

CC/MQ/MC

Email: pqmidwestacute@hse.ie

14th August 2023

Mr Maurice Quinlivan TD,
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

RE: PQ 33123/23

To ask the Minister for Health the number of inpatient and outpatient appointments that have been cancelled at University Hospital Limerick in Q1 and Q2 of 2023; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Maurice Quinlivan

Dear Deputy Quinlivan,

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.

As requested, please see below the number of inpatient and outpatient appointments that were cancelled in Q1 and Q2 of 2023 at University Hospital Limerick:

Cancelled Appointments	Outpatient appointments	Inpatient/ Day-Case procedures
Q1	2,653	95
Q2	2,268	42

It should be noted that the figures cited above do not reliably indicate, and may significantly over-state, the actual number of outpatient appointments that were cancelled at University Hospital Limerick during Q1 and Q2 of 2023.

While there have been cancellations of outpatient appointments by the hospital during that period, appointments can also be cancelled for a number of other reasons, including by the patients themselves or by their parents/guardians. In addition, in cases where appointments are cancelled multiple times and rescheduled, it is possible that one patient can have multiple cancellations in any given reporting period.



Working together, caring for you

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Generally speaking, planned reductions in scheduled care in January are provided for in our winter plan to allow for management of inpatient surges associated with seasonal viruses and other illnesses. The record surge in emergency presentations in early 2023 meant that additional deferrals were necessary.

The decision to cancel patients, in line with the hospital escalation plan, is not one which is taken lightly, especially in the case of patients who we know have already faced long waits for treatment.

A recent analysis found that admissions through the ED at UHL account for 83% of inpatient bed days, leaving limited capacity for elective activity. Frequent cancellations of elective activity to accommodate increases in demand for emergency care have resulted in long waiting lists.

In 2022, UL Hospitals Group met the targets for inpatient, day case and endoscopy waiting lists as set out in the National Waiting List Action Plan. This was largely achieved through the use of private, virtual and extra out-of-hours clinics including various outsourcing and insourcing initiatives. Last year, we reduced the total number of outpatients waiting by 20% and the number of long waiters (18 months and over) by 58%.

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

Yours sincerely,

Professor Colette Cowan
Chief Executive Officer
UL Hospitals Group

