



Deputy Smith,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Dublin 2.

30th November 2022

PQ Ref: 55493/22: To ask the Minister for Health the status of discussions with relevant stakeholders including GPs as of November 2022, in relation to home births, as promised by him as part of a national policy in the context of the national maternity strategy; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Duncan Smith

Dear Deputy Smith,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

In February 2022, the HSE Home Birth Service moved from Community Operations to Acute Operations and is now being integrated into the maternity networks, which are part of the six hospital groups, in line with the strategic objectives of the National Maternity Strategy.

A National Homebirth Oversight and Integration Committee was established in February 2022 to support the transition of the Homebirth Service governance from Community Services to Acute Services. This committee, which has convened on several occasions during 2022, has a number of representatives from key stakeholder groups involved in the HSE Homebirth Service. These representatives include; Consultant Obstetricians, Directors of Midwifery, Designated Midwifery Officers, Self Employed Community Midwives, Patient Representative and GP Lead.

The HSE and its National Women and Infants Health Programme recognise that homebirth is an important pathway for women. Its objective is to ensure the continuity of the service, and the safety of mothers and their babies, in line with the objectives of the National Maternity Strategy.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

John Smith,
Assistant National Director, Acute Operations.