

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



The Charity

When was the charity incorporated?

The service began in 1999 and the present charity was incorporated in 2000.

How many air ambulance charities are there?

There are 18 charities across England and Wales, supporting 32 helicopters.

Are all UK air ambulances funded by charities?

No, Scotland's air ambulance service is funded by the National Government.

Are the air ambulance charities linked?

Each charity is independent, however, there is a central body called the Association of Air Ambulances (AAA), which most air ambulance charities are members of.

What does BOB stand for?

BOB is the name for the Thames Valley & Chiltern Air Ambulance. The name represents the initials of the three counties it serves: Berks, Oxon and Bucks.

Funding

What funding does BOB receive?

BOB relies entirely on charitable donations from the public and receives no central Government or National Lottery funding.

Why doesn't the National Lottery providing funding?

Air Ambulances do not meet the currently funding criteria for National Lottery grants.

Why doesn't the Government provide funding?

Air Ambulances are not regarded as a necessity by the NHS and are extremely costly to operate.

What is the average cost of a mission?

Approximately £2,000.

How much does it cost to operate BOB?

Approximately £1.5m per annum.

How much does the Charity spend on generating funds?

Approximately £650k per annum – 28% of the Charity's income.

Does the Charity fund anything other than the operating costs of the helicopter?

The Charity also funds items such as specialist training for the paramedics, specialist medical equipment; for example: a cardiac compressor, child defibrillator, patient simulator (SimMan®) and other specialist equipment such as helmets, flight suits and fire retardant clothing for the paramedics.

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Missions

How often is BOB deployed?

On average 3 times per day.

How many missions has BOB flown?

BOB has flown over 12,500 missions.

When is BOB operational?

365 days per year (12 hours in Summer, 10 hours in Winter – this was increased in July 2010 from 10 hours and 8 hours respectively).

Can BOB attend missions outside of Berks, Oxon and Bucks?

Yes, air ambulances have no clinical boundaries and BOB often assists in neighbouring counties. However, the Charity only fundraises within its borders, as a matter of good practice.

Mission percentage breakdown by type:

- Road Traffic Collision – 35%
- Medical – 24%
- Sports / Leisure – 23%
- Falls – 6%
- Inter Hospital Transfers – 6%
- Industrial – 2%
- Other – 4%

Who decides if the Air Ambulance should attend a call?

South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) is responsible for the deployment of BOB. Emergency calls are taken at SCAS's Emergency Operating Centres (EOC) at Wokingham and Bicester, where trained operators ask a specific set of questions to identify the needs of each patient. The Charity contributes towards the cost of having a fully manned Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) desk at the Wokingham EOC. The HEMS desk is staffed by one of the HEMS trained paramedics, on a rota basis, to monitor all the emergency calls received by SCAS across Berks, Oxon and Bucks. The paramedic can listen in to any call and can also request to speak to the caller after the SCAS operator has conducted their questioning – this helps ensure that BOB is deployed appropriately and efficiently.

Why is BOB used instead of a land ambulance?

BOB attends incidents where speed is critical to the outcome of the patient or where access to the patient is restricted for land vehicles. BOB can transfer patients to the most appropriate hospital for their treatment, which may not necessarily be the closest, without having an adverse affect on the transfer time.

Helicopter

What type of helicopter is BOB?

BOB is a Eurocopter EC135, supplied and maintained by Bond Air Services Limited on a long term lease.

What happens if the helicopter breaks down?

The terms of our lease with Bond say that they will supply the Charity with a replacement air ambulance helicopter.

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Aircrew

Who makes up BOB's crew?

The standard daily crew is 1 pilot and 2 paramedics but they are also often supported by a small team of BASICS doctors who volunteer their time.

How many people can BOB carry?

1 pilot, 2 paramedics and 1 patient plus an extra seat to accommodate one of the following: doctor, medical observer or parent / carer of the patient. In cases of multiple, major incident trauma an additional patient could be accommodated in the spare seat.

Who employs the pilots?

Bond Air Services Limited employs the pilots and the Charity pays Bond for their time.

Who pays the paramedics?

SCAS supplies and pays the paramedics. These paramedics are Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) trained, to deal with all levels of patient trauma and primary care as well as navigation and flight safety.

Campaigns

What was the 'Who's BOB?' campaign?

'Who's BOB?' was an awareness campaign that ran in Milton Keynes and North Oxfordshire to increase levels of awareness about their local air ambulance service. The campaign included press and radio advertising (Heart) from November 2010 to January 2011.

What is 'One Million Heartbeats'?

One Million Heartbeats is a fundraising campaign asking people to support BOB by 'purchasing' heartbeats by way of a donation. Each heartbeat equals £1. The target is One Million Heartbeats - £1 million. The campaign / appeal was launched on 26 January 2011 on Heart radio using testimonial style adverts using real life patient stories. The appeal is being run across all three counties.

Donations

How can I make a donation?

You can donate online at www.supportbob.co.uk or www.tvacaa.org (same website) or via post by cheque, Postal Order or CAF voucher [NB: A CAF voucher is, in essence, a cheque which is paid from a specialist bank account that individuals can set up which only allows them to make donations to charities]. Cash can be brought directly into the Charity's head office. Donations can also be taken by credit / debit card over the telephone and payments can be made directly into the Charity's bank account.

Text donations can now be taken (from June 2011) – the donor should text 'HBOB10 plus the amount they wish to donate to 70070' e.g. HBOB10 £5.

How can I help?

You can help the Charity either by making a donation as above, by taking part in a sponsored event, leaving a legacy in your Will or joining our team of volunteers and helping the Charity to fundraise and build awareness at talks, events and collections.