



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive



21st October 2014

Mr Denis Naughten TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

Dear Deputy Naughten,

Your email of 1st October 2014 to Mr Tony O'Brien, Director General of the Health Service Executive regarding the National Ambulance Service refers.

The National Ambulance Service serves the needs of patients and clients as part of an integrated health system, through the provision of high quality, safe and patient centred services. Care begins immediately the emergency call is received, through to the safe transportation and handover of the patient to the clinical team at the receiving hospital.

The NAS works on an area and national basis as opposed to a local basis and deploys its resources in a dynamic manner to ensure that the nearest appropriate resource is mobilised to the location of any incident. In the Roscommon area for example, emergency resources can be deployed from surrounding areas such as Athlone, Mullingar, Carrick-on-Shannon and Longford as required.

In relation to HSE West, the NAS serves a population of approximately 1.2 million across Galway, Mayo and Roscommon from 13 ambulance stations (1 control centre) with a staff resource of 188 WTEs. The NAS fleet within the West includes 33 emergency ambulances, 9 intermediate care vehicles and 5 rapid response vehicles.

In order to address the queries outlined in your correspondence it is important to put in context the overall NAS resource pool available within the West across the three counties

Current resources Galway

Galway City	3 ambulances on days Monday to Sunday (4 on Thursday) 2 ambulances on nights Monday to Sunday 3 ICVs on days Monday to Sunday 1 ICV on days Saturday and Sunday
Ballinasloe	1 ambulance on days Mon-Sun

Seirbhís Náisiúnta Otharcharranna
Teach Dara, Ascaill an Crann Teile, Páirc na Mílaoise, Nás na Rí, Co. Chill Dara

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	1 ambulance on nights Mon-Sun
Carraroe	1 ambulance on days Mon-Sun 1 ambulance on nights Mon-Sun
Loughrea	1 ambulance on days Mon-Sun 1 ambulance on nights Mon-Sun
Clifden	1 ambulance on days Mon-Sun 1 ambulance on nights Mon-Sun
Tuam Dispatch Point	Ambulance deployed from Galway or Ballinasloe

Current resources Mayo

Castlebar	3 ambulances on days Monday to Sunday (4 on Thursday) 2 ambulances on nights Monday to Sunday 3 ICVs on days Monday to Sunday 1 ICV on days Saturday and Sunday
Ballina	1 ambulance on days Mon-Sun 1 ambulance on nights Mon-Sun
Bellmullet	1 ambulance on days Mon-Sun 1 ambulance on nights Mon-Sun
Mulranny Dispatch Point	Ambulance deployed from Castlebar or Ballina

Current resources Roscommon

Roscommon	3 ambulances on days Monday to Sunday 2 ambulances on nights Monday to Sunday 1 AP RRV on days Mon-Sun 1 AP RRV on nights Mon-Sun 2 ICVs on days Mon-Fri
Boyle	1 ambulance on days Mon-Sun 1 ambulance on nights Mon-Sun
Loughglynn Dispatch Point	Ambulance deployed from Roscommon

In addition to the above the Emergency Aero medical service which commenced in June 2012 is available within the West and for the first 8 months of 2014 35 missions have been completed within Roscommon. This is deployed via the National Aero-Medical Co-ordination Centre in Tullamore.

In response to your specific queries, the National Ambulance Service can confirm the following in relation to Tuam, Mulranny and Loughglynn:

- Refurbishment of the former Garda Station at Loughglynn has commenced. €70k has been allocated for the refurbishment works. Currently there are three emergency ambulances on duty during the day and two at night at Roscommon Town Ambulance Station as well as an Advanced Paramedic Rapid Response Vehicle on a 24/7 basis. On completion of the works at

Loughglynn an emergency ambulance will be deployed from Roscommon Town to Loughglynn on a 24/7 basis.

- Tuam Ambulance Base was allocated a budget of €1.2m for completion. The build was completed in 2012 and is now operational utilising crews from Galway and Ballinasloe existing rosters. Crews from both Galway City and Ballinasloe are being deployed from the Tuam base.
- Mulranny ambulance Base was allocated a budget of €470k to include the purchase of the building and its refurbishment and was completed in 2013. Emergency ambulance crews from Castlebar and Ballina are being deployed from Mulranny.

While funding has been sought as part of the estimates process for provision for additional staff for Tuam and Mulranny, there is no guarantee that this funding will be forthcoming. The NAS will deploy a single crew from existing resources at Roscommon Town Ambulance Station to Loughglynn following completion of the refurbishments on a 24/7 basis.

Again, it is important to note however, that the NAS operates on a national and area basis and not on a local basis. The National Ambulance Service is moving towards a more dynamic and tactical model of service delivery. The current model where ambulances remain at a single station until dispatched to incidents will eventually change. Emergency resources will be deployed from a central location and move to a number of locations in a particular area rather than remaining at a single location until required. This will ensure greater geographical cover as well as improvements in response times and patient outcomes.

National Control Centre

The development of the National Ambulance Service National Control Centre will also assist in the deployment of crews across previously recognised boundaries. As part of this project, Castlebar Ambulance Control will be integrated into Ballyshannon thus affording the ability to dispatch crew from the existing North West and West area in a more efficient manner.

The centralisation of Castlebar Control Centre to Ballyshannon Control Centre is contingent on the move to a digital platform and the planned 'go-live' date for Ballyshannon Ambulance Control to commence operating on a digital technology platform is October 14th 2014. Following this, the planned centralisation and 'go-live' date for the Ambulance Control Centre operations to migrate from Castlebar to Ballyshannon is October 28th 2014.

Performance Improvement Action Plan

The NAS has developed a Performance Improvement Action Plan focused on achieving an improvement in response time's performance. This plan focuses on areas such as:

- Faster mobilization times for crews
- Processes around call taking and dispatch
- Engagement with and development of Community First Responder Schemes

Development of an Intermediate Care Service

This Intermediate Care Service is specifically focused on the delivery of inter hospital transfers. This additional resource has reduced the reliance on emergency ambulances to undertake inter-hospital transfers and 'low-acuity' calls. The

Intermediate Care Service is based in Castlebar and Galway City Ambulance Stations.

Capacity Review

The National Ambulance Service National Capacity Review is currently underway and is being conducted by a company with extensive international expertise in this area. This is the first time that such a review has been conducted in Ireland and will explore the resource requirements required to improve response times across the country as a whole. It will determine what resources are required and how they can be used in the most efficient manner. It should be noted that achieving response times in rural settings is always a difficult task for any ambulance system and often requires extensive investment in additional resources coupled with extensive community based first responder schemes.

The capacity review will determine the optimal system for the Irish setting and is expected to be concluded by December 2014.

I trust this clarifies the matter you have raised and please do not hesitate to contact me should you require further information.

Yours sincerely,



Martin Dunne
Director
National Ambulance Service