

**Anyone can need us, anytime, anywhere.**

Every day there are over 3,000 medical 999 calls in the South East. Our team respond to a handful of these – nine a day on average. But these are the most critical emergencies. Injuries and illnesses where only we can make a life-saving difference.

When someone dials 999 there is every chance a life could be hanging in the balance. And behind every life could be a partner, parent, child or loved one, desperate to keep their family together.

It might be a high-speed road collision. People with broken bones. Sudden heart failures. Anyone can need us, anytime, anywhere. Whatever the situation – we got to people fast. We give lifesaving care and help them get home to their families.

As a charity we rely on donations to stay in the air, and we would like to ask you to support us this spring.

**Our expertise.** Our helicopters and response vehicles carry a doctor specialising in emergency medicine and a critical care trained paramedic. Experts who can deliver procedures an ambulance team are not trained for.

The interventions they deliver, such as anaesthesia, blood transfusion and open heart surgery, usually only take place in hospital with a large support team. They deliver them at the roadside, in family homes, in remote coastal areas. Whenever and wherever needed.

We listen to every 999-call received by South East Coast Ambulance Service, 24/7, going to patients where we make the biggest difference.

From Redhill Aerodrome, we can reach anybody within 30 minutes. Our pilots quickly plan routes, land in rough terrain, and fly in darkness using night vision goggles. When weather is poor and visibility low, we station our medics throughout the South East in our modified, blue-light response vehicles, so patients can still get the expert care they need.

**“Treating patients in their homes, the road or a supermarket is a very different world to treating patients in the Emergency Department” – Dr Ruth Watson, KSS**

Our team have years of experience. They can quickly tell when someone needs specialist care. When this is the case, we fly to the South East’s major trauma centres; King’s College Hospital, St George’s Hospital, Tooting and the Royal Sussex County Hospital, Brighton.

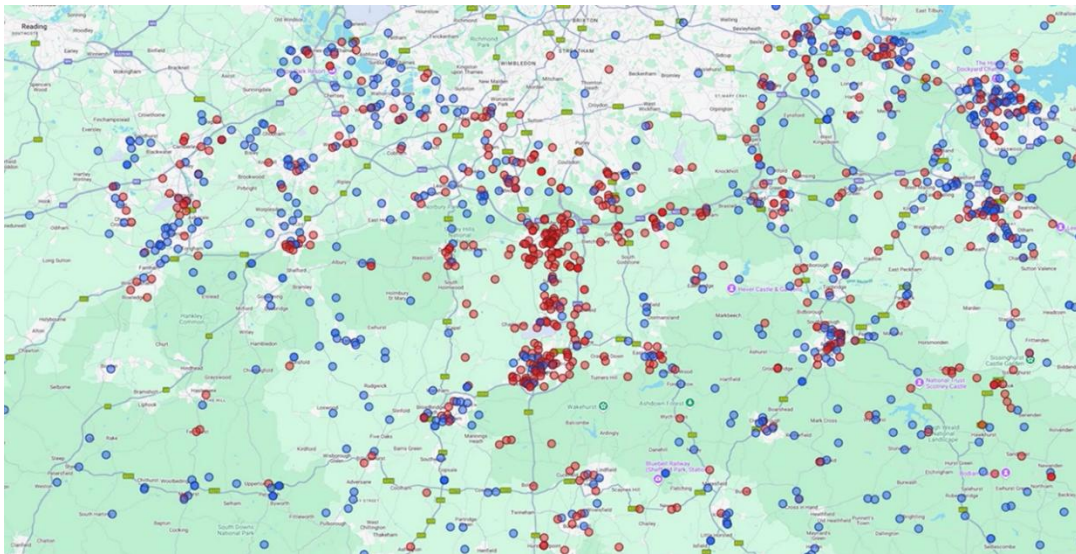
We brief hospitals on route, so patients get immediate treatment – often they are taken straight to a CT scan or an operating theatre where a surgery team are ready. Taking patients to specialized consultants can significantly improve long-term outcomes.



From our morning weather briefings to takeoffs - donations fund every part of our life-saving service

## **We have continued to be there for people across Surrey.**

Last year we provided care to 466 people across Surrey. The map below shows the patients we have helped in the communities that mean the most to you. Emergencies we attended ranged from road traffic collisions to people who suffered cardiac arrest. The blue dots represent our helicopters, and the red dots are the rapid response vehicles



Patients helped across Surrey in 2024.

When we arrive at a patient's side our team begin triage immediately, delivering the best care at scene and making quick decisions on the right hospital for each patient.

This is often a major trauma centre due to the specialist medics that work there, and last year we took 153 patients in Surrey to a major trauma centre.

## **We cannot do any of this without support.**

From April 2023 to March 2024 we helped 1,939 patients and responded to 3,382 missions, nine a day on average. This was a 6.85% increase in mission numbers on the year before as we responded to even more serious injuries and illnesses.

It now costs £56,000 a day to deliver our care, or £20.4M a year. An average mission now costs £4,000, which includes our dispatchers, equipment and helicopter maintenance, fuel, medicines, medical supplies, medics and pilots.



