

# OFF

SPRING  
2025

# LIFE

**WELCOME TO OUR  
LATEST NEWS & UPDATES**

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE...**

**RECORD BREAKING YEAR**  
Our crew going above and beyond

**KEEPING THEIR MEMORY FLYING**  
The Okun family's moving story

**EXCITING 35TH BIRTHDAY EVENTS**  
Something for everyone



**WILTSHIRE  
+ BATH AIR  
AMBULANCE**  
*Going above + beyond*



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## Welcome from David Philpott, our chief executive



As we step into Spring 2025, we proudly celebrate a major milestone, Wiltshire and Bath Air Ambulance Charity's 35th anniversary.

Throughout this issue, you will find a range of exciting events to mark the occasion.

Last year was our busiest yet, with our team attending 1,343 missions, an increase of 15% from the previous 12 months. This surge in demand highlights the vital need for our expert critical care.

At the same time, as we strive to enhance our clinical care further with more doctors on board, coupled with overall costs rising

during this uncertain time, it now means that to maintain our lifesaving service, we need to raise £5 million annually.

This is a significant sum and we are extremely grateful to the people and local businesses across Wiltshire and Bath who continue to dig deep and support our work.

It is because of people like you that we can continue to make a difference. Thank you.

I hope you enjoy reading through our Spring edition of Lift Off and are inspired to support us. We hope you'll never need us, but if you do, we'll be there.

*David*

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# Mission Report

1 JAN — 31 DEC 2024

**1,343**  
TOTAL MISSIONS

**619**  
HELICOPTER

**724**  
CRITICAL CARE CARS



- Top hospitals we airlifted or assisted patients to...**
- 109 Royal United • Bath
  - 82 Southmead • Bristol
  - 72 Great Western • Swindon

42 incidents were attended by multiple resources (e.g. both the helicopter and critical care car or both critical care cars attended). For illustrative purposes this counts as one mission in that location.

- 326** Cardiac Emergencies
- 287** Medical Conditions
- 190** Road Traffic Collisions
- 172** Falls

- 687** Missions with doctors  
Representing 51% of missions
- 127** Advanced airway management  
performed to create an open airway
- 80** Uses of LUCAS Machine  
to deliver CPR to patients
- 55** Procedural Sedations  
to reduce pain and suffering following trauma

**View our online interactive map**



## A look back in time

**Wiltshire and Bath Air Ambulance Charity has evolved significantly since its inception in 1990.**

The concept originated in 1988 when a temporary helicopter, hired by Wiltshire Police for the summer solstice at Stonehenge, was diverted to airlift a critically injured woman from a road accident on the A350 at Beanacre (pictured). This successful mission demonstrated the potential of a joint emergency helicopter service.

An initial three-month trial with Wiltshire Police and Wiltshire Ambulance Service sharing an aircraft soon turned into the official launch of a full-time joint helicopter service on 15 March 1990, based at the

police headquarters in Devizes.

To support the service, the Wiltshire Air Ambulance Appeal was established in 1991 by Dr Dick Riseley-Prichard, focusing on fundraising efforts.

By 1995, the police covered two-thirds of the operational costs, with the charity contributing £134,000 annually through various fundraising activities.

Advancements continued with the introduction of an MD 902 Explorer helicopter in December 1998, offering enhanced capabilities.

In 2001, the service became the first UK air ambulance to operate night flights, extending its operational hours to 19 per day.



A significant transition occurred on 1 January 2015, when the partnership with Wiltshire Police concluded, and the Charity began operating as a standalone air ambulance service.

This independence was further solidified in May 2018 with the move to a purpose-built airbase in Semington, bringing the aircrew and charity team under one roof.

The rebrand to Wiltshire and Bath Air Ambulance Charity took place in November 2024, with the adoption of a new name and logo to better represent its commitment to the communities it serves.



## New name, same expert critical care

Find out more about our new title which better reflects the essential work we carry out in and around Bath.



**We entered our 35th year as Wiltshire and Bath Air Ambulance Charity, having recently renamed from Wiltshire Air Ambulance.**

Chief executive David Philpott explains: "For three years now, Bath has been our second most visited area after Swindon. We felt it was only right to have the charity's name reflect our true operational area.

"It's important to stress, nothing will change clinically, we will continue to be there for the people of Wiltshire and Bath – just as we have done for the last 35 years. Simply put, we now have a name that truly tells our story."

For the first time in 2024, the Charity attended over 100 missions in Bath in a single calendar year. This represents around nine per cent of all yearly missions and once again demonstrates the importance of our work to the city.

You can see our new-look helicopter and critical care cars to the right, which include our changed colours and brand new logo.

The helicopter can fly to Bath's city centre and surrounding villages in just four minutes. During 2024, the team attended 117 missions in Bath and transported 108 patients to the Royal United Hospital in the city.



