



**AIR AMBULANCES UK™**  
SUPPORTING AIR AMBULANCE CHARITIES

ISSUE 32 AUTUMN 2020

# airway

The magazine for the air ambulance community



## THE COVID COALITION

Unprecedented collaboration to tackle pandemic

### ACTION ON MENTAL HEALTH

New initiatives put theory  
into action

### CQC EXCELLENCE

How two members  
became Outstanding

## AIR AMBULANCE WEEK SUCCESS

*"This Air Ambulance Week, more than ever, I am delighted to see a  
spotlight shone on the work of this community"*

HRH The Duke of Cambridge

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## FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to this bumper edition of Airway. The pandemic has seen disruption to every walk of life; Air Ambulances UK and Airway have been no exception. For many practical reasons, it was decided that the June issue of Airway would not go ahead, nor will the December one – but we are giving you this packed Autumn edition that should last you a while!

Where else could we focus our cover story but on the pandemic? This situation will have been your day-to-day reality since March (and before), and in our feature we take a snapshot of the ways in which a whole host of organisations have played their part in keeping the aircraft flying and patients and staff safe.

There was one clear message coming through from everyone who was good enough to find some time to speak to me: that there was collaboration on an unprecedented scale and the success of the sector in the face of this crisis could not have happened without it. It is also clear that this has changed everything: from aircraft manufacturers to the crews themselves, operations will never return to pre-Covid times now. Read the various perspectives on pages 10-13.

The mental health of those working in our sector will have been challenged further by the pandemic, in an already challenging environment. The latest in a number of articles in Airway about mental health looks at two new initiatives: the 87% wellbeing app and training for air ambulance employees from Child Bereavement UK. The app is designed to help people understand, measure and improve their mental wellbeing and thereby help prevent mental health issues. The bereavement training addresses what many crew find some of the very hardest situations to deal with and toughest conversations to have. See pages 8-9.

Two AAUK members have recently achieved the distinction of an Outstanding judgement from the CQC. We spoke to them to find out what the inspection procedure was like and what lessons other air ambulance services could learn from how these organisations navigated their way through it (pages 14-15).

On pages 16-17, we review the newly-rebranded, newly-energised Air Ambulance Week, which was a huge success, including an open letter from former air ambulance pilot HRH The Duke of Cambridge showing his support.

We have our usual news from around the country (p18-19), an interview with the organisation's new Chair (p6), three Member Spotlights (p19-20) and more.

Plans for the next Airway are not yet confirmed due to the pandemic, though it is likely to be in the Spring. You will hear more as and when decisions are made.

In the meantime, I add my congratulations on all you've achieved over the last seven months in such extraordinary circumstances and I hope you enjoy this issue.



Nick Campion,  
Editor

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Cover photo - Provided by Scott McIlwaine, EHAAT.

## Forthcoming events

Events will be shown here when the Covid-19 situation allows.

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Picture credit: MCA

## AAUK EXPLORES FURTHER COLLABORATION WITH HM COASTGUARD

HM Coastguard, the search and rescue emergency service of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, has a long history of working closely with other organisations including air ambulance charities across the UK, to give those who need urgent medical help the best possible chance of survival.

After operational agreements have already been put in place with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance (HIOWAA) to provide mutual aid support, Air Ambulances UK (and member organisations) and HM Coastguard hope to now explore similar initiatives nationwide.

Whether it's transporting specialist doctors, picking up additional specialist medical equipment or providing helicopters when the weather worsens, pooling resources means that the best help can be provided to those most in need in the quickest possible time, often in situations where every second counts.

Chief Coastguard Pete Mizen said: "We work very hard to support our partners such as other emergency services, local authorities, NHS bodies and air ambulances. This joint working has been particularly valuable during the fight against Covid-19 but it goes beyond that.

"By sharing resources, staff and equipment, we can provide the best service possible to those who need our help the most."

The HM Coastguard search and rescue helicopter service is provided by Bristow Helicopters. Learnings from the development of a Covid-19 medical transportation service for the energy sector, developed by Bristow at the height of the pandemic, have been shared with air ambulance operators nationwide.

HIOWAA's collaboration with HM Coastguard during the pandemic has been invaluable, with the larger HM Coastguard aircraft (an AW189) allowing doctors and specialist CCPs from HIOWAA to continue to safely treat patients whilst transferring them to hospital. The front of the aircraft is sealed off to protect the pilots and the back of the aircraft is fitted out with a washable decontamination lining. The larger aircraft also gives the Charity the ability to carry ventilated patients on board.

HIOWAA CEO Alex Lochrane commented: "The current health crisis facing the country has presented us with new opportunities to collaborate and innovate with others. I am incredibly proud of our crew, whose willingness and flexibility has meant that we can continue providing the best level of critical care to our region whilst also providing a vital lifeline to the Isle of Wight."



HIOWAA

HIOWAA's Critical Care Teams continue to respond to critically ill patients across the region, with both the air ambulance and emergency response vehicles remaining operational seven days a week, day and night.

## TOP MARKS FOR VIRTUAL PUB QUIZ

During August, Air Ambulances UK teamed up with The Virtual Pub Quiz – the lockdown phenomenon that is bringing together 180,000+ keen quizzers each week – to raise much-needed funds and awareness for the UK's air ambulance charities.

Creator and host Jay Flynn, who started the quiz 'for a laugh', set a new Guinness World Record for most viewers of a YouTube live stream quiz when an incredible 182,513 viewers played along.

Jay has also been joined by famous faces such as Stephen Fry and Scarlett Moffatt, raising money for multiple charities including the RNLI, NHS Charities Together and now Air Ambulances UK.

Quizzers were encouraged to donate to AAUK in order to participate in the quiz and £14,287 was raised.



## WHAT3WORDS WEEK OF ACTION

Air Ambulances UK played its part in what3words' week of action, encouraging the public to download the free app, which can help air ambulances find you in an emergency.

The #KnowExactlyWhere week involved emergency services, local authorities and organisations around the UK to raise awareness about the free what3words app and how it can be used to save precious time, resources and lives in an emergency.

Chris Sheldrick, co-founder and CEO of what3words, said: "A 999 call could be one of the worst times of your life. Having to provide additional directions when you're under immense stress and the clock is ticking is something that we want everyone to avoid. You never know when an emergency might happen, but with what3words, you'll always be able to say exactly where help is needed – quickly and easily."



## CONFERENCE & AWARDS POSTPONED

The AAUK National Conference and Air Ambulance Awards of Excellence – due to take place in November – have been postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic this year. The continuing uncertainty around what course the virus will run over the coming months, allied to the whole sector's (including AAUK's) focus being on addressing the challenges raised by the pandemic, means that there will be no replacement dates issued for the foreseeable future.

Once the picture becomes clearer, AAUK will communicate with members about plans for the 2021 Conference and Awards.

# AAUK: WHO'S WHO?

The merger of the Association of Air Ambulances and the AAA Charity to form Air Ambulances UK has resulted in significant change, not least in the way the organisation is run and managed, and by whom.

Both the Board and the executive team believe it is important that members know and understand the roles of all involved, so below we take a close look at the teams involved and on the following page learn more about new Chair, Heather Benjamin.



Nikki Wright

## The executive team

**Nikki Wright** is Operations and Marketing Director of AAUK, pending the future appointment of a CEO. Nikki joined AAUK in March 2018 when it was still just the national charity focused purely on creating national corporate fundraising partnerships

and other types of national funding. During this time leading the charity, it had successful partnerships with Allianz and MRH Retail and Nikki also oversaw the rebranding of the organisation, the development of a new strategy and the implementation of a more collaborative culture with the charity's beneficiaries.

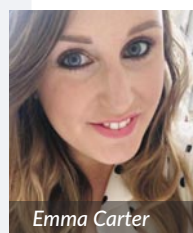
Nikki played an important role in preparing for the charity's merger with the AAA, helping to shape the strategy that would lead the organisation through this critical period. Nikki comments: *"The merged organisation of today feels like a far cry from the original charity. We have achieved so much in such a short space of time and I truly believe this is only the tip of the iceberg."*

Nikki says her day-to-day work in her current role is always aligned to the organisation's stated mission of enabling air ambulance charities to save even more lives every day across the UK. This may be lobbying government, managing corporate partnerships, cultivating the fundraising pipeline, working with peer organisations on sector issues or organising meetings and events for members. In recent months it has involved bringing air ambulance charities together to navigate the Covid-19 crisis.

Asked to consider the biggest challenges AAUK is facing, Nikki says: *"Externally, Covid is undoubtedly here to stay for the*

*foreseeable future and the effect on our corporate fundraising approach, membership events and activities will be significant as we move forward and adapt to the ever-changing social restrictions and economic climate. Internally we are taking a long, hard look at the strategic direction of the organisation with our stakeholders; I am looking forward to seeing how we can align and prioritise our activities to maximum benefit."*

Emma Carter joined AAUK in May 2019 as Charity



Emma Carter

Development Manager to develop the governance of the charity ahead of the merger with the AAA in 2020. She is now Fundraising and Communications Manager – although being one of just two full-time employees, she is involved in all aspects of the organisation.

