



30th November 2020

**Deputy Holly Cairns
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.**

PQ 35751/20 - To ask the Minister for Health if the provision of waterbirths as part of the homebirth service are being facilitated currently; if the practice is under review; if a specific incident is under review; if so, the professionals that are conducting the review; and the timeframe for completion and decision and any reviews.

-Holly Cairns

Dear Deputy Cairns,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for response.

Currently the HSE, in the interest of health and safety of women and babies, has temporarily paused facilitating planned water births in the home birth service, meaning that during labour a woman can immerse in water but will have to leave the water for the birth of the baby.

The HSE is committed to providing safe and effective care during pregnancy and birth and it is for this reason that this decision has been made while the reviews are undertaken.

For anyone requiring further information and advice, the HSE advises that services users make contact with their Designated Midwifery Officer and Self-Employed Community Midwife.

With regard to the specific incident referred to above, the membership for Incident Review for the Category 1 incident has been identified and includes a Consultant Obstetrician-Gynaecologist, Midwifery Consultant, Director of Midwifery and a QPS Advisor. They will commence their work shortly and have been requested to endeavour the Review is completed if possible, by the end of the year.

This Review is receiving high priority and attention and any resource required by the Review Team will be immediately allocated to support the Review Team.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'TJ Dunford', written on a light-colored background.

TJ Dunford,
Interim Head of Operations Primary Care/AND.
Community Operations