

HELIMEDS

SUMMER 2025



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A New Future Saving More Lives

Hello, my name is Dr Sue Barnes. I have the privilege of being the Chief Executive of the Wales Air Ambulance Charity.

You may have read recent media coverage about a development that will improve the air ambulance service in Wales. I'd like to take this opportunity to guide you through the facts about an improvement that will save more lives.

Thanks to your generosity, Wales has the UK's largest air ambulance service. We have four helicopters and a fleet of rapid response vehicles, with dedicated crews who attend people in a life or limb-threatening situation.

Our clinicians travel the length and breadth of Wales to provide lifesaving critical care. We bring hospital-standard treatments to the patient, whenever and wherever we are needed.

People are often surprised to learn that an air ambulance attending an incident may not have come from the nearest base. We are a scarce resource and we go wherever we are needed. This is the way our service is delivered now and that will continue to be the case in the future.



However...

We may be one of the most medically advanced air ambulances in the world but not everybody is benefiting from it. You're not getting the best out of us and we can do better for you.

We attend around 3,500 patients a year but at present, we are unable to get to between 2 to 3 patients a day (unmet need). Yet, perversely, our bases in Caernarfon and Welshpool are underused.

Right now, we only have one aircraft that operates overnight, covering the whole of Wales between 7pm and 7am. This is based in Cardiff. There is no air ambulance provision overnight based in Mid and North Wales and these regions are reliant on the Cardiff crew being available and able to fly.



The result of that is both shocking and heartbreaking. Across the two years of 2023 and 2024, there were 551 emergencies across Powys and North Wales, between 8pm and 2am, that we were unable to attend. To put that into a local context, during this period we saw no patients after 8pm in Anglesey, that's despite there being a total of 49 incidents where we could have made a difference. Similarly, in the same two-year period, we only managed 13 attendances out of the 102 occasions when we were needed by patients in Gwynedd. This pattern of unmet need is replicated across the counties of North and Mid Wales.



We may be one of the most medically advanced air ambulances in the world but not everybody is benefiting from it. You're not getting the best out of us and we can do better for you.

During 2023 and 2024, there were 199 days when our crews in Caernarfon did not see a patient. In Welshpool, it was 163 days without patient contact. Comparing this with our crews in Dafen (28 days) and Cardiff (4 days), you can see the significant underuse of our current resources in Caernarfon and Welshpool. This pattern is consistent year on year.

One of the main reasons for this underuse is due to their locations on the peripheries of Mid and North Wales. Their locations, and the poor road networks that surround them, make it more difficult for crews to effectively use the rapid response vehicles when the aircraft is unavailable.

An independent review of our service, supported by medical and aviation experts, made some recommendations to improve our lifesaving work, as follows:

- The current resources in Caernarfon and Welshpool should come together in one base location in a more central position of North Wales, near the A55.
- Two teams that can respond by road or air will operate from the new base. To meet the pattern of demand, one team will operate between 8am and 8pm and another team will operate between 2pm and 2am.

This means two crews, two aircraft, and two rapid response vehicles (the same resources currently deployed in Mid and North-West Wales) will operate but they will be able to save more lives through a change in the way they operate.

How will this improve our service?

- We can attend more patients. This means more lives will be saved.
- North Wales and northern parts of Mid Wales will get an overnight service closer to them, rather than relying solely on the current single overnight crew based in Cardiff.
- We are making better use of our resources and using your generous donations more effectively to benefit more people.

There have been many misconceptions about this development in parts of Mid and North-West Wales, which have resulted in concerns about a reduced service or even a loss of service. Rural areas are seeing important public services closing in their communities and I completely understand how people have interpreted the reconfiguration of our service.

I can wholeheartedly reassure you that this is not about losing or reducing a service; this is about improving what we already have – particularly for those of you in Mid and North Wales.

Our Charity would never do anything to cause people, and their loved ones, future harm.

From a medical perspective, Welshpool-based air ambulance medic Dr Stuart Gill said recently: “One of the most frustrating elements for us clinicians is knowing that there’s a job we can’t get to. Frequently, this happens with critically ill or injured patients in North and Mid Wales.

“Through the planned service changes, we expect to significantly improve attendance for those people we are currently missing.”

Fellow Caernarfon-based air ambulance medic Dr Mark Knights said: “We have very expensive, highly capable resources, and we want them to be used as much as possible for the people who need them.

“The service improvement will allow us to reach more people and save more lives.

“We hope that the generosity of people across Wales will continue as it makes a lifesaving difference. Something we can vouch for.”

The pilot’s perspective is equally important. Wales Air Ambulance pilot Captain James Grenfell, from our aviation partners Gama Aviation, spoke recently about how the service improvement will be a “game changer”.

James said: “We want to take the service to the next level in North and Mid Wales in a bid to save more lives, which is why we do what we do.”

Put simply, this service improvement will allow us to save more lives, particularly in Mid and North Wales.

We exist because of you, and, with your support, our Charity will be there for you and your community – now and always.

Dr Stuart Gill talks about the service improvement in [this video](#).

We also have a brochure which gives further details. You can [read it here](#).

For up-to-date information, you can visit our dedicated website - <https://www.walesairambulance.com/the-charity/strategy-governance/service-improvement>



“ We have very expensive, highly capable resources, and we want them to be used as much as possible for the people who need them.

The service improvement will allow us to reach more people and save more lives.

”

Dr Mark Knights, Caernarfon Base Lead

Saddle up and
save lives!



Ewch ar gefn
eich beic i
achub bywydau

100 km

for Wales Air Ambulance
am Elusen Ambiwylans Cymru



**Cycle with Shane Williams from
Cardiff to Llanelli and save lives**

Beicio gyda Shane Williams o
Gaerdydd i Lanelli i achub bywydau

7
SEP
MED

£100
to enter
i gofrestru



Elusen
Ambiwylans
Awyr
CYMRU | WALES
Air
Ambulance
Charity

For terms and conditions or to sign up, visit
I ddarllen y telerau ac amodau neu i gofrestru, ewch i
www.walesairambulance.com/cycle100km

931

Missions were attended in
April, May and June.



627

These are pan-Wales figures. Air versus road
attendance can fluctuate greatly in different
regions of Wales.

304

Our crews have
access to Rapid
Response Vehicles
which are used on
missions where
appropriate.



411

Medical



194

Cardiac arrests and
heart-related problems



520

Trauma



172

Road traffic incidents

Busiest hour

2 pm

103

Missions were
Pædiatrics

GOING THE DISTANCE FOR THE LIFESAVING WALES AIR AMBULANCE CHARITY

As always we're very proud of all our supporters for going the extra mile to raise funds for us. Some of you are pro runners, some novice runners but what you all have in common is the dedication to complete the race and raise much-needed funds for the Charity. Here are a few of you that tied up your laces to raise awareness and funds for us. Diolch yn fawr, pawb!

