



IRELAND SOUTH
WOMEN AND INFANTS
DIRECTORATE

A REFLECTION ON PROGRESS



4

Maternity,
Neonatology,
& Gynaecology
Units

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Women &
Infants
Directorate

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Academic
Partner

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1

Executive Summary

This document sets out progress made in the Ireland South Women and Infants Directorate since its establishment in 2017. It makes the case for its continuation in its present form.

The Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate was established in 2017 as a means of encouraging collaboration and mutual support between the four maternity units in the South/Southwest region. It is still the only one of its kind in Ireland. For the first time, services for women and infants from across Ireland South are under collective clinical leadership and governance, with a multidisciplinary team of clinicians and midwives involved at the highest levels. The Directorate was made possible by the creation of the South/Southwest Hospital Group in 2013. It embraces all the maternity and neonatal units in the hospital group – University Hospital Waterford, Tipperary University Hospital, University Hospital Kerry and Cork University Maternity Hospital. These units are widely separated and of very different sizes. Collaboration is essential if a consistent standard of care is to be achieved and care pathways between the four units are to operate smoothly.

The Ireland South Women and Infants Directorate is currently led by Professor John R. Higgins, Consultant Obstetrician and Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at University College Cork. Professor Higgins is also Clinical Director of Cork University Maternity Hospital with responsibility for its budget. This ensures (a) effective clinical leadership, (b) a commitment to evidence-based practice throughout the Directorate and (c), an ability to implement change through executive action. CUMH uses its expertise and financial resources to support the smaller units within the Directorate. Clinical decision makers are to the fore in determining the response to adverse clinical incidents. Clinical thinking and academic rigour now guide the institutional response to these important issues.

Collaboration is one of our core values and is the key to the Directorate's success. Staff who work in and for the Directorate

have developed a strong sense of collegiality and strongly support its continuation as it provides a sustainable model for safe maternity care in the region.

Over the past five years, Ireland South Women and Infants Directorate has faced incredibly challenging times, none more so than the COVID-19 pandemic. Whilst the pandemic brought with it many challenges, it has also highlighted the many strengths within the Directorate. It's proudest

achievement is the implementation of a "No Refusals Policy", the first of its kind in the country, ensuring the safe movement of babies and patients in need of critical care.

It is important to stress that we fully support the strategic aims and direction of Sláintecare and we are willing to put forward alternative proposals that will avoid the break-up of Ireland South and put at risk the significant progress made over the last five years.



National Recognition and Support

Throughout the years of its existence, the Directorate has had consistent support. Sincere thanks to the South/South West Hospital Group, the National Women and Infants Health Programme (NWIHP) and the HSE for the ongoing support and belief in our Directorate. NWIHP has provided Ireland South Women and Infants Directorate with funding for many initiatives. In particular, providing resources for a national centre for endometriosis, a national centre for MESH/ urogynaecology and for the Directorate to become the national lead for publicly-funded IVF services when rolled out in 2023. Commenting on the first five years of the Ireland South Maternity Directorate, Kilian McGrane, Director, NWIHP said, "Ireland South Women and Infants Directorate was the first to be established in the country, in line with the recommendation in the

National Maternity Strategy. The leadership shown in the Directorate has helped create a dynamic where all six hospital groups now have functioning maternity networks. NWIHP has an excellent working relationship with the Ireland South Women and Infants Directorate across maternity, gynaecology and neonatal care. That collaboration has meant that the innovation shown by the Directorate has been matched by funding, enabling significant new service enhancements. NWIHP looks forward to continuing this strong collaboration into the future, which is underpinned by clinical leadership and engagement."





2 Our Mission and Values

Together with women, babies and families, our academic healthcare network strives for clinical excellence and innovation.

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Our Values guide us as we strive to improve and advocate for the health & wellbeing of women, infants and families. They include:

Collaboration

The formation of the Directorate has changed how the hospitals relate to each other – and has built a collaborative partnership across the 4 hospitals to provide the best possible care to all mothers and their infants across the network.

Compassion

Everyone in Ireland South Women and Infants Directorate has a responsibility to be kind and compassionate and to respect the dignity of the women and families we care for and all of our co-workers.

Excellence

We remain committed to the highest standards of care, delivering higher quality services, more consistent access to care and stronger leadership.

Innovation

With UCC as our academic partner, we strive towards an academic health centre model, with the pillars of education, training, research and innovation closely integrated with clinical service across our Directorate.



