



# Freedom of Information Request

17th September 2024

## Question

1. In each year since 2019/20, including the current year to date, how much has been spent on taxi services for patients? Please break this down by health board and year.
2. In each year since 2019/20, including the current year to date, on how many occasions have taxis been called for patients? Please break this down by health board and year.

## 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

	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	2022/ 2023	2023/ 2024	2024/ 2025
Taxi Contract	£421	£739	£9,595	£123,018	£130,275	£48,689

(Apr-Aug24)

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

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.



**Scottish  
Ambulance  
Service**

University National NHS Board



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

The financial cost and location of each private taxi hire is not held in a way that would make it easily reportable by health board.

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 associated with each health board for patient taxi's would not be able to be produced without complex skill and judgement. This is because, although we hold information on total taxi costs, to report these for patients only at health board 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 location 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.