

Spring 2025

# GREAT NORTH NEWS

[www.gnaas.com](http://www.gnaas.com)



## One Team, Saving Lives.

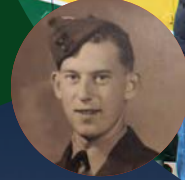
Working together to be there in the critical moments that matter.

     /GNAirAmbulance

UK Registered Charity No. 1092204  
Isle of Man Registered Charity No. 1329

**Charity-funded,  
world-class  
critical care.**

# Together, we save lives



It has been a milestone year for our charity, with record call-outs, advanced training exercises, and remarkable fundraising efforts from our supporters.

Over the past six months, our team at the Great North Air Ambulance Service (GNAAS) has been busier than ever, responding to emergencies across the North East, North Yorkshire, Cumbria, Scotland, and the Isle of Man. **In 2024 alone, we attended 2,083 incidents- our highest number yet.** As we move forward into the year, we anticipate a similar, if not greater, demand for our services, and our team stands ready to provide critical care whenever and wherever it is needed.

When they're not responding to emergencies, our critical care team is sharpening their skills with immersive training sessions designed to prepare them for the most complex cases, including major

incidents. In November, we organised a large-scale simulation exercise in collaboration with the military and local emergency services. Our team recreated high-impact scenarios using real people with lifelike injuries. These invaluable training sessions ensure that our crew have the skills and experience needed to save lives in the critical moments that matter.

That same month, one of our own was recognised for her dedication and hard work. GNAAS paramedic Hollie received the North East Chamber of Commerce's Inspiring Female Award. Hollie joined us in early 2022 at just 28, becoming the youngest female critical care paramedic at the charity. She has since become an integral part of our team and, last year, joined 19 other female air ambulance medics from across the UK to take on the Great North Run. Together, they raised

vital funds for our charity and represented "Fem in PHEM" (Females in Pre-Hospital Emergency Medicine), highlighting the essential role of women in this field.

**None of this would be possible without our incredible supporters, who continue to raise both funds and awareness for our charity.**

Over the past year, we've seen some truly inspiring efforts- from David and Garry, who rowed the Atlantic Ocean in 70 days, to patient Claire Hughes, who completed a self-powered triathlon across the UK. We are also deeply grateful to the late Frank Barker, who left a generous legacy donation of more than £80,000 to support our work. These extraordinary contributions make a real difference in ensuring we can continue to provide life-saving care.

**It currently costs £9.3m a year to keep GNAAS operational. Thanks to your support, we are able to be there for people in their darkest moments, delivering critical care where it is needed most. The past few years have been challenging, but our incredible supporters remain our lifeline. Your passion and generosity keep us flying. We simply couldn't do it without you.**

**Thank you for being part of our team.**



# 6 months of missions...

The following data shows what our teams have been up to in the six months from July 1 2024 to December 31 2024.

**1,127**  
deployments



**540**

Helicopter



**587**

Rapid response vehicle



**206**  
RTC

## Call-out type



**114**  
Assault



**19**  
Burns



**291**  
Cardiac arrest



**13**  
Drowning



**174**  
Fall



**15**  
Industrial



**133**  
Medical



**66**  
Self-harm



**33**  
Sport and leisure



**5**  
Transfer



**47**  
Other



**11**  
Primary Transfer

## Breakdown of Road Traffic Collision (RTC) type



**18**  
HGV



**0**  
Van



**20**  
Bicycle



**31**  
Pedestrian



**49**  
Motorcycle



**88**  
Car



**5**  
Not specified

## Helicopter responses per area

**Total: 1,127**



**15**  
Scotland



**806**  
North East



**280**  
Cumbria



**13**  
Isle of Man



**13**  
North Yorkshire

# The ultimate crew cards



Years with GNAAS  
**9**

Years flying  
**27**

**Pilot: John Joseph 'JJ'**

**Speciality** Low-level, built-up and mountain flying techniques, landing in tight spots and mountainsides. Apache pilot experience.

**Training Received** Line check OPC, LPC, IR flying, basic life-saving techniques, specialist training with our own helicopter.

