



HSE Thiar & Iarthuaisceart
Ospidéal na hOllscoile Mhaigh Eo
Bóthair Cathair na Mart
Caisleán an Bharraigh
Co Mhaigh Eo
F23 H529

HSE West & North West
Mayo University Hospital
Westport Road
Castlebar
Co Mayo
F23 H529

Our Ref: CD/SK
17th October 2025

Deputy Paul Lawless
Leinster House
Kildare St
Dublin 2
paul.lawless@oireachtas.ie

Re: PQ 53334/25

To ask the Minister for Health the actionable plans in place to improve labouring options for women in Castlebar in the context of birthing/labouring pools; and whether there has been any public consultation on reviewing options for women. -Paul Lawless

Dear Deputy Lawless,

I refer to the above representation;

Previously, funding was sought via NMPDU for a water immersion bath for early labour, intended for use in the existing maternity ward bathroom. At that time, sourcing a suitable bath was challenging due to size constraints.

After procurement from the UK and consultations with the maintenance and management, a review of health and safety (H&S) and professional practice guidelines (PPGs) identified significant concerns: the floor structure could not support the weight of a filled bath, ceiling hoist requirements were unmet due to roof limitations, spatial constraints existed, and the projected structural costs exceeded €100,000-funding for which was unavailable pre-NWIHP.

Several potential locations were assessed, each presenting operational and safety challenges, repeated walkthroughs involving senior management, maintenance, and clinical teams confirmed that required infrastructure (equipment, IT, medical gases, hoists) and spatial requirements could not be met without major structural works. Consequently, this initiative was recommended for inclusion in the hospital's development control plan, recognizing the need for a specialised design team to address H&S and building standards.

Given the complexity and potential impact on service delivery, no safe and feasible location was identified at that time that would avoid detriment to patients, staff, or workflow, particularly regarding emergency transfers and resuscitation.

A new project proposal addressing these challenges has now been formally submitted for consideration. There has not been formal local consultation on this.

Thank you for your query, I hope this clarifies the matter.

Kind Regards,

Catherine Donohoe
Hospital Manager