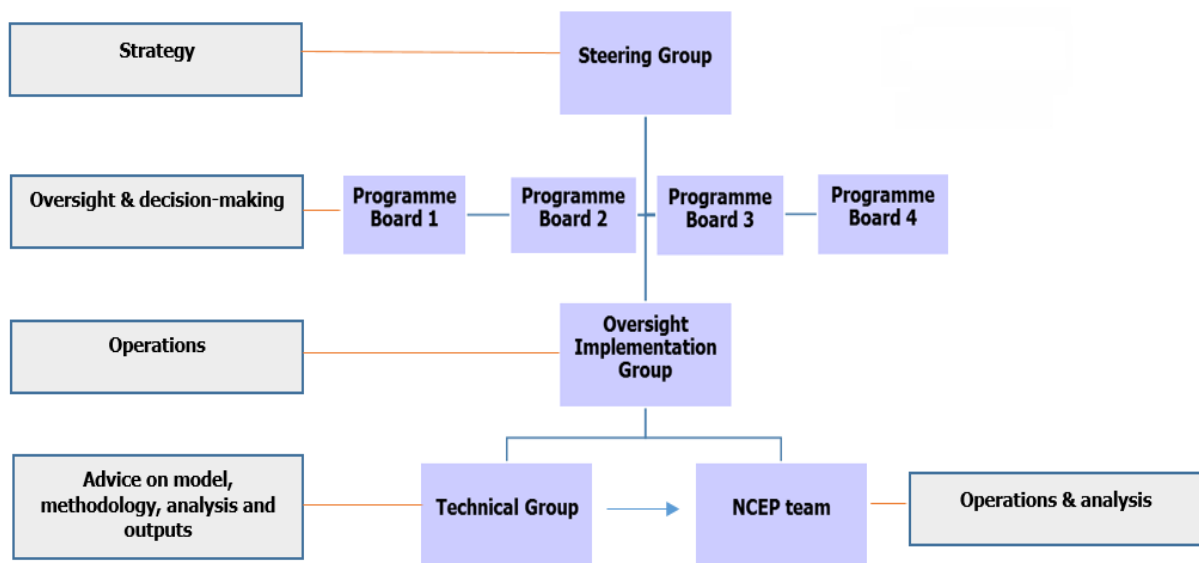


Figure 1 Roles of the National Care Experience governance groups and team

HIQA has contracted a data processor, Behaviour and Attitudes. The data processor is responsible for the administration of surveys. Figure 2 outlines the responsibilities of the data processor.

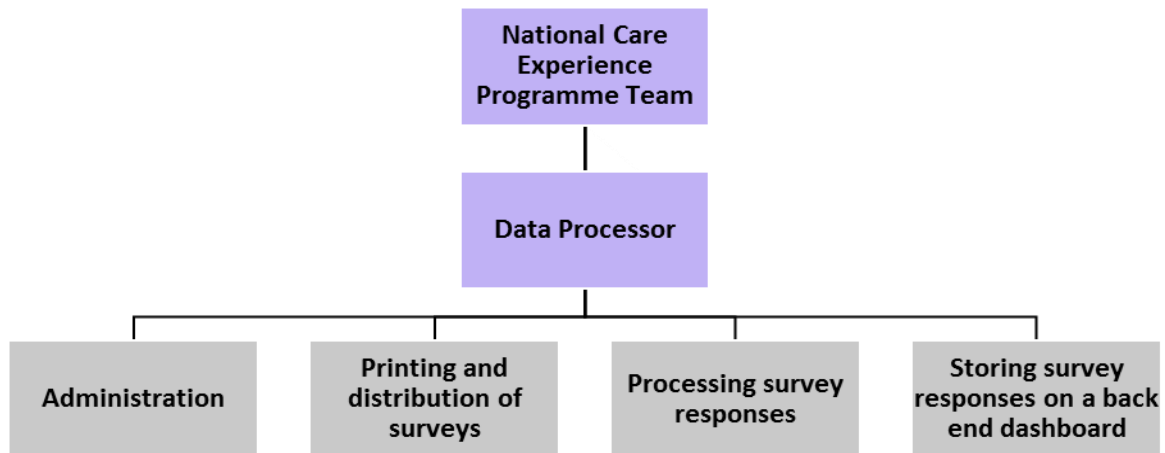


Figure 2 Responsibilities of the data processor

### Roles of partner organisations and representatives of people using service

The National Care Experience Programme includes **representation from people using health and social care services**, thereby ensuring that the viewpoints of people using services will be central to decisions and actions taken in the development, implementation and expansion of the National Care Experience Programme.

**HIQA** is the lead partner for the National Care Experience Programme and is responsible for providing a centralised, coordinated approach to the implementation of the programme. HIQA holds responsibility as data controller under the provisions of the Data Protection Acts 1988 - 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679, hereafter referred to as the GDPR.

