



The Air Ambulance Service
SAVING LIVES

Annual summary

2020/21





Welcome from our Chair of Trustees



2020 will be forever remembered as a year like no other. But, in the face of the biggest global pandemic in a century and the resulting life-changing impact felt by our communities, the Courage, Creativity and Compassion continuity displayed by everyone associated with the Charity has been remarkable.

Thanks to the unwavering support for the Charity, our delivery of lifesaving critical care and inter-hospital transfers has continued without exception. This is a remarkable achievement and is testament to our wonderful supporters, our dedicated clinicians and crews, the commitment of our staff and volunteers and the excellent leadership of the Charity.

The commitment and togetherness shown by all of our stakeholders ensured the Charity was well-placed to be able to adapt, overcome and achieve monumental milestones and accomplishments. It quickly embraced the enforced changes brought about by the pandemic and adopted new ways of working to limit the impact on performance.

The Air Ambulance Service continued to lead the way in embracing new technology as day-to-day working environments changed from offices, stores, vehicles and warehouses to remote working, and through ecommerce, digital campaigns and virtual challenge events, new technology was also able to lessen the financial blow felt.

As Chairman, I am extremely proud of what the Charity has achieved in the most challenging of years and I am extremely grateful to everyone who has helped us to achieve excellence operationally while limiting the financial impact of the pandemic.

Chris Faircliffe
Chair of Trustees

Welcome from our Chief Executive



I am pleased to report that an extremely challenging year for the Charity in 2020 was successfully navigated, and we remained true to our objectives of providing a Helicopter Emergency Rescue Service (HEMS) for the counties of Warwickshire, Northamptonshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Rutland under the banner of your local air ambulance.

We also maintained our national paediatric intensive care transfer and retrieval service, better known as Children's Air Ambulance.

An excellent start to 2020 was suddenly curtailed with the Covid-19 pandemic, which has had a truly devastating impact across the world. We were not immune to that and, in line with government guidelines, we had to close shops and cease all external fundraising efforts such as our lottery and reuse programmes which between them generate a significant amount of income for the Charity.

Such an event could have been catastrophic for a charity like ours had we not been ready to meet such a challenge, but with our renowned resilience, agility, determination, and dedication we were prepared.

Whilst it is fair to say that for most people 2020 will be remembered for Covid-19, Brexit and significant social movements, for The Air Ambulance Service it can also be remembered for some very positive reasons. It was the year that our HEMS fleet surpassed 40,000 total missions since the Charity introduced its first aircraft in 2003, while Children's Air Ambulance reached the 500-mission mark since its inaugural flight in 2012. Our achievements didn't stop there as we continued to improve the clinical excellence displayed by our crews albeit within full PPE and in aircrafts that were modified to make them Covid-19 safe. It was a big and costly exercise but it was necessary, and it gave the required protection to both patients and staff.

We are, and always will be, an organisation steeped in the values of Courage, Creativity and Compassion that have served us well over many years. Every time a doctor or paramedic sets out on a mission, they can never be sure what they will face or what the eventual outcome will be. Sometimes they will see things that can be deeply upsetting and sometimes terribly shocking but there will never be any hesitation on responding when someone needs our help – that's Courage – and so is the willingness of staff and volunteers to try new ways of fundraising and making our charity better especially in the adversity we faced. Our ethos is continual improvement

and always striving to do more and better and it takes Courage and Creativity to do that. Compassion is in everything we do. People don't come to us for their benefit - we join together to help others because we care a great deal about our society. We support each other and we will go out of our way when needed.

The spirit and togetherness showed by everyone involved with our charity has been incredible in 2020 and, if I could, I would mention every single person by name, but I don't need to because I can say with hand on heart that every single person in our charity did their bit and more in 2020.

We have had another very successful year and I thank everyone involved in all our Income Generation activities. Yet again we have hit a record high of income and as always, we do three things with this. We invest more into our operational services, more into developing staff and volunteers and more into our future financial stability to protect all the service budget needed for the future.

Andy Williamson
CEO



Your local air ambulance

Warwickshire & Northamptonshire (WNAA)

Derbyshire, Leicestershire & Rutland (DLRAA)

The five counties we cover are served by two AgustaWestland 109 Grand helicopters and Critical Care Cars that respond to requests by our NHS Ambulance Trust partners, West Midlands Ambulance Service and East Midlands Ambulance Service to assist with major trauma and medical emergencies.

Both of the helicopters and the cars are crewed with a doctor and paramedic of the highest critical care standards and dedication. The helicopters are leased from Sloane Helicopters based in Northamptonshire who also provide the pilots.

In 2020, across Warwickshire & Northamptonshire, we attended 1,365 missions, 585 by helicopter and 780 by our Critical Care Car. Across Derbyshire, Leicestershire & Rutland, we attended 2,038 missions, 804 by helicopter and 1,234 by our Critical Care Car.

