



Oifig anStiúrthóir
An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta,

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

Office of the Director
National Ambulance Service

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5 July 2024

Deputy Violet-Anne Wynne TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 27772/24

To ask the Minister for Health the number of echo and delta (life threatening) ambulance calls that were received in the Kilrush catchment area; the length of time the ambulance took to reach the patient in each case; where the ambulance that responded to the echo and delta calls was based; how far they had to travel to reach the patient, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ 27773/24

To ask the Minister for Health if it is policy to send emergency ambulances on overnight AS3 (non-urgent interfacility transfer) calls; how many times these calls have occurred with Kilrush ambulances in the past twelve months; how many echo and delta calls were responded to while an emergency ambulance was on AS3, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Wynne,

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.

Demand via the 999 service has increased by 14% since 2019 and it is now a matter of public record https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/33/joint_committee_on_health/submissions/2023/2023-02-22_opening-statement-robert-morton-director-national-ambulance-service-nas_en.pdf that the NAS Workforce Plan has identified the need for considerable growth in the workforce across the country both now and into the future.

Approximately 48% of all 999 calls are classified as PURPLE/RED, i.e. life threatening or potentially life threatening while approximately 32% of all patients conveyed to ED are still admitted to a hospital, even after assessment, diagnosis and treatment in the ED.

Approximately 17% of all 999 calls are classified as GREEN, meaning that they are non-life-threatening and are not time-sensitive and referred to the Clinical Hub for review.

Both the HSE and the NAS regularly run campaigns to ask people to consider all available care options before calling for an ambulance or attending an emergency department. These include highlighting self-care options for issues like colds, pharmacies, GP surgeries, out-of-hours GP services, emergency services and injury units.

The NAS ask that people consider these care options and only call 112 or 999 in cases of real emergency but stress that they do call if they need an ambulance.





PQ 27772/24

National Service Plan (KPIs)

The HSE National Service Plan (NSP) for 2024 sets out the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for each HSE service. In relation to NAS, there are two national aggregate KPI targets for emergency calls which apply to the following call categories only:

- PURPLE (life-threatening cardiac or respiratory arrest) – Target: Respond to 75% of such calls within 18 minutes and 59 seconds
- RED (life-threatening illness or injury, other than cardiac or respiratory arrest) - Target: Respond to 45% of such calls within 18 minutes and 59 seconds

These targets are national aggregate targets only and are not measured or reported on a county basis. 999 calls which are not categorised as PURPLE or RED are not deemed to be emergency calls and therefore, there are no response times targets for such calls.

At the end of Month 5, 2024, NAS are currently achieving both targets as set out in the NSP 2024.

The specific information you have requested is not available as there is no operational reason for the collection of such information and there are no clerical administrative staff in place to facilitate the production on such reports.

PQ 27773/24

Dispatch System

The deployment model used by NAS for emergency calls is based on the Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Dispatch Standard published by the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC) as the competent regulator in this area <https://www.phecit.ie/Custom/BSIDocumentSelector/Pages/DocumentViewer.aspx?id=0GsVrspmiT0dOhDFFXZvlz0q5GYO7igwzB6buxHEgeAv3r3L0PQskx1Ab43WhchLRSYLXxHFWCQ%252bU%252bfXr3M4pYkdSOVm%252fwnYZE57yAMym6f%252f7VSgXZUbiAUtZRweGc9SSLXlpskgskhwOEQNjl20sDNE%252btLRx9%252fdfBg41p3E4zM%253d>

In 2022, a number of procedures were developed in consultation with the trade unions to ameliorate some of the impacts of the gap between demand and available capacity on staff working arrangements.

These measures including arrangements for meal breaks, late finishes, handing over patients and the range of a reasonable response. Feedback from the trade unions on the impact of these arrangements has been positive.

To ensure those patients with life threatening or potentially life-threatening illness or injury receive the fastest response, all 999 calls are clinically triaged. To ensure the nearest available resource is dispatched to such calls, NAS operates on a national basis and mobilises responses to calls for assistance based on patient needs.

In this regard, ambulances may travel to and be dispatched from various locations irrespective of their base as they are not confined to work in geographical areas or former Health Board boundaries. The current deployment model is designed around international best practice, is internationally accredited, supported by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA)





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and has eliminated previous practices where the nearest ambulance was not always dispatched due to former legacy boundaries.

The deployment model used by NAS for inter facility calls is based on the Inter Facility Patient Transfer Standard published by the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC) as the competent regulator in this area <https://www.phecit.ie/Custom/BSIDocumentSelector/Pages/DocumentViewer.aspx?id=oGsVrspmiT0dOhDFFXZvlz0q5GYO7igwzB6buxHEgeD013gEh%252bBwnpgYGEV7P6lBaIHn9i3gtl91GoBfn2HXa8jFQskt1vITHQAXZzRWrgfnU%252fs%252fg%252fPZHpre8grmUg3RC4N3AC5T6x%252bc2B%252bwT%252fwQY8l62aTIOZl6Vd%252fC6WUbYL9P5okOKJ%252bPQ%253d%253d>

The specific information you have requested is not available as there is no operational reason for the collection of such information and there are no clerical administrative staff in place to facilitate the production on such reports.

I hope you find this information helpful

Yours sincerely

Robert Morton
Director
National Ambulance Service

