



Deputy Brian Brennan
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

5th February, 2025

Ref: 46917/24: Parliamentary Question

To ask the Minister for Health if attention has been drawn to the waiting times of up to one hour for response on the Caredoc phone line in Arklow and if so, the measures that are being put in place to alleviate this, and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Brennan,

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.

I can confirm that part of winter planning in anticipation of increased demand, the HSE did provide additional funding for Caredoc and other GP out of hours providers nationally to allow an increase in capacity. This uplift has been in operation since the 27th December and has enabled Caredoc to provide an additional 182 rostered hours of service to the community served by the Arklow and Wicklow Out of Hours team.

While Caredoc aim to provide a prompt response to every call, they have experienced an extremely high rate of calls since the latter end of December due to the high level of influenza and RSV in the community. In the last week of December they experienced an increase of 43% in the total number of contacts from the previous week, with an average of approximately 30% increase across one month.

Despite these high rates of respiratory conditions which has added to the pressures on all health providers along with the challenging weather experienced at this time, Caredoc has maintained a full complement of staff on duty throughout December and January.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Fiona Hammond
Interim Head of Service, Primary Care
HSE Dublin South and Wicklow