

# Government Minister praises Inverness Coastguard during visit

The vital work of HM Coastguard at one of the UK's busiest search and rescue helicopter bases has been praised by Cabinet Office Minister Brandon Lewis today.

Mr Lewis visited the Inverness Coastguard to see how the helicopter crews and ground staff train for and carry out life-saving missions, ranging from mountain rescues and aiding ships stranded at sea to missing person searches.

Latest statistics show that of the 1,606 rescue operations carried out in the UK during the past year, 40% were undertaken in Scotland by the coastguards at Inverness and three other Scottish bases.

## **Cabinet Office Minister Brandon Lewis said:**

HM Coastguard is the only UK-wide emergency service. Working as a national network highlights how the scale and size of our Union's infrastructure helps to keep people safe all across the UK.

Our Coastguard helicopter teams provide a brilliant service to protect everyone who visits or works in our coastal and mountain regions, no matter where they are in the UK.

Mr Lewis was given a first-hand look at 2 new state-of-the-art helicopters, which cost a combined £40m. They are helping rescuers get to injured climbers and walkers quicker and to take on an ever-growing range of missions.

The new helicopters are part of a £1.9bn investment by the UK Government in search and rescue helicopter infrastructure to make sure all of the UK's bases have everything they need to keep the nation's coastlines safe.

## **Kevin Drodge, a Captain at the HM Coastguard Inverness helicopter base, said:**

We are pleased to welcome Brandon Lewis MP today and to give him an insight into the base's facilities, in terms of being prepared to undertake the crucial, life-saving work we do to keep people safe in Scotland.

Our priority is getting someone home safely from a search and rescue operation, whether that be at sea or in the mountains. Our base not only has state-of-the-art helicopters, but also the facilities and support we need to ensure HM Coastguard's world class search and rescue standards.