Midlands Air Ambulance Charity®

2026/27 MANIFESTO



CELEBRATING 35 YEARS OF **MIDLANDS AIR AMBULANCE CHARITY**
OUR PLEDGES TO FUTURE-PROOF THIS STRATEGIC REGIONAL ASSET

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CEO FOREWORD



Future-proofing a strategic regional asset

In 1991, Midlands Air Ambulance Charity started its lifesaving emergency service with a single helicopter flown five days a week and chained to a tree overnight. Today we are a 24/7 operation, rated 'Outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission. We respond to approximately 4,000 incidents a year across Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, the West Midlands and Worcestershire, serving a population of more than seven million people.

As we mark 35 years, we have reasons to feel proud. Looking ahead, our priority is to ensure the service we have built continues to meet the needs of patients for generations to come. This manifesto sets out three key pledges to maintain and, where possible, build on our current levels of clinical excellence. We will work with our MPs, Mayors, NHS partners, community and business leaders to fulfil these pledges, which focus on operational resilience, financial sustainability and community impact.

We are not a nice-to-have. We are a must-have. We are a strategic regional asset in the UK's healthcare armoury. We aim to save lives, improve patient outcomes and reduce suffering every day and want to continue this for years to come. Please support our three manifesto pledges to ensure we continue to do just that.

Hanna Sebright
Chief Executive Officer, Midlands Air Ambulance Charity

LISA'S
STORY

The impact of Midlands Air Ambulance Charity

On the morning of 8th March 2024, Lisa Challinor from Oswestry, Shropshire, began her day as she always did walking her three dogs before setting off on a 19-mile run to prepare for the London Marathon. Within moments, a familiar routine became life-altering.

"I checked for traffic before crossing the road. Then a car came down the road at speed, on the wrong side. It hit me and one of our dogs," Lisa said.

The collision killed Dottie, Lisa's Labrador. Lisa was thrown through a wall and left with devastating injuries. Conscious throughout, she lay bleeding and unable to move. Her partner ran for help. A neighbour used a belt as a makeshift tourniquet. A land ambulance arrived first, followed by a Midlands Air Ambulance Charity helicopter.

Lisa said: "I knew it was serious when the air crew arrived. They were brilliant. They worked with the land team to stabilise me, then sedated me so I could be flown to Royal Stoke University Hospital."

> *"I'm still here because of Midlands Air Ambulance Charity"*

Lisa suffered an above-knee amputation of her left leg and lost a lot of blood. Midlands Air Ambulance Charity crews carry blood while NHS land ambulances do not - a key point of difference.

"I was told they would try and save my leg, but was later told it wasn't salvageable," she said.

Lisa learned to walk again with a prosthetic limb. Months later she was walking outdoors on the hills near her home.

Lisa said of Midlands Air Ambulance Charity: "They were there quickly. They knew what to do. And I'm still here because of that."



OUR PURPOSE AND THREE MANIFESTO PLEDGES

OUR PURPOSE:

To save lives and give every patient the best possible chance of a full recovery.

Our ability to reach patients rapidly, deliver life-saving critical care at the scene and facilitate timely access to specialist hospital treatment is fundamental to our mission.

OUR THREE MANIFESTO PLEDGES

Together, these pledges set out the priorities we believe are essential to delivering our purpose for generations to come.

01 **Pledge 1.** We will continually improve our operational resilience by working with our partners to ensure there is a dedicated 24/7 helicopter landing site at all our main receiving hospitals; and calling for air ambulance charities to be statutory consultees in NHS hospital upgrade plans.

02 **Pledge 2.** We will secure long-term financial sustainability by working with our partners to persuade the government of the need to cover the cost of specialist enhanced care dispatch charges, and of medicines and other consumables.

03 **Pledge 3.** We will maximise our impact in the communities we serve by sharing our expertise, supporting education and building stronger connections with communities across the region.

Each pledge requires us to work with people and organisations outside of Midlands Air Ambulance Charity.



"Midlands Air Ambulance Charity is a vital cog in the UK's emergency healthcare engine. Without it, thousands of people would either not be here or would not have enjoyed a full recovery from injuries and illnesses they have suffered.

As the Charity marks 35 years, it makes bold pledges to work with its partners to ensure 24/7 helipad provision at its main receiving hospitals and government funding to cover the cost of NHS 999 dispatch charges and medical supplies.

I back the logic behind these pledges as well as their ultimate aim: to save lives and give patients the best chance of a full recovery."



