



Emergency Medical Retrieval & Transfer Service Cymru Annual Report 2025/26

National Director Foreword

Following the milestone of our 10th anniversary last year, we continue to reflect on how far EMRTS Cymru has come, while continuing to look ahead to the future of pre-hospital critical care and retrieval in Wales.

Our operational activity remains steady at about 10 missions a day. The very low levels of EMRTS secondary transfers continues due to the activity of the ACCTS inter hospital transfer service which carried out 476 transfers in the last year. On scene critical care interventions (e.g. anaesthesia, intubation and blood transfusion) continue to be delivered on most days.

This year we have continued to focus on improving the quality, safety and equity of our services. We have strengthened our relationships across the NHS in Wales, pursued development of our clinical and operational capabilities, and continued to invest in education, research, innovation and the development of our future workforce. Our commitment to robust clinical governance and the use of high-quality data ensures that we can monitor our performance, learn from our experience and continually improve the care we provide.

Our core governance arrangements remain in place but because we operate within a complex system of partnership arrangements with other key providers and our hosting body we have had to make frequent changes to how we interact with them and their own governance structures to demonstrate clinical, organisational and financial effectiveness. We remain committed to delivering an excellent clinical service which delivers value for money at a time of considerable financial pressure. Our work remains challenging, unpredictable and, ultimately, about people.

Every mission represents an individual patient and their family at a time of great uncertainty.

The excellent work of our patient liaison nurses not only supports our patients but also keeps us connected to the patients and the families that we attend. Whether responding to major trauma, a medical emergency or another life-threatening condition, our teams provide expert interventions and critical care at the point of greatest need. The professionalism, compassion and commitment of our clinicians and operational teams continue to be the foundation of the service.

Alongside our pre-hospital critical care work, the now well established Adult Critical Care Retrieval Service provides specialist retrieval for some of the sickest patients in Wales, supporting the safe movement of critically ill adults between hospitals when the appropriate care cannot be provided at their initial location. The increasing demand for this service reflects both its value to patients and its growing importance within the wider critical care network.

None of this would be possible without our people. Behind every mission, every transfer and every clinical intervention are highly skilled individuals working together as a team. From clinicians and dispatchers to pilots, engineers, administrators and our wider support teams, everyone has a role in delivering these services. We are immensely grateful for their dedication and resilience.

Looking ahead, we know that the demands on emergency and critical care services will continue to evolve. Our ambition is therefore not simply to maintain what we have built, but to continue to improve it to ensure that patients across Wales have equitable access to the specialist care they need. I hope that in the next annual report we will be able to celebrate the opening of the new WAA operating base in North Wales which will allow us to attend more patients and deliver a better service to Mid and North Wales in the night hours.

We would like to thank everyone who has supported EMRTS and ACCTS Wales throughout the year, and particularly our partners at the Charity the NHS and in the other emergency services. Above all, we thank our staff for the commitment they show every day.

David Lockey

National Director



As we enter our sixth year of service, we remain firmly focused on our core mission: delivering high-quality critical care to the people of Wales, irrespective of geography. Based on our founding principle that critical care is a process, not a location.

This year we have cared for more patients than ever before, with growth seen not only in activity but also in patient complexity. While this increased demand reflects the value of the service, it also highlights the need to better understand patients who require enhanced care during transfer but may not currently access specialist support. Addressing this unmet need remains a priority as we continue to evolve the service.

ACCTS Cymru continues to play an active role within the national critical care transfer community, ensuring that Welsh experience, innovation and challenges are represented within UK-wide professional groups. We are proud that, in many areas, Wales has established itself at the forefront of critical care transfer medicine and this is only possible through the continued support of Welsh Government. It is due to their commitment that we have been able to develop a service that remains at the vanguard of modern retrieval and transfer practice.

Delivering exceptional patient care also requires investment in our workforce. This year ACCTS Cymru became the first centre to deliver the Advanced Ventilation Study Day: Beyond the Basics of Mechanical Ventilation, accredited by both the European Society of Intensive Care Medicine and The Chinese University of Hong Kong. This collaboration brought together intensive care consultants from across Wales alongside ACCTS clinicians, demonstrating the strength of a truly national faculty.

Since our launch, we have supported and developed trainees from across Wales, fostering expertise in retrieval and transfer medicine. As a direct result we have transitioned to an almost entirely consultant-led medical workforce, reflecting both the maturity of the service and the strength of the training environment we have created.

The quality of our training has also attracted interest from beyond the United Kingdom, with clinicians from Australasia choosing to undertake specialist retrieval and transfer training in Wales. This represents a significant endorsement of the expertise within ACCTS Cymru and of Wales's growing reputation as a centre of excellence in retrieval and transfer medicine.



Innovation is central to the culture of ACCTS Cymru and harnessing the benefits of modern technology to improve patient care previously focused on patient therapies in transit. However, one of the greatest opportunities in improving care lies in supporting clinicians at the bedside where the ability to connect clinicians with specialist expertise quickly is essential.

Advances in digital technology provide an opportunity to create a truly virtual multidisciplinary team, bringing specialist expertise as close to the bedside as possible. In partnership with the University of Warwick, we are pioneering a next-generation remote-support platform. Together with our colleagues at the University of Warwick, we are exploring not only how clinicians make complex decisions, but why they make them. Together, we aim to understand not only the decisions clinicians make, but also how technology can help them make better decisions.

After more than five years of operation, our focus is naturally evolving. The challenge is no longer simply demonstrating what is possible; it is refining our operating model, improving our clinical systems and, most importantly, measuring the quality of the care we deliver. Working closely with the Welsh Critical Care Network, we are embedding standards derived from national guidance into our clinical audit programme, allowing us to evaluate not only activity but also the quality of care provided. To this end we have launched our Welsh transfer Audit.

