



# Freedom of Information Request

**17th September 2024**

## Question

I would like the following information between August 1 2014 and the date of this FOI: -  
Number of private taxis hired by the Scottish Ambulance Service - Reason for the hiring of each private taxi - Cost for the hire of each private taxi

## Answer

The Scottish Ambulance Service will always dispatch an ambulance for patients who require an ambulance intervention and/or monitoring on route to hospital.

Taxis are only arranged after clinical assessment through our Integrated Clinical Hub or clinicians at scene, who have identified that a patient requires further assessment at hospital, it is safe and appropriate for the patient to travel by this method and not necessary for an emergency ambulance to transport them to hospital.

Since January 2024, use of taxis to convey patients to hospital accounted to 0.7% of all incidents managed by the Scottish Ambulance Service

Please see the attached sheet detailing the number of unscheduled patient transfers that have been referred to taxi companies in last five years broken down by month. Each patient counted below has been assessed by a Scottish Ambulance Service clinician for suitability for taxi transfer.

Please note that the first recorded usage of a taxi being used to transfer an unscheduled patient to hospital is September 2021.

Please see the Scottish Ambulance Service's total expenditure on taxi services during 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023.

	From Aug'14										(Apr- Aug24)
	2014/ 2015	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	2022/ 2023	2023/ 2024	2024/ 2025
Staff Taxi Expenses	10,383	15,582	4,534	5,275	4,553	10,374	5,933	4,300	2,277	2,659	820
Taxi Contract				297		421	739	9,595	123,018	130,275	48,689
	<b>10,383</b>	<b>15,582</b>	<b>4,534</b>	<b>5,572</b>	<b>4,553</b>	<b>10,794</b>	<b>6,672</b>	<b>13,895</b>	<b>125,295</b>	<b>132,935</b>	<b>49,508</b>

The **Staff Taxi Expenses** are expenses reclaimed by our employees via payroll as you would expect. However, 2016 and prior, there are direct costs to Taxi companies and therefore don't have figures to report.

The **Taxi Contract** line captures all fares paid in agreement to contracts with taxi companies; this line can include both staff and patient fares.



Scottish  
Ambulance



The financial cost and reason of each individual private taxi hire is not held in a way that would make it easily reportable.

Public authorities are not required to create information in order to answer a request.

There's a distinction between creating new information, and compiling information. Where a request can be answered by compiling information from readily-available resources held by the public authority, this is not the same as creating new information. However, if collation of the information would require skill and complex judgement, the information is not held.

I have concluded that, in the case of working out the financial costs and reasoning associated with each taxi hire would not be able to be produced without complex skill and judgement. This is because, although we hold information on total taxi costs and total taxi usage, to report information on these at an individual level, we would be required to look at each call/usage to determine if this was for a patient or staff member as well as each journey which would require complex judgement.

It is for this reason that we have applied the exemption Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Scotland Act 2002 as information not held.