



Oifig anStiúrthóir
An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta,

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

Office of the Director
National Ambulance Service

Rivers Building, Tallaght Cross
Tallaght, Dublin, D24 XNP2

www.hse.ie
[@hselive](https://twitter.com/hselive)

t 01 4631624/6
e director.nas@hse.ie

Ref: WM/PQ's/220819

19th August 2022

Deputy Pádraig O'Sullivan TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin

PQ39653/22

To ask the Minister for Health the reason that it took an ambulance 210 minutes to respond to an incident in Cork Ccty; his plans to limit any other similar delay occurring; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Pádraig O'Sullivan.

Details supplied; I am writing to you as constituent of Cork North-Central and I hope that you will be able to assist me with my concerns. My letter relates to my recent experience of requiring emergency medical care in Cork city. In my case, I suffered an accident (dislocated knee) which, while not life threatening, did leave me unable to move and in severe pain and distress. Following repeated calls to the ambulance service, an ambulance arrived to take me to hospital after a delay of three and a half hours (210 minutes). This ambulance was not dispatched until three hours after my first call. I am sure that you can understand the distress caused when I called for an update after waiting for over two hours to be told that the ambulance was not on the way. After waiting for three and a half hours, an ambulance crew from Skibbereen arrived to attend my case. I consider myself lucky that they were close by in Garrettstown and were available to help me. I do not write to complain about the treatment I received from the paramedics or at the hospital. I am extremely grateful for wonderful medical care that I received from all involved. However, I would like to express my concerns about the delay in treatment and provision of emergency staff/vehicles within Cork city. I am worried about the lack of ambulances and how this affects not only people living in the city but across the county. As the ambulance crew who attended my case were from Skibbereen (80km away), this will have caused knock-on delays in emergency medical care for the people in this region. After 5 years in Cork city, this is my first experience of requiring the emergency services and has left me worried about our present situation. I believe that the current provision of emergency health services in Cork is unsustainable, endangering people across the county, and I would like to see additional resources within the city to address this. I am uncertain of the direct cause of the present difficulty and how it could be resolved in the short-term, but I would be grateful for any action that could be taken to improve matters for the future

Dear Deputy O' Sullivan,

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.

Emergency calls are clinically triaged to ensure that those patients with life threatening injuries or conditions receive the fastest response possible. As demand can exceed





Oifig anStiúrthóir
An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta,

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

Office of the Director
National Ambulance Service

Rivers Building, Tallaght Cross
Tallaght, Dublin, D24 XNP2

www.hse.ie
@hselive

t 01 4631624/6
e director.nas@hse.ie

available resources, if a 112/999 call is not time critical, then during busy periods, some calls will regrettably wait longer for a response while we respond to the sickest patients first.

Thankfully, it remains the case that the majority of 112/999 calls do not relate to life threatening emergencies. For those calls that are not life threatening or clinically serious, the HSE encourages callers to consider other options such as GPs, Minor Injury Units, Pharmacists or Self Care. If you call 112/999 and your call is triaged as not life threatening or serious, we will respond as soon as we can.

Due to the lack information provided we are unable to comment on the incident outlined above. Information we would require to investigate particular calls includes patient name, location ambulance attended, time and date of the incident.

The HSE welcomes the opportunity to engage with service users to understand their experience and to see if an opportunity for service improvement exists. In this regard, the HSE encourages any service users who wish to discuss their experience to contact the HSE directly through [Your Service, Your Say](#).

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

William Merriman
Deputy Director
National Ambulance Service

