



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
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6 February 2025

Deputy Seán Ó Fearghaíl TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ25/5914

To ask the Minister for Health the national average ambulance response time; the Carlow ambulance average response time; and if she will make a statement on the matter

Dear Deputy Ó Fearghaíl,

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 response.

By way of relevant context, we draw attention to the following:

NAS is one of the State's Principal Emergency Services (PES) serving the population of Ireland, i.e., over five million people. An independent demand and capacity analysis conducted in 2022, projected 999 activity to increase by up to 107% over the 10-year period from 2017 to 2027.

Demand via the 999 service has increased by 25% since 2019, with growth in 2024 up by 9% on 2023. The need for additional capacity is a matter of public record https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/committee_of_public_accounts/2021-09-23/3/, whereby it was confirmed by the HSE (CEO and COO) in September 2021, that NAS had a then capacity deficit of 90 emergency ambulance crews daily (1,080 WTE).

The matter was the subject of further public record in February 2023 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 following the finalisation of a NAS Workforce Plan 2022-2028 in June 2022, underpinned by an independent demand and capacity analysis, which identified the need for considerable growth in the workforce across the country, both now and into the future (2,579 additional WTE by 2028).

The WTE Control Limit for NAS in 2024 was 2,321 WTE which represents a growth of almost 300 WTE since 2019. There are no approved vacancies available at this time as of the 31 January 2025, as the NAS WTE position was in excess of this WTE Control Limit.





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In comparison to NAS, the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust has 4,079 WTE <https://senedd.wales/media/kradakae/gen-ld16576-e.pdf> to serve 3.1m people (2021 Census), while the Scottish Ambulance Service has 5,837 WTE <https://www.scottishambulance.com/publications/annual-report-and-accounts/> to serve 5.4m people (2022 Census).

In 2025, the HSE National Service Plan set national aggregate Key Performance Indicator (KPI) targets for emergency calls as follows:

- PURPLE (Echo, life-threatening cardiac or respiratory arrest) (75% in 18 minutes, 59 seconds)
- RED (Delta, life-threatening illness or injury, other than cardiac or respiratory arrest) (45% in 18 minutes, 59 seconds)

As NAS response targets are national aggregate targets rather than locally based, reporting records on response performance are national level only.

There are no response time targets for 999 calls that are neither life-threatening nor potentially life threatening. Hence during busy periods, patients triaged as non-serious or non-life-threatening can and do unfortunately experience delays in our response.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours Sincerely

Robert Morton
Director
National Ambulance Service

