National Healthcare Charter

you and your health service

you & your health service
people caring for people
your service, your say
you said...we did

National Healthcare Charter for Children

people caring for people

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Tús Áite do Shábháilteacht Othar
Patient Safety First

> The best interests of the child are paramount and healthcare services must be child-centred and respect the rights of children and young people

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on the National Healthcare Charter for Children

Contents

Glossary

The terms referred to in this document are defined as follows:

Service user - we use the term *'service user'* to include:

- people who use health and social care services as patients; carers, parents and guardians;
- organisations and communities that represent the interests of people who use health and social care services;
- members of the public and communities who are potential users of health services and social care interventions.

The term '*service user*' also takes account of the rich diversity of people in our society, regardless of age, colour, race, ethnicity or nationality, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation, who may have different needs and concerns. We use the term service user in general, but occasionally use the term patient where appropriate.

Children - every human being below the age of 18 years. The Charter applies to all children and young people under 18 years regardless of whether they are treated in paediatric (up to 16 years) or adult healthcare services.

Family - those people, not limited to blood relatives, who constitute the family of the child or child.

Parent/carer - an adult in a primary caring role, including biological parents, adoptive parents, legal guardians, grandparents, carers and foster carers. Members of the extended family or community may also be involved in the child or young person's care depending on the family circumstances.

Health - a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (World Health Organization 1948).

Charter - a Statement of Commitment by the HSE on healthcare expectations and responsibilities. Outlining what service users can and should expect every time that they use health services and what service users can do to help deliver safer and more effective health services in Ireland.

Expectations - what service users expect to experience when they use health services in Ireland.

Health responsibilities - the duty of people to do their best to maintain and improve their health, to respect the health of others and to support the Irish health and social care services to run efficiently.

Predictable - knowing what to expect from a procedure, treatment and all Irish health and social care services.

Health services - all Irish health and social care services delivered within acute hospital and community care settings.

The term '*healthcare worker*' is used to describe any person working in any capacity within the health system, whether in private or public services, education, research, employed, self-employed or volunteer. This includes people working as doctors, nurses, midwives, dietitians, physiotherapists, other therapists, social workers, play workers, catering, housekeeping, porters, dentists and administrative duties as well as volunteers working in the health service.

Child-friendly healthcare - health care policy and practice centred on children's rights, needs, characteristics, assets and evolving capacities, taking into account their own opinion (Council of Europe Guidelines on Child-friendly Healthcare, 2011).

Children's rights - the rights to which all children are entitled, as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Ireland in 1992 (UNCRC).

Introduction

Dear Colleagues,
In November 1989 the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was adopted by the United Nations and in 1992 it was ratified by Ireland. More recently, the international community has developed specific standards about children's rights in healthcare including the Council of Europe Guidelines on Child-friendly Healthcare adopted in 2011 and the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment No 15 adopted in 2013.

A large number of the articles of the UNCRC apply to all aspects of clinical care and health services. Paediatric services in Ireland have long strived to support and implement article 24 of the UNCRC which states that ..."the child has a right to the highest standard of health and medical care attainable. States shall place special emphasis on the provision of primary and preventive health care, public health education and the reduction of infant mortality. They shall encourage international cooperation in this regard and strive to see that no child is deprived of access to effective health services". The consequent development of this Charter is the product of exemplary collaboration by the Public Reference Group for the Paediatrics and Neonatology Clinical Programme and of outstanding leadership by the clinical leads.

This Charter is based primarily on: the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Charter of the European
Association for Children in Hospital, The Australian Charter on the Rights of Children and Young People in Healthcare Services, The National Healthcare Charter – You and Your Health Service Ireland and other important documents on children's experience of health services in Ireland and children's health status were taken into account in its development.

There are a number of reasons for developing this document. For example,

1) Children experience illness, injury and disability in a different way from adults, making them especially susceptible to harm.
2) Children are vulnerable because of their developmental immaturity. This vulnerability is compounded by the way our society is structured.
3) Children are dependent upon the adults around them, this dependency is constantly evolving along a continuum from dependence to independence. Many people are involved in the decision making process for children and young people. Healthcare providers have an obligation to fulfill their responsibilities to children and young people by providing care that takes into account children and young people's rights, their evolving capacities and the role of parents/carers to provide direction and guidance to their children.

Following the development of the National Healthcare Charter for Children, we have the responsibility to promote and support its implementation across healthcare services in Ireland. We are committed to making a difference, addressing children's health needs and improving children's experience and outcomes of healthcare.

An implementation plan including a programme of awareness raising, promotional materials for children and their parents will be available on the HSE website *www.hse.ie* and in all publically funded paediatric services across the country.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the children and young people, parents and healthcare professionals who gave their time so generously in developing this document and especially all of those who submitted very detailed feedback during the consultation period.

