



An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Otharcharranna,
Áras na hAbhann,
Crosbhóthar Thamhlachta,
Tamlacht,
Baile Áth Cliath D24 XNP2
Fón 01 4631624/6.
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6th December 2021

Deputy Holly Cairns
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ57394/21

To ask the Minister for Health the steps he is taking to address the recommendations of the National Ambulance Service emergency service baseline and capacity review. -Holly Cairns

PQ58034/21

To ask the Minister for Health if he will ensure that paramedics are facilitated to both train and be stationed within the region in which they reside. -Holly Cairns

Dear Deputy Cairns,

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

PQ57394/21; A 2015 Baseline Capacity Review of the National Ambulance Service (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. This year recruitment to the NAS is being outpaced by demand for our services which has grown by almost 30%.

There is no ready supply of Paramedics in Ireland and NAS for the most part must educate their own workforce in their own college. The Paramedic programme is degree level and takes three years. There are currently over 200 Student Paramedics at different stages of the programme right now.





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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.

As of 1 October 2021, NAS have commenced redeployment of up to 45 Paramedics from COVID related work to emergency ambulance duty and a further 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.

PQ58034/21; Delivering high levels of care is the priority at the NAS and NAS College (NASC), with locations in Dublin, Galway and Offaly, is where all NAS emergency medical technicians, paramedics and advanced paramedics receive training and on-going revalidation. NASC has the latest training aids and simulators which ensures comprehensive training in a consistent manner for all staff.

Training is further provided for the Irish coastguard, the defence forces, An Garda Síochána, health care professionals and members of voluntary organisations. The range of courses includes patient care programmes, leadership courses, tutor development, major incident planning and preparation and driving.

NASC further provides vocational and professional education and training to ambulance and associated personnel based on current best practice, to meet the strategic and operational needs of the NAS and the Health Communities and Patients it serves.

When a staff member joins the HSE NAS initially, the exigencies of the Service dictate that temporary or permanent assignments may be at a location that is not the closest to the staff member's normal place of residence. However, the HSE's NAS endeavours to facilitate all eligible staff taking into consideration the location of their normal place of residence, wherever and whenever possible.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely

William Merriman
Deputy Director
National Ambulance Service

