

CC/MH/MMCM

Email: [pgmidwestacute@hse.ie](mailto:pgmidwestacute@hse.ie)

08<sup>th</sup> March 2019

Dr Michael Harty TD  
Dáil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2

Re: PQ 11911/19

**\* To ask the Minister for Health if the newly opened 12 bed short stay surgical ward at University Hospital Limerick is being used by non-surgical patients to alleviate overcrowding in the emergency department; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Michael Harty**

Dear Dr Harty,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The Surgical Short Stay Unit opened on Monday 25th February 2019. The Unit is a designated Unit for patients, with defined surgical conditions appropriate to an expected short hospital stay, to receive treatment in a timely manner and in an area where they can recuperate post-operatively and be discharged home within a 48-72 hour period. The 12 bay unit will see more emergency surgical procedures carried out during the Winter period. Identified cases such as urology cases will have quicker access and treatment and better utilisation of the Unit overall providing a better unscheduled care journey for our patients. Referral comes from ED admission or the Acute Surgical Assessment Unit. Currently the unit is staffed to permit a 5 day service.

During busy periods, units such as the AMAU, Surgical Day Ward etc, may be opened as surge capacity. This practice is typical of acute hospitals across Ireland where demand exceeds capacity and to ensure patient safety. On the evening of the 25th February, UHL had been experiencing higher than normal attendances and one trolley was placed in the Surgical Short Stay Unit in a surge capacity, to assist with the management of overcrowding at UHL. All surgical procedures planned for the Unit went ahead on the 25th of February, no further trolleys have since been placed in the Surgical Short Stay Unit.

I trust this clarifies the position. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.



Working together, caring for you

Ospidéal na hOllscoile, Luimneach,  
Bóthar Naomh Neasáin, Tuar an Daill, Luimneach V94 F858  
Tel: 061 301111 Facs: 061 301165

University Hospital Limerick,  
St. Nessian's Road, Dooradoyle, Limerick V94 F858  
Tel: 061 301111 Fax: 061 301165

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Colette Cowan'.

**Prof Colette Cowan**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**UL Hospitals Group**



University Hospital Limerick is a member of **UL Hospitals Group** which also comprises: Nenagh Hospital, Ennis Hospital, Croom Orthopaedic Hospital, University Maternity Hospital Limerick and St. John's Hospital (voluntary).