



**Cúram Sláinte  
Pobail Thoir**  
ag freastal ar Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Thoir Theas, Baile Átha Cliath  
Theas agus Cill Mhantáin

**Community  
Healthcare East**  
serving Dublin South East,  
Dublin South and Wicklow

Ceannasaí Seirbhíse Cúram Príomhúil  
Cúram Sláinte Pobail Thoir,  
Bloc B, Lárionad Cathrach,  
An tSráid Mhór, Bré,  
Co. Chill Mhantáin, A98 X329.  
T: 01 2744215 R: louise.lacey@hse.ie

1<sup>st</sup> February 2021

Deputy Holly Cairns,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

Head of Service Primary Care  
HSE Community Healthcare East,  
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**Re: PQ ref 4954/21**

\* \* To ask the Minister for Health his views on the HSE withdrawing funding for a lactation consultant in Dublin South East and its anticipated impact on nursing mothers.

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 and Children for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

Community Healthcare East is committed to supporting and promoting breastfeeding and has a long track record in supporting mothers. However, COVID-19 has presented unprecedented challenges for many of our services.

Demand for services associated with this current third wave of COVID-19 has been exceptionally high due to the level of community transmission of infection.

Levels of staff absenteeism necessitated the urgent redeployment of a part-time Public Health Nursing staff member to cover service gaps in order to mitigate significant clinical risk to service users in the community. The Public Health Nursing team identified and designated another Lactation Consultant to immediately assist with referrals of those mothers who may require support, and to deliver the weekly online breast-feeding support group that commenced last October. This Consultant was in place from Monday 25th January. Lactation consultant support remains available to all mothers who require it in Dublin South East.

Public Health Nurses are trained to promote and support breast-feeding and there are a number of lactation consultants on the Dublin South East Public Health Nursing Team. Every new mother is visited by a Public Health Nurse within 72 hours of hospital discharge, and home visits supporting breast-feeding mothers have continued throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



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**Emma Smyth**  
**Head of Service, Primary Care**