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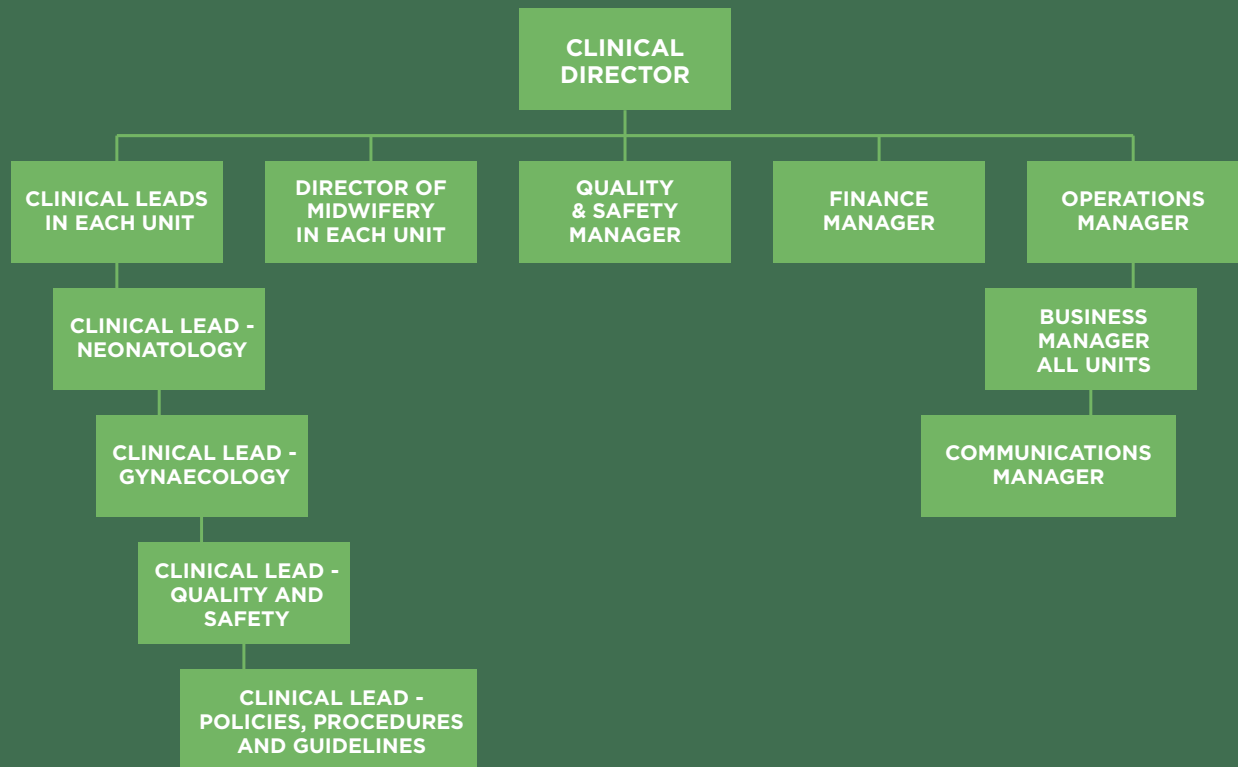
Our Maternity Directorate leads the way in the development of a clinically led network of maternity hospitals and units, collaborating and supporting one another and completely dedicated to the women and babies we serve. Our most proud achievement is our ‘no refusals’ policy, the first of its kind in the country, ensuring the safe movement of babies and patients in need of critical care. We remain committed to the highest standards of care, through our focus on integrating the three pillars of clinical service, education/training and research/innovation, using an academic healthcare model.

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**Professor John R. Higgins,
Clinical Director.**

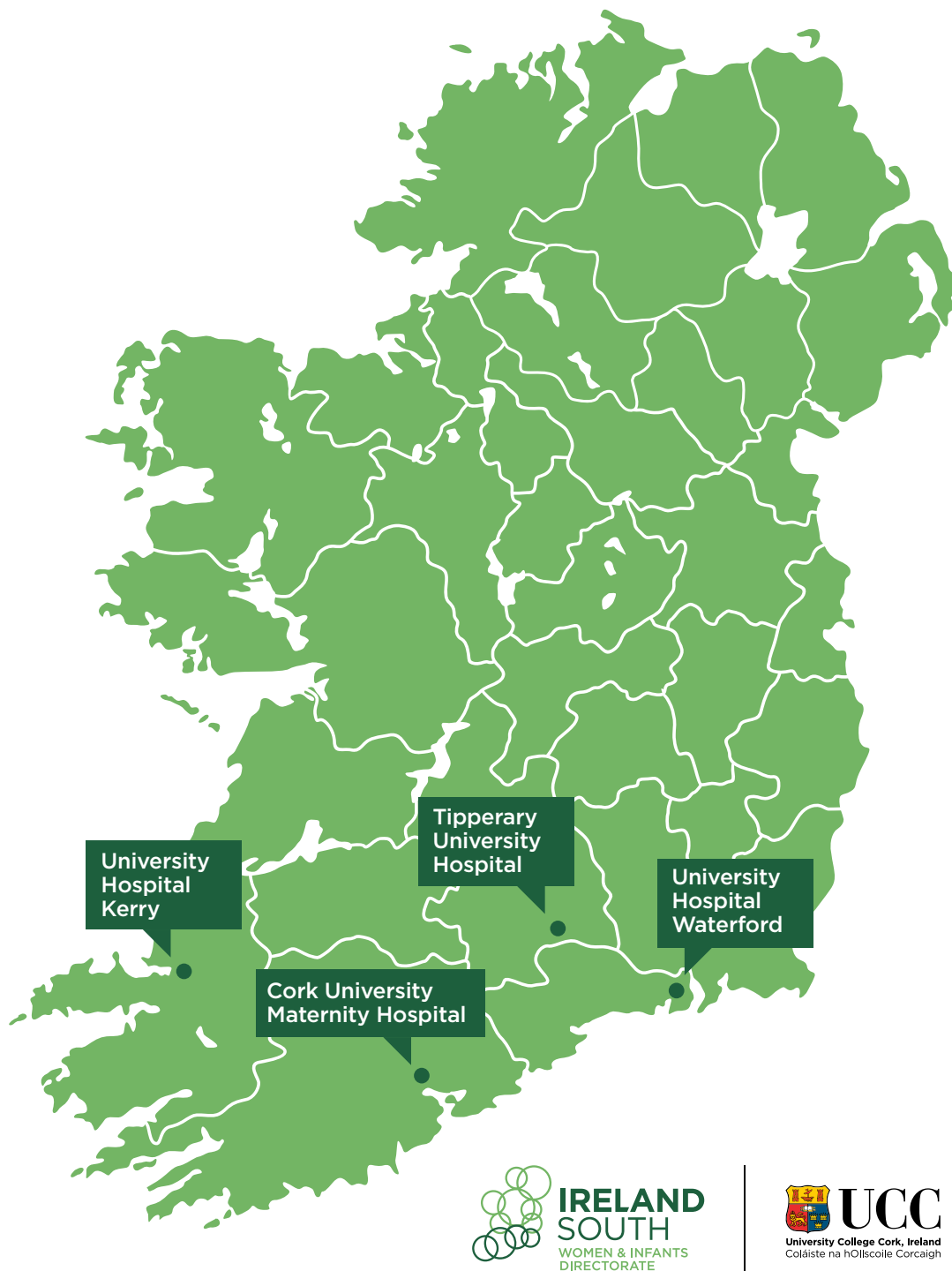
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Structure & Function