Simon takes on Chester Half Marathon again!

A PCI Pharma Services (PCI) employee who ran the Chester Half Marathon in aid of Wales Air Ambulance a year ago took on the challenge again this year!

Simon Jones, who has lived in Brecon all his life, said he 'didn't have to think twice', about running for 'such a worthy cause.'

The half marathon turned into a family event, with Simon teaming up with his brothers-in-law, Tom Price and Ben Keylock.

The father of two said: "I teamed up with my brothers-in-law, and it was a fantastic opportunity for us all to come together, run and fundraise."



Alex completes Gloucester 10K as thank you to medics

A grateful student has completed the Gloucester 10k as a thank you to the medics that came to his mum's aid.

Alex Jones, who is studying Equestrian Sports Coaching at Hartpury University in Gloucestershire, put on his running shoes and raised an incredible £450.

Alex said: "It was a real honour to support such an incredible cause. This Charity is particularly close to my heart. Unfortunately, my mum experienced a spinal cord compression, which is a life-changing and frightening experience.

"Thanks to the quick and professional response of the Wales Air Ambulance, she was able to receive the urgent care she needed. Their intervention gave her a much better chance at living a more able-bodied life, and for that, I'll always be grateful."



Transport for Wales employee takes on her 'fear of running' at Newport 10K

Lucy Martin has raised funds for the Charity in memory of her 'much-loved' father, Alan, who sadly passed away in August 2020.

She signed up for the Newport 10K after the public transport service provider nominated the lifesaving service as its Charity partner for 2023/24.

Lucy said: "I am not a natural runner, but I wanted to challenge myself whilst raising funds for a great cause. The Charity means a lot to my family because it came to the aid of my Dad."

Alan had just arrived at work and was walking through the warehouse when he collapsed.

Lucy said: "The rapid response vehicle came out from the Wales Air Ambulance. A doctor attended him, and they really did everything they could but sadly Dad died.

"He was the most amazing father, very caring and funny."



'I'm not like the runners you see on Tik Tok, but I get the job done' says nurse who ran Wrexham 10K in aid of the lifesaving service she works for

A North Wales nurse who 'couldn't run for sixty seconds twelve months ago', has raised £700 for the Charity after completing the Wrexham 10K.

Hayley Whitehead-Wright, says since starting her fitness journey, it's felt like she's gone through 'an epiphany'. She's even changed her hair colour from brown to blonde.

Hayley said: "I'm not like the runners you see on Tik Tok, all athletic, smiling and waving. I'm beetroot red and sweaty, but I get the job done.

"When I signed up for the Wrexham 10K, I did think, 'oh Hayley, you've done it now, you've really got to do this.'"

"It was quite a lot of pressure to put on myself. I didn't like running, I couldn't run when I first started, but I got off the couch and started building my fitness each day."

Hayley has spent her career working in ITU at Wrexham Maelor Hospital and still does occasional bank shifts, but her full-time role is as a Patient Liaison Nurse with the Aftercare Team at Wales Air Ambulance.



What to do if you see our fleet

Every day, our crew are on standby to deliver lifesaving critical care to those in a life or limb-threatening situation. Until the red phone rings, they have no idea what emergency they'll be tasked to, or which area of Wales they'll be heading to.

Having attended over 53,000 missions, it's highly likely that you will have seen one of our Welsh dragons flying across Wales or even landing nearby. Depending on the circumstances, our pilots will search for the nearest and safest place to land, which could be a field, football pitch, park or on the road. Whilst we appreciate that it can be very exciting to see our helicopters and the lifesaving crew at work, we kindly ask that you read this advice as there are lots of things to consider when you see an air ambulance.

Our critical care medics' primary focus after landing will be getting access to the patient and then assessing their condition. The emergencies we attend are life or limb-threatening, so the faster they can do this, the sooner the patient can receive the treatment they need.

Sadly, there have been occasions where air ambulances have had to abort landing due to people blocking their landing area. This sadly impacts the patient in need as it delays the team.

For your safety, and the safety of our crew, here are some helpful tips to follow if you see our crew.

Help our crew

There are many ways that you can help our crew to make their landing as easy as it can be. If you're on a crowded beach or enjoying a picnic and see our crew approaching, pack everything away so that you can move should they land close to you.



Keep back when the aircraft is landing or taking off

Whilst it may be tempting to rush over to the aircraft, the best thing you can do is keep as far back as possible until the helicopter has landed. If you're in a field, head over to the outer perimeter and if you're in an urban environment, stand as far back as you possibly can. The downdraft created by our blades is very powerful and could knock you off your feet.



Secure any belongings

Our helicopters fly at high speeds and the downdraft created by our blades is very powerful and could knock you off your feet so be sure to keep your children and/or pets safe and close by. Be sure to also hold on tight to lose items, such as bags, pushchairs or anything else you may be holding.



Approaching the helicopter

Once landed, it can be tempting to run to the aircraft. However, the medical team will need to make their way to the patient, so please keep your distance and do not approach the aircraft. Our pilots will remain with the helicopter at all times, and when suitable will often allow you to approach the helicopter to have a closer look or to ask questions. Please do not touch anything unless instructed and keep hold of pets and children.

Once the medical team start to return, please move back to a safe distance to allow them to safely transfer the patient and load their equipment.



Take extra care when taking photographs or video

We love to see the pictures and videos you take of our helicopters, but please be mindful of the situation and ensure that no patients are captured or that you're not obstructing our crew from doing their job. The patients we attend are likely facing the worst day of their lives, and protecting their privacy is very important to us.



Joanna and Pilot James Gardiner.

SWIMMER WHO HAD A 1% CHANCE OF SURVIVAL REVISITS WEST WALES BEACH WITH HER LIFESAVERS, WALES AIR AMBULANCE

In July 2023, whilst on holiday in Wales, Joanna Hicks and her friend went for their usual morning swim at Newgale beach.

However, Joanna, a confident and strong swimmer, was caught in a rip current and got into difficulty.

She said: "I remember lots of waves and thinking I am in trouble here, but I don't remember anything after that."

Her friend Philippa managed to swim back to shore and she and her partner Bob called 999 for help.

Multiple agencies responded, including RNLI lifeguards and lifeboats from two stations along the coast, a coastguard helicopter and ambulances.

After being in the water for around 40 minutes, Matty McLeod a RNLI lifeguard found Joanna and pulled her ashore. Joanna went into cardiac arrest and Wales Air Ambulance

was dispatched to give her the critical care interventions she needed to survive.

The Emergency Medical Retrieval and Transfer Service (EMRTS) medics on board Wales Air Ambulance were Critical Care Consultant Mike Slattery and Critical Care Practitioner Josh Eason. The team attended by air, flown by Pilot James Gardiner.

