

CC/VAW/MC

Email: pgmidwestacute@hse.ie

20th December 2021

Ms Violet-Anne Wynne TD,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

RE: PQ 61595/21, PQ 62037/21, PQ 62035/21, PQ 62036/21

***To ask the Minister for Health the status of the moving of maternity services to University Hospital Limerick; if the move is still planned; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Violet-Anne Wynne**

*** To ask the Minister for Health the maternity services that are offered in Ennis General Hospital; and the days of the week and the time these services are available. -Violet-Anne Wynne**

*** To ask the Minister for Health the projected timeline of the transfer from University Maternity Hospital Limerick to the main University Hospital Limerick campus; and if he will make a statement on the matter. - Violet-Anne Wynne**

*** To ask the Minister for Health the estimated capital costs associated with the transfer from University Maternity Hospital Limerick to the main University Hospital Limerick campus. -Violet-Anne Wynne**

Dear Deputy Wynne,

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.

The National Maternity Strategy 2016-2026 outlines the future of maternity and neonatal care in Ireland. It is focused on improving and standardising care across maternity services; and on adopting a health and wellbeing agenda for women and infants. This strategy is being embraced by UL Hospitals Group.

The relocation of the maternity hospital to the University Hospital Limerick (UHL) campus in Dooradoyle is a core priority for the Group. This transition will support team-based care, improve midwifery services and enhance care for high-risk, complex pregnancies.

There is a commitment to the relocation in Project Ireland 2040 and while there is no specific target date for its completion, it is anticipated it will take seven to ten years to deliver given the scale of the project. It is not possible to indicate at this stage the capital costs associated with this project.

Pending the relocation project, we continue to undertake infrastructural and capital works at the UMHL site. The first phase of a two-stage project to extend the neonatal intensive care unit and refurbish the department's existing facilities was completed earlier this year.

Phase one has involved building a two-storey extension to accommodate staff and parents' facilities currently located in the existing neonatal unit, creating the opportunity to refurbish and expand cot spaces, which will be undertaken in the second phase of the project.

The new structure, facing the Ennis Road, will house parents' accommodation, a new lactation centre to support breastfeeding, and a clinical engineering unit, as well as support facilities for neonatal nurses, doctors, allied health professionals, and secretarial teams. It is envisaged that the extension will also house dedicated areas for clinical teaching and research.

Freeing up of all of the above services that operate from within the existing neonatal unit will pave the way for phase two of the project – the refurbishment and expansion of cot spaces in the department's intensive care, high dependency and isolation areas. This will help to reduce crowding and mitigate infection risk. It is planned also, in line with international evidence and on foot of feedback from parents, to create two family-centred care rooms.

We are working with the Capital & Estates division of the HSE who are responsible for the management and delivery of the project. We are following a blended design concept and with the cooperation of all the staff at UMHL, we are confident of developing one of the best neonatal units in the country.

In relation to maternity services provided at Ennis Hospital, I can advise that an antenatal clinic is provided every Wednesday in the Ennis OPD. A midwifery lead clinic takes place from 9.00am to 5.15pm. In addition, Dr Casey, Consultant Obstetrician operates a clinic from 2pm-5.15pm

I trust this clarifies the position, please contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,



Colette Cowan
Chief Executive Officer
UL Hospitals Group