If you would like to give feedback about the National Healthcare Charter for Children, please send your comments or suggestions to **yoursay@hse.ie**.

Mr. Tony O'Brien
Director General, HSE

Message of Support

I am happy to confirm that this Charter is endorsed and approved by Children's Hospital Group Board and that the Children's Hospital Group is fully committed to promoting and implementing this National Healthcare Charter for Children.

A key priority for the Children's Hospital Group is to establish structures and processes to engage and listen to service users, including children, young people, their parents and our staff. "Joining the Dots" is a partnership initiative with the Ombudsman for Children's Office that listens to the voices of children and young people, according to their rights in healthcare, so as to embed an organisational culture of listening, engaging and involving children in service planning and delivery.

The Children's Hospital Group is fully committed to demonstrating that we are listening, responding and improving services to children across Ireland.

We are committed to making a difference, addressing children's health needs and improving children's experiences and outcomes of healthcare. We plan to develop a series of quality improvement initiatives from the feedback received from children, young people and their families through the "Joining the Dots" initiative which demonstrates our commitment to living this Charter.

Eilísh Hardiman
Chief Executive,
Children's Hospital Group

Foreword

The National Healthcare Charter for Children is a Statement of Commitment by health services on healthcare, rights, expectations and responsibilities. It was developed in partnership with children, parents and healthcare workers.

The Charter describes ten key principles in relation to the provision of healthcare for children in Ireland. Taken together the principles of the Charter aim to ensure that children receive high quality healthcare which is both appropriate to their needs and circumstances and acceptable to them and their families.

The National Healthcare Charter for Children – What does it do?

1) It outlines supporting arrangements for a partnership of care between everyone involved in healthcare-children, young people, parents, families, carers and healthcare providers.
2) It supports the delivery of health and social care services in an integrated, predictable, preventative, personal and participatory way.
3) It recognises that there are different roles and responsibilities for children, their parents and healthcare providers.
4) It promotes the importance of children as individuals with needs, rights and evolving capacities and not just a medical condition to be treated.
5) It applies to all children and young people in all healthcare services which they access. It also applies to health promotion and health education activities aimed at children and young people. Healthcare services include (but are not limited to) hospitals, community health centres, general practices and specialist's rooms.

Three general understandings underpin this Charter and should be considered in its interpretation and implementation.

1) The best interests of the child are paramount and healthcare services must be child-centred and respect the rights of children and young people.
2) Children and young people have the right to have their voices heard and taken seriously on matters that affect them.
3) The family is the fundamental group in the lives of children. The family is the environment most conducive to children's growth, health, happiness and development and must be protected and supported by our healthcare system.

Children, families and healthcare professionals must be encouraged to speak up whenever the principles of the charter are underplayed or ignored.

A suite of informational resources aimed at children and their parents are currently being developed to support this Charter. An implementation plan including a programme of awareness raising, promotional materials for children and their parents will be available on the HSE website www.hse.ie and in all publically funded paediatric services across the country.

This Charter is based primarily on: *The National Healthcare Charter – You and Your Health Service Ireland*; the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Charter of the European Association for Children in Hospital, The Australian Charter on the Rights of Children and Young People in Healthcare Services and other important documents on children's experience of health services in Ireland and children's health status were taken into account in its development. The Charter supports the implementation of the National Policy on Children's Participation in Decision-Making.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the children and young people, parents and healthcare professionals who gave their time so generously in developing this document and especially all of those who submitted very detailed feedback during the consultation period.

This document will be reviewed every two years. If you would like to give feedback about the National Healthcare Charter for Children, please send your comments or suggestions to *yoursay@hse.ie.*

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Member of reference group

National Healthcare Charter

You and Your Health Service

The Charter describes ten key principles in relation to the provision of healthcare for children and young people in Ireland. Taken together the principles of the Charter aim to ensure that children receive high quality healthcare that is both appropriate and acceptable to them and their families.

