

## QUALIFICATIONS AMONG NON-NURSING CARE STAFF IN LONG-STAY SETTINGS IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

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### **Background**

In Ireland, the professionalisation of the health and social care labour force has received ever increasing attention from policy-makers in recent years. The introduction of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act (2005) and the establishment of the Health Information Quality Authority (HIQA) (2007) epitomise this trend. The former provides the legislative basis for standards of professional conduct, training, education and competence among health and social care professionals. While the latter, is an independent body with a remit to ensure quality through the development, monitoring and enforcement of standards across the health and social care sector. In July 2009, the HIQA introduced National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People, which included requirements in relation to training and education for non-nursing care staff.

### **Research Aims**

To scope qualifications held or being pursued by non-nursing care staff in long-stay settings for older people in the republic of Ireland.

### **Methods**

Postal survey. The questionnaire was comprised of 10 questions, and 200 centres were contacted. The response rate was 52% (104 centres). The total capacity of the providers that responded was 7,149 residents (35% private sector/65% public sector). The total number of non-nursing care staff covered by the survey was 3,878. Of these staff 1,499 (39%) were employed in the private sector, while 2,379 (61%) were employed in the public sector.

### **Results (or Progress to Date)**

The survey revealed that 1,438 (38%) of the staff held a qualification at level 5 (National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) or above and 308 (8%) were pursuing a qualification at this level or above. As such, 2,132 (55%) non-nursing care staff neither held nor were pursuing a qualification within the NFQ. Of the staff that did hold a qualification, the vast majority were at level 5 (90%) and a similar trend was apparent for staff engaged in training/education, with 291 (91%) pursuing a qualification at level 5.

### **Dissemination**

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