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27<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Deputy Richmond,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**PQ Ref 1048/21 To ask the Minister for Health if fertility services can continue to operate through Level 5; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Richmond,

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.

As the Deputy may be aware, the HSE's National Women and Infants Health Programme working closely with the Department of Health is currently in the process of implementing Phase One of the Model of Care for Infertility Services. This work programme involves the development and deployment of six regional infertility hubs within the six maternity networks for the provision of secondary level care.

Of the four hubs in the process of being developed to date, all four have endeavoured to continue to provide infertility services during the current Level 5 restrictions. The nature of this provision varies from site to site allowing for such factors as local community transmission rates, staffing levels, infrastructure and presence or otherwise of local Covid-19 outbreaks on site etc. As such whilst some services have continued face to face consultations etc, others are utilising telemedicine with a view to enabling continued access to specialist medical and nursing staff for patient care and management. Services are endeavouring to provide urgent surgical cases and in some areas remain in a position to provide ovulation and induction tracking by specialist fertility nursing and midwifery staff. All involved in the provision of infertility services are aware of the difficulty that aspects of the current arrangements may be causing to patients at local level, with all services looking forward to the restoration of normal service provision when it is safe to do so from a patient and staff perspective.

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**