

21<sup>st</sup> December, 2021

Mr. Thomas Gould, T.D.,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Dublin 2

**PQ ref 62543/21**

**"To ask the Minister for Health if his Department has engaged with SouthDoc since the reopening of its Blackpool facility; and if there is an intention to resume normal operating hours in this facility."**

Dear Deputy Gould,

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.

South West Doctors on Call Limited is an Out of Hours Family Doctor service for urgent medical care in Counties Cork and Kerry with its administrative headquarters and call centre in Killarney. It has a membership of over 500 GPs and a network of 26 treatment centres of which eight are overnight and supported by a fleet of 21 vehicles which are fully equipped for home visit situations.

It provides a service to a population of approximately 694,000 plus the 3.3M visitors to the area, and dealt with over 180,000 patient contacts in 2020. Although a number of these patient contacts were deemed to be emergency related, it is important to point out that while SouthDoc works closely with the Emergency Services it is not the primary emergency service provider.

When a patient makes contact with SouthDoc, an electronic medical record is created which documents the patient's details, clinical category and progression through the service.

Blackpool's previous opening hours were Monday – Friday 18:00-23:00, Saturday and Sunday 09:00-23:00. They are now Monday – Friday 18:00-22:00, Saturday and Sunday 09:00-22:00. This is under constant review by SouthDoc and will be reviewed accordingly depending on needs.

SouthDoc continues to deliver the service in response to the patient needs in a manner which assures safety, ease and equity of access. The service is resourced with the requisite number of GPs to ensure a full and safe clinical service is provided in line with its established ethos. The service provision is equitable to all patients across treatment centres, therefore SouthDoc does not have any plans to alter the service times at this juncture. All patients are dealt with in accordance with their clinical needs as demonstrated from the service times outlined above.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



**Priscilla Lynch**  
Head of Service - Primary Care  
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare