



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Oibríochtaí
An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta
Bloc 4, Lárionad Gnó,
Tulach Mhór,
Co. Uíbh Fhailí, R35 FH59

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Ref: WM/PQ/20230201

01 February 2023

Deputy Denis Naughten
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 1987/23

To ask the Minister for Health the total number of automated external defibrillators registered with the National Ambulance Service; the number of cardiac first responder groups in Ireland; the number of trained cardiac first responder volunteers by county in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Denis Naughten

PQ 1988/23

To ask the Minister for Health the number of incidents that cardiac first responder groups/members were notified of in each of the past 12 months; the corresponding number of incidents that cardiac first responder groups/members attended; the corresponding number of times a cardiac first responder member provided CPR and defibrillation to cardiac arrest victim before the ambulance arrived; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Denis Naughten

PQ 1989/23

To ask the Minister for Health if he will outline the strategy and supports that are being implemented or proposed, to enable communities to respond and improve the survival rate of cardiac arrest victims; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Denis Naughten

Dear Deputy/Minister,

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.

When a 112/999 call is received by the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC), the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) System checks if a call meets the criteria for a Cardiac First Responder (CFR) group to respond. If the call meets the criteria, the system automatically sends out a text to a CFR group in that area. This process happens in the background while the emergency call-taker continues to deal with the caller and a despatcher deploys the nearest available appropriate resource.





PQ 1987/23:

The total number of automated external defibrillators registered with the National Ambulance Service:

3089

The number of cardiac first responder groups in Ireland; the number of trained cardiac first responder volunteers by county in tabular form:

209

The number of trained cardiac first responder volunteers by county in tabular form:

County	Total number of members active
Carlow	34
Cavan	15
Clare	51
Cork	285
Donegal	57
Dublin	88
Galway	62
Kerry	124
Kildare	137
Kilkenny	32
Laois	50
Leitrim	26
Limerick	55
Longford	1
Louth	42
Mayo	52
Meath	143
Monaghan	43
Offaly	19
Roscommon	0
Sligo	45
Tipperary	41
Waterford	83
Westmeath	44
Wexford	98
Wicklow	85
Total:	1712





PQ 1988/23

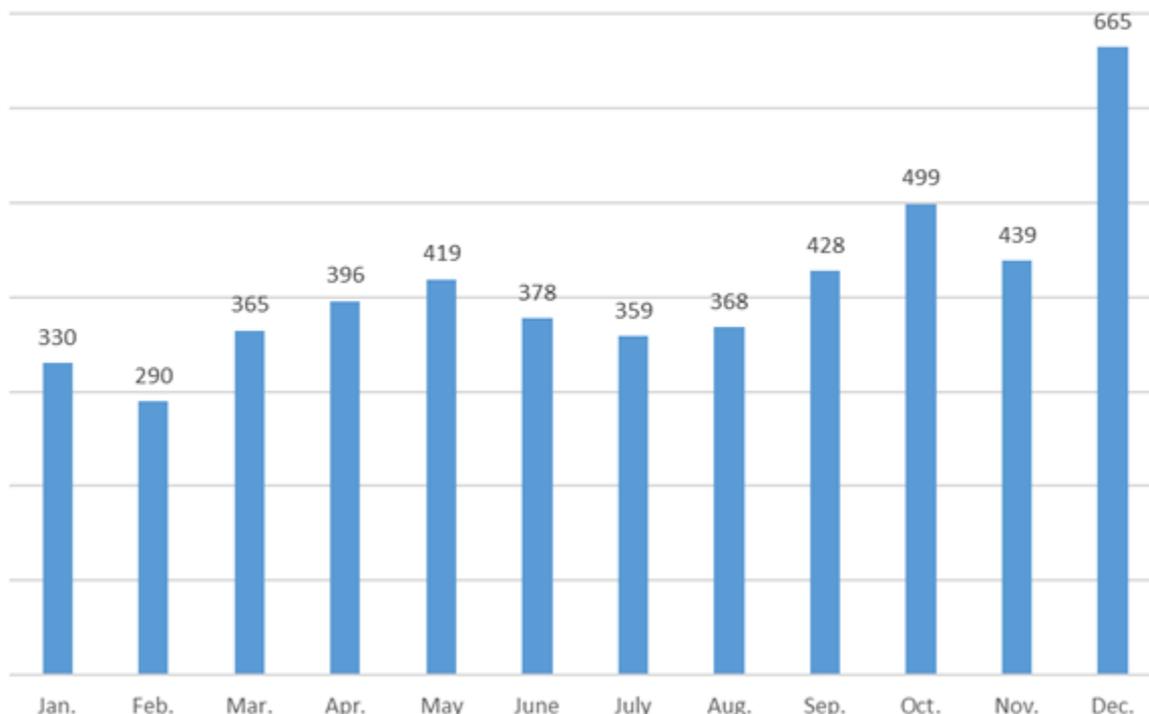
The number of incidents that cardiac first responder groups/members were notified of in each of the past 12 months:

It is not possible to accurately quantify the number of incidents to which CFR groups/members were notified in each of the past 12 months. This is because multiple resources are routinely notified to individual incidents - including NAS resources, off-duty responders and community first responders. In addition, multiple notifications are sent to these resources over the course of the call. The volume of data generated by such a query would be too great for the current system to process for a 12-month period.