Joanna, 64, said: "Newgale is a very long beach and I think it was difficult for the boats to find me, but thankfully and amazingly I was told one of the lifeguards, Matty McLeod, had run to the beach and found me. I had been in the water a while. He said I was lifeless, floating face down and blue.

"He brought me ashore and was joined by other rescue services including, and crucially for me, the Wales Air Ambulance."

Joanna was extremely cold, so the medics tried to warm her up with a thermal blanket.

Following resuscitation attempts, the Wales Air Ambulance provided Joanna with a pre-hospital anaesthetic and placed her on a ventilator. This form of life support enabled the team to take over her breathing, and to minimise the risk of long-term brain damage.

They then set up an infusion of adrenaline to keep her blood pressure from falling too low.

The treatments Joanna received would usually only be available within a hospital setting, but thanks to the advanced clinicians on board Wales Air Ambulance, Joanna received the care she needed to survive on the beach.

Joanna, who is from London, said: "The Wales Air Ambulance medic said because the sea was actually quite cold, my body would have shut down in the sea. That helped me, so they had more chance of reviving me after me being in the freezing cold state.

"Although, I think it made it more difficult for them to apply the drugs to me because I was told the body has to be warm for that to work properly. They did a very skilful job to help me."

Whilst under constant monitoring, the air ambulance crew airlifted Joanna to Glangwili Hospital.

She spent 10 days fighting for her life in the intensive care unit (ICU).

Joanna continued: "I came round in the ICU, having been in an induced coma on life support, apparently none the worse for wear. Everyone seemed to be astonished that I had survived and seemed alright."

After three weeks, Joanna was discharged from hospital and spent time in a rehab facility closer to her home, she then stayed with her friends until she was well enough to return to her apartment in London.

Earlier this year Joanna met one of the Wales Air Ambulance medics, Josh, who treated her on the beach and accompanied her in the helicopter to the hospital.

She said: "It was a wonderful and joyful experience to meet Josh. He told me more about what they'd had to do to try and save me on the beach and really how close I had been to not surviving.


"These were details that I had not heard before, and though hard to process, they made me think more about the incredible skill and professionalism of the medics, and the extraordinary service the Wales Air Ambulance provided in delivering such exceptional lifesaving expertise right to me, just when I needed it most.

"I cannot thank these amazing, truly impressive people enough. Without them I really would not be here today to tell the tale."



Joanna's visit was organised by the Charity's Patient Liaison Nurse, Jo Yeoman, who has been supporting her since the incident.

Jo Yeoman said: "Joanna has made a remarkable recovery, but it has taken a long time for her to come to terms with this life-changing event. Having no recollection about that day, my role has been to help her to piece together the events of this incredibly traumatic experience.



“A critical part of her recovery has involved meeting the people who were involved in her care because each one has played a vital role in her survival. I was able to connect Joanna with Josh, the Critical Care Practitioner who attended her at the scene which was a hugely rewarding experience for them both. It’s been a privilege to witness Joanna’s progress over this time, to provide support and see her return to everyday life.”

Remarkably Joanna is physically fine and has bravely returned to the beach for the first time to meet some of the people who helped save her life. She said: “You don’t imagine this happening and I know just how lucky I have been, and how much I owe the amazing people who came to my rescue and who cared for me.”

Joanna has returned to her regular volunteering at Kew Gardens arboretum and to indoor swimming last year.

She said: “I have yet to swim in the sea, and this will happen, but I guess it might take a little bit more time.”

Joanna’s story is a shining example of how everyone has a part to play in the chain of survival when someone’s life is on the line.

Reflecting on the Wales Air Ambulance and what the team did for her that day, Joanna said:

“I was given a 1% chance of survival on the beach that day, and if the Wales Air Ambulance helicopter had not flown the medics right to me, I would not be alive today. I cannot thank them enough for what they did for me.

“It still astonishes me that this service, which was so vital to my survival, is in fact a charity that relies solely on donations.”

The Wales Air Ambulance Charity relies solely on public donations to raise £11.2 million every year. Help to keep their helicopters in the air and rapid response vehicles on the road this summer, enabling them to save more lives like Joanna’s by visiting:

www.walesairambulance.com/donate



Volunteer Spotlight

“Becoming a volunteer for Wales Air Ambulance has been a great way to get to know my community and make new friends,” according to Tennille Downey, who is originally from the United States of America.

The 47-year-old moved to Wales with her husband, Ronald, 28 years ago.

When I moved to Wales, I had just turned nineteen. I didn’t know anyone other than my husband. It was a bit of a learning curve, living in a different country and climate from what I grew up with in South Carolina.

“The weather in my hometown is hotter and drier, whereas here it is cooler and wetter. But there are pluses to that; we have the luscious greenery of the Elan Valley.

“Often my husband and I will be driving somewhere and there will be rolling hills or a certain landscape, and we will say, ‘that looks like somewhere in South Carolina’, or where he is from in Kentucky.

This part of the world has become our home; our three children were born here and we all very much enjoy life here. We are very happy to have completed our citizenship journey last year.”

“We currently look after two Baptist chapels, one based in Rhayader and another in the Elan Valley.”

As well as working alongside her husband in the chapels, Tennille is also a self-employed carer, assisting people in their homes.



She said: “I like to keep busy, and my days are very full now, but when I first moved to Wales it was so different.

After moving to Rhayader in 2008, Tennille wanted to find ways of getting to know the area. “I started off selling Avon, door to door, which was a terrific way to chat with people and connect with my local community.

“Then I got involved with the Arches and its befriending scheme. I also wanted to do something to help support the wider area, and that is when I found Wales Air Ambulance.”

Tennille lives in the small market town of Rhayader, which is Welsh for ‘waterfall on the Wye’.

Tennille said: “Volunteering for the Wales Air Ambulance is hugely important to me, as it provides such an important service.

“It is reassuring to know it is there should you find yourself, a loved one or neighbour needing critical care at the scene.”

Volunteers do a variety of roles for Wales Air Ambulance, from attending fundraising events on behalf of the Charity, giving talks about the work of the lifesaving service, to cheque presentations.

Tennille said: “When I first signed up to volunteer, I thought I would be just doing bucket collections - but I get to do events like the Royal Welsh Show at Builth Wells.

“One of the most moving things about the role is how people will come over to our stand and tell us their story.

“They’ll say things like, ‘the helicopter came out to my cousin’s farm after he was hurt’ or ‘I needed them when I was injured in a crash’.”

She continued: “It gives you a deeper level of understanding of what people have been through and the impact the service has had on their lives.

“It is a very relaxed, friendly atmosphere and you are not under any pressure.”

“It’s almost like they are letting you into their world, a part of their life they are quite happy to share with you.”

Tennille is enthusiastic about her volunteering role. She said: “It’s wonderful to know that the Charity has a real impact and helps save lives.”

She added: “If I can do it coming from a completely different country, not knowing a lot of people, then anyone can.