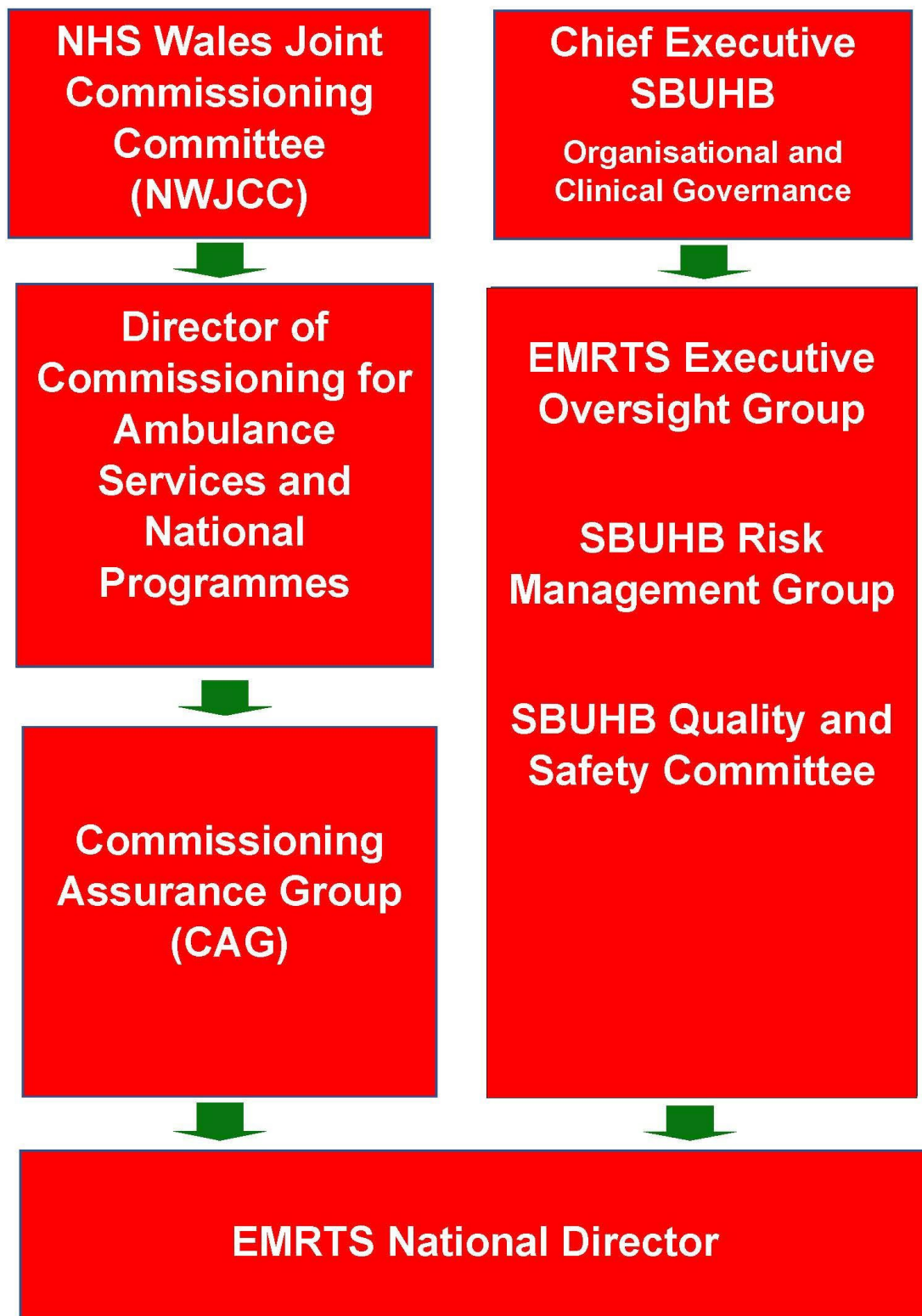
For the first time, we will be able to audit all adult critical care transfers across Wales, not only those undertaken by ACCTS Cymru, but this comprehensive national picture will also allow us to understand unmet need, identify opportunities for improvement and celebrate excellence wherever it occurs.

As we look ahead, our ambition is clear. We will continue to strengthen our clinical capability, expand our educational programmes, further embed a culture of continuous quality improvement and further develop our practitioner workforce. We will continue to invest in research, innovation and technologies that enhance patient care, while working alongside our partners across Wales and the wider United Kingdom to shape the future of retrieval and transfer medicine.

Our focus is, and always will be, the delivery of high-quality critical care by design, irrespective of location. As a service, each patient we care for is a person and family and a story, this report hopefully demonstrates how we use the clinical care, education, innovation to ensure the outcome of each and every story has the best possible conclusion.

ACCTS Clinical Lead

Dr Mike Slattery



Governance

EMRTS Cymru has developed a robust system of organisational and clinical governance. The service is hosted by Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB) and is commissioned by the NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee (NWJCC).

The organisational governance structure consists of an EMRTS Commissioning Assurance Group (CAG) which sits as a subcommittee of NWJCC. The CAG is responsible for the delivery, direction and performance of the Service.

The EMRTS Cymru National Director is accountable to the CAG for the delivery and performance of the service and to the SBUHB Chief Executive for organisational and clinical governance.

Internal governance is led by the EMRTS Clinical and Operational Board which is attended by senior EMRTS and ACCTS personnel and support services and manages clinical and operational issues relating to the service. The Board meets on a bi-monthly basis and is supported by the work of several specialist sub-groups.

There are several supporting documents underpinning the organisational governance of the service as follows:

- National Collaborative Commissioning Quality and Delivery Framework – namely CAREMORE.
- Terms of Reference for the EMRTS CAG.
- Collaboration Agreement between SBUHB, the Wales Air Ambulance Charitable Trust (WAACT) and the Welsh Ambulance Services University NHS Trust (WAST).
- Memorandum of Understanding between SBUHB and other Welsh Health Boards and Trusts.
- Service-level agreement between EMRTS and SBUHB for accessing support services.
- Terms of Reference for the EMRTS Clinical and Operational Board.

An External Clinical Advisory Group (ECAG) was established at the inception of the service in 2015. The ECAG provided benchmarking of clinical standard operating Procedures and independently reviewed significant adverse events, reporting their findings back to the Clinical and Operational Board.