Emma reflects on the last few months:

*"We all know about the negatives of Covid-19 but equally it has been fantastic to see the sector pull together; in eight years in the sector, I have never seen such an amazing level of collaboration. With everyone working on Zoom it has also been an outstanding learning opportunity for me: the forums for CEOs and Fundraising Directors have really allowed us to understand what is happening at a local level and where support is needed."*

*"I have never been prouder to work in the air ambulance sector and am really pleased we have been able to play our part in supporting the sector."*

Emma used to be Head of Fundraising at Great Western Air Ambulance Charity and has been fascinated to broaden her knowledge and learn about the many different operating models throughout the UK. She says: *"I feel so fortunate because I don't think there are many roles in the third sector that give you the level of exposure to a group of CEOs and charity leaders that my role at AAUK does. The only downside is I do miss the relationships with former patients and the crew."*

Nikki and Emma are supported in the administration of AAUK by Diane Scriven.

## Board of Trustees

Alongside Chair, Heather Benjamin, the Board of Trustees comprises:

- **Claire Walters** - Claire is Chief Commercial Officer for Unipart Logistics with a wide portfolio of responsibilities across the UK, US and Asia Pacific.
- **Matthew Williams** - Matthew is a junior doctor, completing his emergency medicine specialty training in South Wales. He has recent experience of charity leadership and governance as a trustee.
- **Anna Perry** - Anna is CEO of Great Western Air Ambulance Charity. She became a Board member of the AAA in 2019, and was part of the working group leading on the merger of AAA and AAUK. Anna has a Diploma in Fundraising, an MBA and degrees in psychology and criminal justice.
- **Daryl Brown** - Daryl is Chief Executive of Magpas Air Ambulance. He has served as Lead Governor at Cambridge University Hospitals, Chairman of NHS Cambridgeshire LINK, member of the

East of England Trauma Network, member of the Intercollegiate board for Training in PHEM.

- **John Christensen** - John was Chief Executive of Great Western Air Ambulance Charity until 2017. He trained as a pharmacist and ran his own pharmacy group. He chaired an NHS Ambulance Trust, a Probation Board and a Police Authority.
- **Tim Howard** - Tim is an experienced finance professional with over 20 years' leadership in hi-tech businesses. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants and of the Association of Corporate Treasurers.
- **David Welch** - David became Chief Executive of Air Ambulance Kent Surrey Sussex in 2019 and has over 25 years of national and international experience in Board-level management roles in the not-for-profit sector. David joined the Board of AAUK in April 2020.
- **Amanda McLean** - Amanda is CEO of Thames Valley Air Ambulance. Having read Law at Oxford, she started her career as a fundraiser and has held senior leadership roles in healthcare charities since 2006. Amanda joined AAUK as a trustee in April 2020.



# FOCUS. COLLABORATION. ACTION

## NEW CHAIR OUTLINES HER PLANS FOR AAUK

When Heather Benjamin agreed to become Chair of Air Ambulances UK (AAUK) on 1 April, no-one could have predicted the Covid-19 storm that would greet her. Heather and the Board of Trustees had to put aside plans for a steady, get-to-know-you period, swapping it for a phase of intensive communication with all stakeholders, facilitating charities to work together, frequent Board meetings focused on rapid decision-making and careful monitoring of cashflow and liquidity.

Heather adds: "Covid meant the Board had to be much more active than was expected, including supporting the very small operational team in their work. Together we were able to do a huge amount of work and facilitate extensive collaboration between members, suppliers and a range of other stakeholders."

Fortunately Heather was able to bring considerable experience to her position, having served on a number of boards across several sectors (including on membership organisation boards), as well as her executive career at energy giant Centrica. She relishes the challenge of chairing AAUK: "Starting in the middle of the biggest threat the industry has ever seen has been the biggest challenge, of course, but this is also a brand new board and a brand new organisation. While the history of the organisation is important, I want this Board to be modern, fresh, forward-looking."

"I am here for five years. My focus is on how this organisation can help its member organisations save lives: how do we help them do that and what barriers to doing that can we help them remove? There's no point replicating the work of the charities themselves, we must add value – otherwise, what's the point?"

"I believe strongly in the Board having a clear role. The division of responsibilities between Board and the Executive team must be clear, and the Board must remain focused on its reserved matters. There is also an important initial task to ensure the two pre-merger organisations are brought together culturally, and I believe that element is progressing well."

"As well as dealing with the day-to-day challenges of the Covid crisis, we have also been thinking strategically. I have asked a number of Board members to look at our three-to-five year vision

and we will share this with members later this year, taking feedback before finalising the vision and strategy ready to launch next year."

"Normally I'd have been out and about in these early months, visiting all members to learn more about all the different business models operating across the UK but I've been having Zoom meetings with CEOs instead for the time being."

Heather already has a broad outline of what AAUK's vision should encompass. This includes:

- Collaborative working between the Board and members based on a process of: listening and gathering information, making a decision, explaining the decision.
- Shaping Government policy through the APPGAA.
- Reinforcing current, and establishing new, national partnerships for income generation; ensuring strong governance around maintaining separation of local and national.
- Research and development: using data to demonstrate effectiveness of air ambulances.
- Innovative membership services.
- Raising the sector's profile.
- Digital strategy.

Asked what her personal style is when it comes to leading the organisation, Heather says: "I listen, I learn, I like diversity of thought – but not a talking shop: we must allow time to hear different views but then be brave and make firm decisions. People must be able to trust me so it's important that I communicate clearly, am comfortable to admit when I don't know something and apologise if I'm wrong. I'm always happy to explain decisions. This is a formula that seems to have worked – people have told me that I inspire them to go that extra mile."

She concludes: "We have a huge amount to do with very limited resources. Sharing ideas at board level is fine but someone has to implement them, so prioritisation is incredibly important at the moment. But by the end of the year, I want members to feel inspired to tell others why they should join Air Ambulances UK."



Heather Benjamin

## PARLIAMENTARY DRIVE FOR GREATER MP INVOLVEMENT

One of the critical roles of Air Ambulances UK is to represent and advocate for air ambulance charities and the wider air ambulance sector. Much of this policy work is focused on AAUK's All Party Parliamentary Group for Air Ambulances (APPGAA), an informal cross-party group that is run by and for Members of the House of Commons and House of Lords.

Robert Courts MP chaired the APPGAA but has now been promoted to Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport with responsibility for aviation and maritime. Robert commented before stepping down as Chair: "The APPGAA continues to work closely with AAUK to ensure it focuses on the key issues that matter to air ambulance charities. Issues such as proper helipad coverage and high quality data sharing are critical to the continued improvement of the services and will help to save lives." AAUK thanks Robert for his dedication and commitment to the air ambulance sector as Chair since 2018.

Details of the next APPGAA meeting will be announced soon.



Robert Courts

# AAUK SEALS GOVERNMENT FUNDING BOOST

In the early days of the pandemic, Air Ambulances UK sought to alleviate some of the uncertainty around income for air ambulance charities by making the case for a share of the £22m funding that the Government had assigned to lifesaving health charities. Following a competitive process, AAUK was awarded a £6m Covid19 Government funding grant to support the lifesaving work of the UK's air ambulance charities.

Secretary of State for Health, Matt Hancock, commented to Air Ambulances UK: "I am delighted that we have been able to award £6 million to Air Ambulances UK, to support their vital life-saving services during this pandemic. Air ambulance charities make an enormous contribution to our NHS emergency response and I am so grateful for their continued hard work and commitment."

The funding was welcomed by air ambulance charities who experienced a drop in public income at the same time as incurring increased expenditure.

Steven Stokes, Head of Communications at Wales Air Ambulance, said: "This funding has given us an enormous boost, helping us to cover costs relating to Covid-19 at a time when generating fundraising income has become a challenge. We have been able to continue our full service, allowing us to support the NHS and be there for the people of Wales. A significant amount of this funding will be set off against the flying costs of our missions carried out during the pandemic."

"We are very grateful to AAUK colleagues for their foresight and action in securing this grant for air ambulance charities across the UK."



Matt Hancock MP

## RACE, BIAS AND PARAMEDIC STRESS

By Aysha Mendes, Editor, JPP

The heartbreaking killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis and the consequent protests made me feel as though I was catapulted back to the Civil Rights Movement. I felt paralysed by the racism and the violence, overwhelmed by the fear and regret that my children (who are half black and half Asian) are growing up in a world where racism is still an issue, and debilitated by the hopeless and helpless feeling that this is something I can't fix.

In the June issue of the JPP's international quarterly journal, International Paramedic Practice, Wheeler and Dippenaar (2020) discuss both the physiological and psychological components of paramedic wellbeing. In it, they point out that stress has both positive and negative psychological effects, differentiating between a 'stress is debilitating' and a 'stress-is-enhancing' mindset. Whether stress is perceived as positive or negative, they explain, is connected with a person's ability to do something about the external stressor.

This explains why my inability to change what is happening made me feel negative and debilitated, rather than empowered to make a difference like so many of those around me. However, I realise that speaking out and teaching my children are small ways that I can make a difference, and while I am still struggling with it all, I am beginning to feel less debilitated and more enhanced by the stress I feel.

One action that I took, and that every person can take, is the completion of an implicit bias test (<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html>). This can help to make health professionals aware of biases that may impact upon care, whether regarding race, sexuality, age, etc.