DIRECTORATE COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION

Daily hub teleconference between all units	Executive Management Committee
Daily huddles between hospital management	Mandatory 'no refusal' policy
Consultant Forum directorate wide meeting for consultants	General Manager Forum between hospital managers and clinical director
SSWHG Midwifery Forum Directors of Midwifery monthly meetings with Chief Director of Nursing	First digital hospital in Ireland, to be expanded into other units
Quarterly meetings with National Women and Infants Health Programme	Directorate approach to capital developments



EMC

The Directorate is managed by an Executive Management Committee which meets weekly. In addition, daily hub teleconference calls between the four directors of midwifery ensure the Directorate is kept abreast of all issues requiring management attention.

The Clinical Director and chair of the Executive Management Committee holds the academic post of Professor of Obstetrics and

Gynaecology at University College Cork, the academic partner of the Ireland South Hospital Group. Academic standards and evidence-based practice consistently inform the deliberations of the Executive Management Group.

The Executive Management Committee regularly meets in Waterford, Clonmel, Cork and Tralee to build a sense of common endeavour and ensure parity of esteem across all four sites.

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Achievements since establishment

2020 Highlights



Births:

10,612

Women gave birth:

10,398



Gynaecology
Outpatients:

38,586



Only Maternity
Directorate in Ireland



Total WTE:

959.8

Consultant Obstetrician & Gynaecologists: **34**

Consultant Neonatologists: **8**

Midwifery: **704.91**

NCHD: **102**

HSCP: **24.15**

Admin: **86.74**



Academic partner:



UCC

University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh



No Refusals Policy

One of the first actions to be taken was the implementation of a “no-refusal” policy in the neonatology department of CUMH. This provided powerful reassurance to the smaller maternity units in the Directorate that every premature baby requiring neonatal care would be accepted into the third-level centre at the request of a Registrar level obstetrician. The policy also provides for the prompt return of the infant when the third level centre neonatologists deem it safe to do so.

The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at CUMH is one of only four Level 3 neonatal units in Ireland and the only one outside Dublin. The NICU is critical to the functioning of the maternity directorate, providing intensive care for all extremely premature infants born in the region. It also provides therapeutic hypothermia (cooling therapy) for term infants at risk of brain injury around the time of birth. Cooling therapy is **time critical** and should be commenced within six hours of birth. Our geographical location at the centre of the region is a key factor in the timely transfer of infants into Cork to receive this cooling therapy.

Whilst we wish every birth was a happy and healthy experience for all mothers and infants, with > 10,000 births per year in the region, there is a “critical mass” of sick newborn infants that require the expertise our NICU delivers.

National (2015 Model of Care for Neonatal Services) and all international (BAPM, 2022) guidelines acknowledge that the concentration of clinical expertise and resources into high-activity neonatal units does achieve better outcomes for our most vulnerable newborn infants. This is particularly true for those infants born at the threshold of life viability (23-25 weeks gestation).

“The development of Ireland South Women and Infants Directorate has been central to ensuring that the infants born in our region have the best available care with health outcomes that we can all be proud of. **Any plan to reduce the population that we serve would undermine the future viability of our Level 3 neonatal intensive care service.**”

Dr Peter Filan, Clinical Lead Neonatology, Ireland South Women and Infants Directorate.





Directorate-wide approach to recruitment and retention

To work at Ireland South Women and Infants Directorate is to be part of a unique community of inspired professionals committed to caring for women across Ireland South. Ireland South Women and Infants Directorate is committed to attracting and retaining high calibre staff to provide an excellent standard of care. Working at any of the four units within the Directorate offers access to professional development and the opportunity to be part of a leading research centre.