A new External Clinical Advisory Panel (ECAP) has now been established in place of the ECAG. The new expert panel provides ad hoc advice on specialist issues when requested and input to Clinical Governance Days when relevant issues are being presented.

Operational Activity

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26

Total incidents – **3566**

DEMOGRAPHICS



RESPONSE TYPE



CLINICAL CASE TYPE



95.5%

Primary missions
(999 calls)



4.5%

Secondary missions
(Transfers)

PATIENT DEMOGRAPHICS



86%
Adult



14%
Paediatric

CRITICAL CARE INTERVENTIONS



337

Emergency
Anaesthetics



153

Sedations



114

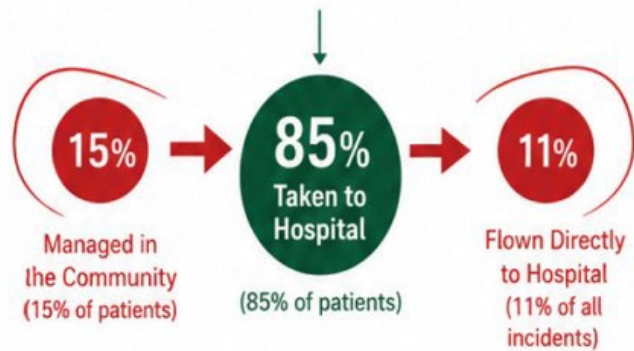
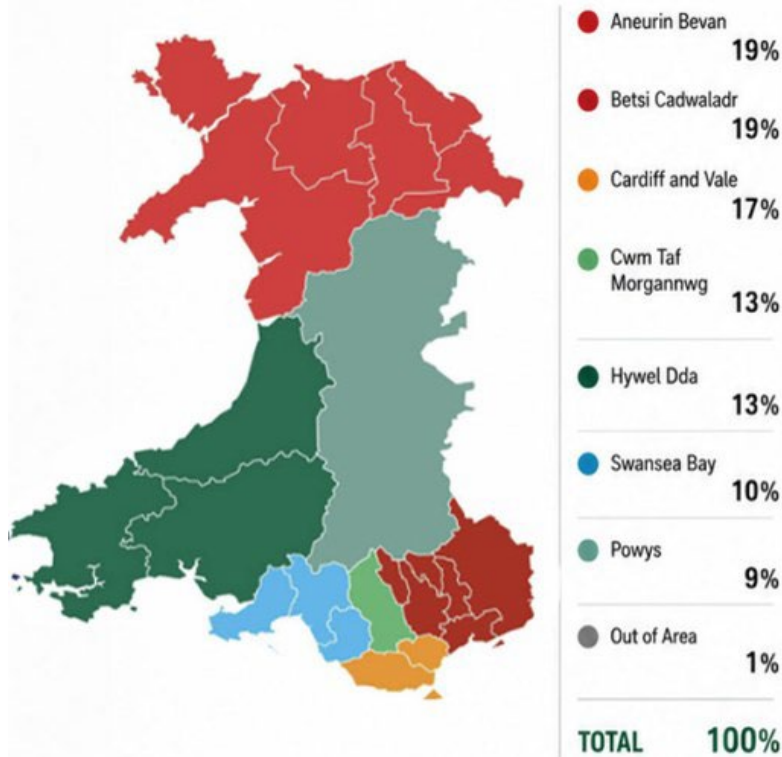
Blood Product
Transfusions



662

Intubations

Incident Location



The Adult Critical Care Transfer Service

Overview



Our Mission

To ensure seamless, uninterrupted care for critically ill and injured patients in Wales through provision of a professional, high-quality, specialist adult transfer service.

Our Vision

ACCTS Cymru's maxim is that Critical Care is a process and not a location. The service aims to ensure equity of access to Critical Care and specialist services for the people of Wales, irrespective of geographical distance or national borders. The service promotes cooperation across the Critical Care units of the health boards and can help to maintain optimal capacity throughout the Wales Critical 14 Care Network. Additionally, the service delivers benefit by reducing demand on anaesthetic & Critical Care departments, Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust and EMRTS, by undertaking transfers that would otherwise impact these services.

Our Service

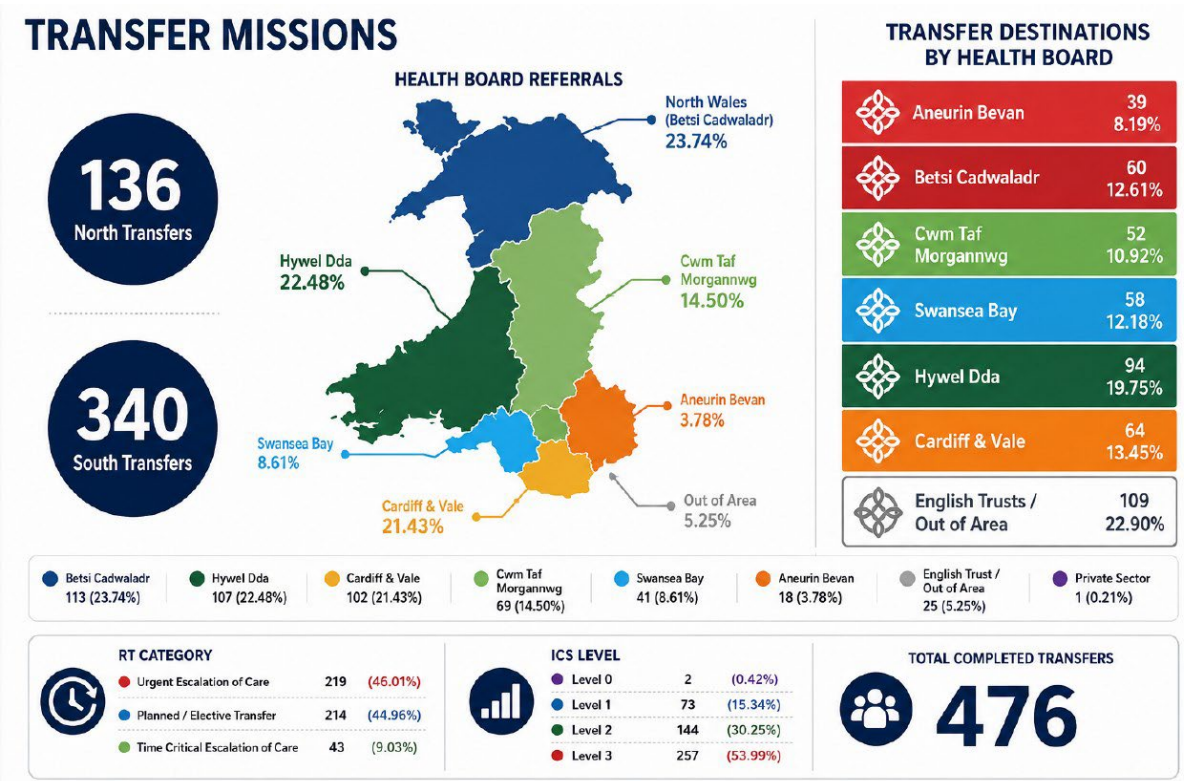
The Adult Critical Care Transfer Service launched in August 2021 as a result of the Critical Care Working Group task and finish report. The report recognised the requirement for safe and high-quality inter-hospital transfer to be an essential part of Critical Care delivery in Wales. Prior to the services launch, Critical Care transfers were undertaken on an ad-hoc basis by medical and allied health care professionals from referring hospitals utilising front line ambulances.