“It is a very relaxed, friendly atmosphere and you are not under any pressure. I only do what I am able to, and I can choose which areas I wish to work, to fit in with my schedule.

“It is a great Charity, and I hope more people will sign up to volunteer.”

Join our team

If you have been inspired by Tennille’s story and would like to get involved, we would love to hear from you.

Further details can be found on our charity website - www.walesairambulance.com/volunteering

If you do not have access to the internet, you can call our Business Services Team on 0300 0152 999 and they will be happy to help you with your enquiry.

Grandfather wins £3,000 in our Spring Raffle

A North Wales grandfather is delighted to have bagged himself the first prize of £3,000 in the Wales Air Ambulance's Spring Raffle.

Due to the shock win, originally Dr Roger Trueman couldn't believe he was a winner and thought the news from the Charity was a scam call.

The phone call from Emma Moore, the Charity's Senior Individual Giving Manager was indeed legitimate and she was delighted to break the exciting news to Roger.

Roger, a grandfather of six, said: "When I received the call I could not believe it and I think my first words were "is this a scam?" Then I was assured it was genuine, and Emma proceeded to tell me the good news again."

The retired Chemical Engineer, who lives with his wife of almost 57 years, has supported the Wales Air Ambulance for numerous years. He also does the Charity's weekly lottery.

He said: "We have supported the Wales Air Ambulance Charity for many years and it is one of just a few we do support. My wife suggested we enter the raffle as we try to support the Charity when we can as it is such a worthwhile service.

"I am very glad that she did. It was definitely one of our better decisions as we have never won anything this much before. I am of course delighted about winning the first prize which is particularly welcome at this time as we need a new central heating boiler!"

Lucky winner Roger purchased the £1 ticket to be in with a chance of winning the £3,000.

The second prize winner, Ms Beckett from Holyhead won £500, and Mr Lewis from Llanelli won the third prize of £300.



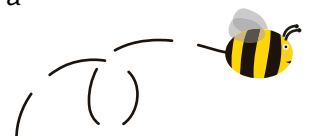
The Spring Raffle raised over £60,000 this year for the all-Wales Charity.

The digital raffle was drawn on Friday 23 May 2025.

Emma Moore, said: "Thank you to everybody for supporting the spring raffle and congratulations to Dr Trueman for winning our top prize. When I broke the news to him, the surprise from him was incredible, he couldn't believe his luck. I was delighted to inform him it wasn't a scam call. Roger and his family have been great supporters of our Charity and we're delighted the winnings have come at the right time.

"Congratulations to all the winners. Everyone who purchased a spring raffle ticket is a lifesaver in our eyes.

"The shops really got behind the raffle so it was a great example of collaboration between retail and fundraising – Tenby alone sold over 900 tickets! We are thrilled with the success of the Charity's Spring Raffle and are very grateful to all of our staff and volunteers who got involved in spreading the word and engaging with our local communities in buying and selling raffle tickets."



WELSH ENTREPRENEUR ‘HONoured’ TO BECOME **WALES AIR AMBULANCE CHARITY’S** FIRST BUSINESS AMBASSADOR!

Ascona Group founder and Chief Executive Darren Briggs has been recognised for his long-standing work supporting the Wales Air Ambulance Charity.

The 54-year-old entrepreneur from Pembrokeshire has become the first person to be appointed Business Ambassador for the lifesaving cause.

Wales Air Ambulance Chief Executive, Dr Sue Barnes said: “I am delighted to announce the appointment of Darren Briggs as the Wales Air Ambulance Charity’s first business ambassador.

“This role recognises Darren’s exceptional commitment to our lifesaving service.”

Ascona Group is one of the UK’s fastest-growing forecourt operators. They have a network of sixty-two sites across the UK, twenty of which are within Wales. The company recently announced the acquisition of three additional forecourts in Mid Wales.

Dr Barnes continued: “Ascona Group has helped fundraise an extraordinary amount of money for our Charity over the years and continues to do so.

“We are hugely grateful for the incredible platform we have been given at forecourts across Wales and to the generous customers who have donated to our lifesaving cause.

“Darren’s appointment comes at a significant time for our Charity; we will be marking our 25th anniversary in 2026. We hope to continue to draw upon his expertise in the years ahead.”

Darren, who acquired his first site in April 2011, says he is ‘totally honoured’ by the accolade.

He continued: “It is incredibly special to be the Business Ambassador for Wales Air Ambulance. It is particularly important that I can use my business skills and networking to promote the lifesaving service even more.”

Darren has a long-standing partnership with the Charity and Ascona Group has donated over £168,000 over the past three years.

He said: “I will always support the Wales Air Ambulance. It is a key service for the people of Wales and has saved thousands of lives since it first started back in 2001.

“It came to the aid of one of my longest-serving employees, who is thankfully still around.”

Reflecting on the Charity’s 25th anniversary next year, Darren said: “It’s incredible how the service has transformed over that time.

“As a businessperson, positive evolution is something I can relate to. Between 2018 and 2022, during the Covid period especially, we went from two sites to sixty-two.

“I decided to go for high growth and to generate as much money as I could to grow our portfolio.

“The Charity relies on donations each year for its survival, so I aim to use my knowledge and contacts to help access new income streams.”

Ascona Group employs almost nine hundred people across the UK. Darren said: “We are so fortunate to have a successful business and loyal customers.

“Our sites are situated across north, mid, west, and south Wales. With sites located as far north as Scotland and as far south as Hastings and Dorking.

“We aim to continue growing and expanding over the next two years and during that time we will continue to support the Charity.”

Ascona Group has teamed up with the award-winning UK fintech charity Pennies, which enables micro-donation opportunities at checkouts, helping create an enormous impact for charities in need.

Customers are given the opportunity to donate to charity when paying by card or digital wallet, which Ascona Group will match fund. It has already helped raise an incredible £68,000 in just over six months.

The company serves 300,000 customers, and dispenses 4.5 million litres of motor fuel, per week – the equivalent of eighteen tankers per day.

Darren said: “We are offering our customers the opportunity to donate 30p each time they fill up or shop and we will match fund up to £100,000.

“It costs £11.2 million every year to keep the Wales Air Ambulance helicopters and rapid response vehicles operating, and we want to do all we can to help.

“It’s also important to give back because the service is there for all those living in the communities in which we have a presence across Wales.

“We are also only a successful business because we have customers, and this is our way of saying thank you.”

Darren, who also has a pilot’s licence, has visited the Charity’s airbases on many occasions. He was presented to Wales Air Ambulance Royal Patron, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, during his visit to the Dafen site in September 2024.

He said: “It was a great honour to meet His Royal Highness. The Prince of Wales is so passionate about the work of the Charity and took time to talk with everyone.

“When you meet the clinicians and they tell you about the kind of scenarios they have been involved with, it is truly humbling.



“What they do, day-to-day, is unbelievable. It is fantastic that we have such a service available in Wales that can help those facing life or limb-threatening situations.