Implicit bias is interwoven throughout our societies and becoming aware of this is essential to tackling it. Health professionals may hold inaccurate medical beliefs about race, such as that a black person's skin is thicker than a white person's or that their blood coagulates more quickly (Hoffman



Photo credit: Adobe Stock UK Parliament

et al, 2016). Medical providers under a heavy cognitive load may also make use of mental shortcuts to make rapid decisions, leading to a high risk of relying on stereotypes (Burgess, 2010).

Ambulance service professionals, whether on the ground or in the air, can face a tremendous amount of stress on the job, particularly given the current climate of Covid-19. But what action will you take, and will you be debilitated or enhanced by your stress?

Share your thoughts with JPP at [jpp@markallengroup.com](mailto:jpp@markallengroup.com) and access your subscription discount exclusively for AAUK members at <https://www.magsubscriptions.com/aaa25>

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# AGILE HEMS SECTOR FOCUSES ON MENTAL WELLBEING

The air ambulance community is known for its agility and innovation, its willingness to take a problem and solve it. Two years ago we addressed the issue of mental health and wellbeing in *Airway* substantively for the first time. I wrote then that mental health was ‘an issue that has rarely been aired, let alone tackled’ and, true to form, the sector has responded with determination, vigour and creativity.

By now, the challenge is well known: employees of blue light services are at some of the greatest risk of experiencing a range of mental health issues – but at the same time are amongst those least likely to take time off work to deal with them and, until a couple of years ago, were reluctant to share how they were feeling for fear of being treated differently.

The culture is changing. There is still a long way to go but the air ambulance community is innovating around how it tackles the issues in its unique environment. In this article, we focus on two initiatives in particular, which demonstrate the creative thinking that is synonymous with the air ambulance sector. Air Ambulances UK has helped roll out each initiative more widely after initial development within an individual air ambulance charity.

## The 87% app

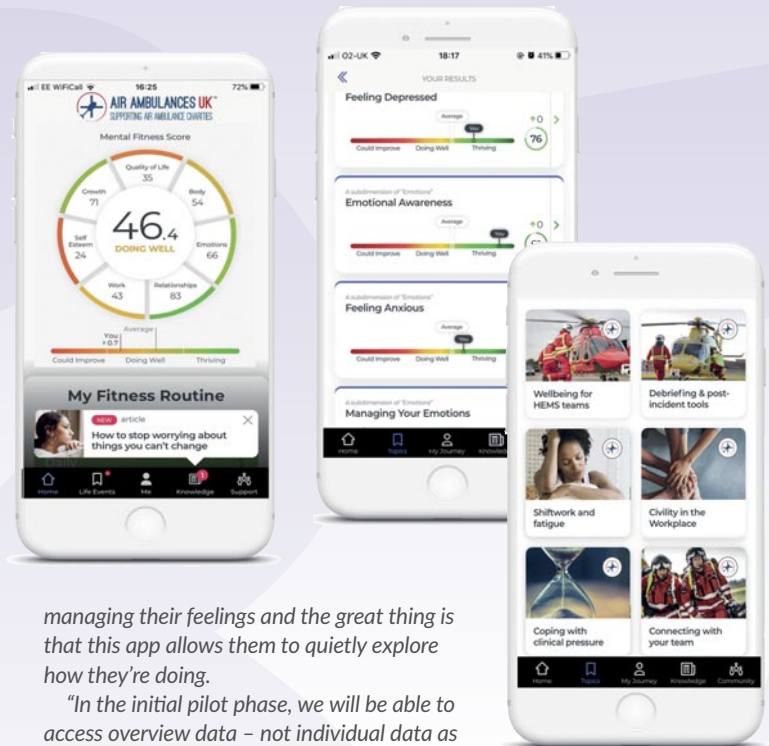
87% is an online mental health and wellbeing platform, designed to offer a brand new approach to managing and improving wellbeing in the workplace. 87% is so called because of a Mental Health Foundation survey that revealed only 13% of adults reported living with high levels of good mental health – leaving 87% with the potential need for support.

Dr Serra Pitts, Clinical Director of 87%, has been working with the emergency services for more than a decade. She explains: “What I have seen is that people working in the emergency services love their jobs but those jobs are wearing them down. They’re wondering how to have a long career and to stay healthy without burning out. What we’re trying to do with 87% is not so much to address serious mental health problems after they’ve happened but to prevent them from happening at all.

“We believe the crucial part of this process is self-awareness. Only by being self-aware can you assess how you are and spot the signs of when you’re struggling. Resilience is born of self-awareness and good relationships, so this is the focus of 87%. The platform helps people measure, understand and improve their wellbeing.”

Indeed the platform is very much focused on strengths rather than deficits and helps users to harness those strengths to keep themselves well. Where there are areas of challenge, the app suggests reading material, videos to watch, exercises to try, people to talk to and so on. Recommendations are based entirely on the individual involved. Importantly, it doesn’t try and diagnose mental illness, it simply points users to interventions most likely to improve their wellbeing.

87% has been working with East Anglian Air Ambulance, amongst others, on a pilot in order to gather information about the platform’s use in the air ambulance community. EAAA clinicians were among the staff who met the app’s developers to help them understand the unique elements of HEMS that would need to be understood in order to develop a HEMS-specific version. Sarah Atkins, Head of HR at EAAA, says: “There just isn’t a wellbeing tracker like this, with such a broad overview, in our sector. Clinicians are often quite private individuals regarding how they’re feeling and how they’re



managing their feelings and the great thing is that this app allows them to quietly explore how they’re doing.

“In the initial pilot phase, we will be able to access overview data – not individual data as the app never allows that – so we can see how it has been used, what has been useful and how overall trends in wellbeing have developed.

“Anecdotal feedback has been positive but we’ll know more at the end of the year, when the full anonymised data will be available.”

Victor Inyang, Medical Director, EAAA, has been using the version of 87% already in use in Emergency Medicine. He comments: “It’s excellent for benchmarking where you are and pointing out potential red flags, amber warnings and so on, along with ways to address emerging issues.

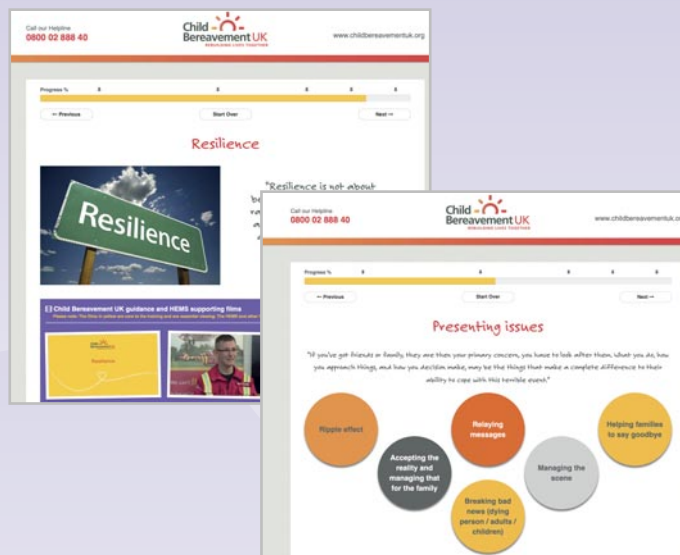
“Using it brought a couple of surprises for me, especially around the issue of not switching off from work, which lots of us are guilty of. I had been aware of it but not realised the extent to which it impacted my private life. So I made a change to separate my home and work phone and email, which has really given me permission to switch off and find some breathing space.

“I think the tragedy of Carl McQueen’s death by suicide brought the issue of mental health to the point where we, as an industry, agreed it must never happen again and must be discussed openly and widely.”

The 87% platform is a constantly evolving product that responds to a fast-moving sector, where the effects of trauma are being understood more and more every day. Development is overseen by psychologists responding to the latest research in the field. It has also been evolving in response to feedback from users and information from the anonymous data of how it has been used in its first 18 months of operation.

87% will continue to work with AAUK to develop the product, which is especially important given how slow and limited mental health support is via the NHS. Serra Pitts concludes: “Some people





won't be interested, which is fine, while for others 87% could make all the difference. We're just trying to help people understand, measure and improve their mental wellbeing. It's just about looking after yourself, so it's nothing to be ashamed of. Those working in the sector tend to focus – understandably – all their energies on helping the patient, but without realising that they too are part of that interaction and that caring for themselves is a sure-fire way to ensure they can offer the very best care to their patients."

Nine charities have now signed up to 87%, two more are interested and over 500 invites have been sent out to staff. For more information, email [wellbeing@airambulancesuk.org](mailto:wellbeing@airambulancesuk.org)

## Child Bereavement UK

After Child Bereavement UK worked with London's Air Ambulance (LAA) to deliver a package of bereavement support training for emergency air ambulance crews, doctors and paramedics, LAA saw the huge value in the training and put them in touch with Air Ambulances UK (AAUK), who have shared the training opportunity with air ambulance services across the country.

