



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

Office of the Director of Operations  
National Ambulance Service  
Block 4, Central Business Park,  
Tullamore,  
Co. Offaly R35 FH59

[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)  
[@hselive](https://twitter.com/hselive)  
t 057 9357696  
e [william.merriman@hse.ie](mailto:william.merriman@hse.ie)

NM/PQ25954/25

4<sup>th</sup> June 2025

Deputy Alan Kelly TD  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

PQ 25954/25

**To ask the Minister for Health the plans in place to help the recruitment crisis in the National Ambulance Service nationwide; the plans in place to recruit staff in north Tipperary, seeing only one ambulance is operating in the whole of north Tipperary last night; the plans in place to retain staff currently operating in the service; and if she will make a statement on the matter. -Alan Kelly**

Dear Deputy Kelly

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.

Firstly, in relation to your concern all NAS recruitment campaigns are over subscribed and since 2021, NAS has not encountered any difficulties in filling any available posts.

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/](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](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).





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

**Office of the Director of Operations  
National Ambulance Service**  
Block 4, Central Business Park,  
Tullamore,  
Co. Offaly R35 FH59

[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)  
[@hselive](https://twitter.com/hselive)  
t 057 9357696  
e [william.merriman@hse.ie](mailto:william.merriman@hse.ie)

The HSE Pay and Numbers Strategy for 2024 set the WTE Ceiling for NAS at 2,321 WTE which represents a growth of almost 300 WTE since 2019. The WTE Ceiling will increase further in 2025 to 2,655.

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).

The National Ambulance Service (NAS) serves the Midwest – which includes Co. Tipperary - through a highly skilled workforce, a fleet consisting of emergency ambulances, intermediate care vehicles and rapid response vehicles and the NAS National Emergency Operations Centre. The Midwest also has a large number of alternative care pathways, including but not limited to Community Paramedic, Pathfinder and the Alternative Prehospital Pathway, these resources serve the people of the Midwest offering a multitude of alternative pathways for care.

NAS continue to seek additional New Service Development posts through the Estimates process in order to increase its' workforce to serve the growing population and increase in demand for Co. Tipperary, the Midwest and Nationally.

Table 1 below gives details of the no of ambulances available, on average in the Midwest Region is as follows:

DAY	AVERAGE NO OF EA'S (DAY)	AVERAGE NO OF EA'S (NIGHT)
Monday	16	13
Tuesday	15	12
Wednesday	15	12
Thursday	16	12
Friday	14	13
Saturday	13	14
Sunday	13	13

Table 1: Average no of EA's -MidWest

A key part of the NAS workforce planning is supporting retention. The NAS recognise that the myriad of opportunities that now exist across the HSE presents tremendous career opportunities and advancement for their staff. The NAS are focused on understanding how they can improve the working environment for existing staff. The NAS are also working to complete the re-design of the structure of the organisation and in doing so, create career opportunities for those who want to progress and advance.

To this end, the NAS continues to work closely with trade unions partners on key areas of concern including reducing late finishes, improving access to meal breaks, reducing the travel distance to calls, facilitating staff transfers close to home and improving rostering and workforce planning arrangements. The NAS and HSE continues to work with staff representative bodies on resolving a number of issues relating to pay and reform in NAS.





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

**Office of the Director of Operations  
National Ambulance Service**  
Block 4, Central Business Park,  
Tullamore,  
Co. Offaly R35 FH59

[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)  
[@hselive](https://twitter.com/hselive)  
t 057 9357696  
e [william.merriman@hse.ie](mailto:william.merriman@hse.ie)

Constructive engagement has continued through a WRC-facilitated process in 2025 with a view to finding a resolution.

To further support staff retention, the NAS has developed the HR People Plan 2022 – 2025. The overarching purpose of this plan is to enhance employee experience, optimise the NAS working environment and meet expectations of health policy in Ireland. The NAS HR People Plan is an enabling plan which describes how, as an organisation, the NAS plan to respond to areas of concern relating to staff, and outlines the actions the NAS will take to address these concerns. The plan comprises of nine primary priorities with each priority supported by an action plan that will deliver a host of important benefits for the NAS workforce and set out a clear vision for the NAS HR team for the next four years.

Through these actions, the NAS aim to:

Ensure that the NAS are supporting our people by nurturing the skills and capabilities of all individuals;

Promote and encourage career development so that our people experience professional satisfaction in an engaging and rewarding work environment; and

Showcase our commitment to support, engage and develop our people.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

---

Niall Murray General Manager  
National Ambulance Service