**"It's rewarding to know we're making a difference when people need us most."**

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
Our helicopter and critical care cars now have QR codes to take supporters to our website



**We have two critical care cars, both carry the same medical kit and equipment as on board the helicopter**



## FAQs

### When are you active?

We are on call every day for up to 19 hours. On average our critical care team respond to three potentially lifesaving missions in that time.

### How long does it take to fly to Bath?

From our airbase in Semington, it takes us just four minutes to reach the centre of Bath. We can reach anywhere in Wiltshire within just 11 minutes.

# Teaching lifesaving skills to children

In 2024, we delivered emergency awareness training to 11,529 young people, marking a 5.2% increase compared to 2023.

These sessions took place across 89 schools, a 20% growth from the previous year. Since the scheme launched in 2019, a total of 45,084 pupils have now learnt vital emergency response skills.



Andrew Robinson, the Charity's emergency awareness instructor, said, "Our aim is to educate the community and provide them with the knowledge to confidently manage a medical emergency prior to the arrival of an ambulance or air ambulance critical care crew.

"Sessions are tailored to engage all ages and adapted to cater for pupils with special educational needs. We also deliver sessions to home educational groups and community clubs."

[wiltshirebathairambulance.org.uk](http://wiltshirebathairambulance.org.uk)

**"We already know of pupils who have been taught lifesaving skills by Wiltshire and Bath Air Ambulance Charity putting them into practice and saving lives. It really can make all the difference."**

## What you said about our training

★  
**Coombe Bissett Primary School, Salisbury**

"Everyday we hope the children learn something new, but this learning was extra special. We think our school may be the safest place around following Andrew's visit!"

★  
**West Ashton Primary School, Trowbridge**

"Children of all ages thoroughly enjoyed the experience. The chat to parents and carers at the end of the day was wonderful to hear. We can't wait to have you back."



JOIN OUR LIFESAVING LOTTERY

## WIN £1,000 EVERY WEEK

Join our Lottery for just £1 a week and you could win a weekly cash prize of £1,000 Plus, there are four more chances to win £25 each week.

**Feeling lucky?** For an extra £1, enter our Superdraw for a chance to win the rollover jackpot of up to **£25,000!** Imagine what you could do with that!

With around 40,000 entries each week, our Lottery and Superdraw help fund one in every four missions, making a real difference.

Since 2009, our Lottery has raised over **£12 million to support our lifesaving work.**

To sign up to our Lottery, scan the QR code below or visit our website  
[wiltshirebathairambulance.org.uk/lottery](http://wiltshirebathairambulance.org.uk/lottery)



## DID YOU KNOW?

Earlier this year, one of our amazing Superdraw winners decided to donate their entire winnings back to the Charity.

**We want to take this opportunity to thank them – they are a lifesaver!**

## How do I live without you?



**Christian and Kate Okun experienced every parent's worst nightmare when their bubbly 15-week-old child, Franklin, stopped breathing suddenly in May 2020.**

Their first-born had been with grandparents when his mattress alarm went off indicating he wasn't breathing.

Frantic calls to the emergency services saw Wiltshire and Bath Air Ambulance Charity dispatched, and critical care paramedics Dan Tucker and Sophie Holt performed a series of medical interventions to regain the baby's heartbeat.

Working alongside neighbouring Great Western Air Ambulance, the medics sedated Franklin, in an attempt to help his brain recover from the trauma.

Franklin was transferred to Bristol Royal Hospital for Children, where he underwent a series of tests over the next two days.

Dad Christian explained: "We knew Franklin was extremely poorly and

were preparing ourselves for the worst, albeit at the same time holding out hope."

Just 48 hours later, on 2 June 2020, the Okun's were given the news no parent ever wants to hear, as tests showed baby Franklin was only being kept alive by the machines and there was nothing more doctors could do.

Christian says: "We knew we had to turn the machine off.

"We played *How do I live without you?* by Leann Rimes and Kate held him in her arms. From the moment they turned the machine off, the colour just drained from him. It was almost instant and was heartbreaking to see."

Franklin had died of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), sometimes known as cot death, something which affects around 200 infants every year in the UK.

Christian added: "If it wasn't for Wiltshire and Bath Air Ambulance Charity getting to Franklin and getting the heartbeat back,

we wouldn't have had those extra couple of days with him; priceless moments.

"We wouldn't have been able to say goodbye. No matter how much money we raise, we can't ever thank the charity enough for that.

"Franklin was the happiest child, he was always smiling and laughing," says Christian, whilst proudly showing a video of him bouncing on his lap.

Kate describes Franklin as "the cheekiest little heartbreaker" and her "dream come true".

Christian has since channelled his grief into supporting the charities that helped them. He cycled the North Coast 500 in 2024 and completed a sponsored ride from Calne to Bristol, raising over £11,000.

"You are funded by us, and we all have to do our bit," he said.