Dr Anna Dobbie, Consultant in Pre-Hospital Emergency Care with London's Air Ambulance, said: "When our medical crews are called to a scene, we hope we can make the difference to a patient's outcome. However our patients are so critically ill that not all of them will make it, despite our best efforts. Breaking bad news in the prehospital environment can be one of the biggest challenges that air ambulance doctors and paramedics face. We are acutely aware of our responsibility to relatives and loved ones in such difficult and emotional moments.

"The impact and long-lasting effect of such tragic news will affect the individuals involved forever and it is imperative that we aspire to deliver this in the best way possible. Up until now there has been little, if any, training on how to do this and we really hope that this training package will help to improve the prehospital care of bereaved relatives across the UK."

By helping crews to deliver tragic news in the best way possible, this training also helps those crews deal with the situation themselves and potentially reduces the vicarious trauma they may experience in having to deliver such news. Indeed, the Duke of Cambridge gave his support for the training programme in a video message which referenced his time as a pilot with East Anglian Air Ambulance, the impact of responding to difficult incidents, and the need for training for air ambulance crews and sensitive support for bereaved families.

The training is currently being delivered entirely online due to the Covid-19 situation, and comprises a short induction, followed by a



*"The scream of a mother stays with you for a long time, or the distress of somebody's relatives having witnessed something appalling is something that never really leaves you."*

more in-depth – and CPD-certified – moulage-based training designed to be completed as a group. Child Bereavement UK then get in touch again a few weeks later to offer crews an opportunity to join reflective follow-up sessions by Zoom if required.

Ann Chalmers, Chief Executive of Child Bereavement UK, said: "Child Bereavement UK is delighted to have worked in partnership with London's Air Ambulance Charity to develop this CPD-certified programme of online bereavement training for HEMS crews. Bereaved children, young people and families we have supported at Child Bereavement UK over the last 26 years tell us that how they are communicated with around the time of a death can stay with them forever, and can make a huge difference to their long-term outcomes. We have included learning from families and crew members in the training, including the impact of the death of a child, to help manage these very difficult and distressing situations.

"In addition to this, the impact on crews of attending traumatic incidents and witnessing death and grief cannot be underestimated. This training aims to give crews improved skills and knowledge for providing effective support, and increase their confidence in communicating around the time of a death. We hope this training will ultimately help improve both the experiences of bereaved families and the mental health and wellbeing of crew members."

Jo Yeoman, Patient Liaison Nurse for Wales Air Ambulance, has completed the online course and comments: "I thought it was really well presented and very beneficial for all prehospital teams who deal with bereavement. Even for people with a lot of experience in bereavement, it is helpful to sit down and take the time to think about how we deal with these situations, remind ourselves about what is important, what we are good at and what we could be better at.

"I particularly liked the focus on self-care, which I think as professionals we are not so good at. Highlighting the importance of our own personal awareness when building resilience is vital when working in such an environment.

"I would highly recommend this course."

Twelve charities have already signed up to the training. For more information, email [info@airambulancesuk.org](mailto:info@airambulancesuk.org)

These are just two examples of both the innovation that is endemic in the sector and the generosity of individual charities in their willingness to share their discoveries. With AAUK also keen to play its part in facilitating the sharing of best practice like this, momentum seems to be building around lasting change when it comes to looking after those who look after others.



# COVID-19: THE HELICOPTER VIEW

*What an extraordinary six months. In a period where teamwork and collaboration galvanised the response of those on the frontline to Covid-19, the air ambulance sector was the epitome of that spirit of cooperation.*

It was not just the air ambulance charities who worked together, but also every single company that is part of the bigger picture: health services, the military, Coastguard, operators, lottery providers, charities, fuel companies and more.

AAUK was glad to be able to play its part in facilitating some of these collaborations, including enabling regular high-level meetings between air ambulance charities. Stuart Elms, Clinical Director, EHAAT, said, "Those meetings were awesome because although there's a lot of experience at Clinical/Operations Director level, this situation was new to all of us so it was good to be able to share ideas. No politics, no barriers, lots of sharing." The online meetings have continued, now with a focus on preparing for winter.

Below we take a snapshot of a unique moment in time when there was collaboration on a scale never seen before, and also a perfect demonstration of the commitment, innovation and sheer agility of the sector to respond to unprecedented circumstances.

## THE AIR AMBULANCE CHARITIES

### Great North Air Ambulance Service

Andy Mawson, Director of Operations at GNAAS, says they have not lost a single minute of operational time because of the virus. Andy adds: "We have a relationship with the HEMS team operating in Lombardy, Italy so we began speaking to them in detail from mid-January: by then we'd all come to the conclusion that the disease would soon come to us. This gave us time to consider what we would do in various scenarios; for example, what if we lost all of our doctors to the NHS? What if local health services broke down?"

"We also sought out high quality PPE, which we were just about able to get hold of because we acted early – but even then it was from multiple sources and manufacturers, which brought its own difficulty when it came to standardising procedures and fit-testing.

"At the start we assumed all patients could have Covid so began using Level 1 PPE for any patient interaction, progressing to Level 3 for any critical interventions. We followed the PHE guidelines as best we could – although were concerned that when faced with a critically injured patient, a two and a half hour journey by road to

hospital or 20 minutes in a helicopter could be the difference between life and death.

"Our main focus was, and remains, finding a way to fly patients safely. We made and installed Perspex screens to separate the pilot from the patient: this gave us the ability to fly those patients who would die without that flight. For the clinicians, we used respirator hoods: these can be decontaminated and offer very high levels of protection during high-risk procedures, such as aerosol-generating procedures.

"As we've understood more about the virus and as supply chains have improved, we now have more options on PPE.

"We're as busy now as ever, after a drop-off around April. We've started to see a bit of an increase in self-harm and assault jobs, as others have reported anecdotally, but it's largely the same sort of work.

"While the level of collaboration across air ambulances and with our two local ambulance services has been brilliant to experience, let's hope we never have to do this again."

### Essex & Herts Air Ambulance

EHAAT also had their eyes on the horizon. Stuart Elms, Clinical Director, explains: "We have experienced managers looking out for external threats all the time so we were keeping an eye on what was happening in Wuhan from the start; actually most of the sector was doing the same in terms of tracking the progress of Covid-19 in detail. We developed a plan to buy stocks of PPE, equipment and pharmacy to ensure business continuity and augment our normal stocks. Despite this preparation we were only about 72 hours ahead of the mad rush for PPE that saw the big NHS Trusts buying suppliers out completely. East of England Ambulance Service also moved quickly and we've been grateful for their support.

"Meanwhile air ambulances were liaising with PHE (Public Health England) and the CAA (Civil Aviation Authority) to be able to fly Covid-infected trauma patients – and Specialist Aviation Services (SAS) moved heaven and earth to make that happen for us.

"We forecast a drop in trauma cases and this duly followed although we noticed road traffic collisions, while fewer in number, were high energy events from high speed impacts. There also appeared to be a rise in self-harm and assaults, which we're researching now with colleagues from other air ambulances.

"Closer to home, we became much more comfortable with working from home and using Zoom. It works, it helps wellbeing and also allowed the continuation of high quality clinical governance. We're looking at how to embrace this new culture.

"It's been a tough time but everyone in the air ambulance community pulling together made it easier and safer for everybody,



Stuart Elms



Great North Air Ambulance Service





MAAC



EHAAT



Wiltshire Air Ambulance and The Royal United Hospital



HLOWAA

and we should acknowledge that teams across the UK were helping each other and providing support. It really did make the difference."

### Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance

DSAA worked intensively with PHE, SAS (and through them, the CAA) and the South Western Ambulance Service to develop new guidance in relation to air ambulances being able to convey suspected or confirmed Covid-19 patients.

DSAA's critical care team remained operational for 19 hours a day, flying to standard operating procedures including cockpit and cabin separation and airflow separation procedures.

Bill Sivewright, CEO, DSAA, said: "Everything we do is patient focused and the pandemic has not changed that. We firmly believe that it is in times like these that patients need us to step forward and be there for them. We have done so by carefully examining every risk, and recognising that it is impossible to eliminate every one, reducing them to their lowest possible level to ensure crew and patient safety."

### Wiltshire Air Ambulance

WAA was able to assist two of its neighbouring air ambulances and a local hospital with the loan of equipment during the coronavirus pandemic.

Both Devon Air Ambulance and Great Western Air Ambulance Charity benefitted from spare Versaflo Powered Hood Respirators from their Wiltshire counterparts. WAA also loaned out two ventilators to Royal United Hospital in Bath. Richard Miller, WAA's Clinical Service and Ground Base Manager, said: "We have a fantastic relationship with our neighbouring air ambulance charities and local hospitals. Fortunately, we were well stocked for equipment, so if it could be used for the greater good elsewhere then we were only too happy to help out."

### Midlands Air Ambulance

While MAAC were not directly tasked to Covid-19 patients, the aircrew still faced the daily challenge of potentially treating patients who display symptoms. In addition, during the peak of the pandemic, members of the aircrew temporarily joined teams

on land ambulances and supported in the 999-call centre due to the exceptionally high number of calls.

Although the public was asked to make essential journeys only, MAAC was still called out to a great number of road traffic collisions and sporting injuries, as well as a greater number of incidents in the home, such as falls, cardiac arrests and strokes.

### Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance

HLOWAA were amongst the first air ambulance services to collaborate with the RAF to carry critically ill patients from more remote areas to major trauma centres with increased intensive care capacity. In April the Charity undertook the first time-critical transfer of a patient from Jersey to University Hospital Southampton in an RAF Chinook. This followed a joint training exercise at the Charity's airbase in Thruxton where the Charity's Critical Care Teams worked alongside military personnel to prepare themselves for this initiative. The drills practised during this exercise were incorporated into new operating procedures drawn up to oversee military aircrew and air ambulance services collaboration across the country.

Dr Simon Hughes, a senior Pre-Hospital Emergency Medicine Consultant with HLOWAA, who led the joint training session, commented: "A Chinook helicopter not only has the advantage of range and speed, but it also offers more space than the Hampshire and Isle of Wight air ambulance, allowing us to continue care for patients who could potentially be Covid-19 positive, whilst maintaining a safe distance from the military aircrew."

### London's Air Ambulance

Jonathan Jenkins, Chief Executive of LAA, said: "Throughout the pandemic we have remained fully operational, attending to the most critically injured people in need of immediate medical assistance. We worked closely with our partners at the London Ambulance Service and Barts Health NHS Trust to offer assistance with the Covid-19 response, including assisting with patient transfers by land ambulance to the Nightingale Hospital as required."

"As well as our crew wearing full PPE, we also installed protective screens in the cockpit of our two helicopters, meaning we can



continue to carry seriously injured patients whilst protecting the pilots and cockpit from infectious diseases.

*"It quickly became clear that trauma does not stop during a pandemic. After a brief reduction in trauma cases at the start of the lockdown period, the service has returned to our average daily mission numbers and we are operating as usual."*

There were also changes to the Physician Response Unit (PRU). This collaboration between LAA, the London Ambulance Service and Barts Health NHS Trust responds to 999 calls, treating patients in their homes who would otherwise have often required an ambulance transfer to hospital.

The PRU service has been operating with two cars and extended operational hours and has established new ways of working to provide care for more patients in their own homes, including:

- Enabling early discharge from Emergency Departments, so patients are visited at home by the PRU rather than referred for inpatient care.
- Saving vulnerable/at risk patients a trip to hospital – performing advanced assessments, blood tests and other investigations, administering treatments in the patient's home rather than risk going to hospital.
- Supporting palliative care services – PRU can visit and provide community review or clinical consultation, when otherwise patients would need to be taken to hospital by ambulance.

These measures all free up hospital beds and reduce risks for vulnerable patients by helping them avoid a trip to hospital.

## Magpas

Magpas quickly introduced changes to the PPE they were wearing, how they stored and used their equipment, and their training. With help from local businesses and generous supporters, the charity received some early donations of PPE, which were vital in allowing them to train using the new equipment and to continue to provide their service 24/7.

Magpas also helped hospitals with severely ill Covid-19 patients, using their specialist equipment and skills to transfer them to Covid-19 wards at different hospitals.

Despite the challenges, Magpas has seen incredible acts of community unity. Supporters have found ingenious ways to raise money and local companies have donated products and hot meals to teams on the frontline to help, say thank you and keep spirits high.

## THE LOTTERY PROVIDER

**LFS** is a lottery provider to a number of the UK air ambulance charities. Ged Jones, Chief Executive of LFS, describes their response to the situation: *"Our ISO 27001 accreditation demands a full disaster recovery plan and when we saw that lockdown was looking likely, we enacted that. This included moving all admin staff to remote working, a process which had already been carefully thought-through so nothing changed for clients and supporters. It was a completely seamless transition."*

*"We began lots more remote communication with supporters to thank them for staying with us and to remind them how valuable their contributions were, especially at the moment. We noticed how support galvanised around the emergency services charities and weekly attrition actually fell fifty percent."*

*"Face-to-face canvassing couldn't happen initially of course. Some clients did some extra social media communications, which helped but didn't provide the volume growth needed. Digital is a useful stream but it doesn't produce anywhere near the volume of growth delivered by face-to-face."*

*"Well before the Government and the Fundraising Regulator gave us the go-ahead, we worked out how we could get back to face-to-face with PPE to make sure we met all the regulations. This meant we could tell our partner charities how it could be done and what was needed, then leave it to them – once it was permitted again – to make the final decision because it's their reputation we're being entrusted with."*

*"The response from the public when we have gone out has been fantastic and sign-ups have been higher than pre-lockdown. They can see how seriously we're taking their safety, right down to the 2m tape measure each canvasser carries to make sure they're the right distance from people!"*

*"We were just pleased that for our client charities, who were faced with such difficulties, we were part of the solution, not part of the problem."*

LFS looked after its own staff too. The company kept in weekly contact with furloughed staff to check how they were coping and also topped up their income and responded to hardship problems. A 24/7 counselling service was made available. Furloughed staff were encouraged to volunteer in the community, with every hour they volunteered being rewarded with an hour of leave once they came back.

*"We knew it before but now it's crystal clear just how important the teams we have built are and the relationships that have developed throughout the company," adds Ged. "We will continue to facilitate remote working but we must also be aware of the huge strength that comes from maintaining those relationships. While the era of having absolutely everyone in the office has clearly now passed, this does put even greater emphasis on having a clear, shared vision and strong leadership and a commitment to maintaining the essence of what turns a group of individuals into a brilliant team."*

## THE AIRCRAFT

### Leonardo

Much of Leonardo's focus was initially within Italy, being the first major outbreak in Europe, but attention quickly moved to the UK and further afield. These early interventions provided the company with invaluable knowledge to offer guidance and support to the wider community of operators and customers. Leonardo supported its air ambulance operators in the UK with various solutions and design changes to ensure the safety of the crew in the event of carrying a Covid-positive patient.

### Specialist Aviation Services

Natalie Bush, Chief Operations Officer at Specialist Aviation Services (SAS), says the company was monitoring Covid-19 from very early in the year and was indebted to partner Leonardo for sharing lessons learned as the Milan area of Italy





was closed down. She continues: “We wrote a pandemic action plan very early, before lockdown, and enacted that. We spoke to our customer partners constantly; they wanted to stay functional throughout the crisis so we set out to help them do that. My whole approach was to keep as normal a routine as possible, which is always a helpful approach in aviation – it helps maintain the safety focus.

“While PHE put a stop to carrying Covid-19 patients, we were busy putting all the measures in place so we were ready to go when they changed the guidance six weeks later.

“That involved working closely with the CAA, Leonardo and our charity partners to modify aircraft and establish PPE protocol, and we developed SOPs to deal with the aircraft modification to the smallest detail. The big challenge was how to keep aircraft sterile and to keep two sets of crew separate to stop cross-contamination and to stop contaminating the engineers.

“We did risk assessments to try and address all the different combinations of variables and ended up with a card for crew to carry that really simplified the process so it could be followed in the field. It was a massive piece of work but the team here and the charity partners really stepped up.

“We continue to modify methods of operation and have plans in place for winter operations in anticipation of a spike. I think we’re moving towards a new normal so we’re looking at a new generation of Covid preparedness. This has made people think differently about future operations.”

### Babcock

Babcock’s Paul Westaway, Business Development Director, says the company quickly decided that they would align their work with UK Government guidelines, while at the same time understanding what was happening in other countries in order to keep ahead of the curve regarding how to keep crew safe. Paul continues: “We enacted our business continuity plan to ensure we would be able to support all our customers, including planning for really challenging scenarios, such as having 20% of pilots off unwell or isolating, for example.

“We kept in close contact with the air ambulance services to negotiate the constantly changing situation, worked hard to understand the nature of Covid-19 as quickly as possible and began to develop mitigations such as PPE for crew and pilots. This involved detailed testing including test flights, voice trials and all other factors that would have an impact on clinical care. Then when PHE advice changed, we were ready to help air ambulance services to implement new protocols.

“All the time, there has been lots of collaboration with partners in the industry including operators and individual AOC holders where we have all shared what we have been doing and learnt from each other. Everyone was totally willing to set aside competition for the greater good in this national crisis.

“We made incredibly rapid progress on getting screens designed, manufactured and fitted to the aircraft, building on work already done with our partners in Europe. We also did some work on isolation chambers, even coming up with a solution to attach them to the top of an Aerolite stretcher with an interface plate: the whole process went from idea to CAA approval in just 21 days.

“This was typical of that period, which was really inspiring both in terms of realising what could be done when the need arises and also for the altruism that typified everyone’s approach. As a Group, we

always say that we thrive on complexity and when it came to the crunch we, and other parties, really showed what we were made of.

“We have learned an enormous amount that will now feed into the design of the helicopters – it’s a whole new body of work which will have a long-term application. Things have changed for good: this has been a huge learning process that is going to shape the way air ambulances work in the future.”

### Airbus

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Airbus Helicopters has worked closely with EASA and the European Helicopter Association, providing support and recommendations whenever possible. In late April, the company set up a dedicated team of Airbus EMS experts to give advice to customers working on the front line, and organised webinars to share experience and best practice.

“We’ve found opportunities to team up with operators, suppliers and regulators to make available protective solutions that shield pilots and crews from contamination, while reducing the turnaround time for helicopter disinfection following transport of a Covid-19 patient,” explains Christoph Zammert, Executive Vice President of Customer Support & Services at Airbus Helicopters.

