

CC/CC/MC

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

13<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Mr Cathal Crowe TD,  
Dàil Eireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2

PQ 10144/23

**To ask the Minister for Health if a review can be put in place to examine the feasibility of upgrading Ennis to a model 3 and a timeframe for same. -Cathal Crowe**

Dear Deputy Crowe,

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 upgrading of any of our Model 2 Hospitals to a Model 3 is not a matter for UL Hospitals Group, or the HSE. Government policy titled 'Securing the Future of Smaller Hospitals: a Framework for Development', published in February 2013 shaped the future of Ennis, Nenagh and St John's and reaffirmed the integral role these hospitals have to play in the future growth of healthcare in the Mid-West region: in the provision of ambulatory care, chronic disease management, day surgery, endoscopy, Injury Units, Medical Assessment Units and much more. As such, UL Hospitals Group is not in a position to carry out a review to examine the feasibility of upgrading Ennis Hospital to a Model 3 hospital.

Among the key objectives of the reconfiguration programme, as set out in the (Teamwork/Horwath) consultants report was the centralisation of acute and emergency medical and surgical services, including trauma in UHL. The programme also provided for the centralisation and expansion of critical care capacity for the region in Limerick; an improved ambulance service for the region and, crucially, the development of appropriate services in the smaller hospitals (urgent care centres/injury units, medical assessment units, day surgery, radiology etc).

The aim of the reforms was to ensure that patient safety was improved across the region by delivering care in the right place and by the right teams. This required an upgrading of diagnostic, outpatient, endoscopy and day services in our model 2 hospitals.

As mentioned above, our Model 2 Hospitals play a vital role in the provision of ambulatory care, chronic disease management, day surgery, endoscopy, Injury Units, Medical Assessment Units and much more. Patients attending the Injury Units in Ennis, Nenagh, and St John's benefit from the expertise and care of a consultant-led team of doctors, Registered Advanced Nurse Practitioners (RANPs), nurses, and other healthcare

professionals who are highly experienced in the treatment of injuries that may not be threatening to life and limb, but which nonetheless require medical attention and treatment.

The Injury Unit at Ennis Hospital has just had its busiest year to date. During 2022, a total of 11,854 patients attended our Injury Unit in Ennis, representing a 25% increase on 2021. Our three Injury Units at Ennis, Nenagh and St John's collectively saw 38,523 patients last year, representing a 30% increase on 2021.

In addition, the Medical Assessment Units at Nenagh, Ennis and St John's provide diagnosis and treatment for patients referred with medical conditions including chest infections, COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), pneumonia, urinary tract infections, fainting episodes, clots in the leg, anaemia, or non-acute cardiac problems. Through additional staffing resources and targeted initiatives such as the NTPF, both Ennis and Nenagh MAUs have expanded their services over the past two years, making more assessment slots available for GPs in the MidWest.

Attendances at Ennis MAU grew from 6,830 in 2021 to 7,768 last year, an increase of 14%. Our three MAUs at Ennis, Nenagh and St John's saw 12,737 patients in 2022, an increase of 19% on 2021.

Our plan is to continue to increase activity across all three of our MAUs. I can confirm that we have recently submitted a bid to the HSE National Acute Division for €5.2m for additional resources to increase MAU staffing in our Model 2 Hospitals.

Additional staff would allow us to extend the operating hours and open the Medical Assessment Units in Nenagh and St John's to 7 days a week and increase the number of slots currently available to GPs, ShannonDoc and NAS paramedics. The bid also includes permanent funding for Ennis MAU to secure the extended hours and weekend service into the future.

We are committed to investing in our Model 2 Hospital sites to enhance non-acute patient care. In 2021, we opened a new Outpatients Department in Ennis at an offsite location on the Kilrush Road. The new OPD in Ennis has 15 clinical rooms, in addition to a phlebotomy bay, four waiting areas, offices and staff changing rooms. The new department will allow for the relocation of services such as cardiac rehabilitation, radiology and general X-Ray.

The enhanced facilities for patients and staff will allow for the future extension and expansion and overall improvement of the patient experience at Ennis Hospital. The development of the facility has been a priority for UL Hospitals Group in improving local access to non-acute patient care. A theatre upgrade was also recently approved for Ennis Hospital as part of the HSE's Capital Programme for 2022. The approved capital budget for this project is €9.95m and is currently at the design stage. It is vital for our patients that day surgery services at all our model 2 hospitals continue to expand.



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

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Prof 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).