

5th April, 2023

Ms. Holly Cairns., T.D.,
 Dáil Éireann,
 Dublin 2

PQ ref 14870/23

"To ask the Minister for Health the steps he is taking to provide appropriate levels of staff in the SouthDoc facilities in Castletownbere, Bantry, Skibbereen, Dunmanway, Clonakilty and Bandon; and if he will make a statement on the matter"

Dear Deputy Cairns,

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.

South West Doctors on Call Limited is an Out of Hours Family Doctor service for urgent medical care in Counties Cork and Kerry with its administrative headquarters and call centre in Killarney, Co Kerry. It has a membership of over 500 GPs and a network of 26 treatment centres of which eight are overnight and supported by a fleet of 19 vehicles, which are fully equipped for home visit situations.

SouthDoc provides a medical service to a population of approximately 736,000 in addition to the 3.3M visitors to the area, and dealt with over 231,000 patient contacts in 2022.

As a dynamic community based service which is provided across the two counties Cork and Kerry SouthDoc constantly reviews the service provision to ensure its continued viability. There are many factors involved in the delivery of the service to include local doctors, locum doctors, local staff and infrastructure. All these elements are supported by a bespoke IT system, Patient Management System as well as a Call Centre where the patient calls are acknowledged, documented and triaged.

The following staff are engaged in the service provision in the following centres:

Area	Driver	Receptionist	Doctor
Castletownbere			1
Bantry / Dunmanway*	1		1
Skibbereen	1		1
Bandon	1	1	1-2
Clonakilty	1		1

The staffing levels currently in place are adequate and appropriate to support the doctor on duty and the demand for the service in the respective areas.

SouthDoc continues to deliver the service in response to the patient needs in a manner which assures safety, ease and equity of access and does not have any plans to alter the service in any way that would diminish this ethos. All patients are dealt with in accordance with their clinical needs.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Priscilla Lynch', written in a cursive style.

Priscilla Lynch
Head of Service - Primary Care,
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare