

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY SENATOR K.L. MOORE
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 12th MAY 2020**

Question

Will the Minister advise the Assembly –

- (a) the average number of patients seen daily by each GP practice from the beginning of the year to 12th March 2020;
- (b) the average number of patients being seen daily by each GP practice since the urgent treatment centre (UTC) opened on 14th April; and
- (c) the number of GPs working in each GP practice during these respective periods?

Answer

The average number of patients being seen as requested under a) and b) is set out below.

Week Commencing	Average per day
08/01/2020	1251.7
15/01/2020	1233.1
22/01/2020	1231.9
29/01/2020	1197.0
05/02/2020	1245.4
12/02/2020	1150.6
19/02/2020	1087.6
26/02/2020	1181.6
04/03/2020	1167.0
11/03/2020	1365.1
18/03/2020	1777.7
25/03/2020	1492.6
01/04/2020	1159.7
08/04/2020	770.3
15/04/2020	739.6
22/04/2020	784.6
29/04/2020	751.1

c) It is not possible to give a straightforward answer to this question.

There has been a drop in the number of GPs – from 88 FTE (pre-Covid) to 64 now – due to a number of GPs having to self-isolate and not have direct patient contact. The majority have signed up to cover 10 programmed activities [equivalent to 40 hours] a week. This is significantly lower than the normal hours worked by a GP.

The reduction in the number of GPs in large part accounts for the drop in the total average number of consultations from approximately 1,200 a day to approximately 800. The reduction in hours involves the

closure of routine Saturday morning surgeries (urgent appointments are seen at the urgent treatment centre) and a reduction in the normal working week of 15% overall for each FTE GP. The spike prior to the drop in the number of consultations reflects the vulnerable screening and optimisation work that was performed by GPs during that period.