



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

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BcMG/PQ45693-4/25

22nd September 2025

Deputy Darren O'Rourke TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 45693/25

To ask the Minister for Health the number, category and response time for ambulance call-outs to addresses in Ashbourne, County Meath in 2023, 2024 and to date in 2025, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter. -Darren O'Rourke

PQ 45694/25

To ask the Minister for Health her plans to improve ambulance services serving Ashbourne, County Meath; if she intends to provide a dedicated service; and if she will make a statement on the matter. -Darren O'Rourke

Dear Deputy O'Rourke

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.

PQ45693/25:

The NAS is one of the State's Principal Emergency Services (PES) serving a population in Ireland of over five million people. The Service's response time performance is assessed against key performance indicators (KPIs) set annually in the HSE's National Service Plan. These KPIs relate to the most serious life threatening calls which the Service receives. In 2025, the HSE National Service Plan set KPI targets for the NAS for emergency calls as follows:

- **PURPLE:** Life-threatening cardiac or respiratory arrest, where the target is to respond to 75% of such calls within 18 minutes and 59 seconds;
- **RED:** Life-threatening illness or injury other than cardiac or respiratory arrest, where the target is to respond to 45% of such calls within 18 minutes and 59 seconds.

There are no response times targets for low acuity calls originating through 999. Consequently, during busy periods, patients triaged as non-life threatening can experience delays in our response, which while regrettable, remains beyond our control due to the significant gap between rapidly rising demand and the level of capacity available.

As the NAS' response KPIs are aggregate targets, the Service does not maintain records of performance data other than at national and regional level. Table 1 provides a monthly





breakdown of national and regional (North Leinster, including County Meath) performance against our KPIs for each of the years requested:

Table 1.

YEAR	MONTH	TARGET	NATIONAL PURPLE RESPONSE	NORTH LEINSTER RESPONSE	TARGET	NATIONAL RED RESPONSE	NORTH LEINSTER RESPONSE
2023	January	75%	77%	80%	45%	48%	51%
	February	75%	73%	78%	45%	49%	47%
	March	75%	73%	75%	45%	45%	43%
	April	75%	73%	76%	45%	47%	50%
	May	75%	71%	75%	45%	46%	48%
	June	75%	69%	72%	45%	44%	42%
	July	75%	71%	77%	45%	44%	40%
	August	75%	71%	82%	45%	43%	46%
	September	75%	67%	72%	45%	45%	51%
	October	75%	73%	80%	45%	45%	46%
	November	75%	72%	76%	45%	47%	48%
	December	75%	72%	74%	45%	41%	33%
2024	January	75%	74%	83%	45%	48%	50%
	February	75%	77%	77%	45%	48%	48%
	March	75%	77%	80%	45%	48%	48%
	April	75%	79%	80%	45%	49%	50%
	May	75%	73%	74%	45%	47%	48%
	June	75%	74%	79%	45%	45%	47%
	July	75%	71%	79%	45%	47%	50%
	August	75%	72%	76%	45%	47%	49%
	September	75%	73%	80%	45%	47%	48%
	October	75%	72%	74%	45%	46%	48%
	November	75%	73%	76%	45%	45%	46%
	December	75%	66%	75%	45%	40%	41%

Table 1: National Response times and targets 2023 & 2024

Since January 2025, regional data has been recorded by NAS along Regional Health Area (RHA) boundaries - in this instance, Co. Meath falls within the Dublin & North East (DNE) RHA. Table 2 provides a monthly breakdown of national and regional performance against our KPIs for the year to July 2025:

Table 2.

MONTH	TARGET	NATIONAL PURPLE RESPONSE	DNE RESPONSE	TARGET	NATIONAL RED RESPONSE	DNE RESPONSE
January	75%	73%	79%	45%	43%	44%
February	75%	73%	75%	45%	47%	51%
March	75%	72%	72%	45%	47%	52%
April	75%	71%	80%	45%	47%	54%
May	75%	74%	73%	45%	47%	49%





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June	75%	70%	75%	45%	43%	44%
July	75%	72%	83%	45%	44%	51%

Table 2: RHA A Response times 2025

PO45694/25:

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 record¹, and it was confirmed by the HSE (CEO and COO) in September 2021, that the NAS had a then capacity deficit of 90 emergency ambulance crews daily, or 1,080 Whole Time Equivalents (WTEs).

Finalisation of the NAS Workforce Plan 2022-2028 in June 2022, supported by an independent demand and capacity analysis, emphasised once more the need for considerable Service growth across the country, both now and into the future (2,579 additional WTE required by 2028).

The HSE Pay and Numbers Strategy for 2024 set the WTE Ceiling for the NAS at 2,321, which represents a growth of almost 300 WTE nationally, since 2019. In 2025 the NAS ceiling has increased once more to 2655 WTE. Further capacity increases have been sought by the NAS as part of its comprehensive submission to the HSE's Estimate Process for 2026. These increases, if realised, will have a real impact on the NAS' response times nationally, and will help it keep pace with the demand for its services across the country, including in Co. Meath.

Currently, the NAS operates three permanent Ambulance Stations in Co. Meath, in the towns of Navan, Dunshaughlin and Trim. Crews from these stations respond to calls within the greater Meath area and across neighbouring counties as demand requires, in accordance with the NAS' model of dynamic ambulance deployment. This framework aligns with international best practice, and enables the NAS to direct resources preferentially toward high-acuity cases demanding immediate emergency intervention. Dynamic deployment also allows the NAS to categorise non-serious or non-life-threatening calls, and to provide a resource appropriate to the patient's clinical need. This does mean that at particularly busy periods, lower acuity calls will be liable to experience a longer wait for an ambulance, and this has become more of a challenge in recent years with the continuous growth in activity volume. Unfortunately, there are no plans to open an ambulance station in Ashbourne at this time, however the Service is committed to building capacity and improving facilities in its existing stations in Co. Meath.

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

- **PURPLE:** Life-threatening cardiac or respiratory arrest, where the target is to respond to 75% of such calls within 18 minutes and 59 seconds;
- **RED:** Life-threatening illness or injury other than cardiac or respiratory arrest, where the target is to respond to 45% of such calls within 18 minutes and 59 seconds.

¹ https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/committee_of_public_accounts/2021-09-23/3/





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999 calls which are not categorised as PURPLE or RED are not deemed to be emergency in nature and therefore, are not subject to response time targets.

The NAS is currently meeting it's KPI targets for PURPLE and RED calls in the Dublin North East (DNE) Region of the country, which includes County Meath.

Yours sincerely,

Brendan McGovern
General Manager
National Ambulance Service

