



Deputy Tom Binet
Minister for Health and Social Services

BY EMAIL

17th January 2025

Dear Minister,

**Health and Social Security Panel
Suspension of Home Birth Service**

Following the recent news that the Maternity Unit's home birth service has been suspended, and an internal review is underway, the Panel has further questions. Whilst some of the information has been provided, which is much appreciated; we wanted to ensure clarity and would like to confirm details discussed during the briefing provided to the Panel on the 14th January.

Please can you provide answers to and confirmation of the following:

- A timeline of events, including when the last home birth took place, when the curtailment of the service began, and when it was suspended. Please add any other key dates you feel the Panel and public should be informed of.
- That the intention is to reinstate a sustainable service following completion of the review and retraining of all relevant staff, and what the parameters of this service would be.
- Whilst we understand that a definitive date for the completion of the review cannot be provided at this time, or a date for when the service will be available again, an estimate of which quarter in 2025 you are aiming to achieve both things.
- How expectant mothers, who had expressed that they wanted to have a home birth and who were known to the Maternity Unit prior to the suspension, were informed and what alternative options and support were .
- The reason/s for the decision to suspend the service and not continue to offer a limited home birth service, as had been happening for some time, whilst conducting the review and retraining staff.
- What are the other operational areas of the home birth service that are under review in addition to staff training?
- Had there been any specific recent issues or incidents within the service that has necessitated the suspension and review?
- Confirmation of the number of midwives currently available to work within the department.
- Have there been recent changes in eligibility for home birth that may have impacted access to the service and caused the 79% decrease in the number of home births from 2023 to 2024?
- Was there any communication, prior to the recent media reports, on the suspension of service to primary care providers and external antenatal services and support groups?
- What efforts have been made to communicate with staff members, their representatives and relevant unions, about this service area? What form has this communication taken, and how will staff and unions be able to contribute to the review? Will former staff be given an opportunity to contribute to the review?
- What provision has been made available to support the wellbeing of midwives during the suspension?



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- Is the department aware of any independent midwives working in Jersey or qualified midwives resident in the Island but not working for any health services? What is the legal position on private services being offered to assist with a birth?
- An estimate or range indicating the costs associated with a home birth.
- An outline of any recent improvements to the maternity unit including which aim to provide a 'homely' environment. Please include images where possible.

The Panel would be grateful, given the level of interest in this issue and the correspondence received from affected parties, that a response to the letter be provided to the Panel by Monday 27th January at the latest, preferably sooner.

Yours sincerely,

Deputy Louise Doublet
Chair, Health and Social Security Scrutiny Panel