Sir David Nicholson KCB CBE, former Chief Executive of NHS England, Chair of Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust and Patron of Midlands Air Ambulance Charity.

PLEDGE 1:
IMPROVING OPERATIONAL RESILIENCE

Improving operational resilience with 24/7 helipads at our main hospitals

To ensure we can get patients to the definitive care they need as quickly as possible, we need night-capable hospital helicopter landing sites (HHLS) at our main receiving hospitals. This avoids the need for secondary land ambulance transfers, which delays patients' access to definitive care and puts additional stress on NHS ambulance services. A helipad within walking distance saves valuable minutes. These minutes can improve outcomes and save lives.

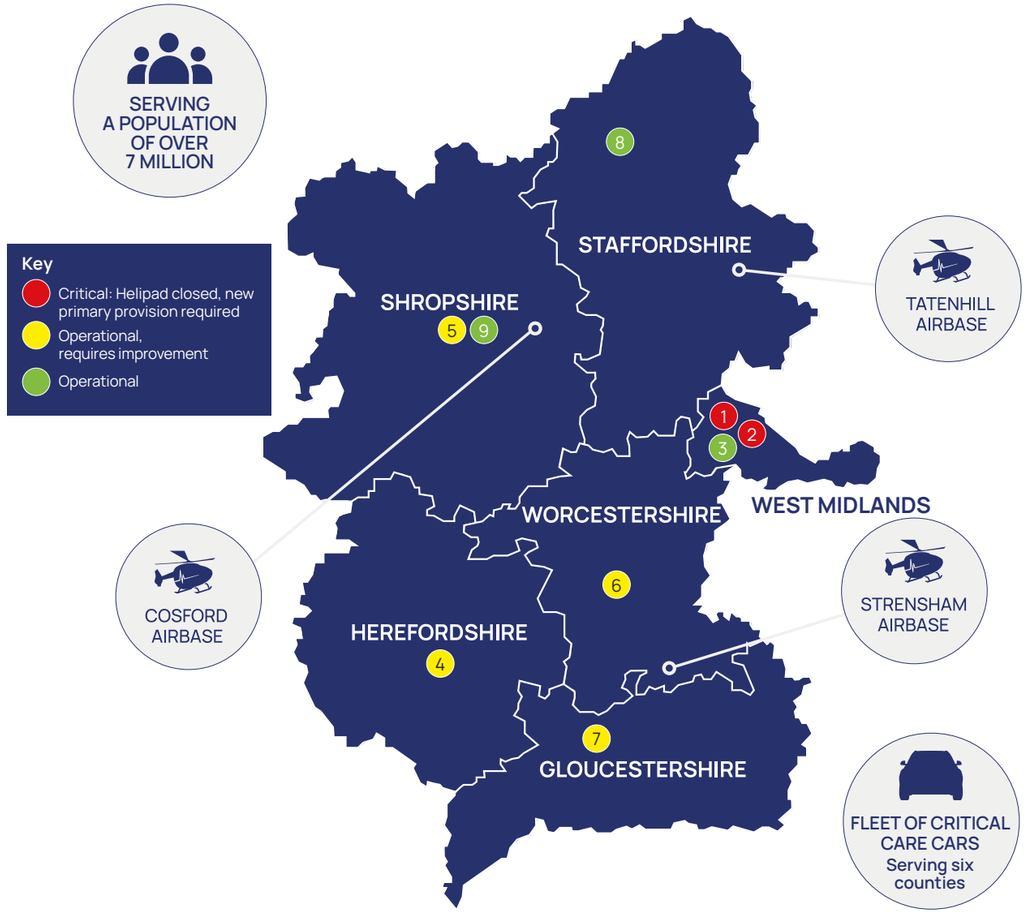
We also need existing hospital helipads to be properly maintained and, where needed, upgraded to meet the developing Civil Aviation Authority requirements.

Six hospitals with helipad development priorities

Six of our regional hospitals have helipad development priorities. We are and will continue to work with our partners, including the NHS, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), the County Air Ambulance Trust's HELP Appeal, local authorities and government, to achieve these priorities.

