



CÚRAM SLÁINTE POBAIL
CORCAIGH CIARRAÍ
CORK KERRY
COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE

Priscilla Lynch
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10th May, 2024.

Mr. Thomas Gould, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 19711/24

"To ask the Minister for Health whether he will instruct SouthDoc to reopen Blackpool to full service."

Dear Deputy Gould,

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 throughout the region which include overnight and non-overnight. SouthDoc has a fleet of 19 vehicles, which are fully equipped for home visit situations. The peninsulas are also supported with a specific model of service provision.

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 Out-of-Hours Family Doctor service, which is provided across the two counties of Cork and Kerry, SouthDoc constantly reviews the service provision to ensure its continued effectiveness. There are many factors involved in the delivery of the service including local General Practitioners, 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 patient calls are acknowledged, documented, and triaged.

SouthDoc is committed to the long-term continuation of the provision of the Out of Hours service in Cork city. There are no plans to close any treatment centre in this area. There are no plans to withdraw the availability of or access to SouthDoc's services in Cork city or for patients in the North Cork area generally. Cork City GPs are valued members of the SouthDoc co-operative and there are no plans to withdraw access to SouthDoc's services from their patients. There are also no plans to withdraw the availability of the centres in the city from service and/or for when in-person consultations in this base are deemed clinically necessary by a doctor.

SouthDoc as with any service continuously reviews the allocation of Doctors, both member GPs and Locum Doctors to ensure the most effective allocation of their clinical skills and expertise to ensure the safest and most effective service.

It is important to emphasise that if an individual in Cork City requires care, that care will be provided by appointment in either the Blackpool or Kinsale Road Treatment Centre or via Home Visit depending on clinical condition of the patient as assessed by the consulting Doctor. There is no reduction in service to city patients and existing resources can meet the demand comfortably.



In summary, the SouthDoc out of Hour's service remains available to the patients and full access to the services provided by them. The SouthDoc Treatment Centre facility in Blackpool will continue to be by appointment.

Any patients that may require a Home Visit due to their clinical condition will be treated accordingly.

All patients continue to be dealt with by appointment only and this will remain unchanged.

SouthDoc continues to deliver the service in response to the patient needs in a manner, which assures safety, ease, and equity of access. 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 read 'Priscilla Lynch', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

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