“That is why it is so important for Ascona Group to support the Wales Air Ambulance in the way we do.

“It’s deeply moving to know that each time we raise money, we are helping save lives.”

“The Charity relies on donations each year for its survival, so I aim to use my knowledge and contacts to help access new income streams.”

HERE ARE SOME OF YOUR FUNDRAISING STORIES

We wouldn't be able to do what we do without the support of the people of Wales. For 24 years you have raised funds continuously to ensure that we continue to be there for the people of Wales when they us most. Each year we need to raise £11.2 million to be there for you, 24/7. Thank you to all our fundraisers.

Here's some of our supporters who have raised funds for us recently.

Teenager pushed his body to the limits once again to conquer epic bike challenge

A schoolboy pushed his body to the limits to conquer an epic bike challenge.

Determined Oliver Williams, 15, from Newport, took 52 hours to cycle 66 laps of Risca bike park on his mountain bike, which is the equivalent of climbing Mount Everest, not once but twice!

Oliver said: "When I came up with the idea of completing the challenge, my family said it was too much and tried to put me off — especially when they realised that nobody else my age had completed this before. But I'm stubborn and love a challenge!"

"The support from the local community especially the Risca Riders, was awesome and kept me going.

"It meant a lot that people turned up to help out and the donations definitely spurred me on – to see the total amount go up gave me the determination to keep going, even when it got really, really difficult."

He raised an incredible £4,120.

Helicopter fan's swim challenge raises over £1,000 for Wales Air Ambulance!

A mum-of-three who was born in land-locked Zimbabwe and didn't see the sea until she was eight has completed 100-swims back-to-back in aid of Wales Air Ambulance.

Fran Spencer who has 'always been nervous' of getting out of her depth, has not only conquered her fear, but raised over £1,000 for the lifesaving charity.

She said: "I am so grateful to everyone who donated to my swimathon to mark my 50th birthday. I wanted to do something memorable with my family and friends.

"I am so lucky to have so many fantastic people in my life and this event really was the icing on the cake."

From chipping trees to Coffee and Cake, local tree surgeons raise thousands for Wales Air Ambulance

A family-run Ceredigion business has whipped up an incredible £2,720 during a Coffee and Cake event in aid of Wales Air Ambulance at its headquarters.

Lampeter Trees has supported the lifesaving service for five years and wanted to be part of the Charity's 24th birthday celebrations by hosting a Coffee and Cake event.

The company's three directors, 87-year-old Islwyn Williams and his two sons Meirion and Emyr say 'it's an excellent service which deserves to be supported.'

Emyr added: "My brother-in-law was injured in a road crash a few years ago and airlifted to Morriston Hospital. As a family, we know what a dramatic difference it can make to a patient's outcome."

The Glen in Haverfordwest continues its support of lifesaving service

The Glen Bar and Restaurant in Haverfordwest has continued its amazing fundraising for the Wales Air Ambulance by raising over £1,200.

As the chosen charity for Glen Bar and Restaurant in total they have now raised £5,000 for the lifesaving cause.

The venue held a hugely popular evening with Welsh International prop Rob Evans and British and Irish Lions hooker Ken Owens.

Around 55 people attended the successful evening, which saw a charity auction held for a grand slam rugby jersey.

Landlord Tom Slater said: "It was a really good evening and everyone enjoyed. The players talked about their careers, and we held an auction. I'd like to thank everyone for supporting our Wales Air Ambulance fundraising events."

Joanna conquers 96-mile walk in memory of her husband Jim

A courageous mum has raised over £2,000 for the Wales Air Ambulance in memory of her husband.

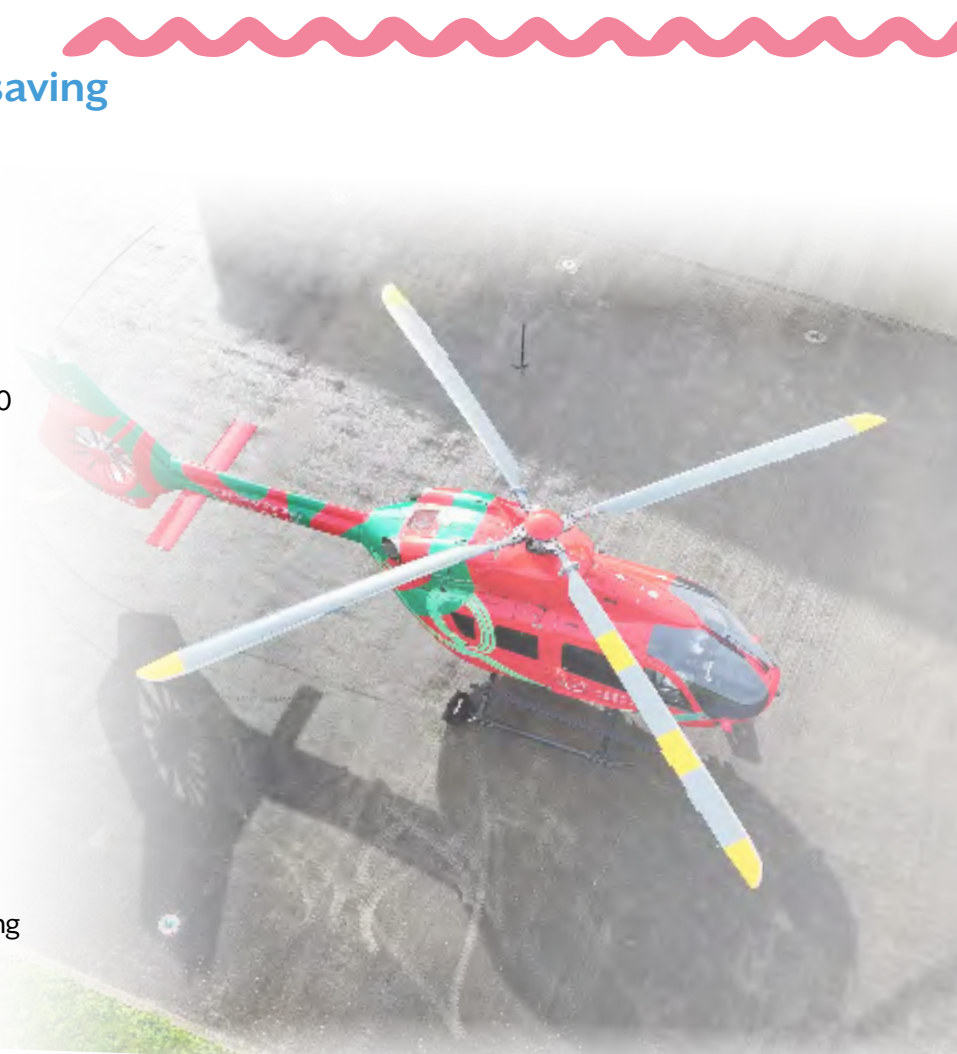
Joanna Lightfoot's husband, Jim, sadly passed away 14 years ago after suffering from a heart attack at work. Despite the Charity's best efforts Jim passed away.