HIQA's primary responsibilities [in implementing National Care Experience Programme surveys and data governance of the programme] are to:

- develop survey models and methodologies
- develop a communications and stakeholder engagement strategy
- develop processes and procedures to support the implementation of surveys
- analyse and report the survey data
- support the HSE in interpreting the data in order to develop and implement quality improvement plans
- develop alternative models, methodologies and tools to capture the experience of people using services, not captured by traditional survey tools
- oversee secondary analysis of the data by academic and other institutions
- use the results to inform monitoring and regulation programmes.

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**The HSE** is working with HIQA to ensure successful implementation of the National Care Experience Programme across participating service providers.

The HSE's primary responsibilities [in implementing National Care Experience Programme surveys and data governance of the programme] are to:

- provide national oversight to ensure the project is implemented and delivered in accordance with the scope and timelines across each of the service providers
- drive engagement between staff and people using services to promote the programme
- ensure that appropriate systems and processes are in place to implement surveys
- use the findings to develop quality improvement plans in order to drive improvements across the healthcare sector
- oversee and assist with developing a cohesive approach to the successful delivery of quality improvement plans within agreed timeframes.

**The Department of Health** provides leadership and policy direction for the health sector in order to improve health outcomes and, through effective performance oversight, ensure accountability and high-quality health service delivery. The overall aim of the Department is to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Ireland by:

- keeping people healthy
- providing the healthcare people need
- delivering high quality services
- getting the best value from health system resources.

The Department recognises patient safety as the cornerstone to quality healthcare. In December 2016, the Department established a National Patient Safety Office (NPSO) to progress a policy programme of patient safety legislation, patient safety surveillance, patient safety policy initiatives as well as the National Clinical Effectiveness Framework. Learning from patient experience, promoting a problem-solving culture through patient safety surveillance, as well as establishing a robust clinical effectiveness framework contribute to the continuous development of national patient safety policy and legislation. From the Department, both the NPSO and the relevant policy unit (such as Acute Hospitals and Maternity Services) participate in furthering the objectives of the National Care Experience Programme.

### 3. What personal information is collected to distribute surveys?

Personal data, including personally identifiable information such as the contact details of people using services, is collected from all participating service providers during survey sample periods. It is collected for the sole purpose of administering

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national surveys on the experience of people using services in the Irish health and social care system.

Limited data relating to the health of service users, such as the date of delivery of people using maternity services, is also collected. The processing of this data is subject to the safeguards provided for in the Data Protection Acts 1988 - 2018 and the GDPR.

The information collected includes:

- name
- address
- date of birth
- gender
- date of admission
- source of admission
- date of delivery (in the case of people using maternity services)
- date of discharge
- discharge destination
- length of stay
- hospital name
- hospital group.

During the survey sample period, service providers extract eligible participants' information on a weekly basis and, following a series of data quality checks, exchange this information with the data processor. The contact details of people using services who are eligible to participate, are used to distribute the questionnaire to participants' home addresses. Information on date of birth, gender and so forth is collected to help us get a more detailed picture of who will be invited to take the survey. All information will be deleted within six weeks of the closure of the survey cycle.

Data Sharing Agreements have been signed between HIQA and representatives of all participating hospitals. These agreements formally authorise the sharing of information.



#### **4. What information is collected on the experience of people using services?**

Information on the experience of people using services is collected through structured survey questionnaires. Surveys ask questions about admission, environment, care and treatment, interaction with staff and the discharge process and may also ask about care delivered in the community. Surveys ask structured tick-box questions as well as open-ended questions for comments. The survey can be completed online or by returning the questionnaire via freepost. Anonymisation criteria are consistently applied to survey responses upon receipt, to ensure that no personally identifiable information is retained.

A detailed information governance framework has been developed to ensure that all data, including personal information, is handled in line with all relevant legislation, guidance and evidence-based practices.

#### **5. Legal context**

Participation in National Care Experience Programme surveys is voluntary. Participants are informed by service providers that they will be invited to participate in a survey, upon which time, participants can opt out. Eligible participants who do not want to participate can avail of four different options to opt out, upon receipt of the survey.

The National Care Experience Programme has developed a comprehensive information governance framework to ensure that the privacy rights of all participants are upheld. The National Care Experience Programme complies with data protection laws, including the GDPR. Under Article 6(e) of the GDPR and Section 38 of the Data Protection Act 2018, personal data can be collected and processed where necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. Article 9(2)(i) of the GDPR and Section 53 of the Data Protection Act 2018 permit the processing of healthcare data, which is "special category data", in the public interest, which includes ensuring high standards of quality and safety in healthcare.

The National Care Experience Programme is conducted in the public interest; the partner organisations of the programme have committed to using the results to inform quality improvements across the healthcare system, from policy to planning and service delivery. The collection of personal data is necessary to conduct National Care Experience Programme surveys, which capture feedback on the experience of people using services.

