

Aoife Brennan

From: Ministers Office <ministers_office@health.gov.ie>
Sent: Wednesday 1 December 2021 15:34
To: Aoife Brennan
Subject: HEA-MO-19808-2021

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HEA-MO-19808-2021

1st December 2021

Dear Ms. Brennan,

The Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly, T.D., has asked me to thank you for your recent correspondence regarding access to GP Services in Adamstown.

GPs are self-employed private practitioners and may establish practices at a place of their own choosing. As GPs are not employees of the HSE, there is no prescribed ratio of GPs to patients and the State does not regulate the number of GPs that can set up in a town or community.

Under the General Medical Services (GMS) scheme, the HSE contracts GPs to provide medical services to medical card and GP visit card holders. Where a vacancy arises in a practice with a GMS contract, the HSE becomes actively involved in the selection process to find a replacement GP. As of the 1st of November, the HSE has one GMS vacancy in Lucan and efforts to find a replacement GP for this panel are underway.

Where a medical card or GP visit card holder experiences difficulty in finding a GP to accept him/her as a patient, and has applied to at least three GPs in their area, the HSE has the power to assign that person to a GP's GMS patient list. The National Medical Card Unit can be contacted by email at clientregistration@hse.ie or by telephone at 1890 252 919 / (01) 864 7100. A list of GPs accepting Medical card/GP Visit Card holders is also available on the [HSE Website](#).

People who do not hold a medical card or GP visit card access GP services on a private basis. As private contractors, it is a matter for each individual GP to decide whether or not to accept additional private patients. While neither the HSE nor the Minister has any role in relation to whether a GP chooses to accept applications from private patients, it would be expected that clinicians would consider the importance of patients having access to a GP service close to home when deciding whether or not to accept such patients.

The Government is aware of the workforce issues currently facing general practice, including the increased demand for GP services. A range of measures have been implemented in recent years to improve recruitment and retention in general practice, and it is hoped that these new measures will help make general practice a more attractive career option for doctors and will increase the number of GPs across the country, to the benefit of both GPs and patients.

Yours sincerely,

Miriam Rooney

Private Secretary to the Minister for Health