

Summer 2021

# GREAT NORTH NEWS

[www.gnaas.com](http://www.gnaas.com)



## The next generation

Welcoming our new helicopter,  
new overnight service and new  
chief executive

**Charity funded,  
world-class  
critical care.**

    /GNAirAmbulance

Registered Charity No. 1092204

# Making strides

In the last edition of this newsletter, we talked about ‘facing the future’ and emerging from Covid in a stronger position than ever before.

Since then, we’ve welcomed a new helicopter to our fleet, we’ve launched an overnight car service in Cumbria and we’ve appointed a new chief executive – me! **The Great North Air Ambulance Service (GNAAS) can hardly be accused of letting the grass grow under its retractable wheels.**

I have been in post as chief executive at the charity since February. And what a first few months it has been...

The arrival of the Pride of Cumbria II aircraft to our Langwathby base in May was a truly momentous occasion.

For the next fifteen years, and possibly beyond, this beautiful aircraft will serve the county. She may be graceful to look at but make no mistake, beneath the sleek lines and shiny paint job, she is all power and endurance and will allow us to cover the large area of Cumbria even more effectively.

The warm welcome Cumbrians gave the aircraft was something I’ll never forget. Within the charity, the team has worked incredibly hard to make it possible, but we never forget what enables that – your support.

**The Pride of Cumbria II is owned by GNAAS but she belongs to the public.** Your support has allowed her purchase, and we just hope now you will continue to support her life-saving work.

This is a crucial message. It would be easy to look at our new aircraft and think ‘job done’. But that’s not the case sadly. We were able to pay a down payment on both our new aircraft, but the ongoing repayments need to be met along with all the other unavoidable expenses that go into making this possible. Please do keep your support coming if you can as it is making a big difference.

Another good example of how your donations are continuing to have an impact is the introduction of an overnight car in Cumbria on Friday and Saturday nights. Replicating the model we already use in the North East, this addition will save lives. **As I write this, our doctor and paramedic are preparing for their first shift on the car.** I hope they are not needed, but having seen the expected workload, I fear they won’t be in for a quiet weekend.

The newsletter is dotted with many other ways you have helped people here in the region. We have a case study of a life saved in Northumberland. And one with not such a happy ending in Teesside. This is the nature of our work. We’ll keep battling for each and every patient. We thank you, most sincerely, for allowing us to keep doing what we do.