Joanna along with some of her gym friends, set themselves the challenge of walking the West Highland Way on the anniversary of Jim's death.

The challenge saw the ladies walk 96 miles in the five days, which has raised an incredible £2,445 for the all-Wales Charity.

Joanna, 48, said: "Sadly they could not save Jim, but I know the Wales Air Ambulance did everything they possibly could.

"For this reason, I decided to walk in memory of Jim and use this opportunity to fundraise for this wonderful charity."



Walk Wales with James

Walkers join rugby legend in Gower coastal walk for air ambulance

Fundraisers across Wales came together to walk the Gower coastline in aid of the Wales Air Ambulance led by Welsh rugby legend James Hook.

Over 70 walkers of all ages, took on the terrain of 10 miles from Oxwich to Mumbles or the 3 mile walk from Caswell Bay to Mumbles to raise much-needed funds.



Past patients also joined the walkers on the day including Anthony Crothers, whose life was saved in October 2024. Anthony, who suffered a cardiac arrest at Three Cliffs Bay, Gower, took on the 3 miles hike, which is the furthest he has walked since his cardiac arrest.

Dewi Thomas, a medic on board Wales Air Ambulance also took part in the 10-mile hike.

As well as the in-person event, a virtual option was available. People across Wales tied up their shoes laces and walked 60 miles throughout the month.

The virtual Walk Wales fundraiser allowed participants to walk, jog or run, whilst raising funds.

As well as taking part in the in-person event James challenged himself to complete the 60 miles during the month.



The Charity's ambassador James Hook said:

“I really enjoyed the day, everyone loved it and the turnout was amazing. It was great to speak to past patients and Dewi the medic and hearing their stories. I enjoyed just chatting to friends, family and people I haven’t met before on the walk and them saying how much they loved it. It was an amazing event, I also loved it and I’m looking forward to doing it all again next year.”

Gail Windley, Events Fundraiser for Wales Air Ambulance, said: “Well done to all the walkers who came together to raise funds for our lifesaving Charity. It was lovely to see people of all ages, from children to adults, who were a mixture of avid walkers and people who wanted to set themselves the challenge of walking the 10 or 3 miles.

“A huge thank you to James who is a wonderful ambassador of the Charity and spent time with the walkers throughout the challenge. His support is incredible, not just during this walk but on a daily basis.

“Fundraisers, like this mass participation one, will help to keep our helicopters in the air and our rapid response vehicles on the road for the people of Wales when they need us the most. Thank you to everyone who took part or sponsored the walkers. You’ve all played a part in helping save lives across the country.”

James would like to thank The Secret and Lighthouse Restaurant for their support following his events.



Did you know you can write a Will for free?

We rely on your support to raise £11.2 million every year to keep our helicopters in the air and rapid response vehicles on the road. Gifts in Wills are a key source of income for us and have funded one of our four helicopters in the last twelve months.

We will be promoting the Free Will Writing Services during the month of September, however this free service is available throughout the year – so if you'd like to create your Will, you don't need to wait until then.

Our Free Will Partners –The National Free Wills Network and Octopus Legacy

The National Free Wills Network is a national network of local solicitors offering free Wills to charity supporters. If you're interested in writing a Will you will be referred to the network by the Charity and then you will receive a pack in the post with all the information that you'll need.

Simply choose a local solicitor, make an appointment to see them and make your Will. To be referred to the National Free Wills Network, please contact a member of the Wales Air Ambulance's Supporter Engagement Team by emailing legacy@walesairambulance.com or by calling **0300 0152 999**.

Octopus Legacy also offer a simple online process to make planning and writing your Will a positive experience. Just follow the easy step-by-step guide, provide your details, your wishes and that's it. Your Will is checked by an inhouse expert, who will send it back to you to print, along with instructions on how to make your Will legally binding. For more information visit will.octopuslegacy.com/WAA

There is no obligation to leave a gift to Wales Air Ambulance to use the free service, but we hope that after caring for your loved ones, you will also think of us, enabling us to protect your family and community for generations to come.

For more information on leaving a gift in your Will you can visit our website <https://www.walesairambulance.com/support-us/gifts-in-wills>



Morgan completes seven ultramarathons, in seven continents, in seven weeks for Wales Air Ambulance

A South Wales man has become the youngest person to **run seven ultra-marathons**, in seven continents, in just seven weeks!

Morgan Thompson, who works for the British Antarctic Survey, has raised over £10,400 for the Wales Air Ambulance after taking on the huge challenge.

With the blessing and support of his employers Morgan has completed 50km runs in Rothera (Antarctica), Patagonia (South America), New York (North America), Casablanca (Africa), Singapore (Asia), Sydney (Australia) and he returned back to Wales for the final European leg in Tenby.

Morgan Thompson, who grew up on a farm outside Merthyr Tydfil and went to school in Cardiff, is enjoying being back home and having a rest.

He said: "I'm definitely relieved it's over now! I really enjoyed the whole experience, but I can safely say there won't be any more ultramarathons for me for a little while.

"Since completing the challenge, I've felt a mix of pride and genuine gratitude. It was tough, but the support from so many people has been incredible. Seeing so many get behind it and knowing the funds raised will make a real difference definitely made it all worth it."

The Charity needs to raise £11.2 million every year to keep its helicopters in the air and its rapid response vehicles on the road.

Incredibly, after reaching his original fundraising target of £4,000, Morgan hoped to raise £7,000 for the all-Wales Charity and smashed that target.

He added: "The amount raised has been overwhelming. I'm incredibly grateful for the support. Every single donation motivated me to keep pushing myself.

"It's been a real privilege to represent such a worthwhile Charity and to see how generous and encouraging people have been."

Morgan, 23, who is currently working his first season with the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) as a Station General Assistant at Rothera Research Station in Antarctica, said: "The idea started when I thought it would be pretty epic to run my first marathon in Antarctica. From there, I decided to go all in and turn it into something bigger – combining my love of travel, adventure, and pushing myself with raising money for a cause close to my heart.

"It's been an incredible experience working down here, and I couldn't have taken on this challenge without all the support from BAS."

Reflecting on why he wanted to support the lifesaving Charity, Morgan said: "Wales Air Ambulance is absolutely vital. Growing up, I'd often see the helicopters flying overhead and be in awe.

"Over the years, friends and family have needed their services, and I've seen firsthand just how crucial it is to be able to reach remote parts of Wales. It's a charity that serves the whole country and saves lives. That makes Wales Air Ambulance a charity I'm proud to have represented."

Christian Sullivan, Wales Air Ambulance's Regional Fundraising Manager for South Wales, said: "Morgan has done incredibly well with his epic challenge of completing seven ultra-marathons in seven continents in just seven weeks, all in aid of our lifesaving Charity, which we're extremely grateful of.