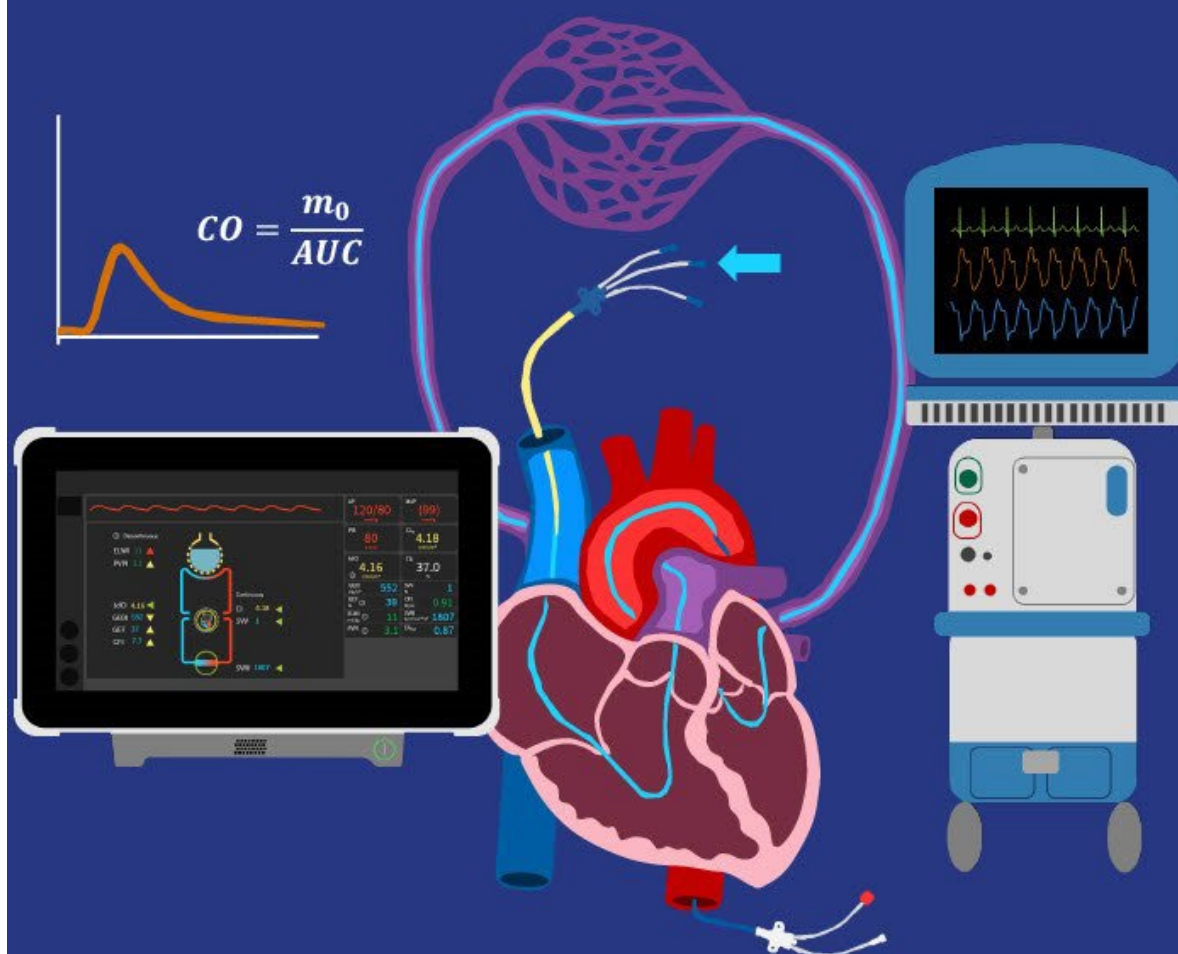
This ultimately resulted in increased pressures on the medical teams, both in hospital and prehospital, by depleting already stretched resources.

The service can provide varying levels of care from complex treatment and interventions to lower acuity Critical Care transfers between hospitals. It has three funded ambulances operated by two transfer duty crews covering the breadth of the Principality. ACCTS Cymru is able to provide this service by recruiting high calibre clinicians who have all undergone a robust selection process and have delivered critical and intensive care in previous roles.

The predicted workload was initially estimated at 420 transfers each year. This number was exceeded within ten months of launching the service. As a national service we have supported the movement of patients to specialist care as well as timely repatriation so that patients can receive the treatment they need near their loved ones.

