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Ambulances have had to race to Scottish prisons on more than 2000 occasions over the past three years, new statistics have revealed.

Figures obtained by the Scottish Conservatives have shown paramedics responded to 999 calls from the country's 15 jails and youth detention centres on 2049 occasions since 2016.

The research states 319 of these were dealt with as "immediate life-threatening" situations.

Barlinnie prison in Glasgow received the most call-outs, with 363 incidents in almost three years, followed by HMP Edinburgh with 300.

The troubled Polmont facility, which houses 16-21-year-old offenders, was forced to summon an ambulance on 88 occasions, including for 15 life-threatening situations.

The prison has been under the spotlight following suicides there in recent times.

Scotland's only female facility, Cornton Vale, had 65 ambulance visits over the time period identified.

The Scottish Ambulance Service revealed that a total of 710 emergency calls were made in 2016, 803 in 2017 and 536 for roughly the first 10 months of last year.

Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Liam Kerr said:

"Prisons need to be absolutely secure and safe environments for both inmates and staff.

"It would be unrealistic to expect there to be no incidents, but it's extremely worrying to discover that ambulances are having to attend 999 calls on such a regular basis.

"Many of these are considered life-threatening matters, so it's clear security needs to improve inside Scotland's jails.

"Paramedics are under enough pressure without having to make these trips into Scotland's prison estate.

"It's also of particular concern that so many emergency calls have come from Polmont, a youth facility which has not had its troubles to seek.

"I hope the SNP government can offer more support to the Scottish Prison Service to ensure there are far fewer incidents to which ambulances have to respond in future."