

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Triple award success for Great Western Air Ambulance Charity

Great Western Air Ambulance Charity (GWAAC) was delighted to win one award and be highly commended in two other categories at the Air Ambulances UK Awards of Excellence on Monday 14 November.

The finest clinicians, aviators, fundraisers, volunteers and charity staff within the UK's air ambulance community came together for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic to celebrate the excellence and commitment of those who go beyond the call of duty.

With the award for Breaking Barriers (a new award category for 2022) going to GWAAC's Advanced Practitioner in Critical Care (APCC), Vicki Brown, and two highly commended recognitions for Charity Staff Member of the Year and Volunteer of the Year, the night was a huge success for GWAAC; a charity that provides the critical care and air ambulance service to 2.1 million people across the region.

APCC Vicki Brown brought home the Breaking Barriers award for her trailblazing work in carving a career pathway for paramedics in the UK. Earlier this year she became the first person in the country to get on the [Faculty of Pre-Hospital Care \(FPHC\) Register of Consultant \(Level 8\) Practitioners](#) by qualifying from a purely paramedic background. Since the first registration in 2015 to Vicki's registration, there were only 70 medical professionals on the list. This achievement follows hot on the heels of Vicki becoming the South West's first Advanced Practitioner in Critical Care in 2020. Vicki's drive and ambition help GWAAC provide the best possible care to patients in the region while giving other paramedics across the country an opportunity to follow in her footsteps.

GWAAC's Strategic Partnerships Manager, Joe Hughes, was highly commended in the award category of Charity Staff Member of the Year for his eleven years of exemplary service and, in particular, the initiatives he has spearheaded during the last twelve months; Joe built an amazing relationship with Spirax Sarco, a Cheltenham company that assembled a small army to refurbish GWAAC's new [Cheltenham shop](#) in no time at all. But his most ambitious project to date is [GWAAC's public access defibrillator campaign](#) that serves to equip businesses and communities with an all-in-one lifesaving automated external defibrillator (AED) package.

Last but not least, Pino Giannitti was highly commended in the award category of Volunteer of the Year. Pino has only been a [Great Western Heartstarters](#) volunteer for six months, but in that time, he has taught CPR and defibrillation to around 900 people in schools and at events. This is something he has done in between working shifts as an Emergency Care Assistant, where he spends 37.5 hours a week in ambulances across the region. To have taught so many people in such a short space of time, whilst juggling a demanding job, is amazing.

Chief Executive Anna Perry said: "I'm so pleased that Vicki, Joe and Pino have received this recognition at the 2022 Awards of Excellence. Their passion and dedication to GWAAC and to the communities they serve is truly inspirational. We're very lucky to have them!"

GWAAC's Critical Care Team is called to an average of over five incidents every single day, bringing the skills and expertise of a hospital emergency department straight to patients - where it's needed the most. Every mission is



**Great Western
Air Ambulance Charity**

potentially lifesaving and the charity relies on charitable donations and support from its local community to raise over £4 million a year to keep flying.

If you would like to find out more about how you can support your air ambulance charity, visit:

<https://greatwesternairambulance.com/how-to-help/>

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Notes for editors

1. GWAAC provide the critical care and air ambulance service for 2.1 million people across the counties of Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire, North Somerset, and parts of Wiltshire.
2. The GWAAC Critical Care Team consists of highly trained and experienced Critical Care Doctors, Advanced Practitioners and Specialist Paramedics in Critical Care, who bring the skill and expertise of a hospital emergency department to the patient.
3. 2021 was the charity's second-busiest year to date, with 1,964 call-outs. The Critical Care Team attends an average of over five incidents a day, either by helicopter or in one of three critical care cars. On average each mission costs around £2,000 to attend.
4. The charity needs to raise over £4 million a year in order to remain operational, yet receives no day-to-day funding from the Government or National Lottery.

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