Bill Long, Head of Operational Marketing at Airbus Helicopters UK, said: “We’ve listened to and supported our operators as they address a whole range of challenges. This has only been possible thanks to huge co-operation across the industry – we were involved with peers and competitors across the globe from very early on.”

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Air Ambulances UK worked with the **Lions Club International** Foundation to obtain £161,000 of funding, which has supplied equipment to many air ambulances across Great Britain.

Caroline Creer, Fundraising and Communications Director of Devon Air Ambulance, said: “We are so grateful to the Lions Clubs for their continued support and for this grant equating to £9,660 which enables us to pay for separation screens on board our two aircraft.”

When air ambulance charities were struggling to find places to isolate their crews (as many hotels and B&Bs had closed down at the start of the pandemic), AAUK got in touch with **UK Hospitality**. The organisation shared the list they had created for the Government for the NHS. AAUK then adapted the list to match up each air ambulance with places that were open in their area.

**Air BP**, the aviation division of BP, provided free jet fuel for use by the helicopters of a number of UK air ambulance services for three months. This was part of the company’s ambition to support local communities during the pandemic. These services, which BP already supplies with jet fuel, were:

- Great Western Air Ambulance Charity
- Midlands Air Ambulance Charity
- Wales Air Ambulance Charity
- Yorkshire Air Ambulance

Great Western Air Ambulance reported that it had made 137 flights in the three months, which gives some indication of the amount of free fuel donated. In addition, AAUK secured free Rapid Response Vehicle and Critical Care Car fuel from **BP** for all charities across the UK.

# HIGH FLIERS



Earlier this year, two air ambulance charities - Air Ambulance Kent Surrey Sussex (KSS) and Thames Valley Air Ambulance (TVAA) – became the first two air ambulance services in the UK to be rated ‘Outstanding’ by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

These were major milestones for the charities: anyone working in the broader healthcare sector will tell you that CQC Outstanding is not easy to earn. While not every air ambulance operating model warrants a CQC inspection, there are lessons to be learned from the way the two charities approach both their work and the CQC inspection itself.

## 5 KEY AREAS

The five key areas that form the framework of the inspection are around:

- Are emergency and urgent care services **safe**?
- Are emergency and urgent care services **effective**?
- Are emergency and urgent care services **caring**?
- Are emergency and urgent care services **well-led**?
- Are emergency and urgent care services **responsive**?

While KSS has been registered since 2011 this is the first time the regulations have allowed the CQC to give a rating. In their report on KSS, the CQC picked out qualities such as openness, transparency, a zero-harm culture and a truly holistic approach.

The CQC report highlights a wide range of outstanding practices at KSS including the service’s ‘strong leadership’, ‘thoroughly patient focused team’, ‘open culture to reporting all types of incidents’, ‘highly motivated staff’ and ‘strong, comprehensive systems and processes’.

Staff came in for particular praise for their respectful, caring

approach and willingness to go the extra mile to deliver care beyond patients’ expectations. Leaders too were congratulated for their abilities, understanding, visibility, approachability, innovation and commitment to continuous improvement through staff empowerment.

KSS’s collaboration with local, national and international partner organisations to help improve services to patients was also singled out. Inspectors praised KSS’s engagement with its partners such as local NHS trusts and the Ministry of Defence.

The inspectors were impressed by KSS’s continual focus on the ‘safe use of innovative and pioneering approaches to care.’ This included the service’s research into new methods of treatments and innovative ways to make patient information more easily available to all staff providing care in order to deliver more efficient and cohesive treatment and care of patients.

David Welch, Chief Executive of KSS, said: *“Receiving an outstanding rating from the CQC across the board is testament to the dedication and commitment of our exceptional team, who work tirelessly to ensure the right treatments and best possible outcomes for our patients.”*

Dr Nigel Acheson, Deputy Chief Inspector of Hospitals (London and South), said: *“The service has a vision for what it*

*wanted to achieve and a strategy to turn it into an action, developed with all relevant stakeholders. Feedback from people who use the service was continually positive about the way staff treat people; they thought that staff went the extra mile and the care they received exceeded their expectations.”*

Philip Astle, CEO of South East Coast Ambulance Foundation Trust, said: *“I am incredibly proud to be a partner of KSS and the fact that the CQC have rated them so highly is absolutely no surprise to those of us who work closely with them. They are a team full of people who strive for excellence, are innovative, enthusiastic and tireless in their search to improve patient care. They are fantastic partners who always seek to maximise the effect of that partnership*



David Welch

*“Receiving an outstanding rating from the CQC across the board is testament to the dedication and commitment of our exceptional team.”*

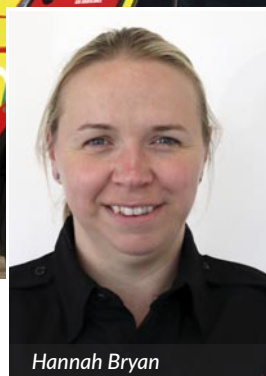
David Welch





*“We’re all proud of our CQC success but recognise there are still things we need to do. The drive to being an outstanding healthcare provider never stops.”*

Hannah Bryan



Hannah Bryan



*rather than seek organisational gain.”*

Thames Valley Air Ambulance also received the Outstanding rating from the CQC on their first inspection. During the inspection, representatives from the CQC spoke with TVAA staff and people who have used their service. The patients interviewed said that staff treated them and their families with compassion and kindness, respected their dignity and privacy. They also said they went above and beyond expectations to meet their individual needs and wishes.

TVAA Chief Executive, Amanda McLean, said: *“Patient care and safety is at the heart of everything we do, and we’re delighted that the CQC recognises this. We will continue to develop our service through innovative technology and research to further enhance the care we are able to provide.”*

The charity earned this rating just over a year after it became an independent healthcare provider, while increasing the number of dispatches by 110%.

So how did TVAA achieve their Outstanding rating? Hannah Bryan, Head of Compliance and Patient Safety at TVAA, explains: *“We were expecting an inspection within twelve months and knew it would be rated. I am an ex-CQC Inspector so I have a good understanding of the CQC’s methods, which was helpful. When we were establishing our processes as a newly-registered independent provider, we used the CQC Framework as a guide to ensure we met essential regulatory requirements. Then about three months after TVAA became independent, we got people together from across the organisation and did a SWOT workshop which fed into the formation of our CQC-focused quality improvement plan.*

*“The policies and processes have to be embedded in the organisation – there’s simply no point in having policies in a file that no-one knows about or enacts. The CQC will be looking for that too – making sure policies and processes accurately reflect the way the organisation goes about things day-to-day, not window dressing for the sake of an inspection. The advantage of this approach when an inspection comes is that no-one has to do anything different, they just do what they do every day and do it well.*

*“In longer-term improvement work and preparation for an inspection, it can also be really useful to have a new pair of eyes looking at your organisation – maybe a peer review – to see what you’re doing well and what needs some work. Sometimes you just do your work every day and don’t realise how good it is and it needs someone to point it out.”*

Before an inspection, CQC asks organisations to provide information to help them plan the inspection and to understand more about the care and services the organisation provides. This is an important part of the process says Hannah Bryan: *“The Provider Information Request is a mammoth task and you need to provide a huge amount of evidence and information; it’s labour intensive because there is so much information to find and you have to put it into the format they ask for. But I think you look upon it as an opportunity to shape what you want the CQC to understand about what your service does. Give them as much information as possible to help them understand what they are coming to look at in the inspection.*

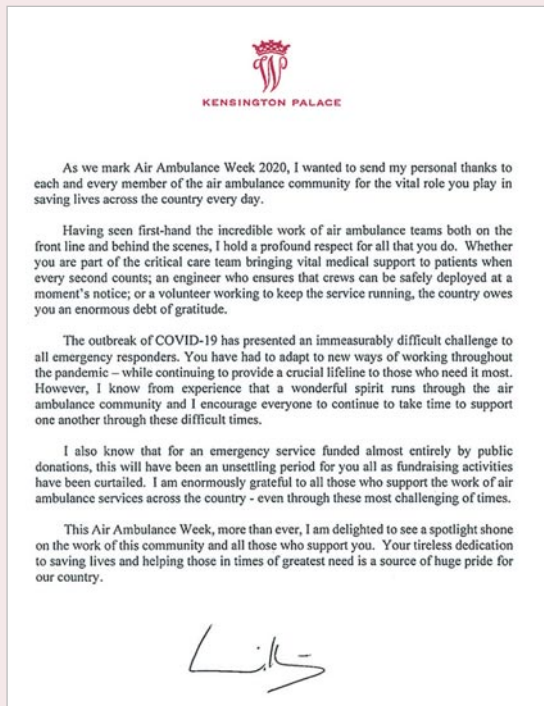
*“With the Provider Information Request and the inspection itself, it’s important to demonstrate you’re aware of areas where you need to improve and have a plan to make that improvement. We were able to do that – and also to demonstrate where we have learnt from other organisations and changed our processes and procedures accordingly.*

*“When the inspection is under way, staff should be open and honest and willing to speak to the inspectors about what they do and what it’s like to work there. Giving staff plenty of information about the inspection process in advance should help ease their understandable worries around inspection. Use the inspection to showcase your amazing patient care.*

*“Although our inspection is over now, our Quality Improvement Plan is a continuous process and we’ve used the CQC report to further improve. We always aim to keep improving: what’s outstanding now isn’t necessarily what’s outstanding in a year’s time. We’re all proud of our CQC success but recognise there are still things we need to do. The drive to being an outstanding healthcare provider never stops.”*

# AIR AMBULANCE WEEK

As Airway goes to press, the dust is settling on a highly successful Air Ambulance Week 2020. From 7 to 11 September, air ambulance services across the country highlighted their work through the Air Ambulance Week awareness campaign called 'Because Every Second Counts'.



