

Urgent and emergency care provision in Ireland

What is urgent and emergency care?

Urgent and emergency care consists of all the services which contribute to the management of people when immediate care is sought for a health condition along with the processes in place for referring patients between services. When patients need immediate care they can enter the health system through a range of services and will often use more than one. Ideally these services would be highly co-ordinated to ensure the time to definitive care is reduced and waste such as inappropriate use of emergency departments is avoided.

Current provision in Ireland

A wide range of services, public and private, provide emergency and urgent care in Ireland. The services within the emergency and urgent care system (EUCS) include General Practice (GP) (including out-of-hours GP co-operatives), emergency departments (EDs), urgent care centres, acute medical units (AMUs), minor injury units, ambulance services (provided by Dublin Fire Brigade and the National Ambulance Service), and pharmacies. When patients need immediate care, they can enter the health system through a range of services and will often use more than one in a single episode of illness. For example, they may phone an out-of-hours GP, be transferred by ambulance to an ED and be admitted to hospital. The combination of these services are defined as an EUCS. The provision of effective emergency and urgent care is critically dependent on all elements of the EUCS of a healthcare system (figure 1). A well-performing EUCS should improve the chances of survival in a patient with an emergency condition and an urgent condition should ideally be managed by a well-performing EUCS without admission to an inpatient bed.

The extent to which these services are integrated is dependent on where and by whom the service is provided. For instance, private services provided in Dublin by Voluntary Health Insurance (VHI) Swiftcare, Blackrock Clinic and Beacon Healthcare are neither integrated with each other, nor the public health system.

Table 1 provides an overview of urgent and emergency care facilities by region in Ireland, including public and private providers.