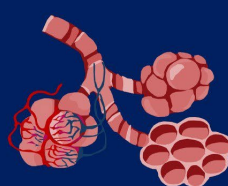
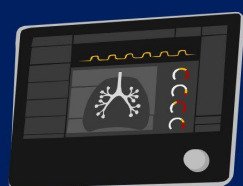
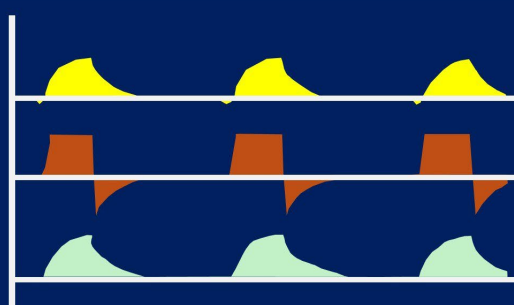
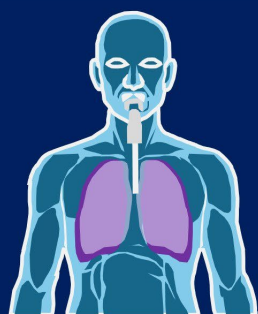
We work across all health boards in Wales as well as expediting access to quaternary care in NHS England for services not available within Wales. For the period covered in this report, we completed a total of 476 transfers; the majority in the south of the country, 340, and 136 in the north. Of those, 257 were level 3 transfers, 144 were level 2, and the remainder were level 1 or 0.





These new acquisitions support the ACCTS mission statement of ensuring high-quality uninterrupted care in transfer, and equity of access to specialist services for all Welsh patients, irrespective of distance or illness. ACCTS again leads UK transfer medicine practice and will be the first service in the UK to introduce both devices in the coming months.

Advanced Ventilation Training



Following the success of the inaugural Beyond Basics course at Dafen in 2025, ACCTS are delighted to partner with the Welsh School of Intensive Care Medicine to provide advanced ventilation to ICM trainees, practitioners and EMRTS colleagues.

Led by an expert faculty with senior clinicals from ACCTS, this internationally recognised course offers an immersive learning experience focused on complex respiratory management. Accreditation by both the RCOA and ICS provides continuing professional development from leaders in the field



Education in Transfer Medicine

ACCTS



ACCTS continue to develop transfer expertise in Wales through education, the service was pleased to welcome back Chris Shaw as Education Lead. ACCTS practitioners continue their journey to advanced practice in conjunction with Bangor University through a bespoke new MSc, with 7 practitioners to the next stage of the programme.

ACCTS clinicians represent the bulk of contemporaneous transfer expertise within the Principality and support delivery of the All-Wales Transfer Course at multiple sites, ensuring that local teams are able to deliver safe ad-hoc transfer of critically ill patients when this is required. ACCTS CCTAs provide invaluable teaching on vehicle operations, dispatch and packaging to hospital clinicians. Each course was supported by a full ACCTS team and a fully equipped ambulance and stretcher, continuing the legacy of transfer training in Wales.



5

All-Wales Transfer Courses supported



7

Practitioners commencing MSc Phase 2



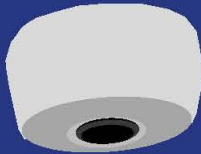
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Staff contributed to transfer training

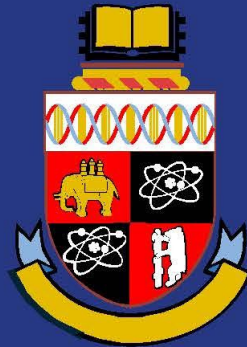
Remote Video Assistance



Omni Angel



360° Secure
Video System



Starlink



Advanced
Satellite Networking

In partnership with Warwick University, ACCTS have secured funding from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) for the 999 R.E.A.C.H. study – Remote Access for Enhanced, Adaptive, Collaborative Healthcare. The study aims to develop evidence-based guidance for the future adoption of video technologies in remote healthcare. This will allow ACCTS to strengthen the remote clinical support available to patients, regardless of location, reflecting our commitment to the people of Wales to ensure equity of access to advanced care.

We believe that adopting new technology is essential to maximising the value of specialist resources and clinical expertise. Although most transfers are undertaken by Intensive Care Physicians, investment in advanced practitioners, supported by this technology creates an opportunity to care for even more patients across the Principality.

The Wales Air Ambulance Charity



Our services are delivered via an important partnership with the Wales Air Ambulance Charity.

What is the difference between EMRTS Cymru and the Wales Air Ambulance Charity?

Wales Air Ambulance is a charitable trust which relies entirely on the generosity and support of the Welsh public to help keep the helicopters in the air and Rapid Response Vehicles on the road. The charity does not receive direct funding from the government. EMRTS Cymru, a part of NHS Wales and supported by Welsh Government, supplies a highly trained NHS Critical Care team.

This exclusive and highly effective partnership between the NHS and the Wales Air Ambulance Charity demonstrates the benefits of cross-sector models and the important role charities can play in the provision of healthcare.

What is the Wales Air Ambulance Charity?

Launched on St David's Day 2001, the Wales Air Ambulance Charity is the official air ambulance service for Wales. The Charity relies entirely on donations to raise £13 million each year. This funds the service's four helicopters, fleet of Rapid Response Vehicles, and the airbase infrastructure across Wales. It is the largest air ambulance operation in the UK. Income generation is supported by community fundraising, legacies and corporate support, a national retail and trading operation, and a Lifesaving Lottery. The service has attended over 57,000 missions since its inception.

The Charity's Mission

To deliver lifesaving, advanced medical care to people across Wales, whenever and wherever they need it.

The Charity's Vision

To improve the lives of patients and their families by being a world leader in advanced, time-critical care. For more information about the Wales Air Ambulance Charity, visit

www.walesairambulance.com EMRTS Cymru would like to thank the charity for their support as we continue to work collaboratively for the people of Wales.



Financial statement

In 2025-26, EMRTS received some £8.6m of revenue funding from the Joint Commissioning Committee (JCC) with a further £1.2m of Welsh Government funding. Actual expenditure was within £2,000 of the total allocation of £9.8m.

A £0.6m Welsh Government capital allocation was also made available to EMRTS in 2025-26. Actual expenditure was in line with this allocation.