"It's a challenge that most people would shy away from but Morgan's determination to complete his fundraiser, whilst raising much-needed funds for the Wales Air Ambulance was amazing.

"He is a wonderful supporter of our lifesaving Charity and he has raised an amazing amount for us.

"We massively appreciate the effort Morgan has gone to, to raise funds for the Wales Air Ambulance and we're delighted he's the youngest person to complete this challenge. He should be extremely proud of himself.

"Fundraisers, like Morgan's, will help us continue to be there for the people of Wales when they need us most. Thank you to everyone who donated to Morgan's fundraiser."

There's still time to show your support by donating to Morgan's JustGiving page www.justgiving.com/page/morgan-thompson-2



Morgan pictured with Laura Slate, **Communications & Engagement Manager** and Hannah Bartlett, **Digital Fundraiser**

“It’s been a real privilege to represent such a worthwhile Charity and to see how generous and encouraging people have been.”

Morgan Thompson





GRATEFUL MAN THANKS MEDICS AND BYSTANDERS FOR SAVING HIS LIFE

In October 2024, Anthony Crothers had enjoyed a walk in Gower with his two friends when he suddenly collapsed and nearly lost his life.

Anthony stopped breathing outside the shop in Three Cliffs Bay, Gower. His friend Glyn Dewis, with the help of two other bystanders, Dean and Jamie, rushed to his aid. They called 999, started chest compressions and attached a community defibrillator, which delivered one shock.

By pure coincidence, four off-duty doctors arrived at the scene and assisted with resuscitation, whilst they waited for the paramedics to arrive.

The doctors performed five cycles of CPR and Anthony was given five shocks from the defibrillator. Thankfully, his heart restarted just before the paramedics arrived.

The paramedics carried out a rapid assessment, gave Anthony some oxygen, supported his airway and attached him to all their monitoring machines.

Due to his condition, the Wales Air Ambulance was called to give Anthony hospital-standard care in the car park. When the air ambulance crew arrived, Anthony was still unconscious and needed support with his breathing. Anthony's pulse was very slow and weak.

The EMRTS (Emergency Medical and Retrieval Transfer Service) medics on board Wales Air Ambulance, Consultant Dr Iain Edgar and Critical Care Practitioners Derwyn Jones and Rhyan Curtin, stabilised him by inserting a breathing tube and attaching him to a ventilator. Taking over Anthony's breathing ensured enough oxygen was getting to his brain, preventing brain damage.

Whilst the Welsh Ambulance Service paramedics contacted Morriston Hospital to arrange for a direct transfer to the cardiac centre, the air ambulance crew gave Anthony adrenaline to keep his heart rate and blood pressure within normal limits.

Whilst under the constant supervision of the Wales Air Ambulance medics, Anthony was then airlifted to the Intensive Care unit at Morriston Hospital, where he required cardiac stents to be inserted (small, expandable mesh tubes used to widen blocked or narrowed coronary arteries, improving blood flow to the heart). Anthony spent a week there, before being transferred to the University Hospital of Wales ICU, to be a bit closer to home.

After nine days on a ventilator and nearly four weeks in hospital, he was discharged home, where he went on to make a full recovery. Anthony now takes daily medication and is doing very well.

Recently, Anthony was delighted to be reunited with some of the people who attended to him on that day.

Anthony has said the day of his cardiac arrest was a total 'blur' to him. He looks at pictures on his phone and wonders who took them, even though it was him. He said: "I have zero recollection of what happened to me. It may be the brain's safety mechanism of wiping away the trauma. The first thing I remember is waking up in the Intensive Care Unit in Cardiff and wondering what I was doing there."

Anthony added that he had never had any significant health problems before his cardiac arrest but had numerous family members who suffered heart problems.

He said: "From a personal point of view, I've tried to keep fit. I have a problem with my knee, which is from playing football. But the only other time I had been in hospital, apart from a knee operation, was when I had my tonsils out at 21."

Anthony, along with his wife, recently visited the Wales Air Ambulance Charity headquarters in Dafen, Llanelli.

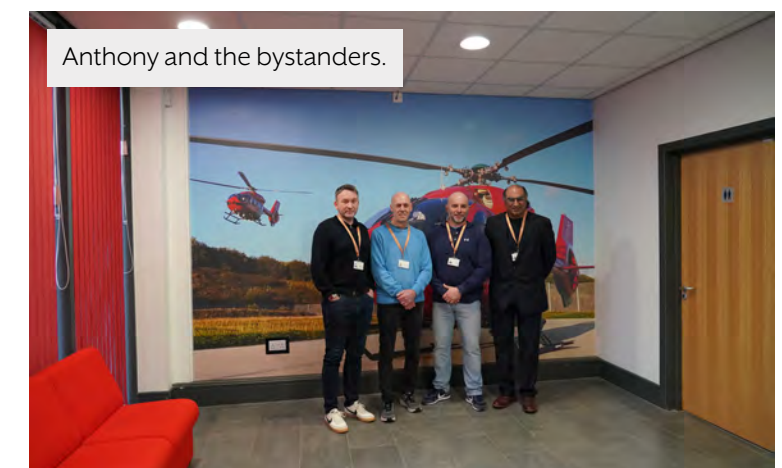
He met one of the Wales Air Ambulance medics, Dr Iain Edgar, who treated him. The emotional day also saw Anthony reunited with the off-duty doctors and the bystanders.

Friend Glyn said: "What I remember about the actual day, when it all happened, was that it was the second day of a two-day road trip that we'd been on. The weather was great, we went down onto the beach at Three Cliffs Bay and we were just walking back.

"He turned his back to me as we got to the boot of the car and it was just surreal. I just heard him say the words, 'oh God'. I said 'what's the matter, mate', and he fell backwards and I caught him."

Reflecting on how important the service is for the people of Wales and people visiting Wales, Glyn said:

"I'm just really grateful that there is a service in place like the Wales Air Ambulance, and that there are people who are willing to put themselves in that incredibly stressful position to fly out and treat people. It's just amazing, absolutely amazing."



Glyn has had emergency first aid training on and off for over 30 years. He said: "It is incredible to have played a part in Anthony's recovery. It is surreal! How often does someone go through their life and be able to say they've helped save another person, unless they're in the medical profession?"

The 66-year-old father-of-three and grandfather-of-five, said: "My recovery has been going well. I say 'going' because it is ongoing and I intend to keep fit, keeping on with the fitness regime.

"Coming to terms with what has happened has been a little surreal because you think you're invincible, until something like this happens. When I was discharged from hospital, I had a little bit of medical anxiety, where I was scared to go to sleep in case I didn't wake up.



