Devon Air Ambulance

MEDIA RELEASE

Devon Air Ambulance launches call for support as rising costs create £1.1 million deficit

Devon Air Ambulance is calling on communities across Devon to help secure the future of the charity's lifesaving service after reporting a £1.1 million deficit in its latest Annual Report.

The charity, which receives no direct Government funding for its day-to-day operations, responded to more than 2,100 emergencies last year and continues to provide critical care to patients across Devon and beyond. However, rising operating costs coupled with reduced legacy income have resulted in expenditure exceeding income.

The charity's latest Annual Report acknowledges that it is currently spending more than it receives and forecasts a further deficit in 2026, prompting a series of measures designed to improve long-term financial sustainability.

These include increased efficiency improvements, cost-saving initiatives and a review of its organisational structure. Whilst these latest measures are set to achieve an annual saving of around £400,000, this will still not be enough to cover the predicted shortfall.

It’s the second time in recent years the charity has recorded a budget deficit – previously in 2023 it showed a gap of just over £2m, but due to high levels of legacy income a surplus was generated in 2024 before returning to a deficit in 2025.

Dave Hawes, Director of Corporate Services and the charity's accountable manager, said: "Our latest Annual Report tells two stories.

"The first is one of extraordinary impact. Last year our crews attended more than 2,100 emergencies, providing critical care to people at the worst moments of their lives.

"The second is a financial reality facing not just Devon Air Ambulance, but many charities across the country. The cost of delivering our service continues to rise, while income is becoming increasingly challenging and unpredictable.

"We are taking action. We are carefully reviewing our costs, improving efficiency and strengthening our fundraising activity. But the simple truth is that Devon Air Ambulance exists because local people choose to support it.

"Every mission we fly is funded by our supporters. There is no us without you."

The charity has stressed that it remains focused on delivering its existing frontline service, with funds in place that allow time to implement its recovery plans. However, leaders say continued public support will be essential to protect the service for future generations.

As part of its response, Devon Air Ambulance is launching a 'Keep Us Flying' campaign, which will shine a light on the increasing cost of providing critical care across one of the UK's largest and most challenging operating regions.

The campaign will ask supporters to help safeguard a service that reaches hundreds of people every month and is available 365 days a year.

Mr Hawes added: "We are determined to protect frontline patient care.

"We have a clear plan and we are taking responsible action. But we cannot do this alone.

"The people of Devon have built this service over more than three decades. With their support, we can ensure it remains there for the people who will need us tomorrow, next month and for many years to come."

For more information about Devon Air Ambulance and ways to support the charity, visit the Devon Air Ambulance website.

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Notes to Editors

Devon Air Ambulance attended more than 2,100 missions in 2025.

The charity receives no direct Government funding for routine operations and relies primarily on voluntary donations, fundraising, retail income and legacies.

The charity reported a deficit of approximately £1.1 million in 2025 and has warned that further deficits are expected without corrective action.

Devon Air Ambulance is implementing a programme of efficiency measures, enhanced financial oversight and income generation activity to restore long-term sustainability.