**THEIR ROYAL HIGHNESSES THE EARL AND COUNTESS OF WESSEX VISIT ESSEX & HERTS AIR AMBULANCE**

*Tuesday 1st March 2022, North Weald:* Essex and Herts Air Ambulance (EHAAT) hosted a visit by Their Royal Highnesses The Earl and Countess of Wessex today.

EHAAT is a local life-saving charity and works alongside the hospitals, emergency services and supporting organisations across the region. Today’s visit was an opportunity to bring everyone together at EHAAT’s new airbase at North Weald, enabling The Earl and Countess to say thank you to some of these organisations for their outstanding hard work during the pandemic.

On first arriving at North Weald, The Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire and Vice Lord Lieutenant of Essex greeted The Earl and Countess of Wessex, and introduced them to Jane Gurney, CEO of EHAAT. Their Royal Highnesses then toured the new airbase, where they met members of EHAAT’s critical care team, charity staff and volunteers. The Earl and Countess also heard about EHAAT’s vision for a ‘Centre for Excellence’ at North Weald, which would enable the charity to push the boundaries in innovation, research and education for the advancement of pre-hospital care.

Their Royal Highnesses spent time with representatives from the local hospitals in the region and then spoke to air lifted patients and their families to hear first-hand about their experiences.

The highlight of the Royal visit took place at the front of the building where people had gathered representing the emergency services and voluntary support organisations, together with the members of the armed forces and many EHAAT charity staff and volunteers. The Earl and Countess took the opportunity to stop and speak to individuals and thank them for the work they do.

Jane Gurney was thrilled that The Earl and Countess of Wessex had visited. She said:

“This is a real milestone in our charity’s history, as it is the first time that Essex and Herts Air Ambulance has hosted a Royal visit. It was a fantastic opportunity to bring together all of the organisations who have worked so hard during these challenging times of the pandemic. I am truly honoured that we have been able to showcase our new airbase at North Weald and share our vision for a Centre for Excellence that will continue to develop pre-hospital care into the future.”

Chair of Trustees at EHAAT, Jonathan Trower, added:

“We are absolutely delighted to have welcomed Their Royal Highnesses The Earl and Countess of Wessex to our new airbase in North Weald, and we are very grateful for their interest and support for our charity. We were able to show them our outstanding new facilities for our team and to discuss our exciting plans for the further development of our emergency medical services across Essex and Hertfordshire.”

**-ENDS-**

**A selection of photos along with captions are available** [**here**](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/f9903mqfgemsvrt/AAD_6Xwcv33fZZ8GnaffbYoTa?dl=0)**. Please credit Doug Blanks.**

**A short video clip (no voiceover) of the visit for your use is available** [**here**](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ea1xt1mrg4b8eh5/AACIGF6ErKdVM4hru-CBat_Za?dl=0)**.**

**An audio only soundbite can be downloaded** [**here**](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/1gnb2oio1gm8uow/AAC4tIOsW23-h2mrp_5n80gea?dl=0)**.**

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**Notes to Editor:**

***Guest organisations attending the event included:***

* Barking, Havering & Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust
* BASICS Essex Accident Rescue Service
* Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Critical Care Scheme (BHECCS)
* Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Trust
* East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust
* East Anglian Air Ambulance
* East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust
* East Suffolk & North Essex NHS Foundation Trust
* Epping Forest District Council
* Essex Blood Runners / Essex voluntary Blood Service
* Essex County Council
* Essex County Fire and Rescue
* Essex Police
* Gates Ford
* Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue
* Hertfordshire Police
* Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust
* Leonardo
* Magpas Air Ambulance
* Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust
* NPAS National Police Air Service
* Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust
* Royal Army Medical Corps
* Royal Brompton and Harefield Clinical Group
* Royal Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
* Specialist Aviation Services
* St Johns Ambulance
* The Royal London and Mile End hospitals
* West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust

**Other Notes to Editor:**

* Essex & Herts Air Ambulance (EHAAT) is a charity that provides a Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS) for the critically ill and injured of Essex, Hertfordshire and the surrounding areas.
* The service is provided free of charge but, unlike NHS emergency services, the charity receives limited direct funding from the Government and none from the National Lottery. It costs in excess of £750,000 every month to keep the service operational and cover all charitable costs, and this would not be possible without the generosity and goodwill of people and businesses of Essex, Hertfordshire and beyond.
* Each of the charity’s HEMS teams consist of two Pilots, a pre-Hospital Care Doctor and a Critical Care Paramedic.
* These teams, made up of highly-skilled individuals, attended 2,545 missions in 2021, with each mission costing around £2,200. Breakdown of missions for 2021 were: 485 road traffic collisions, 991 medical emergencies, 419 accidental injuries, 650 other trauma incidents. 1,317 missions were delivered by air ambulance and 1,228 missions were delivered by Rapid Response Vehicles (RRVs). We attended 1,591 missions in Essex, 609 in Hertfordshire and 345 in surrounding areas.
* During 2021 EHAAT’s critical care teams treated 70 patients with blood products, involved primarily in road traffic collisions, penetrating injuries and falls.
* The fleet consists of two Air Ambulances, and four RRVs. The RRVs are crewed by a Pre-hospital Care Doctor and a Critical Care Paramedic and carry the same life-saving equipment as the helicopters.
* During the day, from 7am until 8.00pm, the Critical Care Team provides the service using helicopters based at Earls Colne and North Weald. An RRV is used before sunrise, after sunset or when the helicopter is unable to fly because of poor weather or maintenance.
* Overnight from 7.30pm to 7.30am the service is provided using an RRV based at North Weald.