- **Birmingham Children's Hospital** – We are supporting the planning and construction of a new elevated HHLS at this paediatric major trauma centre which currently only has a 'secondary' landing site over a mile from the hospital, requiring road transfers by land ambulance and delaying definitive care to critically ill or injured children by more than 10 minutes.
- **Royal Wolverhampton New Cross Hospital** – We are supporting the design and construction of a new HHLS to maximise access to its cardiac speciality and open the potential of supporting further initiatives, for example, the transfer of hyperacute stroke patients to tertiary centres.
- **Worcestershire Royal Hospital** – We are supporting the upgrade of the HHLS at Worcester's Trauma Unit and cardiac centre, to enhance the facility during daylight hours and enabling it's use in the hours of darkness.
- **Hereford County Hospital** – We are supporting the upgrade of the HHLS at this hospital so it can receive our full fleet of aircraft and allow us to assist with transfers to specialist regional centres.
- **Gloucestershire Royal Hospital** – We are supporting efforts to ensure the existing HHLS is future-proofed and protected, or a sustainable alternative solution secured.
- **Royal Shrewsbury Hospital** – We are supporting the design and reinstatement of a suitable HHLS following completion of the current hospital redevelopment.

Midlands Air Ambulance hospital helipad priorities



Hospital

1. Royal Wolverhampton New Cross Hospital
2. Birmingham Children's Hospital
3. Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham
4. Hereford County Hospital
5. Royal Shrewsbury Hospital*
6. Worcester Royal Hospital
7. Gloucester Royal Hospital
8. Royal Stoke University Hospital
9. Princess Royal Hospital Telford

* Operational upon completion of construction works.

PLEDGE 1:
IMPROVING
OPERATIONAL
RESILIENCE



Air ambulance services must be statutory consultees in hospital upgrade plans

We will work to persuade government to make it a statutory requirement for NHS Trusts and local planning authorities to consult air ambulance charities early in the planning process whenever upgrades are under consideration at NHS hospitals.

This is essential to maintaining CAA compliance. Without early engagement from planning authorities, new developments such as housing, car parks and high rise buildings can be built too close to helipads and approach paths, creating safety risks that may force closures.

Strengthened national resilience

A better helipad network will strengthen the UK's resilience and response to major incidents by enabling faster deployment of critical care teams and greater flexibility when patients need to be transferred across the country to spread the load across the NHS.

OUR ASK: **Support enhanced hospital helipad provision and law change**

We need YOUR support for our pledge to secure night-capable helipads at our top six priority hospitals: Birmingham Children's, Royal Wolverhampton New Cross, Worcestershire Royal, Hereford County, Gloucestershire Royal and Royal Shrewsbury.

We also need YOUR support for our request to government to make air ambulance services statutory consultees when plans for NHS hospital upgrades or new builds are being drawn up.



PLEDGE 2:
SECURING LONG-TERM FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

It costs £20 million a year to keep our 24/7 essential service running - a cost that continues to rise. We receive all of this from individual supporters and corporate donors without a penny of government funding. Despite Midlands Air Ambulance Charity being entirely independent of the NHS, all our patients are NHS patients.

A £520,000-a-year opportunity requiring government support

Of the five platforms we run (three helicopters by day and two cars by night), we are currently able to fund a doctor on three. We want to make it five out of five. An opportunity we have identified to fund this, is by offsetting both the £400,000 a year we will pay from 2027 in specialist enhanced care dispatch charges, and the £120,000 we will pay on medical supplies.

How the 999 system integrates with Midlands Air Ambulance Charity

Mobilisation of Midlands Air Ambulance Charity enhanced care resources, from the NHS ambulance service's 999 response system, requires the expertise of a specialist 24/7 team.

OUR PROPOSAL:

Government funding to cover NHS dispatch charges

While we recognise the value and expertise of the NHS enhanced care dispatch teams, we do not believe any air ambulance charity should be paying for this. Instead, we believe government should provide additional funding to cover dispatch charges, paid either direct to air ambulance charities to offset these costs or to the NHS organisation providing the service.

More doctors on more missions - and potential efficiencies for the wider NHS

Midlands Air Ambulance Charity would use the savings from the dispatch costs (£400,000) to help fund more doctors to respond to our missions. Earlier access to higher-level clinicians can improve patient outcomes, and support NHS efficiencies. For example, helping to fast-track patients through emergency departments and by preventing avoidable or unnecessary admissions.

OUR ASK:

Back our bid for government to fund NHS dispatch charges

We will work with our partners, including the NHS, MPs, Mayors and local authorities, to persuade government to fund the cost of specialist enhanced care dispatch for air ambulance services. We need YOUR support on this.