Recruitment is an ongoing challenge across the HSE – as a directorate we can pool our resources and attract and retain a larger pool of qualified candidates. CUMH has already reallocated a

variety of staff positions to other sites in the interests of strengthening the Directorate as a whole. That it should lose the benefit of these posts to a different group sets an unfortunate precedent that could undermine confidence in creating regional directorates in the future.

Critical staff shortages due to COVID-19 saw midwives and doctors from CUMH going to support TippUH and UHW. Members of the Directorate on all four sites do not want to see it broken up when it has shown such benefits to women and their babies across the southern region and has created such a positive sense of shared endeavour among staff in so many practical ways.

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I'm delighted to have taken up the role of Psychologist for Staff Support & Wellbeing in Ireland South Women and Infants Directorate. I look forward to contributing to the promotion of mental health and wellbeing and providing a supportive and responsive service to staff across the organisation. ”

Dr Coleen Cormack,
Senior Clinical Psychologist.



Psychologist for Staff Support & Wellbeing

Our healthcare professionals are exposed to multiple factors within their work, which may impact their physical, mental and emotional well-being in negative ways. Public Health emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, can exacerbate these concerns and pose additional challenges to health workers.

Ireland South Women and Infants Directorate has recently appointed Psychologist, Dr Coleen Cormack, Senior Clinical Psychologist, to guide the Directorate in addressing these challenges and empowering our workforce going forward.



MaternityONESouth – delivering safer care across the Directorate

Safe and effective maternity care within our maternity network is a key aim. It is also one of the key lines of enquiry of HIQA's approach to monitoring against the National Standards for Safer Better Maternity Services which commenced in 2018 and placed a particular focus on obstetric emergencies. Following a number of recent HIQA inspections to our maternity units, it became clear that we needed a shared project across our maternity network to focus on our response to obstetric and neonatal emergencies. As a result, the 'MaternityONESouth' project was born, with 'ONE' standing for Obstetric and Neonatal Emergencies, and 'South' reflecting our place in the South/South West Hospital Group (SSWHG). Following visits to our maternity units, what really struck me is the large

volume of excellent, independent work that is being done and the opportunity to unify, standardise and streamline that knowledge. We don't need duplication of effort, rather we need to standardise and share our knowledge into ONE approach for our maternity network for obstetric and neonatal emergencies.

Katie Bourke, Director of Midwifery at CUMH says "We are aiming for a standardised approach to governance, risk identification and response as well as resourcing and training across the Maternity Directorate. Timelines for achieving these aims were given and have largely been achieved. The last milestone is the full implementation of mandatory training across all four units by the end of Q3 in 2022.



Shared Funding across Ireland South

Directorate support and lobbying recently funded architect design plans for capital projects at each unit:

- Tipperary University Hospital: Maternity & SCBU Refurbishment
- University Hospital Kerry: Maternity Development Plan
- University Hospital Waterford: Gynaecology Pavilion
- Cork University Maternity Hospital: Women's Health Centre.

Ireland South Women's Health Centre – capital submission put forward to national HSE in September 2021 for new build in Cork for outpatient services (some of which are regional).

Directorate-wide services for women in our region

CUMH is the tertiary centre for the Directorate, providing the point of last referral for all serious cases in the South of Ireland. These are some recent developments which have enhanced the services of the Directorate as a whole:

- New regional infertility hub service at CUMH.
- New superregional endometriosis hub (phase 1 funding approved 2022) at CUMH.
- Mesh complications service (one of two in Ireland) at CUMH.
- Regional clinical specialist menopause clinics (funding approved for Cork in 2022).

Midwifery led scanning clinics at TippUH

The introduction of midwifery led scanning clinics in 2019, a development from the already established anomaly scanning clinic, proved to be extremely beneficial due to the continuity of the scanning team: Susan Power, Clinical Midwife Specialist and Andrea Duffy ACMM2. "The links with CUMH are very evident in this area and are proving extremely valuable from a multi-professional stance, especially when referrals are required."

UHK opens a new Home from Home birthing room, offering choice to the women of Ireland South

In June 2022, Maternity services staff at University Hospital Kerry (UHK) were delighted to celebrate the official opening of the Home from Home, alongside birthing room, attended by Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly and Minister for Education, Norma Foley.

The new birthing room, named Saloú was funded by the National Women and Infants Health Programme (NWIHP) and Ireland South Women and Infants Directorate. It features a Hydrotherapy pool providing a calm and relaxing environment in a low-technology setting for women in the first stage of labour. This modern space provides an environment that moves away



from the clinical setting, whilst still providing a safe environment for normal-risk women to birth their babies.

Sandra O'Connor, Director of Midwifery, UHK thanked all the key stakeholders instrumental in bringing this service to fruition. "It is a wonderful milestone which provides choices to the women who use our service. This is one of several exciting projects in the pipeline, aligning with the National Maternity Strategy, that will ensure women availing of the services in UHK have access to better and more timely care with tailored services across all age groups."

Complex Pelvic Surgery Fellowship in UHW

In 2021, an RCPI Fellowship in 'Complex Pelvic Surgery' under Dr John Stratton was awarded to Dr Sabina Tabirca at University Hospital Waterford. The Complex Pelvic Surgery Fellowship post was located in UHW and funded for 12 months by Ireland South Women and Infants Directorate from July 2021 to July 2022.

