



## Press Release

**Date: 27 March 2018**

### **EU INVESTS €1.1 MILLION IN COMMUNITY PARAMEDIC SERVICES**

#### ***Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland to benefit from Community Paramedic services to enable care to be provided closer to a patient's home***

Today sees the formal launch of the €1.1 million EU INTERREG VA funded cross border Community Paramedic Project. Tony O' Brien, Director General of the HSE, was joined by representatives from the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service, Scottish Ambulance Service and the HSE's National Ambulance Service at the launch in Dublin today.

This new collaboration between the three national ambulance services has been warmly welcomed and has resulted in the establishment of Community Paramedic services in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Community Paramedics associated with this project are undergoing specialised training accredited by Glasgow Caledonian University. The project has recently commenced and is enabling Community Paramedics to provide safe and effective care to patients in their own homes and communities and is already reducing unnecessary ambulance transports to emergency departments.

The Co-operation and Working Together (CAWT) Health and Social Care Partnership in collaboration with the Scottish Ambulance Service, the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service and the National Ambulance Service in Ireland developed the Community Paramedic Project bid for EU INTERREG VA funding which was successful in securing €1.1 million for an 18 month period.

The project will target specific patient populations in remote and rural areas / border areas of the three regions. The four pilot localities which have been identified for this scheme include Buncrana, Co. Donegal and Clones, Co. Monaghan in the border region of Ireland, Castlederg, Co Tyrone in Northern Ireland and the Argyle & Bute region in SW Scotland.

In addition to providing Community Paramedic training to eligible individuals, the EU funding is being used to invest in new rapid response vehicles for the pilot areas in the three ambulance regions. These vehicles are fitted out specifically to provide care to patients in their homes or their community. This means that, within the pilot areas, more patients can be

treated at home instead of having to be transported by ambulance to hospital emergency departments.

Welcoming the project Gina McIntyre, CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body said: **“The EU’s INTERREG VA Programme provides funding to organisations that can implement joint cross-border solutions to issues that affect citizens living in the border region. This project, involving ambulance services working together, will enhance the health and social care of citizens living in more rural and isolated areas and will enable the transition from traditional institution-based service provision to a more community-based approach.”**

Speaking at the launch event in Dublin, Tony O’Brien, Director General of the HSE welcomed this new initiative, which allows Paramedics to broaden the routine healthcare services they provide and will help to improve rural urgent medical services. He said: **“Emergency Care pressures are a constant challenge for all health systems in Europe. This innovative project, enabled by EU funding and collaboration with other member states, is a good example of how we can ensure patients receive the right care in the right place while also easing some of the pressures on our Hospital Emergency Departments. I have no doubt that it will be successful and that we will be rolling it out across Ireland as a key part of our Urgent and Emergency Care system in the coming years.”**

Martin Dunne, Director of the National Ambulance Service of Ireland added: **“This project is enabling each of our services to pilot the Community Paramedic model of care. This will give us valuable information to inform our services into the future. I am delighted to be working with the two Ambulance Services from Northern Ireland and Scotland on this exciting initiative where our collective focus is on delivering enhanced patient care in the community. This will enable other strategies to be implemented, as well as further strengthen our relationships with other health care professionals in the community.”**

Pauline Howie, Chief Executive of the Scottish Ambulance Service said: **“We are delighted to be a part of this innovative EU funded project, working with other ambulance services to develop new ways of working across the community and improve patient outcomes. This new model of care will avoid unnecessary admissions to hospital,**



**allowing patients to be treated in their own homes where clinically appropriate and we look forward to seeing this project progress.”**

Commenting on this initiative, Michael Bloomfield, Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service said: **“At a time when Health and Social Care is experiencing unprecedented demand which manifests itself in extreme pressure in Emergency Departments, the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service is delighted to be participating in this initiative enabling Paramedics to work closely with other healthcare professionals within rural and border area communities. The greatest benefits will be felt by patients themselves who will receive the appropriate assessment and treatment in their homes, if admission to hospital is not the deemed appropriate. NIAS welcomes the introduction of this enhanced Paramedic role as it offers an excellent opportunity for career progression for staff.”**

The launch was attended by project participants and stakeholders from all three regions with Sean Murphy, General Manager of Letterkenny General Hospital opening the event. Match-funding for the project has been provided by both Departments of Health in Ireland and Northern Ireland and by the Scottish Government.

- ENDS.

**Notes to editors:**

- The CAWT Community Paramedic Project timeframe is 18 months and will complete in March 2019
- The CAWT Community Paramedic Project is being phased in across the 3 participating regions of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland and to date over 300 patients have benefitted from the new service.
- The CAWT Community Paramedic Project partners are the HSE, Western Health and Social Care Trust; Southern Health and Social Care Trust; Public Health Agency, Health and Social Care Board, and the Ambulance Services of the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland.
- The CAWT Community Paramedic Project has a budget of €1.1 million and is funded through the European Union’s INTERREG VA Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body, and match funded by the Northern Ireland Executive, the Irish Government and the Scottish Government.
- The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland. It is responsible for managing two EU Structural Funds Programmes, PEACE IV and INTERREG VA which are designed to enhance cross-border cooperation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society.



- The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and in the case of INTERREG VA, Western Scotland.
- The INTERREG VA Programme has a European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) contribution of €240 million and aims to address the economic and social problems which result from the existence of borders.
- For more information on the SEUPB please visit [www.seupb.eu](http://www.seupb.eu)

### **CAWT Community Paramedic Project Objectives**

1. Provide additional training to existing paramedics to prepare them to practice as Community Paramedics.
2. Demonstrate cost effectiveness of care provided by Community Paramedics compared to care as it is currently provided.
3. Demonstrate that Community Paramedics can safely and effectively provide care and that unnecessary ambulance transports to Emergency Departments and hospital admissions/readmissions will be reduced.