Consistency on dispatch charges nationwide

And finally, there is no consistency on dispatch charges across the 21 air ambulance services in the UK. The NHS charges some air ambulance services but not others. Midlands Air Ambulance Charity is calling for consistency in this area.



PLEDGE 2:
SECURING LONG-TERM FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

OUR PROPOSAL:

Government funding for medical supplies

When a Midlands Air Ambulance Charity crew goes out to a critically ill or injured patient, they usually treat the patient with drugs and medical consumables. A common example is the administration by Midlands Air Ambulance Charity clinicians of a pre-hospital emergency anaesthesia (PHEA). This can involve sedatives, muscle relaxants, pain relief and the set-up of a drip for fluids, including blood where required, to ensure the patient can be safely transported to an NHS hospital.

If treatments are administered by an NHS ambulance crew or in hospital, the NHS pays for the drugs and other medical consumables used, but if a Midlands Air Ambulance Charity crew administer them, the charity must pay for them. This costs us more than £120,000 a year.

Enabling us to put more doctors on more callout missions

We believe government should provide funding to air ambulance services to cover the cost of medicines and other related consumables. The £120,000 a year this saves Midlands Air Ambulance Charity would fund more doctors on more callouts.

OUR ASK:

Support our request for government to fund medical supplies

We will work with our partners to persuade government to cover the cost of medicines and other consumables for air ambulance services. We call on MPs, Mayors and Councillors, as well as community and business leaders in the six counties we serve, to support us.



PLEDGE 3:
MAXIMISING
OUR IMPACT

Maximising our impact in every community we serve

We will work to maximise the difference Midlands Air Ambulance Charity makes in every community we serve, not only when our crews are called to an emergency, but through education, engagement and sharing our expertise. We need the support of our communities to ensure our role is understood, valued and championed.

From MPs and regional Mayors to business leaders, community groups and individuals, we all have a role to play in supporting a service that could one day be there for someone we know and love.

Every year, it costs around £20 million to run our 24/7 service. This is funded through the generosity of individuals, businesses and communities across Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, the West Midlands and Worcestershire. As the cost of delivering our service continues to grow, we must maintain and increase this support for the future.

By working together, we can ensure communities across the region benefit from our expertise, support our lifesaving work and help us remain there for patients when they need us most.



OUR ASK: **Back our pledges to help future-proof our lifesaving service**

Individually and collectively, support us, invest in us, champion us - in the hope you or your loved ones never need us, but knowing that if you do, we'll be there for you.

Specifically, we need YOU to:

01 **Understand and share our story** so people know Midlands Air Ambulance Charity's vital role in regional emergency healthcare; and support us financially through donations, fundraising or corporate partnerships, encouraging others to do likewise.

02 **Back our pledges to continually** improve operational resilience by ensuring dedicated 24/7 helicopter landing sites at all main receiving hospitals and making air ambulance charities statutory consultees in NHS upgrade plans; and securing government funding for dispatch charges, medicines and consumables.

03 **Help us maximise our impact in our communities** by supporting opportunities to share our expertise, deliver education and improve health, safety and resilience across the region.



FINAL WORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN



We need your continued support

From our humble beginnings in 1991 to today's clinically excellent service, our core purpose remains unchanged: to save lives and give every patient the best possible chance of a full recovery.

The three pledges in this, our first Midlands Air Ambulance Charity Manifesto, directly support this purpose, as we seek to future-proof our lifesaving service across the six counties we serve for generations to come.

Please lend us your support on each of these pledges.

Keith Marriott, Chairman of Midlands Air Ambulance Charity

KEY STATS

OVER 7 MILLION
PEOPLE SERVED

6 COUNTIES
SERVED ACROSS
THE MIDLANDS

3 HELICOPTERS AND AIRBASES
AND A FLEET OF
CRITICAL CARE CARS

RATED OUTSTANDING
BY THE CARE QUALITY
COMMISSION

4,000 MISSIONS
ON AVERAGE EVERY YEAR

80,000 MISSIONS
SINCE 1991

£20 MILLION
ANNUAL COST,
FUNDED ENTIRELY BY
CHARITABLE DONATIONS,
to operate our helicopters and critical care cars.

"Having served this region for over 35 years, saving thousands of lives, Midlands Air Ambulance Charity has demonstrated that it is not a nice-to-have but a must-have: a strategic regional asset that must feature in the long-term plans of the NHS, government, local authorities, metro Mayors and our communities."

Hanna Sebright, CEO of Midlands Air Ambulance Charity

Midlands
Air Ambulance
Charity®