Individual charities created their own campaigns under this banner, with a number creating videos to explain what the service does and how important people's support is, as well as their own images and patient stories.

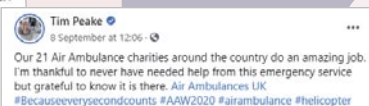
AAUK provided the overall Air Ambulance Week brand and design to ensure the whole event had consistency in appearance and message nationally, while members personalised their contributions.

The Week really took off through social media, where many other organisations joined in the celebration too, including clinical, operational and charity partners, other emergency services, supporters and survivors. There were social media posts from The Royal Family, The Prince of Wales, Jeremy Corbyn, MPs and celebrities and the hashtag #AAW2020 alone reached 8.8million people in all.

Individual charities gained good radio and television coverage too, ensuring the message reached millions. Nikki Wright, Operations and Marketing Director at AAUK, commented: "This was the first year of approaching Air Ambulance Week in this way, with a centralised approach to the overall concept, then allowing individual charities to put their own spin on it. It was a huge success – much more than we could have hoped for. We're really pleased to have been able to keep air ambulances in the public consciousness at a time when the public's support has never been so important. We have already started working on plans for next year."

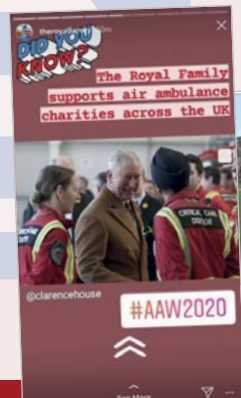
Air Ambulance Week reached an audience of over 150 million people through various media and social media outlets.

Natasha Robertson, Fundraising Manager for Essex & Herts Air Ambulance, commented: "The theme 'Every Second Counts' gave a real focus to our work during the week and really helped increase awareness of the charity. I felt really proud seeing the branding that so many of our neighbouring air ambulances were all using - it felt like we had one united voice this year."



These life-saving charities deliver advanced care 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, bringing the expertise, equipment and treatment of the hospital to patients in need.

#becauseeverysecondcounts





# MAKES EVERY SECOND COUNT

**STOP PRESS:**  
Air Ambulance Week 2021  
will be 6-12 September.

Because every second counts...

**"Their expertise and fast actions saved our little boy. We owe them his life."**

Morven and Derek, Parents of former patient James



Air Ambulance Week 2020  
7 - 13 September

Because every second counts...

"SCAA's speed, professionalism and care made a huge difference to what was a really traumatic experience."

Lucy, Road traffic collision



**"This was the first year of approaching Air Ambulance Week in this way, with a centralised approach to the overall concept, then allowing individual charities to put their own spin on it. It was a huge success – much more than we could have hoped for."**

Nikki Wright



AANI lit up local landmarks

Air Ambulance Week 2020  
7-13 September

Because every second counts...

**"They were complete heroes. They were just brilliant; immediately offering pain relief to James and reassurance to us both. They even had foil blankets to keep us warm."**

Alison, Mum of Former Patient James



Air Ambulance Week 2020  
7-13 September

Because every second counts...

**"Had it not been for the speed of the airlift, skill and professionalism of the crew on that day, I do not think that I would have been able to live my life, as I still do today."**

Robert, former patient

Air Ambulance Week 2020  
7-13 September

Because every second counts...

**"I firmly believe that, had it not been for the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance Critical Care Team, I would not have survived."**

Andrew, Former Patient

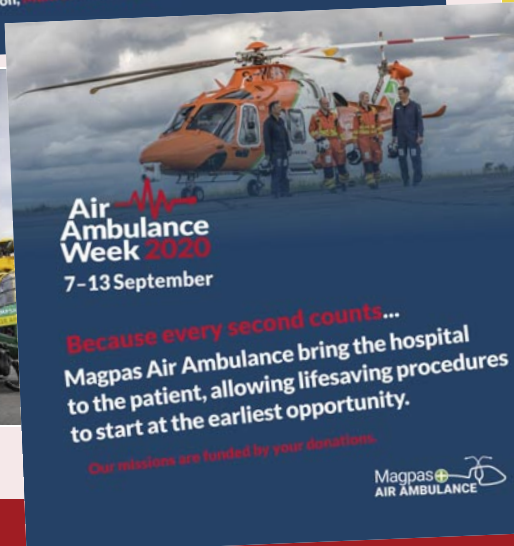


Air Ambulance Week 2020  
7-13 September

Because every second counts...

**Magpas Air Ambulance bring the hospital to the patient, allowing lifesaving procedures to start at the earliest opportunity.**

Our missions are funded by your donations.



Air Ambulance Week 2020  
7-13 September

Because every second counts...

**Our specialist critical care teams include both paramedics and doctors, who are supported by pilots and dispatchers.**

## KENT SURREY SUSSEX WINS CHARITY OF THE YEAR



Air Ambulance Kent Surrey Sussex (KSS) has won Charity Times' Charity of the Year Award (income over £10 million). This prestigious award is open to national and regional charities and not-for-profit organisations across the UK that have consistently delivered an outstanding service to their beneficiaries, been clear in their goals and strategy, and demonstrated excellence all round, especially in the past year.

Finalists in KSS's category included Asthma UK, British Lung Foundation, Blood Cancer UK and Elton John AIDS Foundation.

According to Charity Times, "The awards attracted hundreds of high quality entries, which were evaluated by an expert independent judging panel. KSS was praised for continuing to deliver critical life-saving services despite the pandemic, and for proactively looking across the world to help preparedness. Judges said it excelled across all its delivery areas."

David Welch, CEO, KSS said, "What an amazing achievement in our 30th year to have been named Charity of the Year for an award organised by Charity Times, the charity industry's leading publication. Every member of the KSS team has played a significant role in our success and I am immensely proud of this accolade."

Helen Bowcock, Chair of the Board of Trustees adds, "This award acknowledges the dedication and commitment of our amazing crews who have continued to deliver their life-saving service, without interruption, throughout the Covid crisis. It is a great credit too to all KSS staff and volunteers under David Welch's leadership and, as Chair, I would like to congratulate everyone and to give sincere thanks to the Charity Times judges for giving us this significant honour."

## SECAMB HITS GOLD

South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SECamb) has achieved a gold award from ENEI (Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion). The TIDE (Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation) gold award is the third year in a row SECamb has been recognised by the organisation, following two silver awards.

SECamb is the only ambulance trust in a record 98 entries from organisations from across 26 sectors. A total of 51 achieved an award with SECamb among 13 achieving the highly-coveted gold award.

Other gold winners included IBM UK Ltd, the Ministry of Justice and fellow NHS organisation, North East London NHS Foundation Trust.

SECamb Executive Director of HR & Organisation Development, Ali Mohammed, said: "I'm really pleased that our approach to diversity and inclusion has once again been recognised, this year with an ENEI gold benchmark. We know that we must do lots more to ensure this is embedded throughout the whole organisation but it's great to see our continued progress recognised in this way."



## ENHANCED 111 SERVICE TRIALLED IN THE NORTH WEST



The media has been full of reports of a new service which aims to reduce overcrowding and risk of transmitting Covid-19 in hospital emergency departments. North West Ambulance Service is at the heart of the initiative, whereby the enhanced NHS 111 First service will offer a booked time slot in emergency departments to patients with an urgent – but not serious or life-threatening – illness or injury.

The new approach is being rolled out in phases across the North West. It will be tested and evaluated before being rolled out more widely by all hospital trusts with an emergency department through the autumn.

In the North West approximately 60% of emergency department attendances are self-presenting, walk-in patients, and the majority occur during the day and early evening, which has implications for managing social distancing in waiting rooms.

Patients who are thinking about going to an emergency department will be asked to contact NHS 111 first instead of walking in unannounced.

Jackie Bell, Head of 111 at North West Ambulance Service, said: "Being able to provide patients who need emergency department care with a specific timeslot to attend is a great expansion to the service we already offer and will help to keep people safe and well."

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Shortlist stars

Jane Gurney, Chief Executive of Essex & Herts Air Ambulance, and David Craig, Chief Executive of Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance, were shortlisted in the category 'Charity Leader of the Year' in the Charity Times Awards 2020. They were two of seven people on the shortlist for the award, which was won by James Thornton from Client Earth.

### Howick to KSS

Ian Howick, Chair of Heathrow AOC and former Director at British Airways, has been appointed by Air Ambulance Kent Surrey Sussex (KSS) as Executive Director of Corporate Services. Ian will be responsible for overseeing the finance, HR, IT, estates, facilities, governance, compliance and risk management functions at KSS.

