



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta
Géaroibríochtaí

Aonad 4A, Áras Dargan, An Ceantar Theas,
An Bóthar Míleata, Cill Mhaighneann, Baile
Átha Cliath 8, D08 NN9V

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1st February 2023

Deputy Jennifer Whitmore
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 63191/23 - To ask the Minister for Health the counties in which the HSE home birth service is provided; if County Wicklow is one of the counties where the service is fully available; if there has been any reduction in the availability of this service recently and or if any changes to the services are proposed; and if he will make a statement on the matter. due date 02/02/2023.

Dear Deputy Whitmore,

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 transitioned 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. To support the incorporation of the Home Birth services into our maternity services, significant additional investment was made in this service in 2022 with a view to assisting integration and the delivery of safe high quality care. Maternity services are at different stages of delivering this service as recruitment is on-going.

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

The HSE is committed to the Maternity Strategy and improvements in maternity care. The investment to date in the development of the supported care pathway has provided for significant expansion in midwifery care and community based midwifery clinics across the country. In the last two years alone there have been 13 home from home delivery rooms established with the two midwifery-led-units located in Drogheda and Cavan being supported to undertake significant refurbishment projects. In tandem with these infrastructure developments, there has been a move to develop and implement early transfer home services, with the HSE now focusing on the development of post-natal hubs in the community also.

In the context of the above, the demand for homebirth services varies across the country as these community and site specific midwifery services continue to be developed by the HSE.



With specific respect to your query re County Wicklow, there is one SECM allocated to Wicklow who works across the county.

Regarding the level of activity within the service, the National Perinatal Epidemiology Centre (NPEC), collate this data on an annual basis on behalf of the HSE. National report regarding activity in the service are available on the NPEC website.

I trust the above is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Smith', written over a horizontal line.

John Smith
Assistant National Director
Acute Operations