



# Freedom of Information Request

**16<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

## Question

How many times in each of the last five years have the Scottish Ambulance Service contacted a taxi to take a patient to hospital when there were no ambulances available - not including pre-arranged transport for routine medical appointments? And what is the total cost in each of the last five years?

## 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 table below 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.

Call Started Financial Year	Call Started Calendar Month	Incident Count - Taxi Arrived Scene	Incident Count - Taxi Conveyed
*Taxi started being used 25/08/2021 2021 - 2022	September	19	17
2021 - 2022	October	61	57
2021 - 2022	November	78	61
2021 - 2022	December	95	88
2021 - 2022	January	138	121
2021 - 2022	February	149	137
2021 - 2022	March	239	219
2022 - 2023	April	161	140
2022 - 2023	May	138	123



Scottish  
Ambulance  
Service  
University



2022 - 2023	June	164	156
2022 - 2023	July	210	198
2022 - 2023	August	202	193
2022 - 2023	September	205	175
2022 - 2023	October	263	236
2022 - 2023	November	264	241
2022 - 2023	December	432	397
2022 - 2023	January	346	323
2022 - 2023	February	285	250
2022 - 2023	March	422	381
2023 - 2024	April	307	288
2023 - 2024	May	385	348
2023 - 2024	June	356	330
2023 - 2024	July	326	296
2023 - 2024	August	445	429
2023 - 2024	September	462	440
2023 - 2024	October	428	411
2023 - 2024	November	425	397
2023 - 2024	December	533	509
<b>Sum:</b>		<b>10963</b>	<b>10287</b>

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

The Taxi Contract line captures all fares paid in agreement to contracts with taxi companies; this line can include both staff and patient fares. There is no way to separate the costs for patient and staff usage without assessing each journey which would be creating new information; this is not something authorities are obliged to do under FOISA 2002.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Taxi Contract	£88	£1,054	£867	£51,868	£165,999

**Working Together for Better Patient Care**