

CC/CC/MC

Email: pgmidwestacute@hse.ie

30th January 2023

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

PQ 2521/22

To ask the Minister for Health the reason that hips cannot be x-rayed in the local injuries unit of Ennis General Hospital; if he plans to better resource the hospital in order that it has the capacity to undertake same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -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.

UL Hospitals Group has three Injury Units—in Ennis, Nenagh and St John's Hospital—where tens of thousands of people over the age of 5 are treated every year for minor injuries such as sprains, breaks and burns.

Our Injury Units help to ensure that the Emergency Department at University Hospital Limerick can prioritise emergency care for the sickest and most seriously injured patients who need it most. In 2022, there was a total of 38,523 attendances at the Group's Injury Units in Ennis, Nenagh and St John's. This represents a 30% increase on total Injury Unit attendances for 2021 which totalled 29,552.

Injury Units operate within guidelines from the national clinical programme for emergency medicine on what types of injury meet the criteria for assessment and treatment. I can confirm that suspected hip fractures are excluded from these criteria.

For patients over the age of 5 years who suffer sprains, breaks and burns, the Injury Units are the most efficient treatment pathway. The Injury Unit teams can also treat sports injuries, including hand and ankle injuries, and can remove foreign bodies from the eye, ear and nose. Staff also provide quick access to diagnostics and x-rays, make the necessary arrangements to refer patients to specialist care including at the Emergency Department in UHL when required, and arrange follow-up appointments within the Injury Unit where necessary.

All patients who present to our Injury Units are assessed and triaged based on their clinical need. Patients who are not suitable for treatment in our Injury Units are re-directed to other care options such as their GP, out of hours GP services or the Emergency Department in UHL. For example, falls from a particular height, chest injuries and hip fractures are not suitable for treatment in our Injury Units and therefore patients presenting with these type of injuries are referred to the ED in UHL. Our expert staff assess all patients who present to our Injury Units to see if their injuries are suitable for treatment.

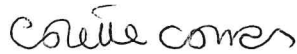


The Injury Unit teams are made up of emergency medicine physicians, advanced nurse practitioners, nurses, health care assistants and administrative support, working together to provide a high quality and timely service for people with a wide range of non-emergency injuries. Registered Advanced Nurse Practitioners (RANP) and Candidate ANPs play a particularly important role, with their ability to perform full episodes of care on patients from admission to discharge, as well as organising follow-up appointments and ongoing reviews, and referral to expert care when required.

All three Injury Units are open seven days, 365 days a year. No appointment is necessary. The Ennis Hospital Injury Unit (open 8am-8pm) can be contacted on 065-6863121. The Nenagh unit (open 8am-8pm) can be contacted on 067-42311, and the St John's Hospital unit (open 8am-7pm), can be reached on 061-462303. For more information about the range of minor injuries which can be treated visit the following link: <https://www2.hse.ie/services/injury-units/>

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