



Stiúrthóir
Seirbhís Náisiúnta Otharchairr

Áras na hAbhann, Crosbhóthar Thamhlachta,
Tamhlacht, Baile Áth Cliath D24 XNP2

Office of the Director
National Ambulance Service

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21 December 2021

Deputy Seán Sherlock TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ58804/21

To ask the Minister for Health the number of ambulance call outs outside of County Cork that resulted in admission to Cork University Hospital, the county of call out origin, the distances travelled, the paramedic staff required in 2020 and to date in 2021, in tabular form. - Sean Sherlock

Dear Deputy Sherlock,

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 for response.

All NAS resources are dispatched to calls across the country from the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) on a nearest available (to the incident) basis and not on a county boundary basis. In this context, NAS operates on a highly dynamic basis and reports on a regional basis only.

Therefore, in relation to your question: *“Call outs outside of County Cork that resulted in admission to Cork University Hospital, the county of call out origin and the distances travelled”*, I must advise that this information is not collected as there is no operational reason or administrative capacity to do so.

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

This year, recruitment to NAS is being outpaced by demand for our services which grew by almost 30% between February 2021 and October 2021. 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 represents 4 academic years completed over three calendar years. In the later part of 2021, there were over 200 Student Paramedics at different stages of the programme.

The surge in demand for service has come at a time when staff are also working hard to support COVID-19 related activities. The level of demand now exceeds levels experienced in 2019. The pressure on everyone working in NAS has been immense, however, both our staff and our trade union partners have stepped up at the time of our greatest challenge. Their contribution has been enormous.





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In the period 2017 to 2027, NAS predicts demand through 999 to increase by up to 107%. It is good operational practice in ambulance services to review Capacity v Demand every 5 years or so. In this context, NAS commissioned a new Baseline Capacity Review in July 2021 which is now well underway to inform future workforce planning. The outcome is expected in 2022 and is likely to represent the need for a significant and sustained increase in NAS staffing each year over the next five years.

This month, eighty Paramedics have graduated from the NAS College. In 2022, and in advance of the outcome of the new Baseline Capacity Review which will inform service planning for 2023 onwards, NAS is already planning to recruit 200 additional Student Paramedics and 200 additional EMTs. As staff graduate, they will be targeted to fill vacancies and staff new developments to be identified in the National Service Plan 2022 once approved by the Minister for Health.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Morton
Director
National Ambulance Service