

5th March, 2025

Mr. Colm Burke, T.D.,
Dáil Éireann,
Dublin 2

PQ ref 7817/25

"To ask the Minister for Health the current status of Southdoc in Blackpool, as a number of users in the northside of Cork city have stated that the service appears to be wound down, that when they call to make an appointment that they are referred to a Southdoc service on the southside of the city, that this is particularly difficult for people who have limited transport options; and if she will make a statement on the matter."

Dear Deputy Burke,

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. 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. 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