

PNS/CC

8<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Darragh O'Brien TD  
Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage  
Dáil Éireann  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

Via email: [minister@housing.gov.ie](mailto:minister@housing.gov.ie)

***RE: Affordable and available Housing Models linked to the Nursing/midwifery Profession***

Dear Minister O'Brien

I am writing to you in connection with the lack of affordable housing available for nurses and midwives in the Greater Dublin Area and in other rent pressure areas around this country.

You will have seen comments from the Director of Midwifery at the National Maternity Hospital describing how difficult it is to recruit and retain midwives and other nursing staff in the hospital. This is one of many Directors of Nursing and Midwifery in the country who are now outlining how the lack of affordable housing is directly impacting their ability to retain and recruit staff to the hospitals.

As Ireland's largest trade union representing nurses and midwives, we know that this is a problem in all Dublin hospitals, as well as large hospitals in Cork, Galway, Limerick, and many coastal areas with a significant tourist industry.

Your predecessor, Minister Eoghan Murphy, announced that affordable housing would be made available to essential public sector workers as part of a pilot scheme in St. Michael's Estate, Inchicore on July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018. This scheme was drawn up by your Department with assistance from the European Investment Bank. The announcement at the time emphasised the importance of this project in planning for essential staff accommodation for the new Children's hospital. Can you provide an update on the status of this pilot?

As we enter a winter of many unknowns for our health service, where the recruitment and retention of our nursing and midwifery workforce is going to be challenging, the

availability of affordable housing is now key. We know in one large Dublin teaching hospital, only 43% of the most recent graduating class are remaining in the hospital, with the lack of affordable housing being a major factor in nurses not choosing to work in that hospital.

Ireland is constantly recruiting nurses and midwives from non-EU countries, and they are advising the INMO that they are not prepared in advance for the lack of suitable affordable accommodation. Two Indian nurses recently recruited to a Dublin teaching hospital advise that they were placed in accommodation in Straffan, Co Kildare for the first 28 days of orientation, they were without public transport links and rosters commenced at 7.30 am. This is simply remedied if the government invested in a capital plan to build and subsidise city centre accommodation for essential workers. This is a feature of recruitment and retention of nurses and midwives in most big cities in the UK, USA, and Australia – which are the main countries recruiting nurses/ midwives from Ireland.

Nurses and midwives earn modest incomes and if we want to have some hope of ensuring that hospitals in Dublin and other large urban areas such as Cork, Limerick, and Galway have safe staffing levels we must ensure that there are homes that nurses and midwives can afford to live in.

We are available to meet you to discuss this very important issue and the possibility of extending affordable housing models linked to healthcare professions.

Thank you for your attention to this note.

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**PHIL NÍ SHEAGHDHA**  
**General Secretary**  
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