

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION 36/2007
20 March 2007

The Opposition considers that it is totally unacceptable that the Government should attempt to wash its hands of the problems with appointments at the Primary Care Centre by saying it is the fault of the patients.

The problem with this Government is that they will never admit that anything is their fault. For them it is always somebody else's fault sometimes they blame the patients, sometimes they blame the staff, sometimes they blame the unions and other times they blame the Opposition.

The Health Authority have said that an average of 550 appointments a month with GPs in the Primary Care Centre and a further 250 consultant appointments in the hospital are lost because patients do not turn up.

What they have failed to say is that there have been many instances, some of which have been reported to the Opposition, where patients turn up for appointments which they find out have been cancelled only when they get there. They are not told in advance. Once this happens on a number of occasions it is only logical that patients get fed up and do not themselves advise when they cannot keep an appointment for whatever reason.

Moreover, persons who have experienced problems in getting to see a doctor if they turn up on the spot will no doubt shudder to think of what will happen if no appointments are freed up through non-attendance. Their problem is likely to be compounded and not improved.

The Minister for Health, who is handsomely paid by the taxpayer, should take political responsibility for what is happening in his department instead of blaming all and sundry for the shortcomings of his Government and of his policies.

ENDS