



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta
Géaroibríochtaí

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26th January 2023

Deputy Holly Cairns
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 2304/23 - To ask the Minister for Health the status of the HSE proposals to limit home birth services for women and pregnant people living within 30 minutes of a maternity hospital. - Holly Cairns, due date 30/01/2023.

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 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.

Acceptance under the homebirth scheme is contingent on meeting medical 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.

I trust the above is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

John Smith
Assistant National Director
Acute Operations