

Addresses in Lothian 'red flagged' by ambulance service

The MSP for Lothian, Miles Briggs says he has discovered that there are 83 addresses in Lothian where Scottish Ambulance Service staff are not allowed to enter without a police escort.

A Freedom of Information request revealed that a nearly 450 addresses in Scotland are identified in this way with the number of homes which are red flagged in Edinburgh only just behind the number in Glasgow.

Briggs is sceptical of the way that emergency services can link up and claims that the number of police officers is at its lowest for 15 years. He says that one attack on an emergency service worker in Lothian is one too many and more action must be taken to keep them safe.

Miles Briggs said: "These figures are deeply concerning.

"This is a significant number of addresses that have been red-flagged in Lothian for our dedicated ambulance staff who are putting themselves at risk for others on a daily basis.

"One attack on any ambulance worker in Lothian is one too many.

"This is a direct result of the SNP slashing local budgets and gutting the police service across the country.

“With police officer numbers at their lowest number since 2008 across Scotland, I am also concerned that they may not be able to easily link up with ambulance crews when called upon at a particular address.

“It is clear from the number of addresses that have been red-flagged in Lothian that more needs to be done to keep our ambulance staff safe, which includes handing out hefty punishments to those found to have assaulted them while they are on duty.

“At the very least, frontline staff in Lothian should be reassured that they can go about their work without serious risk of injury from members of the public.”

A Scottish Ambulance Service spokesperson said: “Our staff should not fear for their safety when working, and these measures have been put in place to help protect them while they do their job. Individual addresses where staff have previously faced violence or threatening behaviour are automatically flagged to our crews, who can then request additional support, if they believe it is required.

“Our staff are trained in assessing risk and managing aggression so that they can make a sensible decision based on the circumstances. However, getting to the sickest patients is always our priority, regardless of whether the police are in attendance.”



Scottish Ambulance Service. Photo: Martin P. McAdam
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