Air Ambulance Charity sees 21% increase in call-outs in first six months of 2024

Friday 5 July, 2024

Great Western Air Ambulance Charity (GWAAC) has been called to a record number of incidents in the first half of 2024. The specialist crew responded to 1,159 people in urgent need of critical care between 1 January and the end of June — an increase of around 21% compared to the same period last year.

The charity is set for a record year and has forecast that this could be around 400 extra call-outs compared to 2023. On average, that's an extra person every day who needs the specialist skills of GWAAC's Critical Care Team.

Although nobody thinks they'll need an air ambulance or Critical Care Team when they wake up, around six people a day across Gloucestershire, Bristol, Bath and beyond require GWAAC's lifesaving services. People like Simon, who was involved in a serious road traffic collision and needed the help of GWAAC's expert crew to give him a chance of survival. Simon said, *"I went from having everything to having nothing in a split second. We could all find ourselves in this situation and we need the reassurance that the GWAAC Team will be there."*

Operating costs have also been increasing for the Almondsbury-based air ambulance and critical care service; the average cost per mission is now around £2,200 — an increase of 10%.

Tim Ross-Smith, GWAAC's Operations Officer, says, *"Nobody plans to need an air ambulance or Critical Care Team being called out to them but we're seeing more and more people who have needed our help. We can't plan for who that is, where they may be, or when the call comes in, but we do everything we can to be prepared. We're asking the public to consider giving us a regular donation so that we can continue to be prepared well into the future. You can help us be there for anyone, anywhere, anytime."*

To find out more, visit gwaac.com and click 'donate monthly.'

One in five calls was to a baby, child or teenager

GWAAC has shared its mission statistics from the first half of the year and the charity has noted a significant increase in call-outs to babies, children and teenagers, both in percentage of total missions (19%) and in number. Call-outs to young people increased by 52% compared to the same period in 2023 and the crew responded to almost double the number of babies (from 26 to 50).

Responses to calls for someone who collapsed or for a stabbing-related incident also increased. While call-outs to these types of incidents make up a small percentage of GWAAC's total missions, the number of these that GWAAC has been called to has increased. Calls to someone who has collapsed increased by 85% compared to 2023 (from 41 to 76) and a stabbing-related incident increased by 75% compared to the same period in 2023 (from 47 to 82).

In the first six months of 2024, the percentage of call-outs that GWAAC's crew responded to using one of their critical care cars increased by 7% when compared to the same period last year. The crew travelled to more than three-quarters of patients in a car rather than the helicopter.

To see more details about their missions and to find out how you can help, visit: www.gwaac.com.

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