



22<sup>nd</sup> December 2020

Deputy Brendan Griffin,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ 39420/20 - To ask the Minister for Health his views on a matter (details supplied) regarding birthing pools; and if he will make a statement on the matter**

**Details Supplied: Re: Birthing pools being prohibited in homes of birthing mothers. Due to the Covid restrictions, birthing pools at home is no longer allowed. Can you please advise if this will be lifted to give women a choice of how they will have their child delivered. It is a very difficult time at present for pregnant women, attending appointments on their own and having the child without their partner being present. Also a lot of counselling services for women who are suffering from Post Natal Depression have not been permitted and access to their GP's is very limited. This is causing huge mental health issues in the County and Country also. ciaraogrady@gmail.com 0876548470**

**-Brendan Griffin**

Dear Deputy Griffin,

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.

The Health Service Executive has put in place a temporary pause on the delivery of babies underwater in the National Homebirths Service pending the outcome of a review of certain incidents in the provision of water births within the HSE home birth service.

A review group was established to provide interim guidance regarding the provision of water births in the HSE homebirth. The membership of the Group included specialists in obstetrics and gynaecology and neonatology, midwifery expertise comprising directors of midwifery, advanced midwifery practitioners and a designated midwifery officer from the HSE home birth service.

The Group completed its work with a wide range of areas and issues being considered and covered as part of its deliberations including current evidence, guidance and practices into water births.

The Group agreed the following suite of recommendations:

1. The continued provision of homebirths under the HSE's National Homebirth Service;
2. The continued facilitation of women laboring in water in the HSE's National Homebirth Service; and

3. A pause in the facilitation of the delivery of babies under water in the HSE's National Homebirth Service.

Based on the above recommendations, access to the HSE's National Homebirth Service remains in place for women and their partners with a pause currently in place in relation to the water births component of the Home Birth Service.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,



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