



London's
Air Ambulance
Charity

UP
AGAINST
TIME
APPEAL



FAQs

ABOUT THE UP AGAINST TIME APPEAL

What is the Up Against Time appeal?

London's Air Ambulance Charity's Up Against Time Appeal must raise £15 million by Autumn 2024 to replace our helicopter fleet – our helicopters will become increasingly difficult to maintain and keep operational by this time. We are a charity and rely on donations.

Only our medics can carry out open chest surgery, give blood transfusions and put patients into an induced coma at the scene, in London. Replacing our current helicopter fleet is the only way for us to maintain our rapid response and ensure that we can continue to operate for years to come.

Why do you need to replace the helicopters?

Our current helicopters – MD902's – have served us very well for over 20 years. However, the number of MD902 models is in decline in the UK. As a result, over the next 2-5 years, our current models will become increasingly difficult to maintain and find spares support for. We will struggle to keep our fleet flying beyond this timeframe.

Our helicopters will continue to be operational until 2024 and we will still be able to save lives in London but we must replace our fleet by Autumn 2024 and as a charity, we are reliant on donations to help us to do this.

Why is there a need for two helicopters?

London's Air Ambulance Charity operates a fleet of two helicopters. Having two aircraft means we can still reach patients if one helicopter experiences mechanical issues or is undergoing routine maintenance. It also provides greater resilience for London in the event of a major incident, including terror attacks – our crew were first responders to the Westminster Bridge attack and the London Bridge attack of 2017.

HOW MANY PATIENTS DO YOU TREAT?

We treat an average of 5 critically injured patients in a 24-hour period. We have treated over 43,000 patients since 1989. In 2021, we treated 1714 patients: of these, 35% were injured by penetrating trauma; 23% by road traffic collision; 22% by falls from height and 20% by other causes (rail incidents, drownings, industrial accidents and medical emergencies.)

WHAT DO YOU DO?

London's Air Ambulance Charity delivers rapid response and cutting-edge medical care to save lives – we deliver the hospital to the patient. We are the only helicopter emergency medical service caring for the 10 million people that live, work and travel in London every day.

The medical trauma team is on call 24/7 via our two helicopters and our fleet of cars. We attend an average of five cases of serious injury every day, where rapid medical attention could mean the difference between life and death. Only our medics can carry out open chest surgery, give blood transfusions and put patients into an induced coma at the scene, in London.

HOW IS THE CHARITY SET UP?

We are an independent charity, predominantly funded through public donations. London's Air Ambulance operates in partnership with and is supported by Barts Health NHS Trust and the London Ambulance Service NHS Trust. Barts Health NHS Trust provides the doctors as well as the helipad facility at The Royal London Hospital.

London Ambulance Service NHS Trust provides paramedics who are seconded to the service. But the reality is that we rely on 89% of our funding coming from the general public.

WHAT SETS YOU APART?

We are part of the national air ambulance membership body, AAUK, and work closely with them to share best practice and guidance in pre-hospital care. Of the 37 air ambulances operated by 21 charities across the UK, we are the only regional service responding almost exclusively to trauma.

We focus on delivering advanced medical treatment on-scene rather than transporting patients to hospital. Operating in a densely populated city means we see more patients with life-threatening injuries than any other service. This unique experience, coupled with our collaborative partnership with the NHS, means we are experts in what we do, providing a knowledge platform for both military and civilian innovations.

WHY AREN'T YOU FUNDED BY THE NHS?

For over three decades, we have been working closely with the NHS to develop rapid-response, cutting-edge care. Thanks to this unique collaboration, we are the experts in pre-hospital medicine. Procedures developed by our medics have even been adapted for use on the battlefield by the US military. The average cost of a patient mission is £2,290 and the charity has to raise around £10 million each year in order to meet running costs. £15 million will enable us to replace our helicopter fleet in 2024.

We are really proud partners of the NHS, but we are also proud to be a charity, funded by the people we serve. Whilst we work alongside the NHS, a degree of independence provides some autonomy and flexibility to push the boundaries of pre-hospital care.