The Wales Air Ambulance Charity continues to provide significant revenue and capital financial support to EMRTS.

EMRTS Education and Training



Education and training remains fundamentally important to both the EMRTS and ACCTS services. Without both initial and ongoing training, the high-quality services we provide to our patients simply would not be possible.

Internally, the Education and Training opportunities for staff continue to grow this year and include creating collaborative courses with our colleagues at PROMPT Cymru improving the delivery of critical care for obstetric patients, holding a dedicated pre-hospital ultrasound course at the National Imaging Academy in Bridgend, and in September 2025 hosting a full week of dedicated multi-agency simulation training for our Consultants, Critical Care Practitioners (CCPs) and trainees. This training week will run again in September 2026, and we will have extended an invite to our friends and colleagues from the Norwegian Air Ambulance Foundation, following another fantastic opportunity to attend their base in October '25.

This year, six of the service's CCPs have completed the Independent Authorisation of Blood Products module at Bangor University allowing them to provide life-saving blood transfusions to our patients at incidents. This also brings them one step closer to completion of their MSc in Advanced HEMS Practice which is yet another testament to the hard work and dedication shown by staff to delivering high-quality patient care.

EMRTS also continues its long history of supporting senior doctors in their Pre-hospital Emergency Medicine training. Wales was the second region to start a formal training programme in this medical sub-specialty, all the way back in 2013. Since then, we have had doctors from across the UK train with the service in Wales, many of whom have remained working for our service since becoming

Consultants themselves. Currently we have 3 PHEM senior resident doctors on placement with us each year, along with clinical fellows.



We have lots of individual staff achievements to celebrate this year. One of our Consultant colleagues has become the first in the service to pass the demanding Fellowship in Immediate Medical Care (FIMC) examination via the Faculty of Pre-hospital Care's Level 8 Accreditation (non-training) route. This is the same examination our PHEM trainees sit at the end of their training programme, and EMRTS will also now be supporting some of our experienced CCPs to work towards this award. It is not for the faint hearted, and again shows the dedication of both the medical and non-medical clinicians within the service.

In February 2026 the first EMRTS CCP Advanced Practitioner was recognised by Swansea Bay University Health Board following a verification process, and in the Summer of 2026 more of our practitioners will be undergoing this process. EMRTS is delighted that the high standards our practitioners apply to the clinical, education, leadership and research aspects of their role (elements of the four pillars of Advanced Practice) has been recognised by the health board.

Congratulations also to one of our experienced CCPs who has submitted their portfolio and obtained Qualified CCP status.

EMRTS also continues to support not just the delivery of training and accreditation locally, but also the implementation of it at a national level. Within our service today we have the Chair of the Intercollegiate Board for Training in PHEM, the Chair of the IBTPHEM Curriculum Committee and the FPHC Level 8 Accreditation Lead Clinician. We have Consultant and CCP examiners who assess candidates on the Diploma in Immediate Care, the Diploma in Retrieval & Transfer Medicine and the FIMC examinations, and have CCPs supporting national projects for paramedic development. Staff also continue to support multiple higher education institutes in delivering their BSc and MSc

programmes, and this year Wrexham University awarded one of our CCP colleagues an Honorary Fellowship for their dedication towards improving pre-hospital practice.

We'd like to thank EMRTS staff for continuously going above to support teaching and education within EMRTS. Without their support the education landscape would be a very empty space. Education continues to remain at the heart of EMRTS and we're looking forward to supporting colleagues again this year with some exciting new developments in the pipe-line.

POCUS



Now in its third year, the EMRTS Pre-hospital Point-of-Care Ultrasound (PHPOCUS) course continues to make a lasting difference to patient care by developing the skills and confidence of frontline clinicians. To date, more than 40 practitioners have completed the course, helping to bring advanced ultrasound skills to patients when and where they need them most.

This success has only been possible thanks to the continued support of the National Imaging Academy of Wales (NIAW) and the generosity of local volunteer patients, whose willingness to take part in training has created an invaluable learning environment. Their contribution has helped clinicians gain practical experience in realistic settings, ultimately benefiting future patients across the region.

As the programme has matured, it has expanded beyond core POCUS training to include advanced procedural skills, such as ultrasound-guided pericardiocentesis. These developments ensure practitioners continue to build the expertise needed to deliver high-quality, evidence-based care in some of the most challenging pre-hospital situations.

The programme's growing reputation has also created new opportunities. We are now able to welcome external candidates onto selected courses, generating income that is reinvested directly into training. This helps fund equipment, course development and future educational initiatives, creating a sustainable model that continues to strengthen the skills of the PHEM workforce while maximising the value of every charitable investment.

International Collaboration



October 2025 saw EMRTS clinicians, along with teams from London Air Ambulance, once again hosted by the Norwegian Air Ambulance Foundation for a tri-service training summit in Norway.

This was an invaluable opportunity to share learning, skills and experiences with other world leading pre-hospital services.

The Norwegian teams showed their new approaches to accessing and retrieving patients from remote and challenging environments by incorporating winch rescue as part of the doctor and CCP skillset. The EMRTS teams had the opportunity to experience winch rescue and long line techniques with the NAAF research helicopter.

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London HEMS shared their latest work on the management of exsanguinating patients with exciting potential for improved outcomes for this group of patients. While Wales's patient group and geography mean this concept may not benefit our patients in the same way the concepts and confidence to challenge the status quo was very inspiring.

Finally, EMRTS shared some of their experiences around emergency caesarean section and the management of extremely premature babies, perhaps one of the most challenging situations any pre-hospital team could face.

The simulations and workshops were followed by hot topic discussions around pre-hospital ultrasound, patient follow up and support services, the use of REBOA in medical cardiac arrests and governance of PHEM training among others. It was an intense and challenging few days for all the services but the learning and networking proved a fantastic opportunity to all those involved.

EMRTS and The Military



EMRTS have a variety of military doctors and paramedics and nurses working with them, both regulars and reservists.

The advantage for the military in placing their doctors and paramedics with EMRTS is the case mix and geography covered by the service. This makes the logistics and clinical experience that responders experience in remote areas challenging, and very similar to what military personnel might experience on operational deployment.