	What you can expect	*What you can do to help*
Access	Every child can expect that services are organised to ensure equity of access to public health and social care.	Children together with the support of their parents can help us deliver more accessible healthcare by being on time for appointments letting people know in time if they are going to be late or cannot attend.
Dignity and respect	All children should be treated with care, sensitivity, fairness and respect throughout any health care intervention, with special attention for their personal situation, well-being and specific needs, and with full respect for their physical and psychological integrity.	If you feel that they are not treated with dignity and respect, together with the support of your parent you should talk to your healthcare team about your experience and agree a way of working together which meets your needs. Children and their families should also treat their healthcare workers with dignity and respect.
Safe, appropriate and effective care	Every child has the right to the highest attainable quality, safe and expert care. Every child shall be cared for by competent staff whose training and skills enable them to respond to their physical, emotional and developmental needs.	Children, together with the support of their families, will receive more appropriate healthcare with improved healthcare outcomes and quality of life if they are informed and involved in their healthcare and work closely with the healthcare teams.
Communication and information	Every child has the right to information, in a form that they can understand. Every child can expect open and appropriate communication throughout their care.	If there is something that you do not understand about your condition or treatment, let your healthcare worker know. Ask your healthcare worker to explain it better, to draw a picture, or explain it in a way that you will understand. Never be afraid to ask.
Participation *see leaflet*	Every child has the right to participate in decision-making about their healthcare in a manner appropriate to their age and understanding. Children have the right to express their views freely and to have those views taken into account in matters that affect them in line with their age and understanding.	Together with the support of their parents, children can prepare a list of questions, concerns and symptoms to discuss with the healthcare worker in relation to their care. Parents should encourage children and young people to participate in decision making in line with their evolving capacity to understand and engage with the decision making process.

	What you can expect	*What you can do to help*
Play, education and recreation	Every child has the right to participate in education, play, creative activities and recreation, even if this is difficult due to their illness or disability. Opportunities for education, play and recreation should be suited to their age and development of children and young people and take place in an environment designed, furnished, staffed and equipped to meet their needs.	Children together with the support of their parents can let healthcare workers know if the opportunities for play and recreation do not meet their needs.
Privacy	Every child has the right to have their privacy respected. The privacy of children must be respected in all aspects of care. Privacy is not limited to personal information. A child's body is an important part of their identity and bodily privacy should be addressed in all aspects of care.	Children together with the support of their parents should be facilitated to give feedback at the point of care if their privacy has been compromised.
Promoting health and well-being	Every child and young person can expect that healthcare services promote health and support and empower children to manage long-term health conditions and to reduce physical and emotional stress.	Learn more about what you can do to improve your health, ask your healthcare provider for information about healthy living and about the support services in your community, ask your health care professional to help you to set goals to improve your health.
Giving feedback	Every child has the right to give feedback about their experience of health-services. Healthcare teams learn about improving services when they hear about what worked well and also what can be improved upon. You can expect to receive information on how to make a complaint if you are not happy with the care that you received.	Please tell us about your experience so that we can meet your needs and deliver more child friendly health care; Talk to staff when they are engaging with you, if you feel that we could do something better tell us at the point of care so that it can be addressed immediately and so that your experience of health services can be improved.
Protection of children	Every child has the right to be kept safe from all forms of harm. As far as possible children should be protected from upsetting experiences during their care. If such experiences are unavoidable, the impact should be minimized using all available strategies.	If abuse, neglect or family violence is disclosed, confirmed or suspected health professionals must intervene appropriately in your best interests

Access

Every child can expect that services are organised to ensure equity of access to public health and social care.

Health services should be accessible to children without discrimination on the basis of their or their family's ethnicity, race, social economic status, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, illness, appearance, language or culture.

As much as possible healthcare should be provided in the home or in the community. Health services should be planned and administered in co-operation with children and young people, their families and the communities concerned. Travelling to access healthcare services for children can often put huge strains on families, but is sometimes necessary for the child to receive the best possible care and outcomes.

Every child and young person can expect continuity of healthcare, including well planned care that follows them into adult or other services.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

- You should receive care that is appropriate, timely and based on need, not on your ability to pay.
- You should be registered with a general practitioner (GP) and if necessary, be able to change GP easily. Children under 6 have free access to general practice care. For further information visit www.hse.ie.
- You should receive emergency medical treatment from their GP and/or emergency department should they need it.
- If needed you should be referred to see a specialist children's medical consultant or other appropriate health and social care professional services when your GP thinks it necessary, and be referred for a second opinion if it is required or requested.
  - If a recommended medical treatment or therapy is not available at the health and social care facility first attended by you, you should be referred to another team where the expert care is available.
- You should be admitted to hospital only if the care you require cannot be provided as well at home in the community or on an outpatient or daycare basis.
- All children should have access to newborn screening and vaccinations and attend a public health nurse for five core developmental assessments in their community.
- Infants and children requiring artificial nutritional support on discharge should have access to appropriate support required to maintain adequate nutritional intake at home.
- You can expect that any waiting period for an appointment, test or a treatment or therapy will be kept as short as possible.
- You should receive clear information in relation to accessing healthcare services, this information should make clear, details of:
  - Appointment dates, times and locations.
  - The estimated cost of a health provider's services for your child before you avail of the treatment/therapy/care, where relevant and possible.
  - The estimated waiting times for a health provider's services and, where known, information about alternative service providers.
- What you can expect to happen to you on the day of any intervention such, as a CT scan or ultrasound.