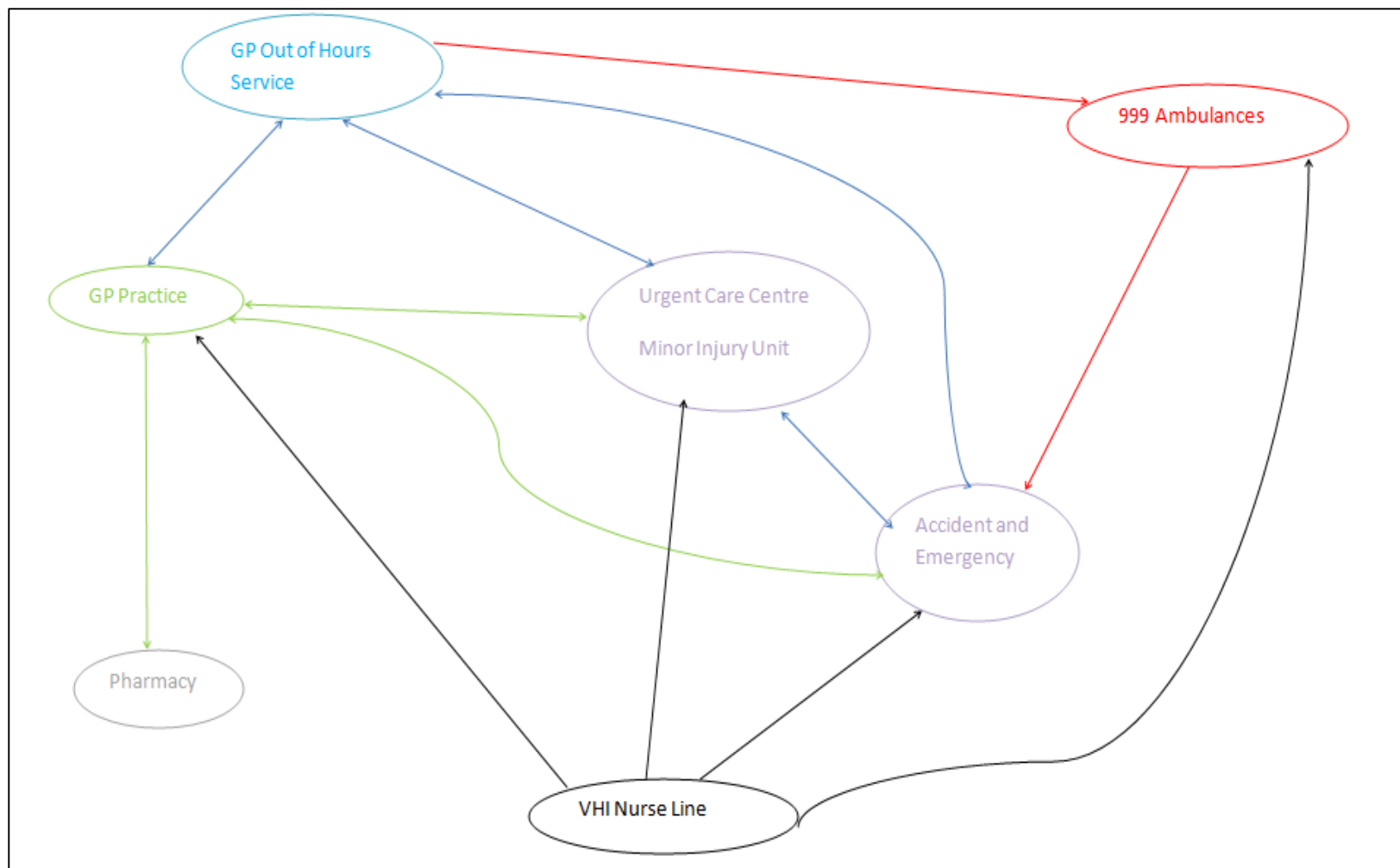


Figure 1
Elements of
Emergency and
Urgent Care in
Ireland

Table 1. Provision for systems of urgent and emergency care in Ireland

Region	Hospitals	Ambulance Bases	GP Co-ops
North East	<u>3 hospitals with 24/7 ED:</u> - Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda - Our Lady's Hospital, Navan - Cavan General Hospital <u>2 hospitals with minor injury unit (MIU):</u> - Louth County Hospital, Dundalk - Monaghan Hospital	11 NAS bases: Dunshaughlin; Navan; Cavan; Ardee; Ardee RRV; Trim RRV: Drogheda; Dundalk; Monaghan; Virginia; and Castleblayney.	NEDoc co-op covers the region. It has a bases at Castleblayney and Drogheda and bases on the hospital sites at Navan, and Cavan. There is a separate arrangement in Dundalk and the Cooley peninsula.
Dublin North East	<u>5 hospitals with 24/7 ED:</u> - Beaumont Hospital - Mater Misericordiae University Hospital with off-site minor injury and elderly rapid assessment units, Smithfield. - Connolly Hospital - Children's University Hospital, Temple Street - The Hermitage Clinic (private hospital)	8 DFB bases: Balbriggan; Blanchardstown; Finglas; Kilbarrack; North Strand; Phibsboro; Skerries; and Swords. NAS covers outside these areas with a base in Swords.	DDoc co-op covers the region. Support from Doctor-on-Duty also available.
Dublin South	<u>2 hospitals with 24/7 ED:</u> - St. James's Hospital - St. Vincent's Hospital <u>4 hospitals with limited-hours ED or MIU:</u> - St. Michael's Hospital, Dun Laoghaire - St. Columcille's Hospital, Loughlinstown - The Blackrock Clinic (private hospital) - The Beacon Hospital (private hospital)	6 DFB bases: Dolphins Barn; Donnybrook; Dun Laoghaire; Rathfarnham; Tallaght; and Tara St. 10 NAS bases: St. James's; Loughlinstown; old district hospital in Wicklow; Wicklow RRV; Baltinglass; Arklow; Athy; Maynooth; Cherry Orchard (Motorcycle Unit); and Newtown Mount Kennedy.	Dub Doc, DL Doc, Luke Doc and East Doc co-ops cover the region. Doctor-on-Duty and Contractors. CareDoc (South East) also has a presence in Wicklow.
Dublin Midlands	<u>6 hospitals with 24/7 ED:</u> - Tallaght Hospital - Naas General Hospital - Midland Regional Hospital (MRH) Mullingar - - Midland Regional Hospital Tullamore - Midland Regional Hospital Portlaoise - Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children, Crumlin	10 NAS bases: Tallaght; Naas; Portlaoise; Tullamore; Athlone; Birr; Mullingar; Longford; Edenderry; and Tullamore RRV.	TLC Doc co-op based at Tallaght Hospital, serves Tallaght, Clondalkin and Lucan and is supplemented by Doctor-on-Duty. KDoc covers Kildare. MiDoc serves the Midlands area - bases at MRH Mullingar and Tullamore.