**We hope that our activities make you proud to be a supporter. With your support, we fly on.**

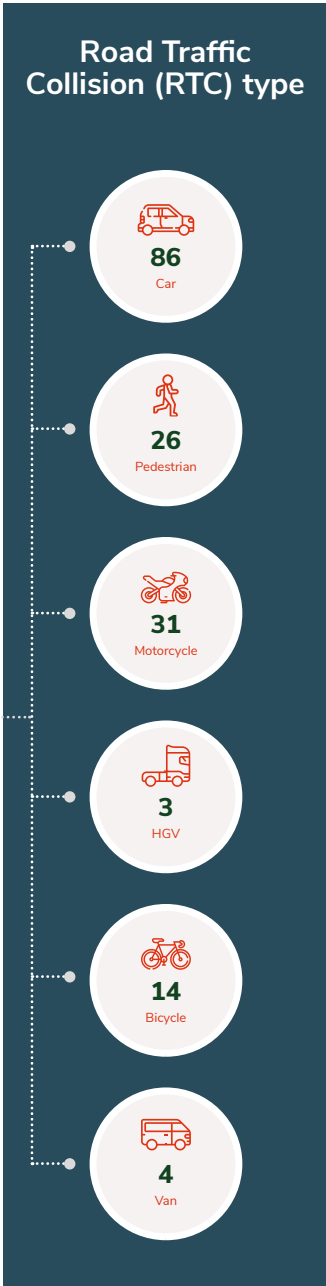
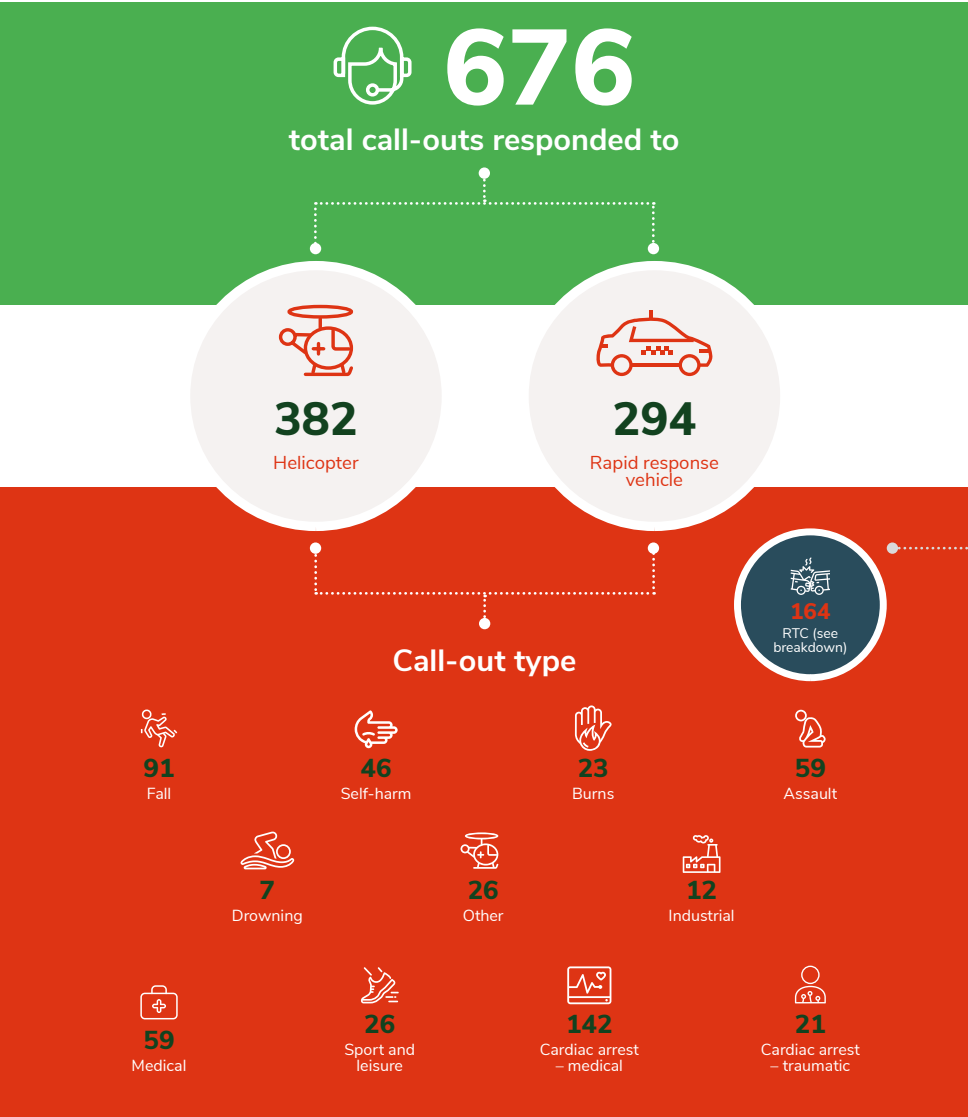
David Stockton  
Chief Executive GNAAS