The corresponding number of incidents that cardiac first responder groups/members attended:

There was 6,303 CFR responses recorded by the National Ambulance Service to a total of 4,936 incidents in 2022 (more than one CFR group may respond to an individual incident). Many CFR Schemes provide a first response to incident types other than cardiac arrest, including stroke, chest pain and falls.

Number of incidents with a CFR response categorised by month 2022



The corresponding number of times a cardiac first responder member provided CPR and defibrillation to cardiac arrest victims before the ambulance arrived.

A CFR resource is recorded as having been on scene before the National Ambulance Service a total of 268 times in 2022. For each of these incidents CFRs provided CPR and/or defibrillation if clinically indicated for the patient.





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The strategy and supports that are being implemented or proposed, to enable communities to respond and improve the survival rate of cardiac arrest victims:

Enhanced community response is critical to improving cardiac arrest survival rates -this is recognised in the National Out-of-Hospital Cardiac Arrest Strategy (OHCA) “Putting Survival at the Heart of the Community” (2019). In 2021, percentage survival from OHCA was reported as 6.1%, with 178 people returning home to their families. It is the aim of the multi-agency OHCA Strategy Governance Implementation Group that Ireland should achieve similar survival rates to our best-performing European neighbours, who more consistently achieve survival rates exceeding 10%.

With regard to enabling communities to respond and improve the survival rate of cardiac arrest victims, the OHCA Strategy has a number of recommendations that are specifically targeted at local communities, most particularly:

- **Maximise public awareness of how to recognise out-of-hospital cardiac arrest and the importance of CPR training.**

World Restart a Heart day is a global initiative held on the 16th October each year to improve recognition of cardiac arrest and to encourage communities to learn CPR. In 2022, a subgroup of the OHCA Strategy Implementation Group devised a video entitled “Check, Call, Compress, Shock” in collaboration with four survivors of cardiac arrest. This short video was shared across multiple social media channels and supported by Irish agencies that provide resuscitation services and CPR training including; the National Ambulance Service; Dublin Fire Brigade; Irish Heart Foundation, CFR Ireland; Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council; Civil Defence; Irish Red Cross; Order of Malta Ireland; St John Ambulance Ireland.

- **Simplify ‘Bystander CPR’ training.**

Since the initiation of the OHCA Strategy, with funding from Electric Ireland and Abbott, the Irish Heart Foundation has created the “Hands for Life” course that equips participants with the skills needed to provide bystander CPR. This course is intended to provide sufficient skills to a lay person who makes a 112/999 call for a person in cardiac arrest and who is asked to provide dispatch-assisted CPR. It is not intended to replace more formal CPR training. Over 28,000 people have attended Hands for Life training that was provided free of charge by Irish Heart Foundation instructors. The Hands for Life course can be taught to communities by certified CPR instructors and is regularly used by Community First Responder groups during community training.

- **Provide at least five cycles of ‘CPR 4 Schools’ training to all children during their post-primary education.**

The ‘CPR 4 Schools’ programme is designed to be run easily in schools with minimal set up and takes just 60 minutes to learn to save a life, with the course fitting perfectly into a double class period. Teachers are trained in this video-led programme and equipped with lesson plans, worksheets, online resources and a practice manikin kit that facilitates teaching of a class of 30 students at a time. This programme is fully endorsed by the OHCA Strategy Group and is available in 612 out of 728 Irish secondary schools (84%).





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- **Establish 250 Community First Responder schemes in Ireland by 2020.**

Prior to the covid pandemic, in February 2020, the goal for establishing Community First Responder (CFR) Schemes had been exceeded and a total of 275 CFR Schemes were established. For the safety of members, CFR Schemes were deactivated in the first phase of the pandemic until a phased re-introduction was commenced in December 2020. Thanks to the enthusiasm of local CFRs, the support of the National Ambulance Service Community Engagement Team and CFR Ireland, a total of 209 CFR Schemes are currently live on the NAS control system. There also 15 retained fire stations services that provide a CFR to OHCA, as well as 343 NAS staff who provide an OHCA response when they are off duty from work.

- **Evaluate the role and feasibility of a live Automated External Defibrillator (AED) register.**

The OHCA Strategy Group has carried out scoping of the feasibility of a live AED register and has considered different models that are operational internationally. A live AED register will have to be integrated with the National Ambulance Service control system, therefore cybersecurity is a major consideration in commissioning and deploying such an AED register. The resourcing and costs associated with implementing and maintaining a live AED register have been estimated. Capital and revenue funding for progress of the AED register (and subsequently a community/emergency first responder application that dispatches responders, records arrival times and facilitates event data collection) have been sought.

The Governance Implementation Group for the OHCA Strategy for Ireland have agreed their Priority Action Plan for 2023, and have continued a strong emphasis on strengthening the links of the Chain of Survival in the Irish community including:

1. Progression of the AED Registry and supporting App for CFRs
2. Training, equipping and deploying high numbers of uniformed first responders include An Garda, retained fire services, GPs and off-duty ambulance staff
3. Continuation of funding for national activities associated with Global Restart a Heart Day

It is hoped that sufficient funding will be forthcoming to enable this important health service initiative to go from strength to strength and increase the chances of survival from cardiac arrest in the Irish community.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

William Merriman
Director of Operations
National Ambulance Service

