



Oifig an Príomhoifigeach
Eagraíocht Cúram Sláinte Pobail Lár Tire,
An Lú, An Mhí

Oifig na bPríomhoifigeach, An Chéad Urlár,
Coimhleasc Naomh Bríd, Bóthar Cheanannais
Bhaile Átha Fhirdia, Co Lú, A92 DRN0

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17th July 2023

Deputy Fergus O'Dowd
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

Re PQ 28898/23 - To ask the Minister for Health if he will provide an update of the North East Doctor-on-Call service to address the major pressures on the current service which is leaving many persons unable to access out-of-hours GPs; and if he will make a statement on the matter – Fergus O'Dowd

Dear Deputy O'Dowd,

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. I have examined the matter and outlined the position as follows.

The Primary Care GP Out of Hours Service called NEDOC serves a population of approximately 470,000 people living in Cavan, Monaghan, Meath and Louth. The area served excludes the Dundalk area from the Cooley peninsula to Castlebellingham as the GP's in that area provide a different model of GP out of hours service for their patients. There are four treatment centres based in Navan, Drogheda, Castleblayney and Cavan for emergency GP out of hours service.

A HSE managed call taking centre based in Ardee handles calls for three GP Out of Hours Services - NEDOC, DDOC & MIDOC. The call taking covers a population of approximately 1.4 million people. Call taking handled approximately 310,000 calls in 2022 and 95,974 of these calls taken were for the NEDOC population. NEDOC Limited is contracted to provide GP's for urgent out of hours in the North East region and Caredoc is contracted to provide nurse triage for NEDOC GP Out of Hours. In 2022, NEDOC dealt with 96,002 patient contacts.

Demand for the Out of Hours Service continues to grow and many patients advise they are seeking the GP Out of Hours Service due to a lack of availability of appointments in their GP practice during day time hours. This places extra demands on the urgent GP Out of Hours Service. As expected, there is surge in demand on this service during winter months and particularly over the Christmas/New Year period each year. During this time it may take longer to process calls to the urgent GP care service. Urgent calls are prioritised and are dealt with first. However, all calls are taken.



The HSE works closely with NEDOC Limited and Caredoc to address capacity issues that arise within the service in order to ensure a safe and high quality level of service to the population that require the GP Out of Hours Service. The HSE and other stakeholders do their utmost to work together and put additional resources in place during periods of high demand to support the service.

I trust the above is in order but please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further queries in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Carole Broadbank'.

Carole Broadbank
Chief Officer
Midlands Louth Meath Community Health Organisation