



An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Otharcharranna,
Áras na hAbhann,
Crosbhóthar Thamhlachta,
Tamlachta,
Baile Áth Cliath D24 XNP2
Fón 01 4631624/6.
Riomhphost: director.nas@hse.ie

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Telephone: 01 4631624/6.
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2nd December 2021

Deputy Bernard J Durkan
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ54227/21

To ask the Minister for Health the steps that are being taken to ensure that the response times for ambulance services are as fast as possible with particular reference to the north County Kildare area; if the service has enough personnel on hand to adequately respond to all calls in a timely manner from the nearest National Ambulance Service station at all times; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Bernard J. Durkan

Dear Deputy Durkan,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) National Ambulance Service (NAS) 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.

Every day, the NAS deploys approximately 160-180 emergency ambulances, an average of 22 rapid response vehicles and in excess of 50 officer response vehicles operating from over 100 locations around the country.

All 112/999 calls around the country are responded to by the NAS. In Dublin, Dublin Fire Brigade operates a number of ambulances in addition to NAS. Where there are more calls than emergency ambulances, then emergency calls are prioritised while those calls which are clinically triaged as not being an emergency will wait until a resource becomes available.

A key target in the HSE's National Service Plan 2021 is that the majority of ambulance calls to life threatening incidents (ECHO and DELTA calls) are responded to in 18 minutes and 59 seconds or less. This target was reached in the majority of calls last year. The National Ambulance Service expects to respond to a total of 360,000 call outs this year.

A 2015 Baseline Capacity Review of the NAS found that a significant number of additional staff would be required over the coming years to support the service. Since 2015 the NAS has increased its staff numbers each year. However, each year the level of demand for NAS services is also growing.





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The surge in demand has come at a time when staff are also working hard to support COVID related swabbing and vaccinations. At this time, the level of demand now exceeds the levels experienced in 2019, i.e. pre pandemic.

80 Paramedics are due to graduate from the college at year end. NAS are also working with trade union partners to develop temporary alterations to the current deployment model to minimise the impact of the capacity challenges on staff. There is no intention to return to a geographically limited model which would re-introduce inherent patient safety risk.

In 2021, a further capacity analysis is now underway to inform future workforce planning.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely

William Merriman
Deputy Director
National Ambulance Service