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Data collected by the National Care Experience Programme may be used for secondary analysis. A formal request can be made to gain access to anonymised survey responses, in line with the National Care Experience Programme Data Access Request Policy. The request must demonstrate that the secondary analysis of the data is in the public interest.

There is a contract and a Data Processing Agreement in place between HIQA and the data processor to define the arrangements for the secure sharing, storage, handling, processing and destruction of all data processed by the National Care Experience Programme.

### 6. Right to opt out

Participation in National Care Experience Programme surveys is voluntary. Potential participants are provided with a participant information leaflet and an invitation letter at the point of discharge. This will allow potential participants to make an informed decision about whether or not to take part in a National Care Experience Programme survey. The participant information leaflet further outlines how survey responses will be used and reassures participants that all survey responses are anonymous.

Eligible participants who do not want to partake can opt out of the survey:

- upon discharge, prior to their data being processed
- by calling 1800 314 093
- by emailing [info@yourexperience.ie](mailto:info@yourexperience.ie)
- online at [www.yourexperience.ie](http://www.yourexperience.ie)
- by returning a blank questionnaire after they have received a survey pack in the post.

### 7. What are survey responses used for?

The National Care Experience Programme will help to determine the quality and safety of health and social care services provided and to inform system-wide quality improvement initiatives in Ireland.

Survey responses will be used by the three partner organisations to support a variety of activities:

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- The HSE will use the results to develop and implement quality improvement plans at both a hospital and hospital group level. As National Care Experience Programme surveys are repeated over time, it will become possible to monitor and evaluate quality improvements.
- HIQA oversees and manages the analysis, as well as the reporting of the data. It will provide an objective overview of the results, and support the HSE in translating these results into quality improvements. HIQA will also use the survey results to support and inform its monitoring and regulatory programmes of work.
- The Department of Health will use the data to inform national health policy and planning.

## **8. Who sees the survey results?**

The results of surveys will be published and made available to the public on [www.yourexperience.ie](http://www.yourexperience.ie) within four month of the closure of a survey cycle. The survey results will be anonymous and will be reported in summary form. Once a hospital has received more than 30 responses to a survey, a select number of hospital personnel can access a facility to review anonymised survey responses.

## **9. How is the privacy of personal information protected?**

A Data Privacy Impact Assessment is conducted and updated in advance of each survey. The Data Privacy Impact Assessment identifies and rates all privacy risks associated with the National Care Experience Programme and recommends the controls to be put in place to minimise identified risks. In addition, the National Care Experience Programme has a comprehensive information governance framework to protect the privacy of all information collected.

This information governance framework outlines:

- how the personal data is used (that is, for the purpose of administering the survey)
- the necessary precautions that are in place to protect personal information from loss, unauthorised access, modification, use, disclosure and disposal
- how data protection breaches are managed
- the retention and destruction schedule for any personal data collected in the administration of the survey.

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The National Care Experience Programme does not store personal data for any longer than is required beyond the administration of the survey.

Anonymity is integral to the survey design in the following ways:

- participant names will not be linked with their responses
- participant contact details will be electronically shredded once the survey is complete
- all hardcopy survey responses will be shredded at the end of the survey cycle
- survey results for hospitals with less than 30 respondents will not be published to ensure that there is no risk of identification for participants.

### **10. How can people access personal information held about them?**

Under data protection legislation, individuals have a number of rights that a data controller is obliged to respect. At a most fundamental level, individuals have the right to have their details used in line with data protection regulations. They have the right to know if an organisation or individual is holding information on their person, and to access this information. They also have the right to object to the processing of their information, or have their information changed, removed or corrected by a data controller. A complete [guide to your rights](#) is available on the website of the Data Protection Commission.

The National Care Experience Programme has a Data Subject Access Request Policy, which outlines how a subject access request can be submitted. This policy is available to download at [www.youexperience.ie](http://www.youexperience.ie).

### **11. Further details on information handling practices**

Further details on information handling practices can be found on [www.youexperience.ie](http://www.youexperience.ie).

Our website has a dedicated section on information governance, where you can find out more about our information governance framework designed to protect and safeguard all information collected in the course of the National Care Experience Programme.

Alternatively, you can write to us at

[info@yourexperience.ie](mailto:info@yourexperience.ie)

or

The National Care Experience Programme  
c/o Health Information and Quality Authority  
George's Court  
George's Lane  
Smithfield. Dublin 7

## **12. Review**

This policy will be reviewed every three years or alternatively in light of any legislative or other relevant project requirements.

## **13. Revision History**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Effective date</b>	<b>Reason for update</b>
1.0	1 August 2019	Original document release

## **14. Signatories to this document:**



**Rachel Flynn**

Director of the National Care Experience Programme  
Health Information and Quality Authority

