

# 'Critical' Partnership Expands Volunteer Emergency Response Across Leinster

A new partnership between Dublin Airport Fire and Rescue Service (DAFRS), the National Ambulance Service (NAS) and emergency medical charity CRITICAL will see members of DAFRS volunteering respond to emergencies in their local communities spanning an extensive area across Leinster.



Pictured (l-r): Liam Stewart and Matthew McShane from the National Ambulance Service; Edward Walsh, CRITICAL's Head of Operations & Standards; John Paul Guiden, DAFRS and David Tighe, CEO of CRITICAL, following the announcement of the partnership in early January 2026.

The collaboration sees members of DAFRS, trained to Advanced Paramedic, Paramedic, Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and Emergency First Responder (EFR) levels, volunteering to respond to emergencies in their local communities spanning an extensive area across Leinster.

A team of 20 responders have now signed up to date, including eight Advanced Paramedics and 13 Paramedics, while an additional five responders are expected to join over the coming months.

The volunteers have been equipped by CRITICAL with basic life support kit bags which include a defibrillator, other resuscitation and diagnostic equipment. They will be notified by the National Ambulance Service of life-threatening emergencies such as traffic collisions, serious injuries, cardiac arrests, and choking incidents.

DAFRS Chief Fire Officer Jim Moore said that at the end of their shift, team members go home to their communities and respond to emergency calls across Dublin, Meath, Kildare, Carlow, Kilkenny and Cavan. "However, through CRITICAL charity, they now have an opportunity to put their expertise to work in their communities when it matters most.

This partnership connects our team to the growing CRITICAL network of responders supporting the National Ambulance Service and other emergency services."

Co-ordinator and member of the scheme John-Paul Guiden acknowledged the amazing support from DAA, NAS, CRITICAL and The State Claims Agency in helping to get this amazing project live. I especially thank all the members for supporting the project and volunteering their spare time to the most vulnerable in their communities."

David Tighe, CEO of CRITICAL added, "The partnership with Dublin Airport Fire and Rescue Service is about empowering skilled pre-hospital professionals to save lives in their own communities. These volunteers are giving their time and expertise beyond their day jobs.

"With the support of the National Ambulance Service, they're helping ensure that people in urgent need of care receive it faster. It's a powerful example of what collaboration across services can achieve. We rely on fundraising to expand and grow our network, and we are

very grateful to everyone who has supported us so far."

According to Liam Stewart, NAS Community Engagement Officer, when the DAFRS approached them about responding when off duty, it was natural to introduce them to CRITICAL. "The charity already supports 100 pre-hospital practitioners and 12 CFR schemes across the country and their investment in this project allows the DAA volunteers, who are skilled professionals, to respond with appropriate lifesaving equipment in their own communities across Leinster," he added.

CRITICAL has a network of more than 300 volunteer responders active across Ireland including doctors and consultants equipped with emergency response vehicles and high-tech equipment; community first responder (CFR) groups; as well off-duty paramedics and EMTs. They responded to over 2,000 calls during 2025. They are notified by the National Ambulance Service and communicate closely with the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) while on scene.