Knowing who is caring for you

Healthcare workers should always introduce themselves and wear name badges. You should be told the name and role of everyone who cares for you and the name of who is in charge of your care.

Continuity of care and smooth transitions between services involved in children's care.

Continuity of care should be ensured by the team caring for children. When a child is referred from one part of the health service to another service or team, all relevant details of the child's health and care plan should be forwarded as appropriate. Children and young people who move across different geographical locations and health services are entitled to continuity of care.

For children and young people with long-term health issues, planning for their care as they become adults is crucial for their well-being. Account should be taken of the evolving capacity of children and young people and particular care should be taken to support young people making the transition from paediatric to adult health and social care services. Regard must be had to the whole-child approach and interventions that manage the child's health condition, but also respond to their physical and social environment, including education and housing and other needs. Collaborative approaches and partnership working with key stakeholders are critical to ensure that children's healthcare needs are addressed in a holistic manner.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

Everybody has the responsibility to improve the accessibility of healthcare. Children together with the support of their parents can help us deliver more accessible healthcare by:

- Being on time for appointments, letting people know in time if they are going to be late or cannot attend,
  - If you cannot keep an appointment inform your healthcare provider in plenty of time so that your appointment can be given to another child.
- Asking your healthcare professional how long you may expect to wait before receiving certain kinds of appointments, tests or treatments.
- If a member of staff (such as a public health nurse) is due to visit your home to see you please make sure that you are there at the agreed time.
- If you have any special requirements, such as alternative methods of communication or special nutritional requirements, please let healthcare services know in advance of visits where possible.

Contact details

Make sure that your GP surgery, dental surgery or any hospital or healthcare service you attend has up-to-date information about how to contact you. If you change address or phone number, please inform all relevant healthcare providers as soon as possible.

PARENTS

If your child needs to go to hospital, especially for an overnight stay you can help by preparing your child for hospital. Bring your children up with the idea that doctors and nurses are nice people who try to make you better and that a children's ward is a nice place, where parents can stay and children play.

Dignity and Respect

All children should be treated with care, sensitivity, fairness and respect throughout any health care intervention, with special attention for their personal situation, well-being and specific needs, and with full respect for their physical and psychological integrity.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

- You will receive healthcare in a child- and family-friendly atmosphere with openness and good communication;
- You will be the heart of healthcare decision-making with the support of your families;
- The religious belief and cultural background of your family to be taken into account;
- The environment should be adapted to meet your needs and circumstances, taking into account your age and development and evolving capacity.

This also means that:

- The rights of all sick children must be respected regardless of the environment in which they receive healthcare.
- When a child is dying or dies, the child and his/her family must be given all appropriate support, care and assistance. Information regarding the death of the child will be given sympathetically, sensitively, in private and in person.
- Staff will support families to cope with critical situations a child or young person might endure. This applies especially to life-threatening situations.
- End of life care (palliative care) should be available to children if needed

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

If you feel that they are not treated with dignity and respect, together with the support of your family, you should talk to your healthcare team about your experience and agree a way of working together which meets your needs.

Children and their families should also treat their healthcare workers with dignity and respect.

Safe, appropriate and effective care

Every child has the right to the highest attainable quality, safe and expert care. Every child shall be cared for by competent staff whose training and skills enable them to respond to their physical, emotional and developmental needs.

Every child shall be protected from unnecessary medical/healthcare treatment and investigation, if no benefit for the individual child can be derived.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

- You will receive care which is informed, clinically appropriate and provided by professionals who are skilled and competent.
- You will receive healthcare in an environment where systems and structures work effectively to ensure safety and to ensure that your care is well coordinated.
- Healthcare workers will do everything that they can to control your pain.
- That healthcare services have processes in place to ensure that you receive safe healthcare irrespective of the healthcare setting and that we will do our very best to prevent healthcare-associated infection.
- You will have access to appropriate food, fluid and nutrition and assistance with feeding as necessary.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

Ways that children together with the support of their families can help promote effective, appropriate healthcare.

Children, together with the support of their families, will receive more appropriate healthcare with improved healthcare outcomes and quality of life if they are informed and involved in their healthcare and work closely with the healthcare teams.

To ensure that you receive the best care possible you should always:
– ask questions;
– talk to your healthcare team;
– listen and note down the information they give.

Help prevent the spread of infection:
Children can help to prevent germs from spreading, by hand-washing. Together with the support of their families, children can help in the following ways:

– washing their hands after coughing/sneezing, after going to the toilet, after touching anything wet (e.g. ooze from your wounds, urine from a catheter, from blood stained dressings) and before mealtimes.

- If you can't get to a sink to wash your, ask healthcare staff to provide you with a means to clean your hands (e.g. basin of water and soap/wipes/alcohol hand rub) so that you can keep your hands clean.
- Avoid touching any wounds or the area around drips, drains or catheters.