In June 2020, your local air ambulance achieved a milestone of 40,000 missions since the Charity first began in 2003.



WNAA 2020 Missions



RTC	388
Medical	432
Sports	33
Fall	162
Industrial	27
Other	323

DLRAA 2020 Missions



RTC	552
Medical	706
Sports	82
Fall	172
Industrial	33
Other	1,053



Pip's story

A former teacher who suffered life-changing injuries when she was attacked by a herd of cows has set herself the challenge of walking 1,000 miles in 2021 to raise funds for your local air ambulance, without whom, she believes, she would not be here today.

Pip Peacock, 63, from Bakewell was walking her dog at Magpie Mine near Sheldon when the incident happened in September 2019.

"My injuries were so serious I probably would not have survived if I had gone in a land ambulance to hospital. The policeman who went to tell my husband what had happened said I might not live even though I had been taken by helicopter" she says.

But thanks to Derbyshire, Leicestershire & Rutland Air Ambulance Pip was flown to the Northern General Hospital in Sheffield – the nearest major trauma centre – in just 10 minutes. The road journey from the remote location would have been about 45 minutes. Her injuries included 34 breaks in her ribs, a broken collar bone, broken shoulder ligaments, and a broken finger, as well as serious wounds to her left leg and right knee.

Pip during her 1,000 mile challenge to raise funds and awareness



Surgeons had to use 17 titanium plates to repair her rib cage – and before the surgery, Pip's husband Philip was warned that the second major trauma to her body in two days might mean that she would not survive. Thankfully, after eight days in an induced coma and another two weeks in hospital, she was well enough to go home.

Since then, despite often being in pain, Pip has been trying to rebuild her life - by spending time with friends and family and walking.

"As walking was allowed I just did more and more. I needed a challenge and signed up to walk 1,000 miles in a year. Then I thought it would be a great idea to use it to raise money for your local air ambulance, so that something good comes out of what happened to me" she says.

Pip also wants to raise awareness of the potential dangers of walking near cows, especially with dogs. She was with her dog Buster in a field, where there were some cattle, when the attack happened. She explains,

"Buster was used to walking in fields of cows and was on a very short lead by my knees. The first thing I recall about the attack is one cow coming for me. Then I was lying on the ground and was kicked and rolled over several times. I tried to shout for help but had no voice. Suddenly I heard voices and two men and a woman came along."

"The men were incredibly brave and chased the cows away. This was no easy task. I could hear them shouting and was worried the cows would attack them. They used their sticks and camera tripods to move the cows away. The woman stayed and talked to me. Once the cows had gone, I could hear the man on the phone telling someone that my dog had been killed, but I don't remember dropping Buster's lead or him running away from me" she says.

Losing Buster, a 13-year-old black Labrador described by Pip as "very docile," is a great sadness to Pip. She says, "He was very placid and loved by everyone - even some people who didn't usually like dogs. He came to us at 18 months from the Dog's Trust and we couldn't have asked for a better dog."

Pip doesn't hold any ill-feeling about the incident. Adding: "I think it was just an unfortunate event. I have had incredible support since the accident and can see that good things have come out of it. I am making good progress but still struggle with pain from time to time."



Children's Air Ambulance

Children's Air Ambulance is a national service covering all of the UK, as and when required. It works in partnership with major specialist NHS paediatric intensive care teams based in children's hospitals across the country.

The role of Children's Air Ambulance is to ensure the quickest, safest transfer and retrieval of critically ill babies and children and, to ensure the doctors and nurses attending them have the best equipment available to meet their clinical needs.



Helicopters



Clinical Partner Teams

We operate two AgustaWestland 169 helicopters for this service, based out of Doncaster Sheffield Airport and London Oxford Airport. This enables us to respond to all parts of the UK in rapid time.

Children's Air Ambulance attended 83 missions in 2020, as the pandemic significantly affected this number as hospitals had to cope with additional demands placed upon them by Covid-19. NHS paediatric and neonatal teams also reported a significant drop-in activity throughout 2020, especially over the historical busy winter/spring period.

Despite challenges we have progressed key pieces of work to further enhance the services provided by Children's Air Ambulance, including Nitric Oxide (specialist gas to aid a patient's breathing) and ECMO (extra corporeal membrane oxygenation – essentially a lung and heart bypass machine) equipment that are in operation. Children's Air Ambulance is the first and only aeromedical provider in the UK to provide an ECMO capability by helicopter.



Jessica's story

The father of a 10-week-old baby flown to hospital for heart surgery by Children's Air Ambulance describes the Charity as "a fundamental piece of the jigsaw to get my daughter as quickly as possible to where she needed to be for a lifesaving operation."

