



MIDWIVES ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

MIDWIVES SUPPORTING MIDWIVES, WOMEN, BABIES, FAMILIES.

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Recruitment of Newly Qualified Midwives

- The Midwives Association of Ireland (MAI) wish to support the position of the INMO and to register concern in respect of recruitment of newly qualified Midwives and the potential impact of that on the safety of Mothers and Babies in our 19 maternity units as well as the impact on existing midwives and nurses working within constrained health services.
- All women should have a minimum of 1:1 care at all times from a midwife (preferably known to her) during labour. This is seldom achieved in Ireland. Despite this and a rebuttal of an active recruitment pause or ban within the HSE, there appears to be obstacles at play which effectively mean that Midwifery Students completing their four year honours degree course in September 2019 and the Postgraduate students (nurses who completed an additional 18 months of training to register as midwives) are unable to secure contracts as midwives (or as midwives awaiting registration) on completion of their studies. This is at a time when the INMO have reported that 1:6 funded midwifery posts are currently vacant.
- The MAI has also received reports in relation to a recruitment agency having been hired to recruit nurses and midwives from abroad where such recruits are required to undergo an "adaptation period" at a validated teaching Hospital, before they can be registered as nurses or midwives, by the regulatory body, the Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland.
- Many of the Midwifery Students have reported to the MAI that they have no alternative at this stage due to ongoing financial commitments (rent/mortgage and need to provide for themselves +/- a family), but to book flights to UK and / or Australia, where there are also midwife shortages but where there is proactive recruitment.
- The MAI is aware that the 3 Dublin Maternity Hospitals (known as Voluntary or Section 38 Hospitals) who conduct their own recruitment are offering contracts to their outgoing students but for the remaining 16 HSE maternity units, there is a centralised national recruitment centre, and the processes there appear to be delayed so much so that potential recruits have no sense as to whether they will receive contracts of employment in the coming weeks or months if at all.
- The MAI note that the CAO entry points were significantly reduced this year for Midwifery, a reflection, perhaps of reduced interest in what is increasingly perceived to be a profession under threat, working in 'a service in crisis' as evidenced by recent and continuing reports of suboptimal service and health outcomes for women and their babies.
- The MAI urges the HSE to ensure that such midwives are immediately provided with assurances of employment if;
1) the health and safety of women and babies receiving care in Irish maternity services is to be prioritised, safeguarded and quality assured; 2) the National Maternity Strategy (DOH 2016) is to be implemented and 3) the cost of recruitment is to be effectively managed while also stemming the 'brain drain' of Midwives from Ireland.

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