- Ask the doctor or nurse why you have a drip or catheter and how you can help prevent it from getting infected. Let staff know if the area around the drip becomes sore or red or if the bandage falls off or looks wet or dirty.
- If you have diarrhoea and are on an antibiotic or have recently been on one – let your doctor know.
- If you think HSE premises are not clean let a member of staff know.
- If you think a staff member has forgotten to hand wash before examining you give them a gentle reminder.

For information on medication safety, see Appendix II.

Communications and information

Every child has the right to information, in a form that they can understand. Every child can expect open and appropriate communication throughout their care.

Children have the right to information that they can understand about their health and healthcare. Information for children should take into account the child's age and level of development, and;

- appreciate their capacity to understand information and express their views;
- be conveyed using language that is accessible to the child or young person with appropriate verbal, audio-visual and/or written information, supported by illustrative aids, models, play or other media presentations;
- whenever practicable and appropriate, involve parents in the communication process.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Information provided to you about your healthcare needs should:

- be provided continuously throughout your journey through healthcare services;
- take account of your evolving capacity to understand, respond to and engage with the information received;
- include information regarding care after discharge;
- be provided in a safe, secure and private environment without pressure of time;
- be communicated in different ways, using different methods where necessary to facilitate understanding;
- be checked by the staff member to ensure that the information given has been correctly understood by both you and your parent(s);
- provide your parents with access to written or pictorial documentation regarding your illness.

It is crucial that healthcare workers talk directly to you as well as to your family, even if you don't seem to understand. Healthcare workers and families should be as open as possible with you about your health and healthcare. You are entitled to know what is going to happen to you before a procedure occurs and to be given honest information about your condition and treatment outcomes, and to be helped to select and practice strategies for coping.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION IN RELATION TO YOUR CARE:

What this means for children and young people. Every child can expect open and appropriate communication throughout their care:

- about your health and what the proposed treatment or care aims to do especially when plans change or if something goes wrong;
- concerning the results of any proposed treatment and medication, including the possible risks and alternatives;
- regarding the type of continuing healthcare or therapy that you may need, including medication, continuing care in hospital, timely and appropriate, referrals, convalescence or rehabilitation;
- regarding discharge arrangements and follow-up support in the community.

You should be given:

- the opportunity to ask questions and receive answers that you can understand;
- be supported to ask questions and to make the most of consultations;
- benefit from interpretative services where possible. A child or a sibling should not be used as an interpreter for the parents.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

Children together with the support of their parents can promote improved communication:

- If there is something that you do not understand about your condition or treatment, let your healthcare worker/team know. Ask your healthcare worker to explain it better, to draw a picture, or explain it in a way that you will understand. Never be afraid to ask.
- Together with their parents, children can provide information about their medical history, current treatment, medication and alternative therapies. It may be helpful for you to carry a healthcare record with you including information about vaccinations etc.
- See p.18 for questions to ask about your healthcare plan.

Participation

Every child has the right to participate in decision-making about their healthcare in a manner appropriate to their age and understanding. Children have the right to express their views freely and to have those views taken into account in matters them.

Every child and young person has the right to have their parents or parent substitute with them when receiving care in hospital or community services.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

You have the right to be involved in decision making about your healthcare, to the greatest extent possible in line with your capacity to understand. You should be offered choices wherever possible. Further, you can seek a second opinion. Whenever you have questions or ideas about your healthcare, these should be heard. If your views cannot be acted on, you are entitled to an explanation.

In order to ensure that you can participate in decision making, healthcare professionals ought to be competent and committed to communicating with children. Children and young people need:

- adequate information regarding their immediate health condition, the proposed forms, risks, and merits of treatment or therapy and its goals as well as the measures to be taken;
- adequate information on alternative forms of treatment or therapy;
- advice and support to parents enabling them to evaluate the proposed way of proceeding.

Children should be informed if student healthcare staff are involved in delivering their care. Students should always seek permission before any medical examination or interview.

Every child has the right to have their parents with them at all times, includes all situations where they need or possibly might need their parents.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

Ways that you can support participation:

Parents should encourage children and young people to participate in decision making in line with their evolving capacity to understand and engage with the decision-making process. Although parents have the legal right to consent up to 16 years, the process of involving children in decision-making should begin as early as possible.

Age and consent to healthcare treatment, what this means for children:
For children below the age of 16 years a parent must give consent to the treatment of the child. In relation to healthcare treatment covered by the mental health act 2001, children under the age of 18 years must have the consent of their parents[1].