Ian Williamson - from Weymouth - accompanied baby Jessica on the helicopter flight from Dorset County Hospital in Dorchester to Southampton Children's Hospital, along with members of Southampton Oxford Retrieval Team (SORT) - one of the Clinical Partners Teams working with Children's Air Ambulance.

It took just 25 minutes by air to transfer Jessica compared with a road journey by land ambulance of well over an hour, not allowing for traffic delays.

"It was about 5pm on a Friday when we were flying. I remember looking out of the helicopter and seeing cars backing up on the motorway and thinking how glad I was that we were in the sky and not on the road" says Ian.

On arrival at Southampton, Jessica - who was born with the congenital heart defect Complete AVSD - went straight into the

Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU). She stayed there, with Ian and his wife Lizzie constantly by her side, for two weeks whilst medical staff prepared her for her surgery, which she now desperately needed.

Ian and Lizzie found out about their daughter's heart problem when they went for a 20-week scan and they always knew that she would have to have an operation. However, they were not expecting the scenario that started just a few weeks after Jessica's birth.

At just 16 days old she had to be admitted to Dorset County Hospital as she was struggling to breathe. The doctors there referred her to Southampton Children's Hospital where she spent four weeks being monitored and treated before being transferred back to Dorchester.

At only three kilos, she still didn't weigh enough to be operated on, but her condition had been stabilised and an Optiflow system was helping her breathing.

Unfortunately, just two weeks later, Jessica's breathing began to deteriorate again, and she urgently needed to go back to Southampton. Because it was necessary for her to be transported whilst on the Optiflow system she couldn't be taken in a land ambulance as they don't have the facilities to support the machinery. This is where Children's Air Ambulance was able to help.



Jessica and family
Baby Jessica during her air transfer to the PICU

Lizzie was waiting at Southampton Hospital for the helicopter to arrive with her husband and daughter on board.

"It was such an emotional and beautiful sight seeing this Green Goddess emerging in the sky and landing at the hospital and knowing that Jessica was now where she needed to be for her lifesaving surgery" she says.

Jessica has been doing incredibly well after her transfer in August 2020 and her cardiologist now feels it is unlikely that she'll need further surgery - which is such a relief for her parents, who describe her as "a gorgeously cheeky toddler".

The couple will always be grateful to everyone who played a part in getting Jessica to where she needed to be for her lifesaving operation. They say, "We were totally gobsmacked when we were told that Children's Air Ambulance is a charity and feel very lucky that this amazing facility was made available for our daughter when she needed it. We always felt she was in very safe hands. Children's Air Ambulance will always have a very special place in our hearts."



It was mobilised from its base in Oxford and flew to Southampton to pick up the specialist paediatric retrieval team from SORT and take them to Dorchester. They then prepared Jessica for the flight back to Southampton and accompanied her and Ian in the helicopter.

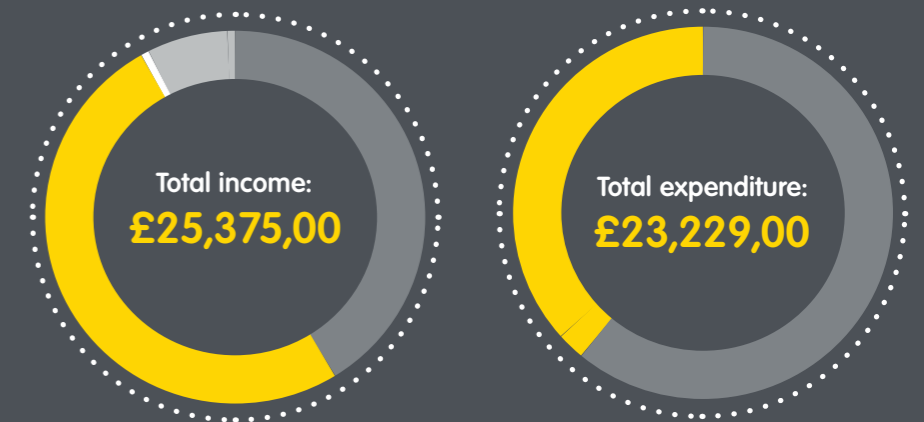
"Up until the last minute we were expecting a road transfer to Southampton and then we were told it would be by helicopter. We'd been waiting for the road transfer for a few days and each day we were told it wasn't possible we became more and more anxious, so when we were told that Children's Air Ambulance was definitely coming that day, we were so relieved" says Lizzie.

"We were expecting a fairly straightforward transfer but by then Jessica had taken a turn for the worst. She got very distressed, and she had a very high heart rate. The SORT team decided to sedate and intubate her and put her on a ventilator prior to flying. She was looking quite grey and unwell at that point" she adds.