Post CSCST Fellowships are designed for doctors who need to acquire additional training

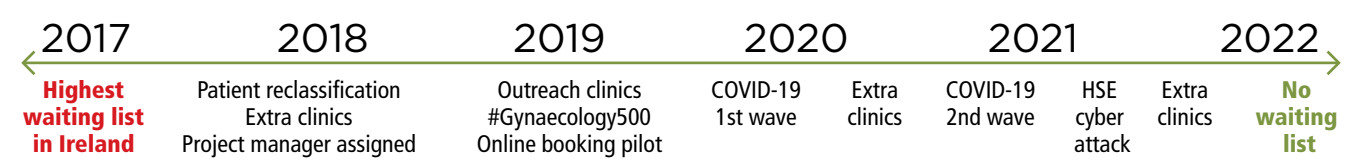
or experience which is not available in their Higher Specialist Training programme and may be required for a consultant post. The training provides exposures for doctors to subspecialties and advanced clinical skills in centres of excellence under an approved trainer.

Following Dr Sabina Tabirca's successful 12-month fellowship, Dr Mary Barrett was awarded for the July 2022 – July 2023 period.

CUMH Gynaecology waiting list initiative

In 2019 CUMH launched an initiative to tackle gynaecology waiting lists which lasted for two years. The object was to reduce the outpatient waiting list from 4,700 – the highest gynaecology waiting list in Ireland – to less than 1,000 with an average wait time of 12 weeks. This target was achieved in March 2020 when it stood at an all-time low of 922 and then COVID-19 struck. By August it was back at

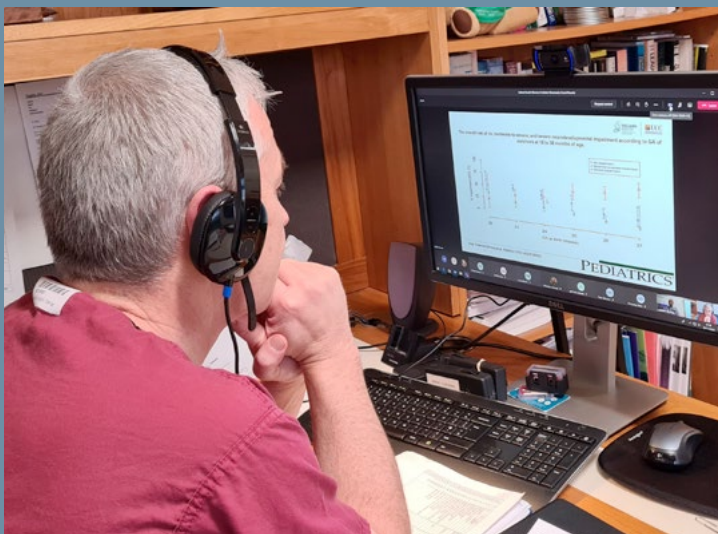
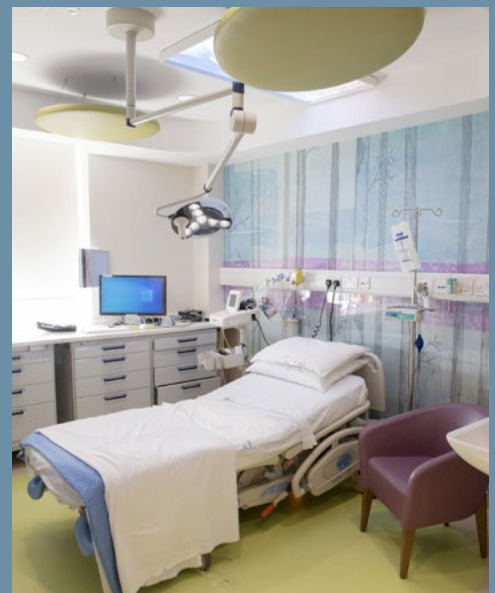
1,700. Through innovation and hard work, it was brought back under control to 1,030 by the end of 2020. The learning and innovation used to succeed in this major initiative was made freely available to the other three units where it was used to keep waiting lists from getting out of hand during these difficult years and keep them manageable into the future.





New Ambulatory Gynaecology Suites

In October 2021, the Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, T.D., opened a new and upgraded Ambulatory Gynaecology Suite and Gynaecology Day Unit in CUMH. This facility grew out of the gynaecology waiting list initiative and will streamline patient care and reduce waiting lists on an ongoing basis. Ireland South Women & Infants Directorate is progressing the further development of ambulatory gynaecology services in the other three units (each at various stages of development).

