

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY THE CONNÉTABLE OF ST. LAWRENCE
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 15TH NOVEMBER 2021
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 22ND NOVEMBER 2021**

Question

Will the Minister explain any reasons, including legal ones, that prevent the staff of the Emergency Department from giving advice to the public when they telephone the Department?

Answer

Staff in the Emergency Department (ED) consistently inform the general public that when concerned about their health they should visit their GP, call an ambulance for support or visit the Emergency Department.

The most appropriate way to ensure that staff undertake an accurate assessment and produce safe clinical advice in an emergency is by seeing the patient in person.

Staff working in ED are not indemnified to give advice over the phone as it is deemed a clinical risk. ED is a service that operates only on the basis of seeing its patients. A telephone advice service has not been operated as this would not be an appropriate extension of the emergency service.

In fact, ED telephone advice is not common practice across the NHS given the requirements to safely deliver this model of care (recording facilities, telephone triage training, defined clinical pathways).