

News story: Air ambulance charities invited to bid for share of £10m funding

The £10 million in capital funding will help air ambulance charities to invest in new equipment and upgrade facilities to support them in providing vital services to patients across England.

Air ambulance services are not NHS funded. They are provided by 18 charitable organisations across England, with most of their resources supported by their own fundraising activities.

The 18 air ambulance charities in England will be able to [bid for the additional funding](#) specifically to support capital projects. This could include:

- buying state-of-the-art medical equipment for critical care teams
- modernising helicopters and helipads
- increasing the number of missions flown or extending the hours services are available
- expanding operational facilities to allow them to hire more highly skilled staff

Each charity will be able to bid for up to £2 million of grant funding. Air ambulance charities will also be able to partner with NHS Trusts to make joint bids, for example to modernise helipads that are owned by the hospital trust.

Air ambulance crews are often called out to those with serious conditions, carrying rapid response medical specialists who can provide expert critical care at the scene of an incident. This can involve treatment usually given in a hospital setting, such as blood transfusions and open-chest surgery.

The crews support the wider NHS emergency response on the ground, ensuring patients get specialised care in both urban settings and hard-to-reach rural areas.

The call for bids, developed in collaboration with the Air Ambulance Association, asks air ambulance charities to present proposals to fund projects.

The Department of Health and Social Care will prioritise applications that deliver clear benefits to patients, while ensuring value for money for the taxpayer.

Applications close on 8 March 2019 and funding will be allocated in April this year.

Health Minister Stephen Hammond said:

Air ambulance charities are a vital life-line for people in critical conditions who rely on urgent treatment before they can reach a hospital.

Generous donations from the public help keep air ambulances in the air and this £10 million will help to ensure that they're equipped to provide lifesaving care to patients in need.

The NHS Long Term Plan will improve emergency care for all patients, including those treated by air ambulance charities. Today's funding recognises their unwavering contribution to our health service and, combined with essential public donations, will ensure these charities can have world-class facilities to match their reputation for world-class care.

Paula Martin, Chairman of the Association of Air Ambulances, said:

It's a very exciting time for the air ambulance community and the opportunity to bid for a grant to help enable significant capital projects is very welcome. Whilst public purse funding being made available for the first time is very exciting, the operating cost for every air ambulance charity and the lifesaving work that it does continues to be entirely dependent on public donations and traditional fundraising.

Air ambulance charities in England are poised to submit a diverse range of applications to help fund capital projects which will deliver good value for money and most importantly benefit the patients and communities they serve.