

CC/BL/MC

07th June 2022

Mr Brian Leddin TD,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

Re: PQ 26894/22

*** To ask the Minister for Health the steps that he is taking to address the extremely high numbers of persons leaving University Hospital Limerick emergency department without being discharged or finishing treatment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. - Brian Leddin**

Dear Deputy Leddin,

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 purpose of Emergency Departments is to deal with serious and unexpected illness and injury. Many people, whose clinical needs could be more appropriately addressed by self-care, Pharmacists, GPs, GP Out of Hours Services and Minor Injury Units, continue to attend Emergency Departments.

In this context, it is inevitable that EDs and their associated hospitals, whose capacity is exceeded by such demand, must clinically prioritise those who must be treated first and those who may need to wait, or attend a more appropriate care setting.

To ensure this process is clinically safe for patients, Irish hospitals use the internationally tested Manchester Triage Tool which prioritises patients into a number of categories based on their clinical needs. Where a patient is seriously ill or injured, their needs will be prioritised above those with less serious conditions.

Ideally, hospitals would be in a position to treat patients on their arrival. However, as demand inevitably overtakes capacity, prioritisation and consequential waiting may occur. In this regard, some patients with less serious needs may choose to avail of alternatives options

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

Yours sincerely,



Prof Colette Cowan
Chief Executive Officer
UL Hospitals Group