

CC/WOD/MMcM

Email: pgmidwestacute@hse.ie

08th December 2020

Mr Willie O'Dea TD
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

Re: PQ 41786/20

***To ask the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to the fact that there are women who have been informed that they have to wait six months for an appointment at the breast clinic at University Hospital Limerick; his views on whether this delay is inappropriate for a potentially life threatening illness; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Willie O'Dea**

Dear Deputy O'Dea,

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.

I have checked with the relevant staff and I have been informed that UL Hospitals Group current Breast Clinic waiting list is at 26 weeks. Due to COVID restrictions over the past few months we are only seeing urgent patients, the breast routine waiting list has exceeded its 12 week KPI as a result.

However we are validating our Breast waiting list at present starting with the longest waiter and telephoning each patient waiting on the list to see if an appointment is still required.

All urgent patients are seen within 10 working days as per the KPI and as of this week we have resumed seeing routine patients in our Triple Assessment clinics.

In January 2021, we are planning to run two additional waiting list clinic's per week in addition to our three normal new patients clinic which currently run in the Breast Unit. These clinics will continue to run until our waiting list is cleared.

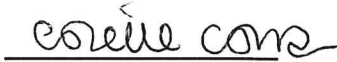
We are conscious that the unfortunate but necessary suspension of so much scheduled work has been difficult on our patients, especially those who had already been waiting a long time for their outpatient appointment or procedure. We are carefully scaling up these services in line with the national public health guidance and in a manner which optimises patient care while minimising risks to patients, staff and the wider healthcare system.



Emergency and time-critical services continued to operate throughout the pandemic and as the weeks progressed, there was considerable growth of and investment in virtual outpatient consultations for many specialties across the system. A virtual clinic is one in which the patient and clinician interact in real time, via a video or telephone.

I trust this clarifies the position. Please contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,



Colette Cowan
Chief Executive Officer
UL Hospitals Group