



Unit 7A, The Dargan Building
Heuston South Quarter
Military Road
Kilmainham
Dublin 8.
076 695 9991

9th April 2018

Deputy Connolly
Leinster House
Dublin 2.

PQ Ref 12078/19** To ask the Minister for Health the status of the roll out of centres alongside birth centres pursuant to the National Maternity Strategy; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Connolly,

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.

Please forgive the delay in responding to you. Alongside birth centres in Irish maternity services were first developed in the north east of the country, with the maternity services in both Drogheda and Cavan having such centres on site. Each of these centres has dedicated clinical space including two specifically designed delivery suites to enable and support midwifery provided maternity services to women in their region.

With the publication of the National Maternity Strategy and in due cognisance of the infrastructure challenges that present on many of the existing clinical sites, the focus in the public system is currently on the development of home-away-from-home suites within the maternity services. These are being implemented by means of refurbishment of ancillary clinical space adjacent to existing labour wards and/or refurbishment of existing traditional delivery suites. These facilities are a key enabler in delivering on the vision of enhanced midwifery care as set out in the National Strategy.

Limerick, Drogheda, Cork, Holles Street, Wexford, Mullingar and the Coombe all have in place home-away-from-home facilities, whilst a further two sites – Waterford and Sligo - are due to develop such facilities this year. Other maternity services are currently developing site specific plans for home-away-from-home facilities.

Parallel to the development of these facilities, maternity services around the country are actively transferring care from their acute sites out to the community by means of establishing new midwifery provided outpatient clinics in community settings. In those services providing this type of community based midwifery services, the number of geographical locations is ranging from 2 upwards of 10 per maternity service.

Combined these initiatives are delivering on the objectives of the National Maternity Strategy in terms of enabling greater continuity of care to women and their families and growing and developing midwifery led care.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

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