



Oifig anStiúrthóir  
An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta,

Foirgneamh Aibhneacha, Crosbhóthar  
Thamhlachta, Tamhlacht,  
Baile Átha Cliath D24 XNP2

Office of the Director  
National Ambulance Service

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t 01 4631624/6

Ref: SM/PQ/28589/24

22 July 2024

Deputy Patricia Ryan TD  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

**PQ 28589/24**

**To ask the Minister for Health if he will give consideration to providing funding for voluntary first responder groups, and if so, to provide details. -Patricia Ryan**

Dear Deputy Ryan

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.

The HSE NAS does not provide direct funding to voluntary first responder groups. However the NAS Community Engagement Team supports Community First Responder Schemes to provide a community-based response to people who have a cardiac arrest, chest pain, or suspected stroke. The team consists of the Community Engagement Manager and six Community Engagement Officers, covering each HSE Regional Health Area.

The NAS Community Engagement team support CFR volunteers as follows:

1. Support and guidance on setting up a CFR Scheme.
2. Provision of free training to the certified level of Pre-hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC) Cardiac First Responder –Community (CFR-C).
3. Provision of free training to the certified level of PHECC Emergency First Responder (EFR) for schemes in remote areas such as the islands.
4. Provision of free training to the certified level of PHECC/ Irish Heart Foundation (IHF) CFR-C instructor training.
5. Provision of free certificates for all CFR members who complete CFR-C/EFR training throughout their membership.
6. Provision of free Irish Heart Foundation Heartsaver certification for community training, delivered by CFR Schemes.
7. Ongoing monitoring and sign-off of new CFR instructors and those who are recertifying after two years.
8. Support and maintenance of a national training site with the Irish Heart Foundation for approximately 350 CFR instructors.
9. State Claims Agency, Clinical and General Indemnity for CFRs while training and active on emergency calls.
10. Provision of “NAS CFR” identification cards and sew-on badges for their CFR vests.

In the event of a medical emergency, CFRs receive an automated text message that directs them to the scene of an incident that occurs in their catchment area. The NAS have also gone to tender for the development of a dedicated CFR mobile application which will replace the current text-based system used to alert CFRs to medical emergencies in their communities. Work will commence on App creation in Q3 2024.

For the safety of members, CFR Schemes were deactivated in the first phase of the covid pandemic until a phased re-introduction was commenced in December 2020. The Community Engagement Team





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created a programme where CFR groups could apply for 'credits' for certain equipment e.g. manikins and projectors for presentations. These items were supplied by the Community Engagement Team directly to the Schemes i.e. bought from existing HSE procurement frameworks. This was a once-off initiative that was made possible by using dedicated funding received for the National Out-of-Hospital Cardiac Arrest Strategy.

The Community Engagement Team have also created a website: [www.becomeacfr.ie](http://www.becomeacfr.ie) where further information about the supports offered by the team to CFRs can be viewed.

Yours sincerely

Siobhán Masterson PhD  
General Manager for Clinical Strategy & Evaluation  
**National Ambulance Service**

