

**From the Permanent Secretary  
and HSC Chief Executive**



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Your Ref:

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Dear Órlaithí

Thank you for your correspondence seeking an update on the work that my Department is currently taking forward in relation to the provision of a Mother and Baby Unit.

In my last update to you on 10 July 2023, I indicated that the Department was expecting to receive a draft report from the independent review team shortly. The completion of this report has taken slightly longer than expected due to ongoing engagement with key stakeholders on the part of the review team. This engagement has now been completed and I am expecting the final report to be submitted to the Department in the coming weeks. Following this, in line with the commitment set out in the Mental Health Strategy Delivery Plan for 2023/24, it is envisaged that next steps will involve inviting the identified Trust to prepare a Strategic Outline Case for the unit.

On a wider note, you may find it helpful to receive an update on work undertaken within perinatal health. I am delighted that all five Trusts now have a fully operational community perinatal mental health team in place, each accepting referrals and providing a consultancy service to women experiencing mental health problems during the perinatal period. In addition, a Regional Implementation Team has been established within the Public Health Agency. This team has been instrumental in leading the implementation of the community teams by providing guidance and oversight as well as ensuring regional consistency, creating referral pathways and ensuring the new service is fully integrated and embedded into existing services.

Finally, the Department is working with the PHA to produce a public communication that will provide an update on the rollout of the implementation of the community teams and the work to date in relation to the Mother and Baby Unit. It is planned that this will be released in early autumn.

I hope that this update is helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter May". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Peter May**