



Clár Sláinte Náisiúnta do Mhná & do Naíonáin
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte, Aonad 7A, Áras
Dargan, An Ceantar Theas, Baile Átha Cliath 8
T: 076 695 9991

National Women and Infants Health Programme
Health Service Executive, Unit 7A, The Dargan Building,
Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8
T: 076 695 9991

12th October 2020

Deputy Cairns,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ Ref 26228/20 To ask the Minister for Health the way in which his Department or the HSE responded to the call by an association (details supplied) in March 2020 to invoke the use of self-employed midwives to provide continuing care to women in labour that may require transfer in from hospital instead of continuing with a home birth as their case midwife; if by issuing honorary contracts or not in view of the fact many midwives already provide services subcontracted by the HSE; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Cairns,

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's National Homebirth Service currently sits within the governance of HSE Community Operations. This service is delivered by means of self-employed community midwives (SECMs) who hold and sign an annual MOU with the relevant Head of Primary Care division of the community area.

If a woman during the course of their labour requires transfer to the nearest maternity services for additional support and care, the care of the women and the associated clinical governance for that care package is then transferred to that maternity service. In this context, the woman is supported and cared for by a team employed by that maternity service, which include hospital based midwives as distinct from SECMs.

It is intended that in line with the National Maternity Strategy, that the governance of the HSE National Homebirth Service will transfer to HSE Acute Operations and its maternity networks and services. This project which is currently being worked on, may influence and change current handover practices.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary-Jo Biggs'.

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

