

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

### **MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN DISTRICT OF LIMERICK**

**20<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2023**

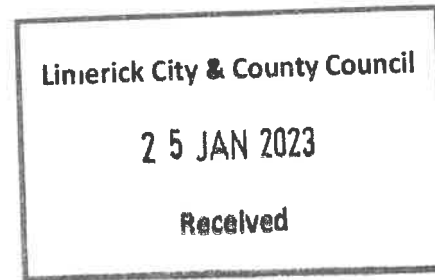
- Letters dated 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2023 from the Office of the Minister for Social Protection and 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2023 from the Higher Executive Officer, Department of Social Protection in reply to Notice of Motion from Members to write to the Minister for Social Protection to ask if widows / widowers can be considered for half rate illness benefit, once the applicant meets the criteria set out under the current scheme.
- Letters dated 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2023 from the Office of Chief Executive Officer, HSE and 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2023 from the Head of Service, Primary Care, HSE Mid West Community Healthcare in reply to Notice of Motion from Members to write to the Health Service Executive regarding the out of hours Limerick Doc based in Dooradoyle, asking them to upgrade this important service, because at present it is not a satisfactory service for its users.

Oifig an Aire Coimirce Sóisialaí  
Office of the Minister for Social Protection



Case Number: REPS-2023-35414

Mr. Mark Leahy  
Meetings Administrator  
Limerick City & County Council  
Corporate Services  
Corporate Headquarters  
Merchant's Quay  
Limerick.



24 January 2023

Dear Mr Leahy

I wish to acknowledge receipt of your correspondence to the Minister for Social Protection, Heather Humphreys TD, regarding a resolution adopted at the meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick, concerning half rate Illness Benefit in relation to recipients of Widows/Widowers Pensions.

Enquiries are being made and a further letter will issue to you as soon as possible.

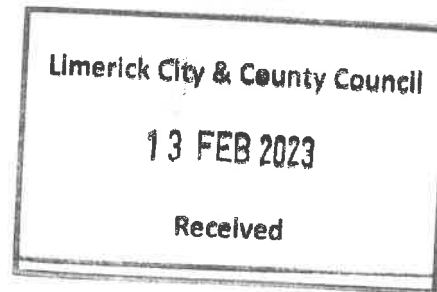
Yours sincerely

  
Caroline Kilkenny  
Private Secretary

*The Minister is a Designated Public Official under the Regulation of Lobbying Act, 2015  
(details available on [www.lobbying.ie](http://www.lobbying.ie))*

Áras Mhic Dhiarmada, Sráid Stórais, Baile Átha Cliath 1, D01 WY03  
Áras Mhic Dhiarmada, Store Street, Dublin 1, D01 WY03  
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**An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí**  
Department of Social Protection



Case Number: REPS-2023-35414

Mark Leahy  
C/O Limerick City & County Council,  
Corporate Headquarters,  
Merchants Quay,  
Limerick.

10 February 2023

Dear Mark Leahy,

I refer to the correspondence you submitted to the Minister for Social Protection, Heather Humphreys T.D., on behalf of Limerick City & County Council in relation to the concurrent payment of Illness Benefit and Widow's Pension.

Illness Benefit is the main income support provided to those who cannot work due to illness of any kind and who are covered by social insurance.

Widow's/Widower's/Surviving Civil Partner's Pension (contributory) is a weekly social insurance payment to those who lost their spouse or civil partner and are covered by social insurance.

There is a general principle of one person, one payment, which applies across the social welfare system. Given the contingency-based nature of this system, it can happen that a person may experience more than one contingency at the same time, but generally they can receive only one payment. This principle is common to social security systems across the world.

As a general rule, people on Widow's/Widower's/Surviving Civil Partner's Pension cannot be in receipt of an overlapping second payment, for example Illness Benefit, at the same time. This does not affect the customer's entitlement to claim credited contributions, to maintain the continuity of their PRSI record, while they are unable to work due to illness.

If a customer is getting a reduced rate of Widow's/Widower's/Surviving Civil Partner's Pension, they may also get a reduced rate of Illness Benefit, so that the combined amount of both payments is not greater than the rate of Illness Benefit to which they are entitled. Further exceptions to the one person one payment and more information on the operations of the scheme are available at [gov.ie](http://gov.ie).

