



National Healthy Childhood Programme,  
HSE Area Office,  
Arden Rd,  
Tullamore,  
Co. Offaly  
R35 TY28

18<sup>th</sup> October 2022

Deputy Cairns,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**PQ Ref 48089/22 To ask the Minister for Health if he will provide details on the availability of dedicated private spaces for breastfeeding and expressing breast milk in each acute and community hospital in each CHO T%Y**

Dear Deputy Cairns,

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.

Breastfeeding mothers are protected by laws to enable them to breastfeed in public and in public spaces. Breastfeeding mothers are welcome to feed their babies when attending HSE facilities.

The HSE as the largest employer in the country adopted a significant leadership position on breastfeeding in Feb 2021 by enabling Staff working in the Public Health Services to take breastfeeding breaks on their return from maternity leave. The new policy support employees who wish to breastfeed through the provision of space, time and support as required up until the child's 2nd birthday. This includes facilitating the expression of breast milk in the workplace by mothers upon their return to work following maternity leave.

Dedicated rooms or multipurpose rooms for mothers to express breast milk or feed their babies are widely available in acute hospitals and community services. The total number of dedicated or multipurpose rooms within acute and community services is not available on a national basis.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

**Anne Parry, General Manager, National Healthy Childhood Programme & Chair of HSE National Breastfeeding Implementation group**