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12th August 2020

Deputy O'Reilly,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ Ref 18018/20 To ask the Minister of Health the estimated cost of funding and implementing the national maternity strategy; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy O'Reilly,

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 *National Maternity Strategy 2016 – 2016 Creating a Better Future Together*, published in 2016, is a 10-year plan with funding to support its implementation to be introduced across the lifetime of the plan. With a view to managing and enabling the implementation of the Strategy the HSE 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 in 2016 under the Strategy's four strategic priorities and details how each of the 77 actions identified in the strategy will be implemented, on an incremental basis. The Programme as part of the development of its implementation plan in 2016 estimated that the total cost of the implementation of the National Maternity Strategy would be an additional €75 million approximately over the ten year period of the Strategy.

Successful implementation of the Strategy is dependent on multiple stakeholders ranging from national to local level, both internal and external to the HSE, and the additional investment required being made available by the Department of Health.

Since the publication of the Strategy, significant progress has been made in implementing the Model of Care as recommended in the Strategy and developing the recommended governance structures for maternity services. Additional funding made available to date to the HSE subsequent to the publication of the Strategy, has enabled this progress to be supported and enabled by means of expansion of maternity service personnel including additional consultants, midwives, allied health professionals, sonographers, quality and risk etc. In addition, NWIHP has also been able to support the maternity services in acquiring new and replacement maternity related equipment, implement home-away-from-home delivery suites and undertake work in a large number of additional areas including smoking cessation, breastfeeding and management and review of maternity related adverse events.

Overall, whilst significant work has been undertaken, the National Programme remains mindful that there is still further work to be undertaken before all women have access to type of maternity service envisaged in the National Strategy. In this context, the Programme is currently reviewing its implementation plan vis-à-vis timelines and associated additional investment required going forward.

Working with its key partners including the Department of Health and HIQA, the HSE remains committed to ensuring that the vision in the National Strategy is realised and that the actions identified in the Strategy are fully implemented within the 10 year plan.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,



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