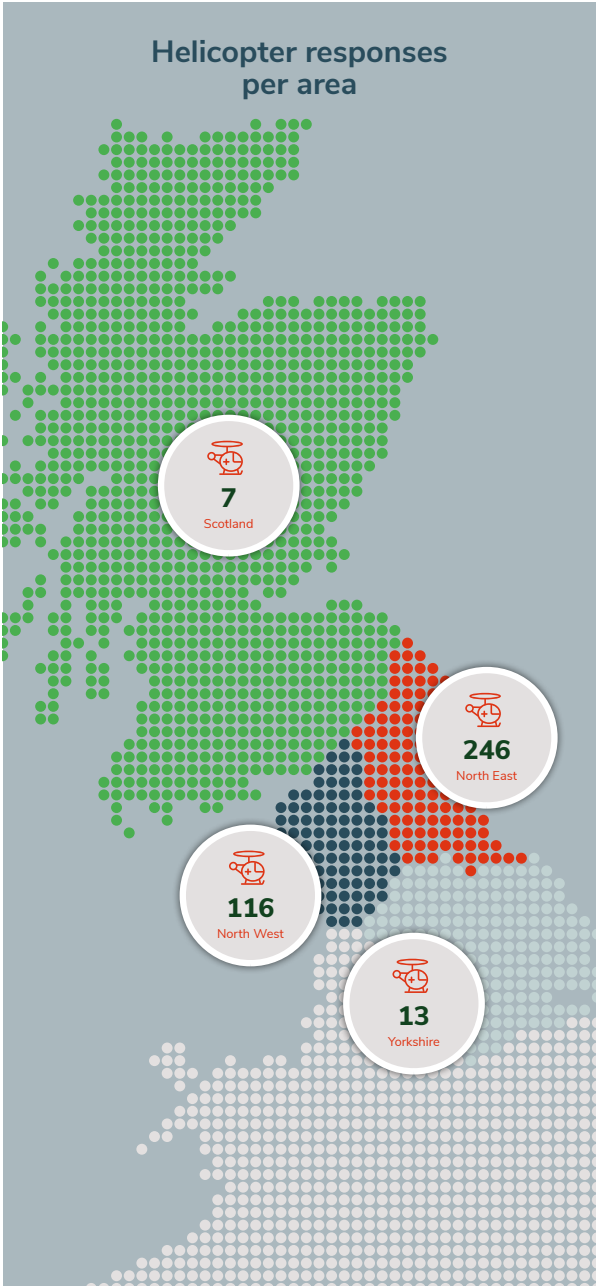


# What we've been up to...

The following data shows what we've been up to in the six months from Dec 1, 2020, to May 31, 2021.



Data taken from six months to May 31, 2021





# The view from my office window

GNAAS pilot Phil Lambert is not just a natural behind the controls of a helicopter, he's also handy with a camera. Here, he shares some of his favourite scenes from around the region.



## The Langdales

"I'm from Kendal, so I'm Cumbrian born and bred. To be able to do what I do in a place that I absolutely love is really exciting. I think if you can do something for a living that you enjoy, then you're very lucky."

## Wastwater



"I've always loved the scenery aspect of flying, so getting to fly around the Lake District is just fantastic. Genuinely it's just a privilege to see a part of the country that I absolutely love and call home. There's not many people that get to see it the way I do."



## Keswick



"I've got some family friends called Eileen and Bernard who are pretty much like mum and dad to me, and they're in their 80's and they wave at every single helicopter that goes past their garden just in case it's me."



## Snowy Cumbrian fells

"In the fells in Cumbria it can be very challenging particularly with low cloud and poor visibility due to rain or snow. When it gets windy it becomes very turbulent and different sides of the fells have different turbulent conditions so that's always on my mind as a pilot, weighing up the risk against the reward."



# "He wouldn't have survived the night"

**Karen Samuels**

Five family members who were involved in a serious collision have praised our "tremendous" critical care team who came to help them.



Paul Samuels, 66, was travelling back from a holiday in Scotland with his wife Karen, 59, and their grandchildren Jayden, 11, George, 10, and Codie, 4, when their lives changed forever.

Karen from Hebburn, said:

"We'd stopped at St Abbs and had something to eat and then text everybody saying we were on our way home and would be dropping the kids off, then life just changed in a short space of time."

The family's car collided with a tractor pulling a hay baler on the A1 near Shilbottle, Alnwick, on 26 August 2019.