*If you have been affected by anything you've read in this article, we offer a Grief Chat service on our website. Additionally you can contact our Aftercare Team for further support, including if you or someone you know has been impacted by our work. Read more about Christian's fundraising efforts on his Fitness For Franklin Facebook page.*



**"It's incredible what the Charity does. You hope you never need them, but they're there if you do. We need to keep it that way."**

## Keep memories flying

**We understand the death of a loved one is hard.**

We know that doing something in memory of someone you love can help with the bereavement process and ensure that while your special someone may no longer be here, we can help keep their memory flying.

Donating in memory of your loved one makes you and them a lifesaver, it's an incredible lasting legacy. We hope that the continuation of our vital service will be a fitting tribute to your loved one.

On our website, we offer support in arranging funeral collections, an online memory wall and a Grief Chat service.

Scan the QR code to find out more about our support services, as we understand everyone experiences bereavement differently.

[wiltshirebathairambulance.org.uk](http://wiltshirebathairambulance.org.uk)

SCAN ME



## Out and about in the community



Whether it's attending events, giving talks, or bringing our mascots to life, there are plenty of fun and rewarding volunteer opportunities.

You can make a difference by:

- Collecting and distributing tins
- Attending presentations
- Volunteering at local events
- Bringing our mascots to life
- Helping in our Charity Shop
- Giving informative talks
- Gardening at our airbase
- Offering office support

Our amazing volunteers, known as the GroundCrew, dedicate their time to help spread awareness of our lifesaving work. Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, try new things, and connect with your community — all while supporting a fantastic cause!

Interested? Find out more online.



## Get in touch with our community team

The community team is here to support you every step of the way in your fundraising journey.

From providing resources and advice to helping you maximise your fundraising.

Together, we can make a real difference to the people of Wiltshire and Bath.

If you are holding an event, looking to volunteer or thinking about fundraising for us, get in touch with the team by scanning the QR code below.



## Will you make a difference?

A gift in your will costs nothing during your lifetime but ensures we can keep saving lives in the future. On average, around one in three of our lifesaving missions is funded by gifts left in wills. These gifts help our aircrew reach patients quickly, treat them on the spot, and transport them to the hospital that's best for their needs.

We offer free will-writing options through our trusted partners:

**Secure a solicitor-drafted will:** We've partnered with Parker Bullen LLP, a long-established law firm based in Salisbury, to help you through the entire will-writing process.

**Write a will online:** Through Make A Will Online, you can create a solicitor-checked will at your own pace from the comfort of your home.

You don't need to include a gift to us to use our free will services, but if you are able to leave a gift after caring for your loved ones, we'd be incredibly grateful.

Interested in learning more?

Pete Burch was airlifted by us after a road traffic collision on his motorbike in 2015.

**"Completing the will online, in the comfort of my home, meant I could take my time and decide the intricacies of where we wanted various parts of my will to go.**

**I knew from the very beginning that Wiltshire and Bath Air Ambulance Charity was the first thing I was going to include in my will."**



# What's coming up...



## 13 APRIL Skydive

Experience an unforgettable thrill as you skydive over the stunning Wiltshire countryside, with views of Salisbury Cathedral and Stonehenge from above.



15 APRIL

## Brew with the Crew at Easter

Come in and enjoy a cuppa and cake with our crew at the airbase in Semington. Chat with our pilots, doctors, and paramedics - grab your tickets now!



26 APRIL

## Car Boot Sale

Join us at our first fundraising car boot sale at the airbase! Bring your pre-loved items along, and whether you're a bargain hunter, or simply someone who enjoys browsing, our airbase is the place to be.



7-8 JUNE

## Middlewick House Open Garden

A great family-friendly weekend! Visitors will be able to wander around the beautiful garden, browse the sports cars and shop from the array of stalls selling everything from plants to art.



## 20 MAY Behind-the-scenes tour

Gain an insight into how we run our lifesaving service as we open the doors to our airbase to give our guests a unique experience.



21 JUNE

## Paws for a Cause

Calling all dog lovers, come and join us for the inaugural charity dog show at Rainscombe Park, near Marlborough. There will be plenty to see and do for dogs and their well-behaved owners too!



## 1 - 31 JULY 35 miles for 35 years

Run, walk or cycle. However you choose to take on 35 miles, you'll be supporting our lifesaving work in your community and helping us celebrate our 35th anniversary.



31 JULY

## Teddy Bears Picnic

Kickstart the Summer holidays at our airbase with a range of children's games and activities on the lawn. Our teddy bear mascots, Wilber and Marsha will be waiting to see you there.



16 AUGUST

## Summer Birthday Party

Help us celebrate the 35th anniversary of our lifesaving service at our birthday party on the lawn at the airbase.



8-15 SEPTEMBER

## National Air Ambulance Week

Support us throughout the week and help to raise awareness of our lifesaving work within your community.

Get in touch with our fundraising team, we'd love to hear from you!







### **VOLUNTEER**

We are always in need of help in our shop. Get in touch if you can spare a few hours.

## **Shop with us**

Find bargains galore in our incredibly well-stocked pre-loved store in Devizes. Browse through a great selection of high quality clothes, books, toys and more.

### **VISIT US AT...**

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