



Mari O'Donovan,
Interim Head of Service,
Cúram Príomhúil
FSS an Iardheiscirt

Áras na Ceachan,
Páirc Ghnó agus Teicneolaíochta,
Bóthar na Modh Feirme,
Corcaigh. T12 XHT4

Mari O'Donovan,
Interim Head of Service,
Primary Care
HSE South West

Caha House,
Business and Technology Park,
Model Farm Road,
Cork. T12 XHT4

southwest.hse.ie
E: Mari.ODonovan@hse.ie

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Mr. Ken O Flynn, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 20227/25

"To ask the Minister for Health if her department or the HSE have any plan to make resources available to the South Doc services Blackpool, Cork city to have an out of hours doctor available and to recruit further staff for the facility."

Dear Deputy O'Flynn,

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 (known as SouthDoc) provides an Out-of-Hours non-urgent GP service to a population of approximately 736,000 in Cork and Kerry, in addition to the 3.3M visitors to the area. The HSE has a Service Level Agreement with SouthDoc for the provision of out-of-hours cover for medical card holders. SouthDoc continually evaluates their service provision, formally with the HSE and on an ongoing basis internally.

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 a 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.

The SouthDoc Out of Hours service remains available to the patients and full access to the services provided by them. The SouthDoc treatment centre facility in Blackpool continues to be by appointment. Patients who require a face-to-face consultation will firstly be offered an appointment to see a doctor in Kinsale road. In the event that a patient is unable to attend Kinsale road then they may require a home visit or need to be seen in the Blackpool facility. This is a clinical decision and is by appointment only. 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 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,

Mari O'Donovan
Interim Head of Service - Primary Care,
HSE South West