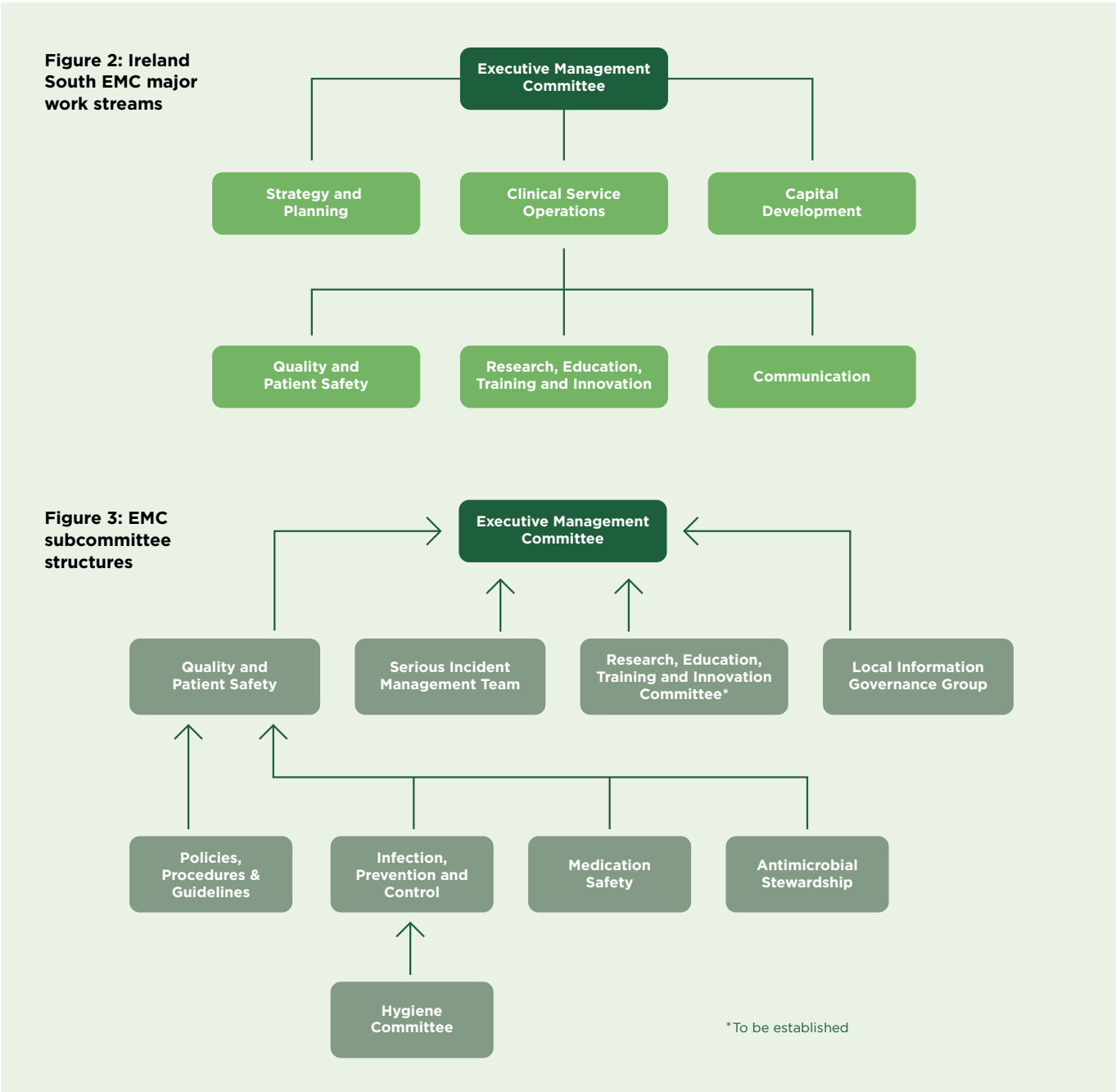


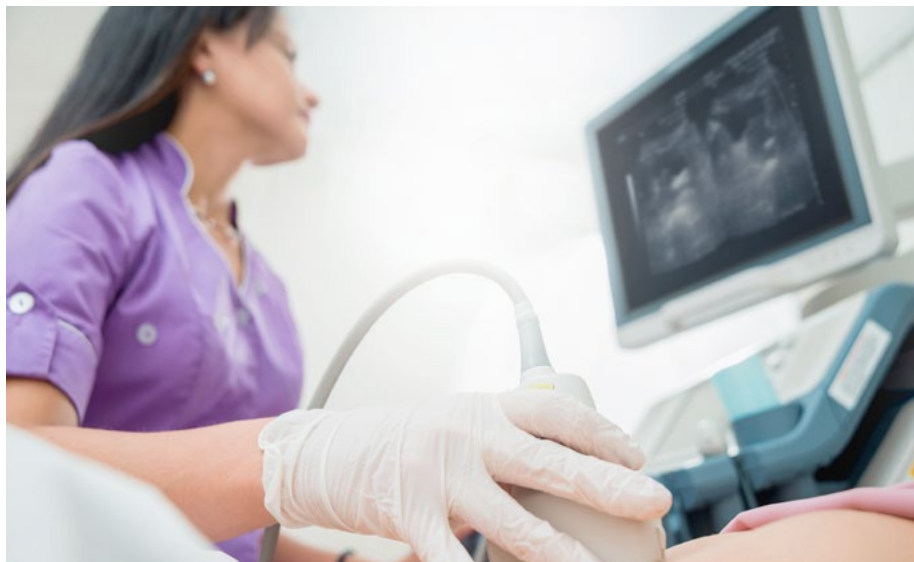
Grand Rounds

In 2019, Grand Rounds in the theatre of Cork University Hospital were relayed live to the other three maternity units for the first time. The schedule from April to December included presentations from Tralee, Clonmel and Waterford and from Midwifery and the Health and Social Care Professions. This practice has now been standardised into an annual Grand Round schedule that includes all units in the Directorate.

