

APPROVED

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
BY DEPUTY L.M.C. DOUBLET OF ST. SAVIOUR  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 12th MARCH 2019**

**Question**

Can the Minister indicate whether women are routinely offered use of the birth pool at the General Hospital when in labour?

How many women used the birth pool in each of 2016, 2017 and 2018 and how many requests to use the pool were refused in each of those years?

In terms of planning for the provision of such facilities in the future General Hospital, what best practice guidelines is the Minister proposing to follow? What plans does the Minister have to consult with families on the provision of maternity facilities and when does he propose for such consultation to take place? Will the Minister also consult on the provision of facilities for the other parent to stay overnight in the Hospital with the mother and baby?

**Answer**

**Can the Minister indicate whether women are routinely offered use of the birth pool at the General Hospital when in labour?**

Women are routinely offered use of the birthing pool as part of their care in labour. All women who choose to use the pool are subject to a risk assessment. Many women use the pool for some time during labour, but do not remain in the pool for delivery.

**How many women used the birth pool in each of 2016, 2017 and 2018 and how many requests to use the pool were refused in each of those years?**

The number of women using the pool was as follows:

2016	<b>81</b> women used the pool during labour <b>12</b> women delivered in the pool
2017	<b>80</b> women used the pool during labour <b>24</b> women delivered in the pool
2018	<b>57</b> women used the pool during labour <b>28</b> women delivered in the pool

Easily accessible information on the number of women who were refused use of the pool is not kept, but refusal would only have occurred following a robust risk assessment.

**In terms of planning for the provision of such facilities in the future General Hospital, what best practice guidelines is the Minister proposing to follow?**

Best practice – informed by reports from the Department of Health, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and the NHS – is to provide pools within a consultant-led facility and alongside a midwifery-led facility. Pools will also be available for women who wish to deliver at home.

**What plans does the Minister have to consult with families on the provision of maternity facilities and when does he propose for such consultation to take place? Will the Minister also consult on the provision of facilities for the other parent to stay overnight in the Hospital with the mother and baby?**

Health and Community Services is working on a strategy that will see greater service user involvement in how maternity services are delivered, including a working group that will consider how best to engage with and respond to the opinions of parents. Any future refurbishments to the maternity unit would be informed by such initiatives.

At present, the department encourages women to share their experiences of the service through a monthly "Listening Clinic", which is facilitated by a senior team of midwives known as Professional Midwifery Advocates. This team offers debrief sessions for women both at the hospital and at home and seeks to learn from and build on the experience of women it has assisted.