“When my bladder woke me up early in the morning, I was relieved to think ‘I’m still here then’. I’m getting there. I don’t get any anxiety anymore but visiting the Wales Air Ambulance headquarters has been a privilege and it has also helped me put things into place by meeting the people who helped me along the way. It has been a pleasure.”

Anthony went on to receive support from the Charity’s Aftercare Service and was introduced to Patient Liaison Nurse, Jo Yeoman, whose role is to support patients and their families after what is usually a life-altering and sudden traumatic event.

Jo was instrumental in organising for Anthony to meet the individuals who helped to save his life that day.

Bystander Dean Adams, who said he feels fulfilled by helping save Anthony, was delighted to be part of the reunion. He said: “It felt surreal, I guess, in loads of ways. It just happened in front of me and I think most people would react that way because there’s no other way to react. It’s been amazing meeting Anthony.”

The bystanders on the day have since been presented with certificates for helping to save the life of another from Save a Life Cymru, who promote public awareness of CPR and defibrillator use, for providing lifesaving care.

Julie Starling, Clinical OHCA programme manager for Save a Life Cymru said: “It’s important that we recognise the action of those people willing to give CPR a go regardless of the outcome, doing something is so much better than doing nothing at all. This story highlights how taking action can save a life and that we all have a role to play as part of a wider team in that chain of survival. It’s important that everyone in Wales is familiar with the process of performing CPR, which can be easily achieved by watching a short video. The 999 call-taker will tell you how to do CPR, but we all need to be prepared to act fast so we can help each other.

Reflecting on what message he’d give to the air ambulance crew that treated him that day, Anthony said: “Firstly, a massive thanks for what they did for me and what they do on a daily basis. They are an incredible crew of people. Thank you for what you did and everything you do. I cannot express my gratitude enough. Without them, and the people who helped me, I wouldn’t be here. My feeling towards the Wales Air Ambulance is eternal gratitude.”



“I cannot express my gratitude enough. Without them, and the people who helped me, I wouldn’t be here. My feeling towards the Wales Air Ambulance is eternal gratitude.”

Become a Future Flyer



If you're under 25 and are looking to boost your future job prospects, then our 'Future Flyers' Programme may be perfect for you.

What is Future Flyers?

The future flyers scheme is supported by a grant from the Principality Building Society and aims to give young volunteers looking for work a vital boost. By becoming a 'future flyer' you will be able to enhance your skills while adding to your CV.

Learn how our **Future Flyers** scheme can help guide volunteers into the workplace.

<https://www.walesairambulance.com/future-flyers>



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Charity Number 1083645

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Kit on board

Aviation, Medical and RRV

Community Talks Network – Get Involved!

Would you like to volunteer with us or book a talk for your group or event? The Community Talks Network offers inspiring talks about the lifesaving work of Wales Air Ambulance, and we're always looking for passionate volunteers to help us share our story.

Email: communitytalksnetwork@walesairambulance.com

Book a talk: www.walesairambulance.com/support-us/raising-money/request-a-talk

Emergency Location Transmitter

Wales Air Ambulance
CYMRU Charity

Each aircraft has an emergency location transmitter. If we needed to complete an emergency landing, this transmitter would send our position via satellite to the UK Search and Rescue agencies, enabling them to locate us quickly.

Engine Wash Rig

Wales Air Ambulance
CYMRU Charity

This engine wash rig allows us to send cleaning fluid into the engines, helping to prevent corrosion and dirt buildup.

Ground Based Electrical Power

Wales Air Ambulance
CYMRU Charity

We can connect the aircraft to an electrical power source when it's on the ground for maintenance purposes. This allows us to run systems and conduct necessary checks without having to rely on the aircraft's own power supply.

Spill Kit

Wales Air Ambulance
CYMRU Charity

Each base is equipped with a spill kit. The kit contains materials to help contain and absorb oil and/or fuel in the event of a spillage.



Oasis fan wins tickets to 'dr dig' after entering raffle to funds for lifesaving service!

A mum of two who has been a massive Oasis fan since their heyday was the lucky winner of Wales Air Ambulance's raffle to see them in Cardiff this July.

45-year-old Victoria Whittal-Williams 'could not believe it' when she got the call.

She said: "I was like, really? Are you sure? I never win anything and did not expect to, so it was a fantastic surprise."

Victoria was ecstatic when the Gallagher brothers announced they were reforming last year, but it soon turned to disappointment when she could not get tickets.

She said: "I never got to attend one of their gigs when I was younger, just cover bands!"

"After their breakup, I never thought it would be possible to see them, so it was amazing when they said they were getting back together. But I was gutted as the Cardiff gigs sold out so quickly. I was one of the many people on Ticketmaster praying for a spot but couldn't get through."

Wales Air Ambulance's Aviation Partner, Gama Aviation, kindly donated two tickets and hospitality for the gig on Saturday 5 July 2025 which the Charity raffled.

Over two hundred people entered, giving them a chance to be at the gig of the year, while helping to save lives.

Just over **£4,500** was raised, with every pound going towards the lifesaving service which helps around 3,000 people across Wales each year.



Victoria said: "I entered the raffle after hearing about it during a visit to the service's Cardiff heliport.

"I work for NatWest Cymru and our staff recently voted for Wales Air Ambulance as our Charity partner for the year.

"I really wanted to go to the show, but thought even if I didn't win, the money was going to a brilliant cause and will make a difference."

Victoria bought one lucky ticket for £20 and found out on Friday 13 June 2025 that she had won. She admits 'it's still not sunk in.'

She added: "You really do not know what this means to me! I first became a fan of the band in 1993, and they played such a massive part of my life when I was a teenager.

"Their songs were the anthems of my youth, and I never imagined that one day I'd get to see them live on stage. I still can't quite believe it's happening.

"When I found out that I had won, it was a real Wonderwall moment!"

Reflecting on the gig, Victoria said: "It was fantastic, such a great line up and flash back to the 90s. I didn't get to sleep until 3am because of all the excitement, and I had a very sore throat from singing along. Everyone in the box was lovely too, and it was fascinating to find out more about Gama Aviation."

Phae Jones, Director of Income Generation at Wales Air Ambulance, said: "This was an epic evening for Oasis fans, and we are delighted that our ticket raffle was able to get Victoria to her dream gig!

"We are so grateful to our partners Gama Aviation, for providing the tickets and hospitality for this historic show.

"It has not only given Oasis fans an opportunity to attend the concert of the year but has helped us raise £4,650 for Wales Air Ambulance. We would like to thank everyone who bought a ticket, contributing to our all-Wales Charity.

"That is a Supersonic amount and will help save lives!"

Oasis' last live show was on the 22nd of August 2009 at V Festival in Staffordshire during their Dig Out Your Soul Tour. The band split up the following week.

They announced their comeback tour last Summer with 17 shows nationwide, including two dates in Cardiff.



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0300 0152 999

Don't forget to add Gift Aid to boost the
value of your donation by 25%

Your donations help save lives

