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05/06/2024

Deputy Connolly  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**PQ 22453/24: To ask the Minister for Health pursuant to the revised National Maternity Strategy Implementation Plan 2021 – 2026, the status of the review by NWIHP of the maternity and infant care scheme, in conjunction with the Primary Care Directorate; the details of any adaptations made or planned on foot of the review; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

**PQ 22454/24: To ask the Minister for Health pursuant to the revised National Maternity Strategy Implementation Plan 2021 – 2026, the status of the stakeholder forum to assess the effectiveness of the maternity and infant care scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

**PQ 22455/24: To ask the Minister for Health pursuant to the revised National Maternity Strategy Implementation Plan 2021 – 2026, the status of the promised detailed national standardised dataset to support the effective monitoring and evaluation of the maternity and infant care scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Connolly,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Questions, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position on the various areas and issues you raised.

The National Maternity Strategy (NMS) was launched by the Minister for Health in January 2016. The NMS has 77 recommendations to be delivered on over the 10-year life span on the strategy. The National Women and Infants Health Programme (NWIHP) developed an implementation plan in 2017 with 236 actions, and a detailed cost estimate to deliver on the 77 recommendations in the NMS. Work has been ongoing on the delivery of the implementation plan since 2017.

While significant progress has been made, some recommendations, particularly regarding the Review of the Maternity & Infant Care Scheme, have encountered delays or are yet to commence. An update on the status of the Review is provided below:

In November 2023, a stakeholder group was convened, comprising representatives from various entities including the HSE's National Women and Infants Health Programme (NWIHP), Primary Care Reimbursement Service (PCRS), Contracts Office, and Clinical Programme Implementation & Professional Development. This group was tasked with assessing the overlap between the Strategic Review of General Practice and the review of the Maternity and Infant Care Scheme.

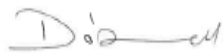
Following deliberations, the stakeholder group recommended that the ongoing review of the Maternity and Infant Care Scheme should be sequenced with the conclusion of the Strategic Review of General Practice. NWIHP is actively engaging with the Steering Group for the Strategic Review of General Practice to coordinate activities accordingly. The strategic review is ongoing. The HSE GP Oversight group, co-chaired by the Chief Operations Officer and Chief Clinical Officer, serves as the mechanism for coordinated input from the HSE, enabling the referral of issues and input to the review process as needed. Terms of reference can be found here:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/701f8-terms-of-reference-for-a-strategic-review-of-general-practice/>

Completion of the Maternity and Infant Care Scheme review remains a priority for the HSE and the Department of Health, as it is a key deliverable of the National Maternity Strategy.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,



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**Davinia O'Donnell, General Manager, National Women and Infants Health Programme**