



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta  
Géaroibríochtaí

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2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023

Deputy Holly Cairns  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**PQ 7410/23 - To ask the Minister for Health the steps he is taking to support women who choose to have home births - Holly Cairns.**

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.

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.

The homebirth service has been present for many years and is delivered by self-employed community midwives in accordance with a range of clinical guidelines and within the scope of practice and compliance requirements of the HSE. There are currently 22 SECM's providing the service.

From a safety perspective, acceptance onto the HSE homebirth scheme is contingent on the woman meeting a number of HSE stipulated criteria and some will be excluded on this basis. Availability of a midwife is a requirement as well as the need for a second midwife at the time of birth.

The HSE is committed to the Maternity Strategy and improvements in maternity care. The supported care pathway has provided for midwifery care and community midwifery clinics across the country. In the last two years alone there have been 13 home from home rooms established. There has been a move to early transfer home and the development of post-natal hubs in the community also.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

John Smith  
Assistant National Director  
Acute Operations