GNAAS are tremendous and I am full of admiration for the people who work there.

The fire service cut off the roof of the car to gain better access to the couple, while two aircraft from GNAAS flew to the scene. Our critical care team worked alongside the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) to assess and treat the family.

Paul, Jayden and Codie were airlifted to the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle, while Karen and George were taken to the same hospital by a NEAS road crew.

Among a long list of injuries, Paul had a traumatic brain injury, and badly broken limbs.

Karen also suffered life-changing injuries, and the three children were all badly hurt.



But it could have been so much worse. And the family can now begin to look to the future, together, thanks to the care they received in the immediate aftermath of that fateful incident – care that they continued to receive in the days, weeks and months afterwards.

Karen said:

"If it hadn't been for GNAAS, the police said Paul would never have survived the night."

Paul added:

"GNAAS are tremendous and I am full of admiration for the people who work there."

Since the incident Karen and her friend Debra Rowntree have decided to virtually walk from Land's End to John O'Groats, which is 878 miles, to raise money for GNAAS.



# "Do it for Jake"

## a heartbroken mum's fundraising plea



The tragic death of Jake Hurst shook the Middlesbrough community where the 14-year-old was born, raised, and schooled.

But the incident has sparked a fundraising drive led by Jake's mum, Nicola, and supported by schools, residents, and local businesses.

Jake died following a road traffic incident in July 2020.

He was cycling in Eston when he was involved in a collision with a vehicle.

Our critical care team flew to the scene and worked alongside the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) in attempting to save his life.



He was taken to James Cook University Hospital in Middlesbrough by a NEAS road crew, accompanied by our team. Tragically, Jake could not be saved.

Nicola, 35, said:

"Jake was a funny, bubbly lad, a cheeky chappy who had banter with the teachers and played the class clown. He was bright and he had aspirations and plans, and he loved his little brother and sister so much."

Determined for some good to come from Jake's death, Nicola has launched a fundraising campaign for GNAAS using Jake's favourite saying which was 'do you have a pound?'.

This summer Jake would have turned 15.

"He used to be spoilt on his birthday," said Nicola. "This is my way of giving something back. His passing affected a lot of people so it's a good way of bringing people together."



Jake's schools including Grangetown Primary School and Bankfields Primary School are taking part in a non-uniform day.

There are also several local businesses with collection tins and social clubs hosting games nights.

She said:

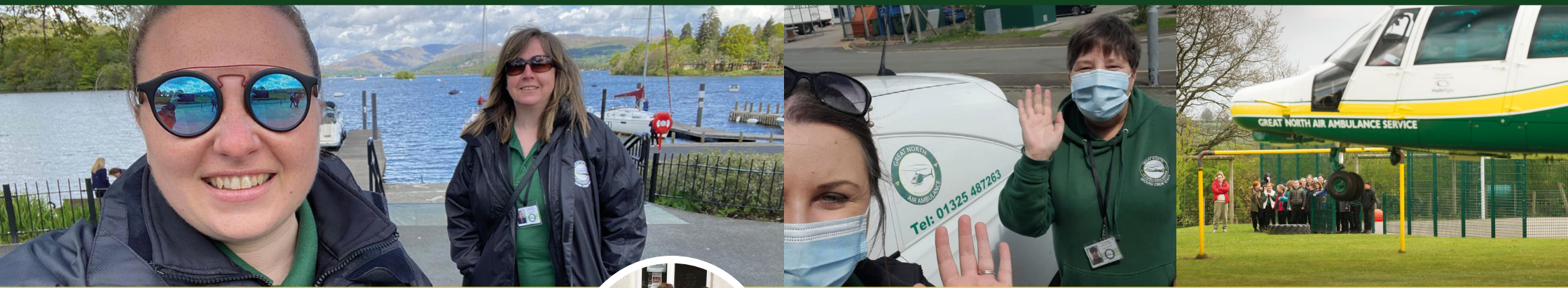
"I'd say definitely support GNAAS, they do a fantastic job and provide a vital emergency service. I would advise anybody to do a bit of fundraising, it's for a great cause. We need this service."

