



Oifig Stiúrthóir na Seirbhíse Náisiúnta Otharcharranna,  
An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Otharcharranna,  
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Tamhlacht,  
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Mr. Alan Kelly TD,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Dublin 2.

16<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

**Re: PQ16664/21. To ask the Minister for Health the average ambulance wait across County Kerry in 2019, 2020 and to date in 2021, in tabular form.**

Dear Deputy Kelly,

The Health Service Executive 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.

All 112/999 calls to the National Ambulance Service (NAS) are categorised under the internationally recognised Advanced Medical Priority Dispatch System (AMPDS). This system ensures that life threatening calls receive an immediate and appropriate response, while lower acuity calls may have to wait until an emergency resource becomes available. Treatment commences the moment a 112/999 emergency call is received as callers can be given instructions by the trained emergency call takers to deal with a number of situations including CPR, defibrillation, choking, control of external bleeding and childbirth all while the emergency resources are en route to the scene.

The NAS is also supported by Community First Responder schemes, responding to particular types of medical emergencies (i.e. cardiac arrest, respiratory arrest, chest pain, choking and stroke), where it is essential for the patient to receive immediate life-saving care whilst an emergency response vehicle is en route to the patient.

Internationally, it is recognised that achieving response times in rural settings can be problematic for any ambulance system. Therefore, considerable planning and effort went into establishing the Emergency Aero Medical Service by the NAS, the Irish Air Corps and the Irish Coast Guard (IRCG) and it is an essential part of our country's emergency response and has greatly reduced scene to hospital times from rural areas.



Seirbhís Sláinte  
Níos Fearr  
á Forbairt | Building a  
Better Health  
Service

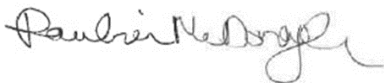
For low acuity calls, where needs are more appropriately met via alternative care pathways other than the Emergency Department, the Clinical Hub (Hear and Treat) provides advice on self-care, discharge or referral to other appropriate local treatment pathway, e.g. GP and primary care, local based urgent care service, specialist services – such as mental health service, social care services and dental services. In addition, NAS in partnership with HSE Mental Health deliver a ‘Your Mental Health’ information phone line that provides information on mental health supports and services across the country provided by the HSE and their funded partners.

The NAS functions on a national and region basis as opposed to a local or county basis and reports on the average response times for ‘Category 1’ calls by division and region. ‘Category 1’ refers to a life-threatening conditions requiring immediate intervention and/or resuscitation. For example, cardiac or respiratory arrest; airway obstruction; ineffective breathing; and unconscious patient with abnormal or ‘noisy’ breathing etc. The ‘Southern’ region is composed of Cork and Kerry. Please note that with COVID-19 additional decontamination requirements were introduced which effects the time that a crew can return to being on-call times following patient transport to hospitals.

| <b>Average Response Times for the ‘South’ Region</b> |             |                                  |
|--|-------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>2019</b>  | <b>2020</b> | <b>2021 (January - February)</b> |
| 18 minutes   | 20 minutes  | 23 minutes                       |

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

Yours sincerely,



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Pauline McDonagh - Senior Executive Officer.