

8th December

Deputy Peadar Tóibín T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2
E: peadar.tóibín@oireachtas.ie

Re: PQ 39532/20 – Clinical genetic services, National Maternity Hospital

“To ask the Minister for Health the steps he has taken by to address the gap in clinical genetic services at the National Maternity Hospital in the period between receipt of a protected disclosure (details supplied*) and the mistaken abortion at the hospital; and when the necessary clinical genetic services will be put in place. -Peadar Tóibín

***a protected disclosure was made to the Department of Health in 2018 by a hospital consultant which raised concerns about clinical genetic services at the National Maternity Hospital. The protected disclosure warned of ‘catastrophic consequences’ since staff were being deprived of expert advice when considering the results of genetic testing. We know that a short time later a perfectly healthy baby was aborted in the National Maternity Hospital, after initial tests had incorrectly indicated that the baby had Edwards’ Syndrome?”**

Dear Deputy Tóibín,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question seeking an update on the gap in clinical genetic services at the National Maternity Hospital, which has been referred to the Ireland East Hospital Group for direct response.

I have had this matter examined and am advised that following internal consultations with the Fetal Medicine team, the National Maternity Hospital initiated discussions with Birmingham during 2017 in relation to the provision of a fetal medicine genetic services for the short and medium term while a longer term solution could be put in place.

Unfortunately, due to a number of factors, including the objections and threats of legal action and refusal to engage with any new staff or service, from an individual, these discussions did not result in any additional service.

Since that time the National Maternity Hospital, in conjunction with the other Dublin Maternity Hospitals, have engaged with the Ireland East Hospital Group and HSE over a period of time in relation to the need for these services in all three hospitals and the requirement to fund and source these services and ultimately recruit staff, including at consultant, to provide the services.



The National Maternity Hospital are hopeful that funding will be allocated in the 2021 estimates and budget, to allow for the recruitment of the staff and the commencement of these enhanced services.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely



Paul Gallagher
Chief Director of Nursing and Midwifery