



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

4th December 2019

Deputy Thomas P. Broughan
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 48260/19** To ask the Minister for Health the staffing levels of midwives in HSE maternity units and hospitals; the number by which these staff numbers fall short or exceed the Birthrate Plus metric; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Broughan,

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.

The HSE Midwifery Workforce Planning Project Report modeled on Birthrate Plus methodologies was published in April 2016. This Report recommended a range of midwifery staffing ratios across the 19 maternity services taking into account the variability in working arrangements and clinical practices between the different sites and services

On foot of the publication of the Report in 2016, it was identified by the HSE that an additional 196 midwives, in both clinical and non-clinical roles, were required across the maternity services. To address this acknowledged deficient an additional 100 WTE midwives were approved and funded in 2016, whilst a further 71.45 WTE were approved and funded in 2017. All of these additional posts would have been incorporated within the base staffing of each maternity service and as such would have been advertised, recruited and filled. Akin to the existing cohort of midwifery posts in place, these additional posts would have been subject to staff turnover and fluctuations in fill rate that is consistently managed in an on-going basis by all maternity services.

With the commencement of the National Women and Infants Health Programme in the HSE in 2017, a programme charged with driving the implementation of the National Maternity Strategy, a further 77 WTE midwifery posts were approved across the 19 maternity services in 2018. This last tranche of posts included specialist perinatal mental health midwifery posts, advanced midwifery practitioner posts and 52 WTE registered midwifery posts to enable the development and delivery of the midwifery supported care pathway in all 19 services.

The HSE's national employment census as of 31st January 2019 recorded a total of 2,087 WTE midwives in employment in the HSE. This figure encompasses all grades of midwifery personnel, both clinical and non-

clinical. This figure will not include those posts that are in the process of being actively recruited into and filled nor would it include other staff who may be directly involved in the provision of maternity care in the 19 services such as theatre nurses, general nurses and ultrasonographers from a radiography professional background as these will not be classified and returned under a midwifery heading.

This active employment figure compares to a national figure of 2,089 WTE midwives as recommended in the 2016 Workforce Report. Whilst it is noted that there are variations across the 19 services when assessed against their individually recommended Birthrate ratios, as referenced previously all sites are actively recruiting with the midwifery employment numbers presented being dynamic, with employment levels fluctuating up and down in each of the maternity services during the course of any given year.

Yours sincerely,



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

	Maternity Hospital	Birthrate Plus Review overall recommended need (WTE includes clinical & mgmt)	Actual WTE at time of Review (includes clinical & mgmt)	Variance in staffing from this Recommendation at time of Review)	Midwifery Staffing (WTE) (Jan. 2019; HSE Census)	Overall variance in Birthrate Plus Recommendation and Jan. 2019 (HSE Census)
1	Coombe Women & Infants University Hospital	276.38	238.73	-37.65	259	-17.38
2	Cork University Maternity Hospital	255.48	241.47	-14.01	277	21.52
3	National Maternity Hospital	291.39	251.47	-39.92	306	14.61
4	Rotunda Hospital	280.35	234.5	-45.85	252	-28.35
5	Our Lady of Lourdes, Drogheda	114.66	123.86	9.2	121	6.34
6	University Maternity Hospital Limerick	147.2	129.73	-17.47	199	51.8
7	University Hospital Galway	95.81	108.41	12.6	90	-5.81
8	Midlands Regional Hospital, Mullingar	62.62	46.5	-16.12	61	-1.62
9	Wexford General Hospital	52.81	43.5	-9.31	52	-0.81
10	St Luke's Hospital Kilkenny	50.67	50.57	-0.1	49	-1.67
11	Midlands Regional Hospital, Portlaoise	69.37	70	0.63	44	-25.37
12	Letterkenny University Hospital	56.4	53.3	-3.1	46	-10.4
13	Mayo University Hospital	49.19	44.8	-4.39	37	-12.19
14	Sligo University Hospital	47.94	46.57	-1.37	54	6.06
15	Portiuncula University Hospital	52.35	51.8	-0.55	57	4.65
16	Cavan Hospital	54.58	48.5	-6.08	57	2.42
17	University Hospital Waterford	58.48	51.8	-6.68	48	-10.48
18	South Tipperary General Hospital	30.62	30.77	0.15	38	7.38
19	Kerry University Hospital	42.99	44.87	1.88	40	-2.99
	Total	2,089.29	1,911.15	-178.14	2087	-2.29