With regard to additional supports, this department also provides Additional Needs Payment under our Supplementary Welfare Allowance scheme to help meet essential expenditure which a person could not reasonably be expected to meet out of their weekly income. This includes exceptional and



urgent needs payments, and certain supplements to assist with ongoing or recurring costs that cannot be met from a person's own resources and are deemed to be necessary.

The payment is available to anyone who needs it and qualifies, whether the person is currently on a social welfare payment or in employment. The payment amount will depend on a person's weekly household income, their outgoings and the type of assistance needed. Payments are made at the discretion of the Community Welfare Officers administering the scheme, considering all the circumstances of the case.

This department keeps its schemes and supports under review to make sure they continue to meet their objectives. Any changes to the current system would need to be considered in an overall policy and budgetary context.

Your sincerely,

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Helen Cheevers  
Higher Executive Officer  
Strategic Policy Unit  
Áras Mhic Dhiarmada  
Store Street  
Dublin 1



**Príomhoifigeach Feidhmiúcháin**  
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Urlár 1, Ospidéal an Dr Steevens'  
Baile Átha Cliath 8, D08 W2A8

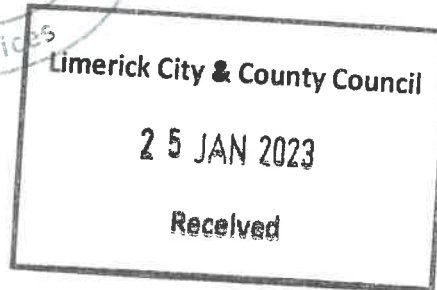
**Chief Executive Officer**  
Health Service Executive  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Dr Steevens' Hospital  
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24<sup>th</sup> January 2023

**CEO Ref: 08245**

Mr Mark Leahy  
Meetings Administrator  
Limerick City and County Council  
Corporate Headquarters  
Merchants Quay  
Limerick



**Subject: Resolution Adopted at Meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

Dear Mr Leahy,

I wish to acknowledge with thanks your letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023 to Mr Stephen Mulvany, CEO.

I wish to confirm that your correspondence has been referred to the HSE Parliamentary Affairs Division for their attention and processing through to the relevant management in the appropriate HSE section who will in turn issue a response directly to you in due course.

Yours sincerely,

  
Suzanne Hannigan  
Office of the Chief Executive Officer



Oifig um Cheannasáí Seirbhíse do Chúram Príomhúil  
Cúram Sláinte Phobail FSS an Mheán Iarthair  
Ascaill Bhaile Choimín,  
Páirc Gnó an Ráithín, Ráithín  
Luimneach  
Teil: 061 483226

Office of the Head of Service for Primary Care  
HSE Mid West Community Healthcare  
Ballycummin Ave, Raheen Business Park, Raheen,  
Limerick  
Tel: 061 483226

9<sup>th</sup> February 2023

**Mr. Mark Leahy**  
**Meetings Administrator**  
**Corporate Services**  
**Limerick City & County Council**  
**Corporate Headquarters**  
**Merchants Quay**  
**Limerick**

**Re: REPDR/23/00511 Limerick Doc, Dooradoyle, Limerick**

Dear Mr. Leahy,

I refer to your letter of 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023 which was sent to Mr. Stephen Mulvany, CEO, regarding the above.

I note from your correspondence that a resolution was adopted at a Meeting of the Metropolitan District of Limerick held on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023 regarding the Out of Hours GP service provided by Limerick Doc in Dooradoyle, Limerick. In this regard, I wish to advise you of the following:

The Primary Care Unit Manager has confirmed that Limerick City Doc is a committee made up of approx. 40 General Practitioners (GPs) in Limerick City and it employs Limerick Doc to provide a GP Out of Hours services for their patients. The Primary Care Unit Manager has also confirmed that the HSE Mid-West (CHO3) does not have a Service Level Agreement with Limerick Doc for the provision of GP services to GMS (medical card) patients.

The Primary Care Unit Manager has confirmed that she recently engaged with Limerick Doc following receipt of a national circular regarding Winter 2022/23 Support measures for GP Services. The circular referred to an arrangement, whereby, Limerick Doc would be requested to provide an additional 84 hours per week between the hours of 18:00 – 22:00 for an eight week period to facilitate the increase in consultations over the winter period. Limerick Doc reverted to the Primary Care Unit Manager to advise that they do not have the capacity (i.e. manpower) to meet this request.

I trust this information addresses the issues raised in your representation.

Yours sincerely,

**Margaret Costello**  
**Head of Service, Primary Care**