EMRTS also employs cutting-edge equipment and very high levels of clinical governance, which ensures all clinicians that work with us when they're not militarily deployed are keeping their skills up to the highest standards.

The relationship is reciprocal, and the army allow EMRTS to conduct training at their bases at Kinmel Park Camp in Rhyl, home of the Army Reservists from 203 (Welsh) Field Hospital, and Cwrt-y-gollen near Crickhowell, where 158 Medical Squadron: 203 (Welsh) Multi-role Medical Regiment are based.

The facilities are used for a variety of training exercises, including multi-agency responses to major incident simulations, when we are joined by ambulance and fire service crews.

New Base and New Levels of Service



(Image shown artist's impression)

In 2022 EMRTS presented a development proposal using data routinely collected from missions and ongoing service analysis, which suggested re-configuring the operational arrangements to provide a more effective service.

The study revealed that while WAA/EMRTS attend 4,767 incidents a year, it was meeting just 72% of total demand – and was not getting to around 2 or 3 people in a life or limb-threatening situation every day. Some of these patients will have died.

The research also found the service's two highly skilled medical teams based in Welshpool and Caernarfon are underused.

The concerning pattern of underutilisation of crews while there is significant unmet need is a consistent issue year-on-year. For example, in the two years of 2023 and 2024, there were life or limb-threatening emergencies across Mid and North Wales, between 8pm and 2am, that WAA/EMRTS were unable to attend.

During the same two-year period, there were 199 days when the Caernarfon crew did not see a patient, and 163 without patient contact in Welshpool. This compared with crews in Dafen, 28 days, and Cardiff, 4 days.

This indicates that over a two-year period, there was nearly a year cumulatively where crews in Caernarfon and Welshpool did not see a patient.

One of the main reasons for this underuse is due to their locations on the peripheries of Mid and North Wales. Their locations and poor road networks that surround them make it more difficult for crews to effectively use the rapid response vehicles when the aircraft is unavailable.

The current configuration in Mid and North Wales also does not meet the pattern of demand for our service.

EMRTS is commissioned by the NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee (formerly the Emergency Ambulance Services Committee EASC), who undertook an independent Service Review of the proposals – independent of the modelling included in the original Proposal to make sure patients who need this important critical care service can have access to it no matter where they live in Wales or when they need it.

Led by the Chief Ambulance Services Commissioner for Wales it involved a formal public engagement process, more than double the time recommended by the then Community Health Council (now Llais) for the initial 'listening' phase, with public meetings and drop-in sessions.

The review agreed improvements should be made to the current air ambulance service in Wales, by combining the current resources in Caernarfon and Welshpool in one base in a more central location of North Wales, near the A55. The change would see two teams able to respond by road or air operating from the new base. To meet the pattern of demand, one team will operate between 8am and 8pm and another team will operate between 2pm and 2am.

The Committee also approved the development of a commissioning proposal for a bespoke road-based enhanced and/or critical care services in rural and remote areas. This would not be a mitigation for the air ambulance reconfiguration, as no mitigation is required. This would be a separate service addressing concerns raised during public engagement about wider ambulance service provision.

The air ambulance reconfiguration means more patients can be attended and more lives saved. Northern parts of Mid Wales and North Wales will get an overnight service closer to them, rather than relying solely on the current single overnight crew based in Cardiff. This will provide a reduction in the inequity of service provision at night between North and South Wales.

The decision to approve the plans was challenged, via a Judicial Review, by campaigners who believed that despite the statistical evidence and independent modelling supporting the proposal, the loss of the Caernarfon and Welshpool bases would be detrimental.

However, in June 2025 High Court judge Mr Justice Turner dismissed the case, and a subsequent application to appeal to the Court of Appeal was also dismissed.

The decision means the Caernarfon and Welshpool bases will now close and be consolidated in a single site in north Wales.

The Aftercare Team



The aftercare service has been operating for over 5 years and we are very grateful to Wales Air Ambulance for providing resources to operate what has become an essential part of our service delivery.

The Patient Liaison nurses will provide vital post injury or illness support and guidance for our patients, assisting their recovery and transition back to independent living. Frequently patients and their family contact the service during their recovery to express their gratitude and find out more about what happened to them. Many of them were so critically unwell that they do not recall the events after their injury or illness when we were treating them. As a result of their illness our patients often have to endure enormous physical and mental challenges after initial treatment and at times they do not feel that they have sufficient information about their care or access to help.

The aftercare team reviews thousands of incidents per year and directly contacts relatives and patients, resulting in appointments being offered every month. In addition, the team attend a number of multidisciplinary hospital meetings every month, ensuring that those that may benefit most from the service are identified as early as possible.

We recognise the importance of an ongoing relationship with patients following their contact with our clinicians. Through charity visits, and engagements, it is increasingly evident that there is a huge benefit to all parties including the patient, family or carers, and indeed, to the staff who are able to see the long term results of the original attendance.

A patient forum has also been developed consisting of past patients who wanted to be involved in giving something back, sharing their stories and interested in working on projects to improve patient experience and the Aftercare service.

A new patient leaflet was designed and published as a result of the forum, and their stories shared at conferences and multi-media stories developed to highlight the benefit of the Charity and NHS partnership.

Building on its success, and potentially a first for the UK, we have developed a relative forum, to share the experiences of bereaved families who have been attended by our service.

Other projects include the development of a WAAC bereavement guide, including a set of frequently asked questions

To find out more visit <https://emrts.nhs.wales/patient-liaison/>

Case Study - A Patient's Perspective



On 10 April 2025 Mandy Reynolds was enjoying a walk on Great Orme last year when she slipped on jagged rocks. She suffered injuries that left her in significant pain and in need of advanced medical care.

The Charity's critical care team, Doctor Gareth Thomas and Critical Care Practitioners Dan Evans and Jo Thomas, were dispatched to the scene. When they arrived, they assessed Mandy's injuries. At the scene, Mandy was given strong pain medication and antibiotics to help prevent an infection in the open wound.