"Although they couldn't help Jake, they had every intention to do the best they could for him."

If you would like to fundraise for GNAAS, please call us on 01325 487 363.



## Back where we belong



### This charity is nothing without its supporters.



Being detached from you all and the communities we serve over the past 18 months or so has therefore been incredibly challenging for our fundraising team members. Like many of you, these are people whose days revolve around social interaction.

A virtual meeting serves a purpose, but there's nothing like seeing each other face to face, sharing a laugh, or a cry, or anything in between.

So we are genuinely thrilled to announce that with the relaxation of COVID restrictions (at the time of writing), our 'free-range' fundraisers are back where they belong - roaming our beautiful region, meeting supporters and gently

encouraging the public to get behind our cause. We spoke to some of them to find out what they have been up to and what the response has been like from the community.

Deborah Gibbs said:

**"It feels fantastic to be back out in the community and engaging with our supporters again."**

"We're out contacting local businesses, shops, pubs and hotels to see if they can help us with any fundraising opportunities, whether that's having a collection tin, doing a bucket collection, or even choosing us as their charity of the year."

"We've had some really positive feedback and everybody's happy to see us and help where they can."

Tracy Bowstead added:  
**"After being limited with what we could do in the last year it's exciting to be out visiting different areas of the region again and actually speaking to people in person."**

"It's been a really positive experience so far and people have been reaching out to us and showing their interest in supporting our charity, so we've been following these up as well as speaking to our volunteers who live locally and know the area well."

The safety of our staff and the public is paramount - we have completed a full risk assessment and undertake regular COVID testing to ensure the safety of everyone involved.

We are continuing to assess and reassess the situation, but for now our community fundraising team are back out meeting our supporters face to face and doing what they do best.



**"It feels fantastic to be back out in the community and engaging with our supporters again."**





# Through the night

**Accidents can happen any time of day or night. We believe that the care you receive should not differ depending on when you need it. That's why we are working towards providing a 24/7 service.**

This ambition took a huge step forward in May, when we launched our overnight car service in Cumbria.

This means the charity's doctor and paramedic teams are now available through the night on Friday and Saturday nights in addition to the regular air ambulance seven days a week.

GNAAS paramedic Andy Dalton said: "We're expanding coverage to make sure we can reach even more of the people who need us in this area."

"We know that there have been accidents through the night in the past that we would have been able to make a difference to if we had the resources at the time."

GNAAS has provided an overnight response car in the North East since 2015. With that now established, the model has been replicated in Cumbria, representing the latest upgrade to the charity's service in the county.

Andy added: "We started off small in Cumbria back in 2004 and 16 years later we have a purpose-built cabin, full time staff, a new helicopter and now this service which has all been thanks to public donations."

Andy Mawson, director of operations at GNAAS, said:

"This will give the people of Cumbria access to the service day and night."

**"We want to send a strong message of commitment to our patients and ask the public to back us – help us help you at night."**

GNAAS doctor Theo Weston said:

"It is fantastic to have this response guaranteed two nights a week. The service is needed in Cumbria due to the rural area and hopefully we'll get to a point where this service can be offered seven nights a week."



The Great North Air Ambulance Service  
brings pioneering pre-hospital care  
to the scene, rescuing hundreds of  
severely injured or ill patients every year  
throughout the North East,  
North Yorkshire and Cumbria.

We are 100% charity funded.

**Contact us:**

**T:** 01325 487 263    **E:** [info@gnaas.com](mailto:info@gnaas.com)

**Great North Air Ambulance Service**  
Progress House, Urray Nook Road, Eaglescliffe,  
Stockton-on-Tees, TS16 0QB

    [/GNAirAmbulance](https://www.linkedin.com/company/gnaas)



Registered charity no. 1092204

[www.gnaas.com](http://www.gnaas.com)