### LAA backs blood call

London's Air Ambulance joined leading medical organisations in the summer to raise awareness of the importance of blood donation. Since being able to administer pre-hospital blood transfusion to critically injured people began in 2012, there has been a reduction in pre-hospital deaths in London from 34% to 19%. Around three quarters of all UK air ambulances now carry some form of blood product on board. LAA also released data showing that during the pandemic, the number of pre-hospital blood transfusions increased by 25% compared to the same period in 2019.

### Name in flights

More than 1,000 names have been added to the underside of the new Cornwall Air Ambulance helicopter. As part of the Heli Heroes campaign, supporters paid a minimum of £100 for a name to be added to the helicopter to help raise money for the New Heli Appeal. It was a hugely popular campaign and the name places sold out at the end of 2019, raising over £120,000 for the charity. The names appear on the underside of the helicopter, making up three large yellow chevrons, which are visible when the aircraft flies overhead.

### New HQ

Midlands Air Ambulance has unveiled plans to make Cosford the home of a new multi-million-pound headquarters. The project, currently at the pre-application stage with Shropshire Council, proposes the new headquarters be a base for two helicopters as well as training facilities. MAAC's Staffordshire and Worcestershire bases would remain.

**Do you have any news you'd like to share in Airway? Then email [emma.carter@airambulancesuk.org](mailto:emma.carter@airambulancesuk.org) to be considered for the next issue.**



# BMW'S SPECIALIST GROUND SUPPORT VEHICLES



The ground support response vehicles used by air ambulance Critical Care Teams are involved in an ever-increasing number of tasking requests.

Fleet numbers of these essential vehicles have increased significantly over the last two years and look set to increase further.

One such vehicle is the latest BMW X5, the fourth generation of this hugely successful 4x4. This all-new model follows the long tradition of being offered to the emergency services with a specialist Authority model. Unlike the retail model, the AC version is supplied with practical features for operational duty and excludes luxury features. All series standard safety features are included, along with the highest detail level of satellite navigation, climate control for crew comfort whilst wearing heavy protective equipment, and Sport front seats for lateral comfort during response driving.

Tried and tested – The X5 is in daily operational duty with every UK Police Authority in the most demanding of duties possible. It is also used in an NHS Ambulance Service Incident Officer role, with the new G05 generation X5 just entering operational service.

BMW Operational Support and Evaluation vehicles. Two new G05 generation X5 Ambulance vehicles will shortly enter service. One is equipped for air ambulance duties (top right image) and the other for NHS ambulance service.

For further information on this model please contact Nick Withington at the BMW Group – Government and Authorities Division - on 07815 371518 [Nick.Withington@bmwgroup.com](mailto:Nick.Withington@bmwgroup.com)



## SWASFT WELCOME NEW CEO

South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWASFT) has welcomed Will Warrender CBE as its new CEO. Will succeeds Ken Wenman, who retires after more than 40 years' service in the NHS.

With over 30 years' Royal Navy experience, Will has spent much of his time at sea, where he commanded five warships; and ashore he led national and coalition maritime operations across 2.5 million square miles of water in the Gulf. In 2018 he was made a CBE in the military Operational Honours List and was awarded the US Legion of Merit in 2017 for his contribution to coalition maritime operations in the Gulf.

"We are very excited that Will is joining us, bringing a wealth of leadership experience in complex and challenging environments," said Chairman Tony Fox. "His personal values are a great alignment with those of the Trust and we know that he will be an inclusive and compassionate leader, able to take us forward as we continue our drive to be an outstanding organisation in all that we do."

## WILTSHIRE AIR AMBULANCE LASER DANGER

On the evening of 6 September 2020, Wiltshire Air Ambulance (WAA) aircrew were subjected to a laser attack when attempting to land in Trowbridge. Fortunately the crew were all fine and it was only a training mission the laser attack disrupted rather than a lifesaving emergency.

However, this is the fourth laser attack on the WAA helicopter this year. Chief pilot Matt Wilcock said: "It is only by the grace of God that we haven't had a patient on board or that we haven't been flying to a lifesaving incident when these laser attacks have occurred."

"Nobody should be shining laser pens at aircraft. You don't know who that aircraft is coming to help and just think about if it was en route to help you or one of your loved ones and a laser attack forced us to abort the mission."

Shining a laser at an aircraft is a criminal offence, with punishment of an unlimited fine and up to five years in prison.



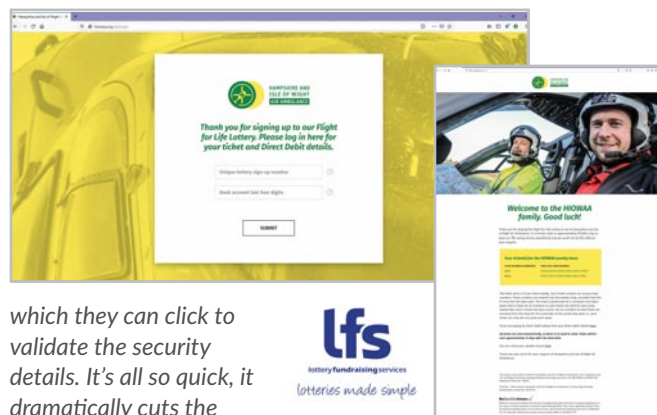
# LFS ACTIVATES CONTACTLESS SIGN-UP

LFS (Lottery Fundraising Services) has always worked hard to innovate, well aware that its air ambulance charity clients rely on their lotteries to maintain and increase their income levels. Given current circumstances, with so many other fundraising avenues closed or severely compromised, lotteries have become even more important.

LFS has already recently introduced attrition management programmes, where it gives extra value to supporters to ensure they stay with the lottery. This extra value is specifically designed to keep supporters onboard and LFS has also streamlined its communications with supporters to enhance the process. Supporters are communicated with when they want to be, in a much more targeted approach.

LFS's latest innovation is designed to address another pinch-point in the process: signing up new lottery supporters. Written in-house, the LFS team have launched their Activate contactless sign-up process. The process sees LFS canvassers sign people up, whereupon the Activate system sends them a code, the supporter clicks on it and their online membership pack is there, waiting for them.

Ged Jones, Chief Executive of LFS, explains: "The system validates the supporter's details and the transaction at the point of sale. The supporter receives a link immediately on their phone,



which they can click to validate the security details. It's all so quick, it dramatically cuts the amount of time from securing a signature to getting them in the draw as there is no post involved. It has led to a 50% drop in the number of supporters who say yes at the time but then don't make their first payment, which represents a considerable uplift in income.

"Security and authenticity are built into the whole transaction, so all parties know it's completely safe and trustworthy. It has the added benefit of reducing paper use considerably, which saves on both cost and carbon footprint.

"The additional benefit of this system is that it drives an immediate engagement with the charity as the supporter is directed to their website to view the information. Once on the website, engagement figures show that 28% of people will go on to explore other pages on the website. Of course, on air ambulance charities' websites are hundreds of reasons – such as success stories – to persuade supporters to keep on supporting, so that engagement is vital."

## H145 LEADS MULTIPLE CERTIFICATIONS FOR AIRBUS

When it comes to HEMS aircraft, Airbus has had a busy year. In January, the H135 upgrade, which increased maximum take-off weight, was certified; in June the new five-bladed H145 with additional payload was certified; and in July it was the turn of the brand new H160.

Since certification in 2014, Airbus has delivered 319 H145s, 13 of them in service in UK HEMS. Bill Long, Head of Operational Marketing at Airbus Helicopters UK, adds: "Customers told us they wanted additional payload and we found a solution by developing the new five-blade rotor, which has improved ride quality on an aircraft already known for being smooth as well as allowing us to remove anti-vibration technology from the aircraft – a weight saving of 150kg.

"Like the H135, the new 145 is the quietest and most fuel-efficient in its class."

The simplicity of the new bearingless main rotor design will also ease maintenance operations, further improving the benchmark serviceability and reliability of the H145. The aircraft is equipped with full authority digital engine control (FADEC) and the Helionix digital avionics suite. It includes a high performance four-axis autopilot, increasing safety and reducing pilot workload.



# AIRBUS



The first deliveries in Europe of the H145 will be this Autumn and all UK orders will now be the new H145. Airbus can upgrade existing D2 aircraft to the same standard as the new D3, giving all the same improvements except wACS.

While a number of charities moved from the H135 to the H145, a number still need the smaller machine and that too has been improved. Following evaluation of customer feedback, Airbus has developed an upgrade package that gives an extra 120kg payload, which will help those charities who need the more compact aircraft but want to travel slightly longer distances.

Finally Airbus was delighted to see the H160 certificated in July. Airbus believes it will be a major player on the global air ambulance market, although will have slightly less impact in the UK market because of its size. Bill Long explains: "This is a bigger machine and incredibly useful for longer distances and remote communities, of which there are a few in the UK. It would work well for transfers rather than direct HEMS, due to its size, downwash, operating costs and limits on landing. But for those who do use it, it is a wonderful aircraft, incredibly smooth and quiet – almost like a fixed-wing aircraft. It also has some fantastic new technology with many patents; it's a real step-change."





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# THANK YOU

