Roinn Cumarsáide, Gníomhaithe ar son na hAeráide & Comhshaoil
Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment

EIRCODE

EIRCODE CASE STUDY

National Ambulance Service

The National Ambulance Service (NAS) works constantly to improve the care provided to patients and to provide much faster access to care.

How are Eircodes helping the NAS?

Using Eircodes helps the NAS to provide speedier access to care. The NAS integrated Eircodes into its computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system in February 2016. This means that if callers to the ambulance service give the patient's Eircode, it can be entered into the CAD and validated. The call taker is then able to locate the patient's property and the position of ambulances on a digital map. The dispatcher can then direct the nearest available ambulance to the correct property, facilitating a much speedier access to care.

Ambulance emergency requests often come from isolated locations. The use of Eircodes assists in the rapid identification of these non-unique, rural addresses. The NAS considers the Eircode information to be very important in responding to emergency calls – in particular, responding to the 35% of non-unique addresses that caused significant operational challenges in the past.

WHAT ARE THE **KEY BENEFITS** TO THE NAS OF USING EIRCODE?

The patient's address and the position of the nearest available ambulance can be **accurately pinpointed** on a digital map

Access to care is speedier – particularly for the **35% of non-unique addresses** that caused significant operational challenges in the past

Scale of savings or improvements

Every year the NAS receives between 275,000 and 280,000 emergency calls. This is about 23,000 emergency calls each month, and the number is increasing.

Estimates suggest that for every minute without CPR and defibrillation, a cardiac arrest victim's chance of survival decreases by 7-10%.[1] Using Eircodes can potentially improve response times by accurately identifying non-unique addresses and optimising dispatch options. In Ireland in 2012, the Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest Register recorded 1,798 cases, with a survival rate of 5.2% (93 people). Increasing the survival rate to 6.2% could amount to an additional 18 lives saved every year.

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport provides an appraisal framework[2] to inform investment decisions. This framework indicates that investments that save a life are worth in excess of €2m. While reducing human trauma is naturally the key concern in this area, this suggests that any reduction in wait times, leading to reduced mortality, is likely to significantly outweigh the associated costs.

References

1. Sudden Cardiac Arrest Foundation – http://www.sca-aware.org/about-sca.
2. http://www.dttas.ie/sites/default/files/publications/corporate/english/common-appraisal-framework-2016/common-appraisal-framework2016_1.pdf.

www.dccae.gov.ie | www.eircode.ie
www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/3/nas/

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