Local air ambulance charity announces increasing number of jobs

Tuesday 28 August, 2018

Great Western Air Ambulance Charity (GWAAC) has announced that they have attended a record number of incidents in the first half of 2018.

The service, which is entirely charity funded, attended to patients 1094 times, via helicopter or Critical Care car, this year so far; an increase from the first half of the year in 2017. This figure, if replicated during the following few months of 2018, will prove to be the charity's busiest year to date.

The charity provides the Critical Care and Air Ambulance service to 2.1 million people across the counties of Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire, North Somerset and surrounding areas. They receive no day-to-day funding from the Government or National Lottery.

The team consists of highly skilled Critical Care Doctors and Specialist Paramedics in Critical Care, who are able to carry out life-saving interventions such as blood transfusions, and administer anaesthetics, at the scene of an incident – in effect bringing the skills you would usually find in an Accident & Emergency department to your garden, the roadside, a park or your home. The GWAAC crew attend on average 5 incidents every single day, providing cutting edge Critical Care at the scene of an accident or medical emergency.

GWAAC recently launched an urgent campaign, *Buy our Base.* They are appealing for public support them in buying a new air base, as their current one is no longer fit for purpose.

Their current air base in Filton is one of the oldest in the country, and unfortunately is no longer meeting the needs of the increasingly busy service. Added to this, the entire site is set to be re-developed, and will no longer be able to host the service.

Luckily their current landlords, BAE Systems, is building a new air base in Almondsbury for the charity, which will provide a modern home for the life-saving service and which GWAAC will move into before the end of 2018. BAE have now offered GWAAC the opportunity to buy this new air base, thus providing the charity with stability for the foreseeable future.

GWAAC's Lead Doctor, Ed Valentine, explains: "It has been interesting to see the stats come through about the jobs we have been on since January. It is important for our charity that we are able to continue to offer this service, and so we are calling on the help of the public to buy our new air base and keep us flying way in to the future. Our current base dates from before the First World War, and we really need a suitable place to operate from, to train in and in which to de-brief, be together and support each other as a team."

The new air base will cost GWAAC £2 million to buy, and they are asking you to help them raise £1 million towards this, plus £250,000 to fully kit it out. That is in addition to the £3 million needed by GWAAC each year to stay operational.

To find out more and an donate to the Buy Our Base appeal visit www.buyourbase.co.uk

ENDS

Notes for editors

- GWAAC provide the Critical Care and air ambulance service for 2.1 million people across the counties of Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire, North Somerset and surrounding areas.
- In 2018 the charity celebrates ten years since its first flight.
- The GWAAC Critical Care team consists of a highly trained and experienced Critical Care Paramedic and Doctor, who bring the skill and expertise of an Accident and Emergency Department to the patient.
- In 2017 the Critical Care team attended 1,824 jobs by helicopter and by one of our Critical Care cars.
- From January to July 2018, the Critical Care team have attended 1,094 jobs by helicopter and by

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one of our critical care cars.
- We need to raise over £3 million each year to stay operational, but receive no day to day funding from the Government or National Lottery.

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