

2025.07.08

4.12 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of the Minister for Social Security regarding access to contraception services (OQ.164/2025):

Will the Minister advise whether proposals will be brought forward in the forthcoming Budget to improve access to contraception services?

Deputy L.V. Feltham (The Minister for Social Security):

I thank the Deputy for her question. The provision of contraception and also the communication of such provision is an active point of discussion in the Women's Health Advisory Group of which I am a member. I can give the Deputy confidence that we can make improvements to our provisions without the need for a commitment specifically in this year's Budget because we can make such commitment through the H.I.F. (Health Insurance Fund). With regard to prescribing, we are already creating foundations for such a service. I recently made a Ministerial Order which will enable pharmacists to prescribe costs to the H.I.F., and we are seeking to link pharmacy appropriately into patient records so that prescribers can issue prescriptions safely. I hope the Deputy understands that there are a number of moving parts that need to be aligned in order to make such changes and make further improvements to the provision.

4.12.1 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Can the Minister advise the timeline for delivering these improvements, please?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

As I said in my initial answer, I have just recently signed a Ministerial Order. Currently there is a lot of work to be done with pharmacies because pharmacies do not have access to patient information at the moment, so should not be commissioned to issue prescription-only medications. There is a piece of work ongoing at the moment which is a priority for the Employment, Social Security and Housing Department and Digital Services to achieve appropriate access to patient records. I am unable to give a timeline at the moment because that piece of work is integral to that.