



Oifig an Stiúrthóir
An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta,

Foirgneamh Aibhneacha, Crosbhóthar
Thamlachta, Tamhlacht,
Baile Átha Cliath D24 XNP2

Office of the Director
National Ambulance Service

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Ref: WMPQ's/220202

Deputy Verona Murphy TD
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

2nd February 2022

PQ1035/22 - *To ask the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to the service issues with the National Ambulance Service in County Wexford in terms of emergency response times and resources; the immediate supports that will be provided to the service in County Wexford to address the current difficulties within the service; and if he will make a statement on the matter. - Verona Murphy*

Dear Deputy Murphy,

The 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 response.

The capacity of the NAS was last reviewed in 2014 and since then, over 500 staff have been recruited. However, recruitment to the NAS is being outpaced by demand for our services.

It is worth noting that 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, i.e. four academic years undertaken over three calendar years. There are currently over 100 Student Paramedics at different stages of the programme right now. At this time, NAS estimate a requirement for an additional 90 emergency ambulances on duty every day which reflects a requirement for approx. 1,100 extra staff. The pace of predicted growth in demand might suggest 2,000 extra staff are required by 2028.

The outcome of the National Demand and Capacity Analysis is expected by the end of Q1 2022 and will then inform the development of a Workforce Plan in Q2 2022 which will inform the estimates submission for new development funding in the National Service Plan 2023 and each year thereafter.

NAS has developed a 5 year Strategy to inform service development and investment priorities over the next 5 years. This draft Strategy is now being considered by the HSE and high level indicative costings are in development. Where approved, the Strategy will be submitted to the Minister for Health for consideration. Such a strategy will inform submissions to the annual estimates process each year, starting in 2023, the submissions process for which commences in Q3 2022.

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 reports a regional basis only.

Every day, 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



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locations around the country, i.e. everywhere in the Republic of Ireland. All emergency ambulances are on duty, there are no on call arrangements.

Each year the level of demand for NAS services is growing. In 2021, NAS responded to over 363,000 emergency calls (362,000 - 2020)

Please find below the average response for the South region – category 1 calls (Echo and Delta)*

	2018	2019	2020	2021
South East	00:21	00:21	00:22	00:28
Southern	00:18	00:18	00:20	00:26

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

William Merriman
Deputy Director,
National Ambulance Service