Directorate-wide Policies and Procedures

A comprehensive review of policies and structures was undertaken in order to place the new Directorate on a sound and stable footing in 2019. As a result, there is now a clear set of organograms covering personnel, work-streams and committee structures and policies to inform decision-making. This is an ongoing process, covering not only internal procedures within each unit but also how the maternity units relate to the general hospitals in which they are located and to UCC their primary academic partner.





Directorate Newsletter - UltraNews

The publication of a quarterly newsletter UltraNews was another early demonstration that the four members of the Directorate would share their stories, problems and successes through the pages of a regular newsletter. This newsletter, which launched in Autumn 2018, is a result of an idea that came out of the CUMH Ideas Forum earlier this year.

Throughout the years of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ransomware attack in May 2021 which proved so enormously challenging for the whole health service, the fact that all four units could share their problems and develop solutions helped everyone to come through these years and demonstrated the value of the Directorate as nothing else could have done.

The newsletter provides an opportunity for all four units in the Directorate to share their news with the other units of the Directorate by contributing to the newsletter and put a spotlight on employees.

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Annual Reports for the Ireland South Woman and Infants Directorate

An annual directorate-wide report has been published since 2017 and has grown since in scope and the amount of information provided. This is obtained by a collaboration between the four units and the National Perinatal Epidemiology Centre and is now a valuable source for determining statistical trends in maternity care throughout the Ireland South area.





New Antimicrobial Guidelines

In September 2021, the launch of new antimicrobial guidelines on the MicroGuide App was announced on Grand Rounds by Dr Deirdre Broderick, Consultant Microbiologist and Susan Potter, CUMH Antimicrobial Pharmacist. This resulted from a collaboration between consultants and pharmacists in CUMH and UHK. “The App is designed to be an easy way to access infection management information to support appropriate antimicrobial use and antimicrobial stewardship”. The launch was marked by an Antimicrobial Awareness Day in UHK led by Dr Síla O’Connor, Antimicrobial Pharmacist in UHK.

Collaboration with Health Innovation Hub Ireland and the Academic Partner



The Directorate appointed Caitriona Heffernan as Innovation Lead in 2021. Based in CUMH, the Innovation Programme Lead is the first role of its type in a HSE hospital in Ireland. Its primary aim is to support the vision of creating an innovative healthcare system that implements new service models, products and technologies to support service delivery and improve outcomes for our patients.

Health Innovation Hub Ireland (HIHI), which has a well-established relationship with Ireland South Women and Infants Directorate, works across the health sector with Irish businesses to creatively solve problems and improve patient care. Harnessing this innovation, through the development of new healthcare technologies, products, and services, will help to create Irish jobs and exports. Caitriona works with Health Innovation Hub Ireland to identify which products or technologies can add value to our patients across Ireland South.

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What Our People Say

What do people who work in Ireland South Women and Infants Directorate think?



“Collaboration within our SSWHG Neonatal Network, with the central hub in the CUMH NICU supporting the neonatal units of Waterford, South Tipperary and Kerry, is now embedded in our daily practice, with a commitment from the staff in all four units to its ongoing operation and success. The success of the SSWHG Neonatal Network can be measured in the outcomes for our smallest Very Low Birth Weight Infants (<1500g), where we have a > 90% inborn rate, > 90% antenatal steroid administration rate, and year-on-year improved survival rates.”

Peter Filan, Clinical Lead Neonatology, Ireland South Women and Infants Directorate.



“The SSWHG Maternity Directorate has recognised the value and importance of Health and Social Care Professionals in providing a holistic service to women and infants. Our involvement at Directorate level has given us a voice and created a peer network within the four maternity services for the first time.”

Maria Leahy, HSCP representative for Maternity Directorate and Acting Manager of Social Work Services, CUH/CUMH.



“Nurses and Midwives working in the Ireland South Women’s and Infants Directorate can be assured that they are represented by the Directors of Midwifery in each hospital. Our collective experience and knowledge have been a driving force for the benefit of the maternity services across the four hospitals. One of our many improvement projects, MaternityONESouth (ONE=Obstetric, Neonatal Emergencies), drives collaboration across the Directorate, aiming to strengthen and pool resources and expertise to manage Obstetric and Neonatal Emergencies, improving outcomes for women and babies.”

Katie Bourke, Director of Midwifery, CUMH.



“The Ireland South Women and Infants Directorate has built a collaborative partnership across the 4 hospitals to provide the best possible care to all our mothers and newborns across the network. With our open-door policy we have put in place a culture and belief that every mother and newborn across our region deserves and receives equal access to specialist care when they need it, while aiming to provide their care as close to home once more when this is possible.”

Dr Brendan Murphy, former Clinical Lead Neonatology, Maternity Directorate.



“The SSWHG Maternity Directorate has set the framework to achieving the first functional women’s and newborn clinical network in Ireland – allowing the standardisation of clinical practice, data management and information governance, encouraging peer engagement and support and sharing resources towards equity of care. This has been achieved not only through strategy documents but in real terms with the no refusal policy for transfer of care, the outreach of specialists from the tertiary unit and the sharing of clinical discipline posts (Pharmacy, Dietetics, Social work, etc.) to the smaller units to achieve equality of care for all women and infants in the SSWHG.”

