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28th September 2022

Deputy Cairns  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**PQ Ref 45139/22: To ask the Minister for Health if he will outline his commitment to ensure that homebirth services are offered to all persons who wish to avail of them.**

**PQ Ref 47341/22: To ask the Minister for Health the actions that he has taken since taking office to facilitate women and pregnant people seeking home births.**

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.

Whilst the Home Birth Service is small relative to the overall birthing numbers in Ireland, the HSE and its National Women and Infants Health Programme recognise that it is an important pathway for women. The objectives of the HSE regarding the HSE Homebirth Service is both to enable women a choice of care pathway whilst at all times providing a service that is safe for both mothers and their babies in line with the objectives of the National Maternity Strategy.

In line with the National Maternity Strategy, the HSE Homebirth Service transitioned from Community Operations to Acute Operation thereby enabling greater integration with acute maternity services, with specific reference to their supported care pathway.

In terms of facilitating homebirths, the HSE homebirth service is available free to women who meet the criteria for access to the service in terms of assessing their suitability vis-à-vis the HSE's objective to deliver a safe service.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

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