**Quote** "It's a cliché but being part of a team that can make a difference in people's lives is very rewarding."

- Pilot Fact File:**
- 1,000 hours piloting command, 1,000 hours co-piloting in HEMs to join the charity.
  - Transport the crew to the scene as quickly as possible.
  - Provide essential support to the clinical team.
  - Assisting getting the patient ready for flight.
  - Transporting the patient to hospital safely.



Years with GNAAS  
**10**

Years saving lives  
**20**

**Pre-hospital Doctor: Jonathan 'Doogie'**

**Speciality** Emergency Medicine Consultant, specialises in hyperthermia.

**Training Received** Two-year subspeciality course, PHEMCC and PHEA.

**Quote** "My favourite thing about working for GNAAS is it's a team effort."

- Doctor Fact File:**
- One of the first air ambulances to carry doctors on board.
  - Accomplish a very high level of medical intervention.
  - Deliver pain-relief.
  - Perform blood transfusions.
  - Carry out surgeries.
  - Put patients into induced comas.



Years with GNAAS  
**1**

Years saving lives  
**7**

**Critical Care Paramedic: Sarah**

**Speciality** Critical care and rapid response in extreme environments, prescribing qualification, resuscitation officer.

**Training Received** GNAAS Standard Operating Procedures, air desk, PHEA, PHEMCC, provide support to pilot.

**Quote** "I have the privilege of responding to people on the worst day of their lives."

- Paramedic Fact File:**
- Advanced training as they attend more complex and severe incidents.
  - Knowledge of doctor-led procedures.
  - Five years' experience as a qualified paramedic before joining GNAAS.
  - Supervised for a year before being signed off.

# Day in the life of a dispatcher



Jordan, who has been part of the GNAAS family for over two years and previously worked at the NEAS dispatch centre, gives us an insight into a day in the life of a GNAAS dispatcher.

**"Being a dispatcher at GNAAS is a crucial role - it's all about keeping a close eye on emergency calls and determining who needs us the most."**

**7:25am**  
I arrive at HQ and head straight to the crew room, powering up two computers - each with four screens. They show 999 calls from ambulance services, help us log our call-outs, track our aircraft, and keep an eye on the weather.

Before the night shift hands over, I make a beeline for the crumpets and sneak in a quick cup of tea.

**7:55am**  
Time for admin!

**8:00am**  
With the day shift officially starting, the crew go over the daily briefing.

**9:30am**  
Now it's time to do what I do best - keeping a close watch on emergency calls and working out which ones meet our dispatch criteria.

**11:00am**  
Helimed 63, our North East-based helicopter, is called to a serious RTC. As they prepare for take-off, I arrange clearance for them to fly over Durham City.

**11:15am**  
The crew arrives on scene and gets to work.

**11:40am**  
I get a full rundown from the crew: patient age, incident time, injuries, observations, and treatment given so far. I pass it to the hospital.

**11:45am**  
I ring the blood lab at the RVI to arrange a fresh supply for Helimed 63. The crew can either pick it up themselves or Northumbria Blood Bikes will deliver it to HQ.

**1:00pm**  
The team radios in to say they've finished at the RVI, picked up the blood, and are heading back to base.

Meanwhile, Helimed 58 is still available in the North West, covering Cumbria and the Isle of Man from Langwathby.

**2:00pm**  
With the paramedic covering the desk, I take a well-earned break for lunch.

**3:00pm**  
The afternoon is spent keeping an eye on calls and making sure we're there for those who need us.

**5:30pm**  
As dusk sets in, our helicopters are grounded, and our rapid response vehicles take over to provide overnight coverage.

**8:00pm**  
That's a wrap! I hand over HEMS resources to the relevant ambulance services and get ready to leave.

**8:05pm**  
I say goodbye to the crew, get in my car, and head home—ready to do it all again tomorrow!





# 10 years of Blood on Board: how teamwork is saving lives

**"To know that we've now given blood to 750 patients over the course of ten years is a phenomenal achievement, and it's honestly one of the highlights of my career." – Dr Rachel Hawes OBE**

At GNAAS, we're always looking for ways to push the boundaries of emergency care, making sure we give our patients the best chance for survival. One of the biggest game-changers for us has been the 'Blood on Board' initiative – a project that allows GNAAS to carry out roadside blood and plasma transfusions on patients.