Our donors provide stability and mean we can be more resilient when we need to help more patients, or deal with new challenges such as cost of living and inflation. They enable us to be there for patients in their darkest hour as well as helping us to innovate for the good of our future patients, more information on our latest innovations can be found below.

## **We would be honoured if you would consider supporting us.**

Donations like yours ensure our team can provide the best possible care to the most critically ill and injured people whenever and wherever they need us. Examples of the difference your donation could make include:

- **£1,080 could buy one months' worth of plasma kits**, used to replace the proteins that help a patient's blood to clot after a severe bleed.
- **£732 could buy 35 bougies**, used to guide a breathing tube down a patient's airway.
- **£570 could pay for 32 heated blankets**, which help to treat hypothermia (an issue even in the warmer weather) or shock and protect them from the elements.

## All of this is to help people like Sam.

When Sam jumped on his bike one sunny morning he was not expecting it to be one of the most challenging days of his life.

He was just 400m from home, having just said goodbye to his wife and children, when a van unexpectedly turned in front of him. Sam was knocked unconscious and thrown into the air, landing some distance away.

"The first thing I remember when I regained consciousness, which I understand was around 10 minutes later, is doing a mental body scan and thinking "this is not good, I'm in bad shape". Various body parts were pointing in the wrong direction, and the pain was getting rapidly worse."



Sam with his family and paramedic Tom

Time was ticking and Sam needed us. His vital signs were dangerously low, and he was in a critical condition. We bought hospital grade equipment, specialist medicines and crucially, Dr Kevin Fong and paramedic Tom Mikrut, specialists with years of experience in critical care.

Kevin and Tom could quickly tell Sam needed an emergency anaesthetic, something a land ambulance team are unable to perform. This kept him still so he wouldn't cause any further damage and removed his pain.

They were concerned he may have damaged his liver and made the decision to take Sam to specialist at a major trauma centre. This would have been an uncomfortable hour-long journey by road – but by air, we could get him to a major trauma centre in a matter of minutes.

Sam's recovery involved several surgeries and intensive physiotherapy but with time and determination he was able to walk again and to return home to his family.

**I hope you will consider supporting us.** When accidents surge again this spring, more people will need our crew, and we would be thrilled if you would consider donating to help.

If you have any questions at all on anything I have shared, if you would like to donate or are interested in visiting us in Redhill to see our service in action, please do get in touch via [paulsandford@aakss.org.uk](mailto:paulsandford@aakss.org.uk) or 01634 471 979. Alternatively, you can write to me at Air Ambulance Charity Kent Surrey Sussex, Rochester Airport, Maidstone Road, Chatham, ME5 9SD.



**Appendix - We innovate to save even more lives.** We have a long and proud history of innovating to give people the best chance of surviving the worst injuries and illnesses.

In the past this has included being the first service to fly at night, one of the first to carry doctors and blood on board and the first to have our own dedicated dispatchers in the ambulance centre control room, meaning we can ensure we go to the patients that need us most.

Our most recent and ongoing innovations are outlined below.

**Giving our communities the skills and confidence to make a lifesaving difference** In 2023, we live-streamed CPR awareness to 17,000 people, including 8,000 school children in 60 schools, who gave CPR to a teddy, on our "Restart a Heart Day".



South East Coast Ambulance Service receives approximately 3,800 calls for out of hospital cardiac arrest every year.

Survival rate nationally is just 11% with chances of survival decreasing by 10% with every minute without defibrillation, from 90% after one minute to just 10% after 10 minutes. We know bystander CPR and defibrillation could make a huge difference, doubling chance of survival.

"What we have delivered is quite phenomenal. It is almost certain that some of the 17,000 will go on to use those skills in the future; lives will almost certainly be saved or at a minimum, be given a greater chance of surviving cardiac arrest" - Ben, KSS Paramedic (pictured).



Restart a Heart Day 2024 took place in October, and we reached over 80,000 people through a week of activities both online and face to face in multiple shopping centres, Gatwick Airport and other public places. We're so proud of how this has grown, creating an army of lifesavers across the South East.

**Using technology to save lives.** We are testing if drones can deliver defibrillators to people in cardiac arrest. We were recently approved to join the Civil Aviation Authority's "Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) Sandbox", one of just six providers from across the charity and commercial world approved to test drone use in UK airspace. We will begin testing south of Gatwick this year.



We have also taken steps towards flight in lower visibility. Currently, Visual Flight Rules mean pilots must be able to see 3,000m and clouds must be above 500ft for us to fly. At night these increase. Our helicopters have the technology to fly when these criteria are not met and we are working to do so safely, which could reach 150 more patients by air a year.

**Owning our most valuable equipment.** In early 2024 we ran an appeal to buy, rather than lease, one of our helicopters 'KSST'. This appeal was extremely short notice due to a forced change of aviation partners which lead to increased costs.

We were thrilled to raise £1m in a little over two months which meant we could buy KSST, saving us money in leasing costs and offering vital stability for our service. It will mean we can fly for longer every day, reach more patients and save more lives.

