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4th December 2018

Deputy Martin
Leinster House
Dublin 2.

PQ Ref 47810/18To ask the Minister for Health the status of implementation of the recommendations of the maternity strategy; if they are ahead of behind recommended timelines; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Martin,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

With a view to managing and enabling the implementation of the *National Maternity Strategy 2016 – 2016 Creating a Better Future Together* the HSE has established a dedicated National Women and Infants Health Programme. The Programme at the request of the Department of Health developed a detailed implementation plan. The plan was developed under the Strategy's four strategic priorities and details how each of the 77 recommendations identified in the strategy will be implemented, on an incremental basis.

Under the governance of the National Programme, work is underway in delivering the Implementation Plan. Successful implementation of the Strategy is dependent on multiple stakeholders ranging from national to local level, both internal and external to the HSE. To date a central focus of the National Programme has been on supporting the development of Maternity Networks within each of the Hospital Groups. These Networks, which are under development, have been identified as the key clinical and executive structure through which maternity services will be delivered and developed on a regional basis. These Networks enable groupings of maternity services to work together with a view to

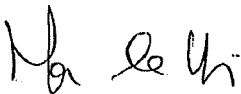
identifying and enabling best practice, implementing shared pathways and protocols and undertaking reviews and managing risks at network level.

Parallel to the development of Networks, work is actively underway in a large number of areas as set out in the implementation plan including breastfeeding, smoking cessation, clinical guideline development and review, foetal anomaly scanning, community midwifery services, perinatal mental health services, maternity medical social work services, management and review of maternity related adverse events, workforce planning, utilisation of quality and risk data and enabling greater choice for women at local level.

Overall, whilst significant work has been undertaken, the National Programme remains mindful that there is still quite a way to go before all women have access to type of maternity service envisaged in the National Strategy. However working with its key partners including the Department of Health and HIQA, the HSE remains committed to ensuring that this vision is realised and that the actions identified in the Strategy are fully implemented.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,



Mary-Jo Biggs,
General Manager, National Women and Infants Health Programme