This year, we hit a massive milestone: ten years of carrying blood products on our aircraft and rapid response vehicles! Since 2015, our critical care team has been able to give blood transfusions right at the scene of an incident - something that used to be possible only in hospitals.

The 'Blood on Board' scheme is a team effort between Newcastle Hospitals, GNAAS, and the amazing volunteers from Cumbria and Northumbria Blood Bikes. The idea came from Dr. Rachel Hawes OBE, who took what she learned from battlefield transfusions and made it work for emergencies here at home. This whole project is proof of what we can achieve when we all work together for the same mission - saving lives.

Every day, our brilliant Blood Bike volunteers pick up cool boxes packed with red blood cells and plasma from local RVIs and deliver them to our bases.

Dr. Hawes OBE summed it up perfectly: **"We're always ready to respond, and in a major incident, we can even support other regions to make sure help gets where it's needed fast."**

We're so proud of the incredible teamwork that makes all this possible. Thanks to innovation, collaboration, and the support of our amazing volunteers and medical professionals, we're taking emergency pre-hospital care to the next level!



# Life-saving funds.

During 2023/24 our fundraising and income generation activities raised:

## £9.2 million



**Legacies 31%**

Gifts in Wills ensure our vital work continues, like those from John, who left our biggest legacy ever.



**Charitable Activities 8%**

Our world-famous training for doctors and paramedics.

**Lottery & Raffle 11%**

Elizabeth was thrilled to play and win our top raffle prize of £10,000- then generously donated half back to the charity!

**Fundraising Activities 15%**

Like Leo, who dressed as a hot dog while taking on walking challenges to raise money for GNAAS.

**Donations 23%**

What the generous public give us through our appeals, website and donation boxes.

**Grants 1.5%**



**£** For every £1 we spent on fundraising, we generated £4.18 back

# Give Regularly and become a life-saver

To sign up to Regular Giving, head to [gnaas.org.uk/regulargiving](https://gnaas.org.uk/regulargiving)

Your regular donations help us plan ahead, giving us a steady, reliable income. With your ongoing support, we can confidently adapt and improve our services, ensuring we're always ready to help our community with the latest techniques and innovations.

## What your donation could fund after a year of Regular Giving:

£5  
a month

a pair of defibrillation pads to help us restart a heart.

£10  
a month

a ventilation tube to give someone the breath of life.

£25  
a month

a weekend's worth of fuel to fund our life-saving missions in our rapid response cars.



## Why I give: John's story

John Wilson required our help following an eight-foot fall from his roof while repairing his chimney.

The GNAAS aircraft arrived to assist the North West Ambulance Service paramedics treating him at the scene, before airlifting him to the hospital.

"They were brilliant," he said "I'll never forget the pilot's skills when he landed at the hospital. I had five broken ribs, a broken shoulder blade and a punctured lung, yet never felt a bump as we landed!"

Since recovering from his incident, he has been donating to the charity through Regular Giving.

"I wanted to give something back to show my appreciation for all that GNAAS did," he said.



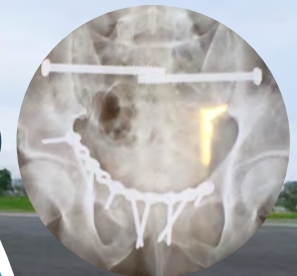
"I wanted to give something back to show my appreciation for all that GNAAS did,"

John Wilson

"We weren't well off, so I set up a monthly donation. Once I received my state pension, I increased it. I'll never be able to fully repay their efforts, but every little helps."

Mr Wilson is a passionate supporter of air ambulance services. His stepson Martyn also needed an air ambulance after a motorcycle collision in 2016. While he survived, he was left with life-changing injuries.

"I'd ask anyone that can, to consider a regular donation to their local air ambulance, none of us plan to need to use it, but when the need arises, it's a brilliant service."



Read John's story on why he is thankful for GNAAS and what led him to regularly give.

# How you can help save a life today.

Take a look at the different ways you can get involved and support the charity.

To find our more visit:  
[www.gnaas.com](http://www.gnaas.com)



Shop to save lives- visit our merch store

Take on an inspiring challenge



Partner with us- align your business with GNAAS



Donate to keep us flying



Volunteer for a charity you feel passionate about



Donate now or get in touch: [gna.as/donate](http://gna.as/donate)

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