



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

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18 May 2023

Deputy Peadar Toibin  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**PQ 20846/23**

**To ask the Minister for Health if he will review the arrangement for the Ambulance Service overnight emergency vehicle in (details supplied) in Trim, County Meath which would effectively leave the Trim area with no overnight emergency vehicle; and if he will ensure that the 30% sick leave rate will remain in place to maintain an essential overnight emergency service for the Trim area; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Peadar Tóibín**

**Details supplied: where previously if staffing levels fell by 30% on any night in other areas such as south Meath, Cavan and Monaghan paramedic crews in Trim would provide cover, and whereby this rate of sick leave is now being reduced to 20% if paramedic crews are out on sick elsewhere which occurs frequently, and**

Dear Deputy Toibin,

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.

In line with international best practice, the National Ambulance Service (NAS) operates a dynamic deployment model which results in the closest ambulance being tasked to respond to high acuity PURPLE calls (Life Threatening cardiac or respiratory) or RED calls (life threatening illness or injury other than cardiac or respiratory arrest). This call taking and dispatch function is operated by the NAS National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) across two sites in Dublin and Ballyshannon. All NAS resources are dispatched to calls across the country from the NEOC, on a nearest available (to the incident) basis and not on a county boundary basis.

Response times per county are not deemed a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for the Health Information Quality Authority (HIQA), the Department of Health (DoH) or the National Ambulance Service (NAS). Therefore, reporting and publishing of response times on a county by county basis same is not a requirement.

There is currently one Advanced Life Support (ALS) Rapid Response Vehicle (RRV) operating out of Trim for 7 nights per week and 6 days a week (with the exception of Tuesday). This RRV service provides ALS to Emergency Ambulance crews who are deployed from nearby stations in Dunshaughlin, Navan, Maynooth and Swords, day and night, in response to





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999/112 calls from across Meath, Kildare, North Dublin and beyond, as part of the dynamic deployment model. This service also provides an initial ALS response to patients where no Emergency Ambulance is currently available. However, an RRV, of itself, cannot transport a patient to the Emergency Department - the conveyance of patients, in Trim and elsewhere, can only be conducted by Emergency Ambulance.

NAS are consistently working towards the improvement of the quality of service and in particular to improving response times and conveyance times to the most appropriate pathway or Emergency Department.

In the event of unexpected absence due to a number of factors including sick leave, NAS have a duty of care to provide the best possible emergency service to their patient population. In these instances, NAS use a staff shortfall percentage such as 30% as criteria in deciding whether or not to withdraw an RRV advanced paramedic to partner with a solo crew member in order to provide emergency services on an emergency ambulance. This decision does mean that no RRV service would be available for that shift. However, it also means that an Emergency Ambulance is available for the region.

I trust that this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

William Merriman  
Director of Operations  
National Ambulance Service

