



Dignity4Patients Terminology in Plain Language

General Terms

Term	Definition
Safeguarding	Referring to the action an organization or person takes to protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults from harm, abuse, and neglect.
Governance	The system of rules, practices, and processes used to direct, control, and hold an organization or society accountable.
Methodology	The system, principles, and rationale of methods used in a particular field of study or activity.
Tribunals of Inquiry	Statutory, with High Court powers, public hearings and reports to the Oireachtas.
Oireachtas Inquiries	Non-statutory parliamentary inquiries (less powerful than tribunals).

Civil Justice

Term	Definition
Civil Justice	Civil justice is the system of laws, courts, and procedures that people use to solve non-criminal disputes to fix the harm caused with fair compensation or redress.
Compensation	Compensation is money paid to cover a specific financial loss or exchange of values lost.
Redress	Redress is the broader act of setting right a wrong, which can include financial payment for emotional or non-economic harm.
Affidavit / Statement	An affidavit is a written statement of facts confirmed by oath or affirmation, carrying the same legal weight as oral testimony given in court.

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Access To Information

Term	Definition
Freedom of Information	Freedom of Information (FOI) is a legal right that lets people request and access official records and information held by government departments and public bodies.
Medical Records	Medical records are a systematic, formal collection of a patient's health history, diagnoses, treatments, and care information documented by healthcare professionals.
Ombudsman	An ombudsman is an independent official who investigates complaints from the public against government agencies, public bodies, or service providers.
Evidence	Documentation within a patient's health care used in legal or clinical settings to objectively prove a health status, timeline of care, or standard of treatment, and medical staff present.

Criminal Justice

Term	Definition
Criminal Justice	Criminal justice is the system of government agencies and rules used to investigate, prosecute, and punish criminal behaviour.
Evidence	Evidence means anything that gives proof or a clear sign that something is true or exists. Facts that help show a claim is true.
Judicial Review	A court-based process used to check if the decisions, actions, or laws of government bodies and public officials follow the law and the constitution.
Prosecution	Prosecution means the act of officially accusing someone of a crime in a court of law and trying to prove that they are guilty.
Conviction	A criminal conviction is the formal legal judgment or decision in which a court finds a defendant guilty of a crime.
Summary Of Reasons	A summary of reasons from the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) is a written explanation provided to a victim of crime when the DPP decides not to prosecute a case.
Independent Review	A secondary evaluation of a decision not to prosecute a criminal case, conducted by a different lawyer who had no part in the initial ruling.

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Reviews & Scoping Exercises

Term	Definition
Scoping Exercise	A preliminary evaluation or investigation used to define the boundaries, objectives, scale, and feasibility of a project, policy, or research topic before full-scale execution.
Transcripts	A written, printed, or typed copy of words that were originally spoken or recorded word-for-word of everything said during a legal meeting.
Recommendations	A recommendation is a suggestion, piece of advice, or formal statement saying that someone or something is good, safe, or right for a specific job or purpose
Review	An act of carefully looking at, examining, or judging something again for the purpose of evaluation or reflection.
Time-Bound	Time-bound refers to when the duration of a process is restricted to a specific period or subject to a strict deadline.

Public Inquiry

Term	Definition
Public Inquiry	A public inquiry is an official, independent investigation set up by a government to examine events or actions that have caused major public concern or serious harm.
Commission of Investigation	A commission of investigation is a statutory body set up by a government to look into matters of significant public concern quickly and cheaply.
Terms of Reference	A formal document defining the boundaries, purpose, and authority of the review. This process provides the structural and legal framework that guides decision-making, evidence gathering, and reporting.
Formal Investigation	A structured, official fact-finding process used to discover the truth about alleged misconduct, rule violations, or disputed events.
Power of Compellability	The legal authority granted to a court, legislative body, or official entity to force a person to attend a proceeding, testify under oath, or produce specific documents and evidence.
Accountable	To be held accountable means to be required to accept responsibility for your actions and explain the results, especially when something goes wrong.
Failings	A failing of a state body occurs when an entity funded by the public fails to meet its statutory duties, legal obligations, or standards.
Public Record	Being "on the public record" means that a statement or fact, is officially documented, openly declared, and accessible for the general public to see and read and the fact can no longer be denied.