

19-21 Broad Street | St Helier
Jersey | JE2 4WE

Deputy Louise Doublet
Chair, Health and Social Security Scrutiny Panel
BY EMAIL

18 March 2025

Dear Chair,

Suspension of Home Birth Service

Thank you for your letter dated 11th March 2025 regarding the Suspension of Home Birth service and maternity care options in Jersey. I appreciate the opportunity to provide clarification on these important matters.

The home birth service has been temporarily suspended to allow for a comprehensive review and to ensure that all necessary staff training is completed. This decision was made with the primary objective of prioritising the safety of all women accessing maternity care. A final decision on the reinstatement of the service will be made by the Chief Officer upon completion of the review and training process. The review is already underway, with all required actions currently being implemented and progressing as planned.

Your reference to the home birth service not being "fully operational for many years" acknowledges that, while home birth has remained an option and women have been accepted for home births at the point of booking, there have been periods when service provision was inconsistent. Staffing shortages and increased demand within the maternity unit have occasionally resulted in the temporary suspension of the home birth service, limiting its availability at times. The current review aims to establish what might be possible in relation to the future provision of home birth services.

It is important to clarify that financial considerations were not the determining factor in the decision to suspend the home birth service.

Regarding comparative birth costs, it is challenging to provide precise figures due to the highly individualised nature of maternity care. Each case varies in terms of medical intervention, resource utilisation, and associated costs. Factors such as length of stay, additional medical support, and any complications significantly impact overall costs. While there is variation in each case, UK and European benchmarks exist for different birthing options. For reference, I have included NHS cost estimates for various delivery categories below.

NHS tariffs

Maternity pathway - guide prices, proposed for 2025/26	
Type of Birth	Guide Price
Home Birth	2,807
Vaginal Birth Hospital	2,807
Elective Caesarean Section	4,564
Emergency Caesarean Section	6,613
Vaginal Birth with Induction of labour	4,564

On the matter of birth locations, our foremost responsibility is to provide safe, high-quality maternity care for all women. While home birth is a recognised and appropriate option for low-risk pregnancies, we must balance this with the need to ensure the provision of round-the-clock maternity care across all services. Given Jersey's unique position as an island, we do not have the option to divert maternity care to another hospital, meaning we must allocate resources to ensure safe care for all women, not just those opting for home births.


Additionally, we have seen an increase in women requesting home births outside of clinical guidelines, meaning they have identified risk factors that make a home birth less suitable from a clinical safety perspective. This has necessitated increased support, clinical input, and decision-making to ensure the safety of both mother and baby remains the priority.

As part of the ongoing review, we are carefully considering what might be possible for the delivery of a safe and sustainable home birth service in the future. However, it is important to highlight that a fully operational, 24/7 home birth service, 365 days a year, is not feasible. Our focus is on reviewing activity levels and staffing resources to ensure the best possible care for all women.

We recognise the strong public interest in home birth services, and this review will determine the most appropriate way forward in delivering this option as part of Jersey's maternity services. We remain committed to engaging with service users, healthcare professionals, and governance teams to ensure that maternity care meets the needs of all women while maintaining the highest standards of safety and quality. Additionally, the Director of Midwifery is available to meet with any member of the public who wishes to discuss the home birth service, raise concerns, or provide feedback as part of this ongoing review.

I appreciate the Panel's interest in this matter and will ensure that any further updates on the review are communicated accordingly. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,



Deputy Tom Binet
Minister for Health and Social Services
E t.binet@gov.je