

[Ambulances forced to attend thousands of drink-related emergencies](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
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Ambulance crews were forced to attend more than 15,000 emergencies last year where alcohol was to blame, it has emerged.

Figures obtained by the Scottish Conservatives have revealed the number of incidents where drink was an “additional factor” increased from 2016.

In total, there have been 53,141 alcohol-related incidents in the past three years, the equivalent of nearly 50 a day.

The Freedom of Information response showed Glasgow had the highest number of instances in 2017, with a total of 3783.

That was followed by Edinburgh with 1674 and North Lanarkshire with 1279.

And the true number is likely to be even higher, as paramedics often don't specifically record if alcohol was one of the causes of the emergency.

The figures come as the Scottish Ambulance Service struggles to deal with the scale of demand across Scotland.

It was reported earlier this year that police and fire services have been called upon to help out with certain patients.

The Scottish Conservatives previously campaigned for some measures such as recovery centres to deal with people who'd consumed too much at weekends and during big events, to take the strain off ambulances and accident and emergency departments.

Scottish Conservative public health spokeswoman Annie Wells said:

“It's clear people who've consumed too much alcohol are putting an immense and unnecessary strain on the ambulance service.

“No-one will be more annoyed than hardworking paramedics that this particular challenge stands in the way of helping patients who've fallen ill through no fault of their own.

“What's more worrying is the real scale of this will be so much higher, as these are only the incidents when the Scottish Ambulance Service has deemed

it necessary to specifically record alcohol as a factor.

“The SNP government needs to ensure ambulance staff are sufficiently resourced to deal with current challenges, and regrettably that includes alcohol.

“We need to start discussing measures that could take the pressure off paramedics when dealing with this, including the possible role of temporary units in towns and cities to deal with those who’ve consumed too much, meaning they wouldn’t need to go to A&E or trouble the ambulance service.”