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Scottish Conservatives have called on new Health Secretary Jeane Freeman to undertake a review into ambulance provision across Scotland.

The call comes following concerns expressed over emergency 999 incidents being responded to by minibus Patient Transport Services and warnings that the Scottish Ambulance Service needs an estimated 600 more paramedics.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs MSP said:

“It is concerning that we have seen such an increase in the Scottish Patient Transport Service minibuses being sent so frequently to respond to emergency 999 incidents.

“This clearly demonstrates the failure of SNP Ministers to provide and resources needed by the patient transport service and the Scottish Ambulance Service to meet the needs of patients traveling to hospital appointments or return home or to their place of care

“Scottish Conservatives want to see a review of patient transport services across Scotland as it is increasingly clear that demand for patient transport services in Scotland is outstripping supply, and this is just another example of the SNP Government failing to deliver an NHS plan for the future.”

On the predicted 600 paramedics needed:

“It is now abundantly clear for all to see the SNP mismanagement of workforce planning for our Scottish NHS has been a total failure.

“There’s no question the Scottish Ambulance Service is under immense strain, and short of workers in key areas.

“There are also things the SNP government could be doing alongside recruiting more staff, like ensuring the unacceptably high sickness rate comes down.”