Together with the support of their parents, children can prepare a list of questions, concerns and symptoms to discuss with the healthcare worker in relation to their care. Here are a few suggested questions to get you started:

- Can you please tell me more about my health (condition)?
- Do you have any information that I can take away with me?
- Can you tell me where I can find out more information? (plain English, child friendly information, which is evidence based).
- Why do I need to have this test?
- What are the different treatments or therapies for this condition?
- How will this treatment/therapy help me?
- What does the treatment/therapy involve?
- What can go wrong for me?
- What is likely to happen if I do not have this treatment/ therapy?
- Who will be caring for me?
- What should I look out for?
- When should I come back to see you?
- Ask about your care plan before you leave hospital. Ask for it to be fully explained to you. Make sure you get the results of any tests or procedures.
- If you are having any procedure or intervention, including surgery, clarify with the relevant professionals so that everyone is clear about exactly what is going to be done.

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[1] The National Policy on Consent in Healthcare, outlines the responsibility of parents to give consent for children up to the age of 16 years. For more information see *www.hse.ie*

Play, education and recreation

Every child has the right to participate in education, play, creative activities and recreation, even if this is difficult due to their illness or disability. Opportunities for education, play and recreation should be suited to their age and development of children and young people and take place in an environment designed, furnished, staffed and equipped to meet their needs.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

To the greatest extent practicable, you should be assisted to participate in regular activities and routines while in a healthcare service. You should continue to receive education while you are in healthcare services[2].

You have the right to an environment which meets your needs, age, development and circumstances and regardless of whether you are receiving healthcare. This applies also to day-facilities or other areas where children are being treated or examined.

You should have access to extensive possibilities for play, recreation and education

- available in the form of appropriate play or recreation materials;
- adequate periods of time for play seven days a week;
- provision for the abilities of all age groups cared for in the facility;
- inspirational and creative activities for all children;
- allowing for the continuation of the level of education already reached.

The architecture and interior design of such an environment must incorporate appropriate features for all age groups and types of illnesses treated in the facility. The environment should be adaptable to the needs of different age groups and not be focused on one particular age group.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

Children together with the support of their parents can let healthcare workers know if the opportunities for play and recreation do not meet their needs.

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[2] Hospitalised children can expect to receive educational support tailored to their needs during their hospital stay. See *http://www.hospitalteachers.eu/who/hope-charter*

Privacy

Every child has the right to have their privacy respected.

The privacy of children must be respected in all aspects of care. Privacy is not limited to personal information. A child's body is an important part of their identity and bodily privacy should be addressed in all aspects of care. This is particularly important in physical examinations and personal hygiene activities such as dressing, toileting and bathing.

Children's religious and cultural beliefs may also require special responses in relation to the privacy of their bodies. Children and young people may request a staff member of the same gender and this should be accommodated whenever possible. Healthcare providers should be alert to the fact that children's privacy needs and wishes may change as they mature. These needs and wishes should be respected.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

- Protection from physical exposure;
  - protection from treatment and behaviour which diminishes self respect or makes the you feel embarassed or humiliated;
  - the right of personal retreat, to be alone;
  - the right of private communication with staff;
  - the right of undisturbed association with close family members and friends;
  - audio and visual separation from adults in emergency department services.

The confidentiality of children and young people's information

The confidentiality of children's personal information is very important. Proper handling of children's personal health and other details is necessary to ensure that the information remains private. Keeping children's details confidential (except where this places them at risk) and assuring children and young people that their privacy is respected, encourages them to share all of the information relevant to their care with health professionals.

PARENTS

- Obtain and inspect a copy of your child's health information.
- Your child's personal health information will be stored securely and not disclosed to others without your consent. Your child's personal health information will only be accessed by those who need it for your child's care.
- You should be facilitated to complain if you are unhappy with how health services have used or protected your health information.
- Your healthcare records may be accessed for audit purposes to provide assurance to the HSE about the quality of service provision.

Promoting health and well-being

Every child and young person can expect that healthcare services promote health and support and empower children to manage long-term health conditions and to reduce physical and emotional stress.

Health is more than merely the absence of disease. Health is a holistic concept incorporating equally important and in-separable elements of physical, mental and social well-being. Most common chronic diseases, disabilities and injuries in children can be prevented.

WHAT THIS MEAN FOR YOU

- You will receive information and advice on how to stay as healthy as possible and you will receive the necessary support and encouragement to do so
- If you have a long-term health condition, you will be empowered to manage your condition and together with the support of your parents will be given advice and support to prevent further illness
- You have the right to participate in vaccination and core developmental assessments provided through your local primary healthcare services
- Healthcare services work in partnership with schools and the wider community to promote health amongst children, examples of this work include:
  - Promotion of dental health
  - Healthy eating
  - Active living and the promotion of play
  - Managing weight
  - Prevention of smoking
  - Prevention of disease through immunisation

You will have the opportunity in your school to participate in health and well-being programmes.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

Ways that you can improve your health, children together with the support of their parents can improve and maintain their health:

- Learn more about what you can do to improve your health, ask your healthcare provider for information about healthy living and about the support services in your community, ask your health care professional to help you to set goals to improve your health.