The critical care crew manually repositioned Mandy's fracture, dressed the wound and secured it in a splint. Her blood flow and pulse improved after treatment, and they gave her further pain relief.

Mandy said: "I was enjoying a lovely day out with my husband and grown-up children in Llandudno, a place we have visited many times. The sun was shining; it was a beautiful day. The next thing I

knew, I was in severe pain with terrible injuries to my leg and foot. At first, it felt like it wasn't real, but then I heard a helicopter above me and the air ambulance came to my rescue. I was aware of the critical care crew transferring me over the tram lines to the top of the mountain on a stretcher and then being placed inside the helicopter, feeling safe and relieved to have this help."

Mandy, 55, from Cheshire, injuries were severe enough to require airlifting to the major trauma centre at the Royal Stoke University Hospital.

The mum-of-two sustained a very complex triple open fracture with full dislocation of her ankle.

Mandy said: "I woke up in the trauma department with an unstable, multiple open fracture of my ankle. During my time in hospital, I had two operations, one to fit an external fixator while doctors decided how best to save my foot, followed by surgery to fit titanium plates and screws to reconstruct the lower leg and ankle. This was followed by months of painful rehabilitation."

Following plastic and orthopaedic surgery, Mandy had to learn to walk again.

She said: "I now have lots of metal in my right foot, where it had to be completely reconstructed. I had to learn to walk again and I have been told these injuries will affect me for the rest of my life."

A grateful Mandy has fundraised for the lifesaving charity since her accident and is a wonderful supporter of the service. She has sold hand-painted pebbles for the Charity.



The former teacher said: "I will be forever grateful to Wales Air Ambulance and EMRTS for the kindness and treatment they gave me that day, and for the continued support they have given us as a family to help us come to terms with what happened and the huge impact it now has on our lives. I felt completely overwhelmed by what had happened to me and did not fully appreciate the service until we needed them ourselves.

"I feel incredibly grateful that the crew were able to help me that day. It is difficult to find the words to express what their actions meant to me."

As well as being there from the beginning, EMRTS continued to support Mandy once she was discharged from hospital.

It provides an Aftercare Service through its Patient Liaison Nurses. Thanks to this service, the EMRTS is not only one of the first to arrive by a patient's side, but also one of the last to leave, supporting them and their families throughout their recovery.

Mandy received support from Patient Liaison Nurse Hayley Whitehead-Wright. Mandy was recently delighted to meet Hayley during a base visit. She said: “Hayley and the aftercare service were fantastic. Everything that had happened to me was fully explained, from the medications I received to my observations and the names of the crew.

“I was provided with information throughout, including an offer of ongoing support for me and my family, such as counselling services. Hayley totally understood how I was feeling and made me feel listened to throughout. It was great to meet Hayley, who continues to support me following my accident.”

“I am extremely thankful to the EMRTS crew, who came to my rescue when I was in urgent need. Meeting the crew was a very emotional experience and a day that I will never forget. My family recognised their faces, but initially all I could remember was the calm and kindness in their voices. It was a truly special moment for me and my family.”

“The skills of the Wales Air Ambulance team gave me a second chance and saved my foot. I will always be deeply grateful to the service and to everyone who has helped me during this life-changing event.”

Research and Innovation



The Emergency Medical Retrieval and Transfer Service (EMRTS) and Adult Critical Care Transfer Service (ACCTS) deliver a highly specialised model of pre-hospital and interhospital critical care across Wales, providing advanced clinical decision-making and interventions for patients with life or

limb-threatening conditions. The service is designed to ensure equitable access to critical care, enabling early specialist intervention and direct transfer to appropriate treatment centres, thereby improving patient outcomes and system efficiency.

The service is developing a diverse portfolio of research and innovation. This includes clinical topics such as novel use of Cold stored platelets, airway management techniques, and Stroke Care, through to the use of artificial intelligence, and drones supporting delivery of healthcare.

Academic Partnerships

EMRTS and ACCTS maintain strong collaborative relationships with academic institutions, including Warwick University, Cardiff University, Swansea University and Bristol University. These partnerships support a diverse programme of research that extends beyond traditional clinical studies.

A key highlight is the collaboration with Warwick University, which utilises applied linguistics and behavioural science to examine communication, decision-making, and risk negotiation within critical care teams. This work is highly innovative within emergency and retrieval medicine and provides valuable insights into how clinicians make complex, time-critical decisions under pressure.

Findings from this research supports policy and training as well as allowing the study of complex decision making, which is key to delivery of the services offered across EMRTS and ACCTS.

NHS and Clinical Partnerships

The service works in close collaboration with other NHS partners, including the Welsh Ambulance Services University NHS Trust, Welsh Blood Service and the South Wales Trauma Network.

These partnerships not only enable coordinated clinical delivery but also play a critical role in facilitating research and innovation. Through access to real-world clinical environments, shared datasets, and multidisciplinary expertise, partners contribute to the development and evaluation of research in areas such as pre-hospital interventions, blood product use, and trauma care pathways.

This collaborative infrastructure supports the translation of research into practice, ensuring that innovations are tested, implemented, and scaled within routine care, ultimately improving patient outcomes and service effectiveness

Industry Collaboration and Technological Innovation

The service also has a unique collaborative partnership with industry working closely with Tactical Wireless Ltd. This collaboration has enabled the development and implementation of cutting-edge technologies that enhance both clinical care and operational capability.

Key areas of innovation include:

- Telemedicine solutions, enabling real-time remote specialist support
- Remote ultrasound, improving diagnostic capability in pre-hospital environments
- 360-degree immersive clinical support systems, supporting both patient care and training
- Advanced satellite communication technologies, enhancing connectivity in rural and remote settings

This work also includes engagement with the European Space Agency (ESA). Through revenue share agreements this also has facilitated income generation which is used to undertake further projects.

More about the EMRTS various projects can be found on our website

(<https://emrts.nhs.wales/research/>)

Thank you for taking the time to read about the critical care services we provide and if you have any further queries about EMRTS or ACCTS and the work we do you can contact us on:

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