



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

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Deputy Thomas Pringle
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

14th March 2024

PQ9412.24

To ask the Minister for Health his Department's plans for the role out of the community paramedics position will make a statement on the matter. -Thomas Pringle

Dear Deputy Pringle,

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 response.

In line with its strategic plan 'Vision 2020' and the implementation of Sláintecare, (2017) the NAS engaged in cross-border collaboration with partners under "Co-operation and Working Together," (CAWT) to pilot a Community Paramedic service in the Republic of Ireland. This was an EU Interreg-funded initiative for the development of a new form of community-based health care in which paramedics practiced outside their customary emergency response and transport roles in ways that facilitate the more appropriate use of emergency care resources and enhance access to care for patients in rural and minor urban areas.

Due to the success of this project, the NAS mainstreamed the Community Paramedic service, gaining approval for funding from the Department of Health and the HSE in September 2020. The service has proved to be safe and high quality for patients, delivering their care in their homes/community, where clinically appropriate.

In January 2023, PHECC published a consultation process to finalise a Framework for the Specialist Paramedic – Community Care. The HSE and NAS very much welcomed this important step by the professional regulator of Paramedicine in Ireland to develop a new national standard. This new Framework will form the foundation for the widespread introduction of Community Paramedicine in Ireland.

In the HSE, the new Specialist Paramedic – Community Care role is expected to be part of a suite of NAS and wider health service services that align to the universal healthcare principles of delivering the right care, in the right place, at the right time. Specialist Paramedic – Community Care will deliver care in the NAS Clinical Hub (Hear and Treat/Refer), following response to a 999 call (See and Treat/Refer) or in other future healthcare settings.





**Oifig an Stiúrthóra Oibríochtaí
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To facilitate the adoption of Community Paramedicine across the HSE, PHECC will need to develop and introduce a new practitioner level of registration at 'Specialist Paramedic' level. In the HSE, Paramedics currently undertake a BSc. (Hon) in Paramedic Studies in UCC (QQI Level 8) while Specialist Paramedics will need to undertake an MSc. level programme, at QQI Level 9. In this context, the HSE as a potential employer of Specialist Paramedics will need to establish a new employment grade for this level of health care professional. Engagement with SIPTU on the introduction of such a new grade has been ongoing since July 2022.

Both elements are necessary to facilitate the formal introduction of Specialist Paramedics in Community Care to the Irish Health Care System.

In the interim, there are a small number of existing staff who have completed a MSc. in Community Paramedicine through NAS' partnership with UCC and who are working in the National Ambulance Service under the authorisation of the NAS Clinical Director.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

William Merriman
Director of Operations
National Ambulance Service