South East	<u>4 hospitals with 24/7 ED:</u> - University Hospital Waterford (model 4) - St. Luke's Hospital, Kilkenny (model 3) - Wexford General Hospital (model 3) - South Tipperary General Hospital (model 3)	11 NAS bases: Carlow; Kilkenny; Clonmel; Cashel; Tipperary Town; Dungarvan; Waterford; Wexford; Gorey; Enniscorthy; and New Ross.	CareDoc co-op covers the region.
South	<u>3 hospitals with 24/7 ED:</u> - Cork University Hospital - Mercy University Hospital, also has off-site minor injury unit at St. Mary's. - Kerry General Hospital <u>4 hospitals with limited-hours ED or MIU:</u> - Bantry General Hospital - Mallow General Hospital - Mater Private and Bons Secours (Private EDs)	18 NAS bases: Listowel; Cahirciveen; Killarney; Tralee; Dingle; Kenmare; Castletownbere; Bantry; Bantry RRV; Skibbereen; Clonakilty; Cork; Midleton/Youghal; Macroom; Kanturk/Millstreet; Mallow General Hospital; Mallow RRV; and Fermoy. Medicall base in Cork.	SouthDoc co-op covers the region.
Mid-West	<u>1 hospital with 24/7 ED:</u> - University Hospital Limerick <u>3 hospitals with MIU:</u> - St. John's, Limerick - Ennis General Hospital - Nenagh General Hospital	11 NAS bases: Newcastle West; Ennistymon; Limerick; Thurles; Roscrea; Scariff; Kilrush; Ennis; Clare RRV; Nenagh; and Tipperary RRV. Medicall base in Limerick. Murray base in Croom, Co. Limerick.	ShannonDoc co-op covers the region. There is a separate GP co-op in Limerick city.
West	<u>5 hospitals with 24/7 ED:</u> - University Hospital Galway - Portiuncula Hospital Ballinasloe - Mayo General Hospital (model 3) - Sligo General Hospital (model 3) - Letterkenny General Hospital (model 3) <u>2 hospitals with limited-hours ED or MIU</u> Roscommon County Hospital (model 2). - The Galway Clinic (private hospital)	21 NAS bases: Carrick on Shannon; Sligo; Monorhamilton; Letterkenny; Ballyshannon; Donegal; Killybegs; Dungloe; Cardonagh; Finn Valley; Ballinasloe; Roscommon (plus RRV); Boyle; Loughrea; Galway; Carraroe; Clifden; Belmullet; Castlebar; and Ballina. Medicall base in Galway, Castlebar and Letterkenny. Murray bases in Castlebar and Galway.	WestDoc co-op covers Galway, Roscommon and Mayo). Sligo has its own arrangement for out-of-hour provision. NowDoc covers Donegal and Leitrim and nominally Sligo. There are also two separate cooperatives located in Galway city.

The map provided in Figure 2 shows the locations of public acute hospitals in Ireland. In this map, red pins represent hospitals with emergency departments operating 24/7, pink pins represent hospitals with minor injury units or emergency departments operating over limited daily hours. Yellow pins represent hospitals with emergency departments dedicated to children.

Figure 2. Map of ED and MIU locations in Ireland.