Income Generation

The Covid-19 crisis meant that for the first time in our history income did not grow. The suspension of so many activities meant we had to rely on our existing supporters' generosity even more. Our mailing campaigns were very successful and our applications to Grants and Trusts proved exceptional.

Data for financial year ending 31 December 2020



Donations & legacies	£8.90m
Charitable activities	£0
Other trading activities	£14.71m
Investments	£178,000
Other	£1.59m

Raising funds	£14.40m
Charitable activities*	£8.83m
Other	£0

*cost of running the helicopters and Critical Care Cars

The Air Ambulance Service in numbers

Our children's club #TheCrew launched and reached a membership of



Celebrated **10 YEARS** of our retail function

First ever digital fundraising campaigns

2.6 Challenge and the **Virtual Santa Fun Run**



Individual giving income **£2.68m**
9000 regular givers

Received over **22,600** supporter calls

Opened our first online shop



Our People

Our front line services are all supported by a dedicated team of staff providing the infrastructure and support required to maintain the services free of charge to NHS and patient.



The pandemic brought an increased threat across a number of areas throughout the year. We had to ensure all of our aircraft were Covid-19 safe and we spent significant amounts of money on installing better safety shields in the cockpit and patient areas.

We adapted our shops and offices into a Covid-19 safe space, and we implemented all government recommended guidelines. The Charity leadership team focussed very strongly on regulatory compliance and risk management because of the pandemic, and we have implemented new processes to improve this area across the whole organisation. This has meant investment into more digitally focussed activities in order to keep our charity running as it needs to.

We implemented a fortnightly business update for all staff to keep everyone informed of developments and a fortnightly wellbeing session to ensure we managed concerns, anxiety, and loneliness the lockdown brought to many.

We built on our wellbeing programme, introducing a strategy to deliver on the five pillars of wellbeing; mental, social, financial, physical and digital. In remembrance of our much loved and respected late colleague and Deputy CEO, Alexandra Pope, April saw our first 'Alexandra Day'. This brought the organisation together and united everyone, giving time to reflect and focus on their wellbeing.

A high priority has continued to be training and development. The Senior Management Team concluded their CMI Level 7 in Strategic Leadership and Management, while line managers continued with the ILM Level 5 in Management, due for completion in 2021. We maintained and improved the staff "our voice" initiative and the "Just Landed" newsletter. We made good use of MS Teams, Zoom, Yammer and SharePoint as staff communication tools.

Volunteers were kept up to date on a monthly basis and there were weekly bulletins from the CEO and leadership team to our multiple stakeholders across the country. We maintained our centralised management team "The Volunteer Hub" as well as a portal to improve communication and accessibility to the Charity's recourses.

We have expanded our external mentoring scheme with 16 employees engaged with an external leader in their field on a one-to-one basis to develop skills and knowledge beyond their immediate roles.

The Charity achieved recognition of its quality management and were awarded the ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 Certifications.



Our Vision, Mission and Values

Our vision is to ensure children grow into adults, adults live longer and families stay together, making bereavement through trauma rare.

Our rapid response services work tirelessly to save lives and alleviate pain and suffering, wherever and whenever needed.

We live and thrive with our three core values of Compassion, Courage and Creativity that have been demonstrated by everyone involved in the Charity. We care about our patients, our supporters, our partners and our colleagues. We act with dignity, humility, integrity and respect. We succeed because we dare. We are bold, pioneering and brave enough to ask questions of ourselves and others while actions are taken with responsibility.

We succeed because we innovate. We recognise that new ideas, big and small, are essential for future growth.

We are curious, we embrace change, and we rise to the challenge.



2021 and beyond

The seven strategic aims which are to be developed over the 2020-2022 period are:

1. Continuously advance rapid response and critical care services to patients.
2. Be recognised as the leading authority on pre-hospital emergency care and paediatric transfer services.
3. Raise awareness, understanding and engagement with our charity across the country.
4. Unite people in the common purpose of our charity and create advocates who will enhance reputation and reach of the Charity.
5. Be the organisation of choice and opportunity for the most talented and driven from diverse backgrounds.
6. Drive best practice across all areas of the organisation in a sustainable, responsible and ethical manner, to ensure a positive impact on the communities and environments in which we operate.
7. Grow income to £30 million in a diverse and sustainable manner to continue and develop our services.



2021 will see us replacing the two current aircrafts for our local air ambulances with both new helicopters expected to be in service from March.

The project will enable us to have a dedicated spare aircraft for the first time and for use during periods of maintenance.

The new helicopters will see further advancements in the lifesaving equipment carried onboard the aircraft and extended availability during summer months.



your local
air ambulance

Derbyshire · Leicestershire · Rutland

Warwickshire · Northamptonshire



children's
air ambulance

keeping hope alive

The Air Ambulance Service

Blue Skies House

Butlers Leap

Rugby

Warwickshire

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