This could mean:

- taking more exercise, living an active life
- eating healthy food
- managing your weight
- avoiding smoking,
- not drinking too much alcohol
- not using drugs

- Seek information and advice from any healthcare professional or other sources such as *www.hse.ie* on how to prevent disease, including immunisation, and on how to protect your health and your family's health.
- Seek information about accident prevention in children and how to keep for home safe for your child. For more information see *www.hse.ie*
- Always ensure that your child is appropriately strapped in their car seat see *www.rsa.ie*

PARENTS

Children learn from their parents, extended family, friends, school and local community. If children see their parents or peers living a healthy lifestyle they too are more likely to practice healthy behaviours.

All HSE provided services aim to be smoke free by 2015 – many are currently smoke free. Please support your services to achieve this goal by not smoking on health service premises. Parents can promote the health and well-being of their children by not exposing children to passive smoking in cars or in their home and creating awareness around the dangers of smoking in children and by promoting healthy living as described above.

Giving feedback

Every child has the right to give feedback about their experience of health-services.

- Healthcare teams learn about improving services when they hear about what worked well and also what can be improved upon.
  - Please tell us about your experience so that we can meet your needs and deliver more child friendly health care;
  - Talk to staff when they are engaging with you, if you feel that we could do something better tell us at the point of care so that it can be addressed immediately and so that your experience of health services can be improved.
- Information about how to give feedback about your experience, whether it was positive or negative
- To have any concerns dealt with properly and in a timely manner.
- To receive feedback in relation to what changes or improvements have been made in response to your feedback.
- Information on how to make a complaint if you are not happy with the care that you received.

If you are unhappy with the way your complaint was dealt with, you can request that your complaint be reviewed by the HSE.

PARENTS

Parents should advocate on behalf of their child at all times and take into account the child's evolving capacity in ensuring that their needs are met and any concerns communicated effectively to healthcare providers. Younger children may not always have the language or be comfortable articulating their feelings or problems so you will need to be alert to their needs and circumstances in a variety of ways. Always let your child know that you will represent their interests and voice their worries or problems to hospital staff for them and in a sensitive manner. Encourage them to speak up where they feel comfortable to do so.

Set an example: if you have a complaint, do not be afraid to express it. It is better to solve problems at an early stage rather than to allow them to grow or fester. Be firm but never rude. If it is serious, it may be necessary to put the complaint in writing. Find out about children's advocacy and support services by contacting Citizens Information *(see contact details on p. 28).*

Protection of children

Every child has the right to be kept safe from all forms of harm.

Well-being encompasses more than just the absence of physical suffering. As far as possible children should be protected from upsetting experiences during their care. If such experiences are unavoidable, the impact should be minimized using all available strategies. Opportunities to debrief should be available for children and their families if distressing events occur. Seclusion and restraint should be minimal and used only as a last resort.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

To reduce unavoidable physical or emotional stress, pain, and suffering you should be offered:

- ways of dealing with painful situations or actions experienced as negative;
- support for your parents as well as measures ensuring their protection from too much strain while caring for you;
- contact with social services, psychologists and other key therapists as required;
- contact when requested with minister of religion, self-help groups, patient/parent-help groups and cultural groups.

You also require protection from potential harm and burden associated with your involvement in research or teaching (including training of healthcare providers) while engaged in the healthcare system.

Child protection from abuse:

You have the right to be protected from abuse, neglect and exposure to family violence. If abuse, neglect or family violence is disclosed, confirmed or suspected health professionals must intervene appropriately in your best interests. Irish law and HSE policy mandates[3] and supports such actions. Co-operation between healthcare services and other agencies, including timely sharing of information, is also essential to ensure that children are kept safe and receive safe healthcare.

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[3] The Department of Children and Youth Affairs has produced Children First the National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children. This document tells adult's, professionals and persons involved in organisations who work with children what they should do if they have concerns about a child's safety or welfare.

Appendix I

National
Healthcare Charter
for young people

(12-18 yrs)
what we can expect from our health service and what we can do to help

Access

Dignity and respect

Safe, appropriate and effective care

Communication and information

Involvement

Play, education and recreation

Privacy

Giving feedback

Promoting health and well-being

Our protection

This work was carried out in collaboration with the HSE Advocacy Unit and YAC (Youth Advisory Council)

Call-save HSE: 1850 24 1850
(Mon-Sat 8am - 8pm) www.hse.ie

NATIONAL HEALTHCARE TEENAGE (12-18) CHARTER
A1 wallchart

We acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the Youth Advisory Council (YAK) for helping to develop the poster of the charter aimed at young people.

