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19th January 2023

Deputy Smith
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 1150/23: To ask the Minister for Health the number of mother and babies who were discharged from maternity hospitals directly into homeless services in 2022, broken down by month and by region; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Smith,

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

As outlined in our response to your PQ 60354/22 on the 4th January 2023, the data requested is not collected at national level.

However, with this area the HSE has funded specific social work posts across the three Dublin maternity hospitals to specifically deal with mothers and babies at risk or identified as being homeless. In addition, the HSE has ensured that all other maternity services around the country have been funded and approved so that they have at least one medical social worker post allocated to the maternity services. This investment will further strengthen the existing relationships that all services have with local government and statutory agencies with a view to supporting mothers and babies at risk or identified as homeless.

To date NWIHP has funded an additional 20.5 WTE in social work posts across the 6 maternity networks. The HSE has in place a specific case management system for people identified as homeless and in need of rapid response. This case management system works rapidly to connect identified homeless persons with homeless specific services and facilitate the processing of medical cards.

Although the HSE does not collate information on homeless persons across the health service, there is a specific social inclusion service across each HSE area who work closely with all health services to support and work with people who are homeless.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