Richard Greene, Professor of Clinical Obstetrics UCC and Director, National Perinatal Epidemiology Centre.



“The SSWHG Maternity Directorate is a platform for open communication between the four maternity hospitals where decisions are made collaboratively that enhance the care we provide to our mothers and babies in the region. The sharing of clinical expertise, offering support to colleagues and the daily communication between each hospital has been very beneficial for all.”

Miriam Lyons, Business Manager, CUMH.



“The SSWHG Maternity Directorate provides a platform for standardising midwifery practices, enhancing peer engagement and collegial support which are critical to the on-going advancement of the professions of midwifery and nursing.”

Bridie O'Sullivan, Chief Director of Nursing/Midwifery, South/Southwest Hospital Group, and Adjunct Clinical Professor, University College Cork.



“The Maternity Directorate has been a positive force for UHW from a clinical, learning and collegial standpoint. While we've only 3 consultant obstetricians and gynaecologists in UHW, we feel part of a much bigger network reinforced by weekly Maternity Directorate Grand Rounds, a valuable teaching and learning forum, and Directorate wide social gatherings such as consultant away days involving the wider group. From a clinical standpoint, we feel the benefits of Maternity Directorate every day through the 'no refusal' policy for sick babies between CUMH and smaller units like Waterford.”

Dr Eddie O'Donnell, Clinical Lead UHW, Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist.





“The Maternity Directorate has strengthened ties between the 4 maternity units in the group. It has allowed for sharing of ideas and promotes a culture of learning and development for all staff. The Directorate has facilitated peer support that is vital to the role of Director of Midwifery.”

Paula Curtin, Director of Midwifery, UHW.



“The Maternity Directorate has streamlined networks in the South/Southwest Hospital Group, with maternity patient referrals and transfers occurring regularly without issue. The consultant forums and executive meetings, which are not centralised, make us feel valued in the network. The undergraduate and postgraduate training links are a valuable part of the multidisciplinary working environment in the group, and we look forward to even deeper connections in the future.”

Dr Vijoyashree Hiremath, Clinical Lead TippUH, Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist.



“It’s a pleasure to work together to provide an enhanced, inclusive and progressive approach to maternity care in the SSWHG region. The buy in from a clinical, educational and cross professional aspect has been evident across the region. No more obvious than the implementation of the non-refusal policy, which has been invaluable to South Tipperary General Hospital, alongside the cross educational support within the SSWHG.”

Sinéad Heaney, Director of Midwifery, TippUH.



“The establishment of the SSWHG Maternity Directorate has greatly enhanced our maternity services in University Hospital Kerry by changing it from a small, isolated stand-alone unit to being a member of a much larger group where we look to play our part in the provision of maternity and gynae services across the region. The weekly teaching videoconferences enhance our regular local training meetings. The daily hubs and fortnightly EMC meetings allow the group to maintain close oversight of workload and outcomes. The ‘no refusal’ policy for sick babies has been a tremendous advance. Going forward, full integration when the Group Chief Clinical Director takes over responsibility for all four units should ensure further standardisation of practice and even better outcomes for our mothers and babies.”

**Dr Paul Hughes, Clinical Lead UHK,
Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist.**
Sandra O'Connor, Director of Midwifery, UHW.

“The establishment of the Ireland South Women and Infants Directorate has been fundamental to delivering safe, high-quality care to the women, infants and families within the region. It has provided a framework for efficient decision-making across the network, allowing us to focus on providing equitable patient-focused care. Clear governance and streamlined processes have helped us respond effectively to the changing health landscape with significant improvements in the services we provide. Within the maternity Directorate, we have built strong relationships with increased opportunities for innovation, education and collaboration making Ireland South an employer of choice.”

**Dr Mairead O'Riordan, Clinical Lead
Quality and Patient Safety, Consultant
Obstetrician and Gynaecologist.**





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We seek to operate as one team, forging bonds between our four maternity units via daily hub calls covering clinical matters such as patient transfers, regular meetings between consultants and meetings between directors of midwifery. Every week we also host an Executive Management Committee (EMC) meeting covering key areas such as research, clinical service, health and safety, health and social care professionals, administration and others. We aim to modernise our approach to Grand Rounds to foster evidence based discussion and practice and bring clinically relevant information to even more health professionals in our region.

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**Professor John R. Higgins,
Clinical Director.**

6

Concluding Reflection

The Ireland South Women and Infants Directorate has more than proved its worth throughout some of the most challenging of times. We believe the progress detailed in this document has justified the bringing together of large and small maternity units into a hospital group-wide directorate. The Sláintecare report is an important national policy that will benefit the health service as a whole. It represents an important step in deconstructing the public/private structure of the Irish health services and

moving the funding of the public health services to a long-term multi-annual funding model.

We hope that the implementation of Sláintecare will allow the continuation of our Clinical Maternity Network. We believe our Directorate provides patients with the highest level of safe, sustainable care and support through our teams' shared expertise, innovative spirit and commitment to the women, infants and families in our region.



