



6 December 2024

Email:

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Request No: 33443-24(AME/NA)

Subject: Cross Border Ambulance Queries

Date Received: 27/08/2024

Thank you for your request for information received on 28th August which was dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) Health and Social Care Trust has now completed its search for the information you requested and that is detailed below.

1) What barriers (if any) are in place at present that prevents this cross-border emergency NIAS ambulance conveyance from occurring in all emergency situations?	Mutual recognition of the professional registration of clinicians (e.g. doctors / paramedics) no longer exists between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. This means that clinicians from Northern Ireland cannot legally practice in the Republic and vice versa, unless they hold dual registration.
2) What exceptions are presently made to enable crossborder emergency NIAS ambulance conveyance?	NIAS holds Memoranda of Understanding with the National Ambulance Service of Ireland to cover cross-border response in the event of an acute emergency and the provision of mutual aid in the event of a declared major incident. Due to mobile phone roaming arrangements in proximity to the border, it is not uncommon for NIAS to receive emergency calls from the Republic and vice versa. The receiving organisation will normally undertake triage of the emergency call and then pass details electronically to their counterpart in whose jurisdiction the emergency has arisen. In border areas both services may provide an emergency response to the opposite jurisdiction, but the patient is typically transferred to a hospital within the health service of the country where the incident occurred.



3) Can you please provide any reviews/reports/etc relating to the conveyance of patients by emergency NIAS ambulance across the border that have been published since 1st January 2020.	NIAS has not published any such reports.
4) Can you provide an update on any ongoing work with regard to developing such pathways that are underway at present?	Both NIAS and the National Ambulance Service of Ireland have made representation to their respective Departments of Health and professional bodies highlighting the issue of cross-border working, and NIAS is currently meeting with representatives from the Department of Health to seek long-term practical solutions.
5) Can you confirm any meetings/seminars/conferences et cetera that have taken place that included discussion of cross border emergency ambulance conveyance of patients - since 1st January 2020	Meetings and discussions have been held between the senior management teams of both Ambulance Services and their respective Departments of Health, and the Medical Directors and Chief Executives of both services have held joint discussions on how to progress the issue. The NIAS Emergency Planning team, Helicopter Emergency Medical Service team, and the Trauma Network leads have held discussions with their counterparts to scope how cross-border emergency response might be facilitated in future. An all-island trauma care conference was held in Belfast in September 2024 where areas of mutual interest and potential support were discussed. Outside of NIAS, we are aware that the Western Trust has previously held meetings for many years with their counterparts in the Republic of Ireland regarding the cross-border transfer of patients for the purpose of primary percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI).

I hope the above fully assists you.

Please note that, under the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations, if you wish to publish or otherwise use this information besides for your own means, you will need to seek our permission to do so.

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible, or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter.

In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to the Director of Planning, Performance and Corporate Services, Northern Ireland Ambulance

Service (NIAS) HSC Trust, Site 30, Knockbracken Healthcare Park, Saintfield Road, Belfast, BT8 8SG.

If following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision maker, you remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request, you may make a complaint under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the Trust has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

You can write to the Information Commissioner at:

Email: ni@ico.org.uk

Website: [ICO Website](#)

Post: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, CHESHIRE SK9 5AF

Telephone: 028 9027 8757 or 0303 123 1114 (Belfast based Office)

In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out. However the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Please be advised that NIAS replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ <https://nias.hscni.net> Personal details in respect of your request will have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.

Yours sincerely

(not signed – issued by email)

Information Governance Team