YAC
YOUTH
ADVISORY
COUNCIL

Appendix II

PARENTS

Medication safety:

- For information and advice on the safe and effective use of your child's medicine, contact your Pharmacist.
- Try to follow any advice or treatment that has been agreed with you for your child. If you are worried about doing this, or do not fully understand what is required, discuss it with the person giving the advice or treatment, or contact your GP or Pharmacist
- If you are given a prescription for antibiotics to take at home for your child, it is very important to give your child the full course of antibiotics as prescribed (i.e. finish the course) even if your child begins to feel better. Do not keep antibiotics at home for your child for future use and do not share them with other people or other people's children.
- Check with your pharmacist if you are unsure about how often you should give your child medicine, how much medicine you should give your child or how long your child should be taking the medicine for.
- Take care with medicines. Give children or young people medicine in line with instructions and finish the course of treatment unless your doctor has advised you not to. Please discuss with your doctor or pharmacist, before you decide to change or stop your child's medication, particularly if your prescription says that your child should continue to take it.
- If your pharmacist provides you with a measuring device to use with one of your child's medicines, ensure you understand how to use it correctly and always use it when giving the medicine to your child.
- Read the label on the medicine and the leaflet in the pack before giving the medicine to your child.
- Ask your pharmacist about possible side effects from the medicine and what to do if you think your child is experiencing a side effect.
- When you purchase a medicine, whether prescribed, over-the counter or herbal, tell the pharmacist about any other medicines or treatments your child is having so that they can check if the medicine is safe for your child to use.
- When having a medicine dispensed, your pharmacist may have to ask you some questions about your child's age, weight or medical condition. This is so that they can ensure the medicine is safe and appropriate for your child.
- Don't share your child's medicine with others or use a medicine that was prescribed for someone else.
- Store medicines safely and out of the sight and reach of children's reach. Return unused or out of date medicines to your pharmacist for safe disposal.
- If you go into a hospital, let the staff know about any medicines that your child is already taking, for example by bringing a list of all the medicines and giving this to a member of staff, and tell staff about any allergies (including food allergies) that your child may have. Your pharmacist can help you prepare this list. If you don't have time to prepare a list, bring your medicines to the hospital and show them to a staff member.
- If you feel that your child's condition has gotten worse, you should consult your GP, who can, if necessary, consult further with the paediatric hospital or relevant service.

Help save a life

Consider donating blood, organs, tissues or bone marrow:

Every year, hundreds of lives are saved with the help of donated blood, organs, tissues and bone marrow. You could save or improve the lives of several other people if you become a donor. To become a blood donor, visit the National Blood Transfusion Service website, *www.giveblood.ie*. To become an organ or tissue donor, put your name on the Organ Donor Register. You should also discuss your wishes with the people close to you, and carry a donor card.

For more information, or if you have a question about this topic, contact the Citizens Information phone service on lo-call 1890 777 121 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 9pm).

First Aid

Did you know that over 6,000 people die from cardiac arrest every year, before reaching hospital; that's 18 people every day? If you were the first person on the scene of one of the cardiac arrests would you know what to do? Make a difference today, find out about doing a first aid course in your local area, and learn about first aid. Help save a life.

Stroke

Learn about the signs and symptoms of stroke, F.A.S.T. Face Arms Speech Time
Help a stroke victim access emergency services in time and help save a life.
See *www.stroke.ie/FASTCamaign*

QUIT smoking

1-in-2 smokers will die of a tobacco related disease, can you live with that, QUIT

For more information visit:

- *www.quit.ie* or
- *www.facebook.com/HSEquit* or
- call the National Smokers' Quitline: 1850 201 203

Safety in children

Make sure that your home is a safer place for young children.
See *www.hse.ie* for the child safety resources

Road safety

Slow down and drive carefully, never, ever drink and drive, help save a life, see *www.rsa.ie*

Prevent falls in older people

Find out about how to prevent falls in older people see *www.hse.ie*

Finding out about health services

Contact the HSE:
Contact your local health area for information about local HSE services. You can find the contact details in the phone book under ‘health services’ or on the internet at *www.hse.ie*

Call-save: 1850 24 1850
(Monday to Saturday 8.00am to 8.00pm)

Citizens Information:
Contact your local Citizens Information service for free, confidential and independent advice on a wide range of issues including services and schemes provided by the HSE and the Department of Social Protection that you may be entitled to.

You can also visit your local Citizens Information Centre. To find your nearest office, look in your local phone book or go to the Citizens Information Board website, *www.citizensinformation.ie*

Lo-call: 1890 777 121
Tel: +353 (0)21 452 1600
(Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 9.00pm)

Acknowledgements

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We acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the Youth Advisory Council (YAK) for helping to develop the poster of the charter aimed at young people.