

7<sup>th</sup> October 2022

Deputy Denis Naughten  
Unit 3 Golf Links Road  
Roscommon  
Co. Roscommon  
F42 YX65

**PQ 47777/22**

**To ask the Minister for Health the number of occasions that the WestDOC service has been extended to include an additional general practitioner rota group; the groups involved; when they were incorporated into the service; if he will list the GP rota groups presently not part of WestDOC or similar groups in the adjoining counties of Galway, Mayo and Roscommon; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Naughten,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

Westdoc, the GP Out-of-Hours service in Community Healthcare West, commenced in December, 2002. The catchment areas are based on geographically defined Cells rather than GP practices. Westdoc consisted of five Cells at its commencement in 2002 as follows:

**1. Galway City:**

Incorporating approximately 50% of the GPs in the city plus GPs in Oranmore, Clarinbridge, Claregalway, Turloughmore and Spiddal.

**2. Tuam:**

Incorporating GPs in Tuam Town, Dunmore and Abbeyknockmoy.

**3. Westport:**

Incorporating GPs in Westport Town.

**4. Ballina:**

Incorporating GPs in Ballina, Crossmolina, Killala, Ballycastle and Lahardane.

**5. Ballinrobe:**

Incorporating GPs in Ballinrobe, Cong, Clonbur and Tourmakeady.

Some of the above Cells have been expanded over the years to include additional GPs and a further four Cells have been developed as follows:

**6. Craughwell:**

Incorporating GPs in Loughrea and Athenry.

**7. Glenamaddy:**

Incorporating GPs in Glenamaddy, Ballygar, Williamstown, Mountbellew, Castlerea, Frenchpark and Ballaghaderreen.

**8. Knock:**

Incorporating GPs in Knock, Claremorris, Ballindine, Ballyhaunis, Hollymount, Kiltimagh, Kilkelly, and Charlestown.

**9. Roscommon:**

Incorporating GPs in Roscommon Town.

The expansion is summarised as follows:

- **June 2003:**

New Cells were developed in Knock and Glenamaddy.

- **December 2003:**

A new Cell was developed in Craughwell.

- **December 2006:**

The Westport Cell was expanded to include GPs in Newport, Louisburgh and Mulranny.

- **May 2007:**

The Ballinrobe Cell was expanded to include GPs in Headford and Annaghdown.

Weekend Cover was introduced for the GPs in Achill covering 13 weekends per annum for the GPs in Achill Sound and Pollagh.

Weekend Cover was also introduced in Belmullet covering 20 weekends per annum for the GPs in Belmullet, Bangor Erris and Glenamoy.

- **June 2008:**

Weekend cover was introduced in North Connemara covering 10 weekends per annum for GPs in Clifden, Roundstone and Tully, Renvyle.

- **July 2008:**

Weekend cover was introduced in South Connemara covering 10 weekends per annum for GPs in Carraroe, Lettermore, Rosmuc and Carna.

- **June 2011:**

Red Eye Cover (12.00am to 8.00am) was introduced for GPs in Castlebar Town.

- **July 2011:**

A new Cell was developed for GPs in Roscommon Town.

- **January 2014:**

Weekend Cover for North Connemara, South Connemara and Achill was increased to 20 weekends per annum to bring them in line with Belmullet.

- **August 2017:**

Full Cover was introduced for GPs in Castlebar Town and the Castlebar Cell was merged with the Westport Cell.

- **September 2018:**

The Knock Cell was expanded to include GPs in Foxford and Swinford.

- **November 2019:**

Red Eye Cover (12.00am to 8.00am) was introduced for GPs in Gort and Kinvara.

- **July 2020:**

Red Eye Cover was introduced for the GPs in Galway City who were not members of the Galway City Cell.

- **September 2020:**

Weekend Cover was introduced for GPs in Gort and Kinvara in addition to Red Eye Cover.

- **February 2021:**

A Nurse Triage service was introduced for GPs in North Connemara in addition to weekend cover.

- **June 2021:**

The Craughwell Cell was expanded to provide full cover for GPs in Gort and Kinvara.

- **January 2022:**

Weekend Cover for North Connemara, South Connemara, Achill and Belmullet was increased to 25 weekends per annum on a once-off basis for 2022.

- **September 2022:**

A Nurse Triage service was introduced for GPs in South Connemara in addition to weekend cover.

The Westdoc service is currently not available to GPs in the following areas:

- Ballinasloe;
- Kiltormer,
- Kilconnell;
- Eyrecourt;
- Laurencetown;
- Portumna;
- Moycullen;
- Oughterard;
- Aran Islands;

- Inishboffin;
- Inishturk;
- Clare Island
- Inishbiggle.

Partial Weekend Cover only is available to GPs in the following areas:

- Clifden;
- Roundstone;
- Tully Renvyle;
- Carraroe;
- Lettermore;
- Rosmuc;
- Carna;
- Achill Island;
- Pollagh;
- Belmullet;
- Bangor Erris;
- Glenamoy.

Red Eye Cover (12.00am to 8.00am) only is available in the following area:

- Galway City - approximately 50% of the City GPs.

It should also be noted that parts of North Roscommon are covered by Nowdoc, which is the GP Out-of-Hours service for the North West area.

It is the aim of Community Healthcare West to have 100% Westdoc coverage for GPs in our area but funding is required to achieve this aim. Business Cases seeking the necessary additional funding have been submitted to the HSE at national level over the past number of years but only limited funding has been received to date, which has mainly been used in providing weekend cover in remote rural areas such as North Connemara, South Connemara, Achill and Belmullet as outlined above. A further Business Case has been submitted as part of the Estimates Process in the current year seeking additional funding in the sum of €2.5m to expand the Westdoc service in our area but no reply has been received to date.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but should you have any further queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

*Michelle Gan*

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**Mary Warde**  
**Head of Primary Care**  
**Galway, Mayo and Roscommon**