



Oifig Stiúrthóir na Seirbhíse Náisiúnta Otharcharranna,
An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Otharcharranna,
Áras na hAbhann,
Crosbhóthar Thamhlachta,
Tamhlacht,
Baile Áth Cliath D24 XNP2.
Fón 01 4631608.
Riomhphost: pauline.mcdonagh@hse.ie

Office of the Director of the National Ambulance Service,
National Ambulance Service,
Rivers Building,
Tallaght Cross,
Tallaght,
Dublin D24 XNP2.
Telephone: 01 4631608.
Email: pauline.mcdonagh@hse.ie

10th December 2019.

Mr. Denis Naughten TD,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Dublin 2.

Re: PQ 48784/19: To ask the Minister for Health the steps he is taking to improve ambulance services on foot of recommendations in the report of the Trauma Steering Group; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Naughten,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

In recent years, the NAS has embarked on a strategic investment programme to develop a modern, quality service that is safe, responsive and fit for purpose. The service is implementing a significant reform agenda which mirrors many of the strategic changes underway in ambulance services internationally as they strive for high performance, efficiency and cope with a continuously increasing demand for services.

The NAS operates a singular platform for all call taking and dispatch and utilises a range of models to respond to emergency and urgent calls, provides a Critical Care and Retrieval Service for adult, paediatric and neonatal critical care as well as an Intermediate Care Service which focuses on non-emergency clinical transport, including inter-hospital transfers and low acuity work. As part of the long term evolution of the service the NAS is transitioning from an Emergency Medical Service to a Mobile Medical Service as it integrates more with community and other health care provider services across the State.



Key Recommendations associated with the National Ambulance Service in respect to the report of the Trauma Steering Group includes:

- The development of policies and protocols, to ensure the safe and timely transport and inter-hospital transfer of patients with major trauma.
- An examination of how existing HEMS resources can be enhanced and further developed, recognising the critical role of aeromedical transport in the timely transfer of high acuity patients and the implementation of a trauma system.
- Continual development of retrieval services in order to ensure capacity and capability to provide a robust and consistent national critical care retrieval service.
- The enhancement of pre-hospital care in areas outside of 60 minutes travel time to the nearest Trauma Unit and/or in circumstances where direct transportation to a Major Trauma Centre is required.

The implementation of by-pass protocols has commenced in a number of areas for patients who have suffered orthopaedic and trauma injury in line with the development of the Trauma Steering Group recommendations, to ensure that patients are brought to the most appropriate place for treatment.

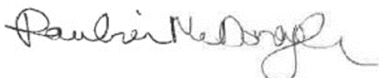
The National Service Plan 2020 includes an allocation of funding to further introduce this initiative in the South East area.

Implementing these changes will require investment and training, as well as further interdependencies (e.g. repatriation of patients post-surgery) and other issues that arise in the development of protocols and policies in relation to triage, transport and bypass. These are likely to include:

- Investment in ambulances and staff;
- An enhanced skill set of advanced paramedics to specifically focus on the treatment of trauma patients at the scene;
- Enhanced inter-hospital transfers systems;
- The introduction of additional hospital by-pass policies.

I trust this information is of assistance to and should you require additional information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Pauline McDonagh,
Senior Executive Officer.