

# LIFT-OFF FOR AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Lives are to be saved as Ireland's first-ever Charity Air Ambulance service, which touched down at Kerry Airport before taking flight to Wales on a 'fuel for life' promotional tour and fundraising campaign in recent weeks, is now taking to the air as a full-time daylight hours' service.

Irish Community Rapid Response (ICRR) – the charity dedicated to pre-hospital care – is running the air ambulance service in co-operation with the HSE National Ambulance Service.

The chopper is expected to respond up to 500 calls per year, and will bring the population of a 10,000 square mile area within 20 minutes of critical medical care.

The Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS), which will be based at Cork Airport, will be tasked through the 999/112 call system and operated by the National Ambulance Service at its National Emergency Operations Centre in Tallaght.

Supported by the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Department of Health, the chopper will be available



John Kearney, CEO ICRR (left) pictured with pilot Captain John Murray on board Ireland's first-ever Charity Air Ambulance service, which touched down at Kerry Airport during a promotional 'fuel for life' campaign.



John Parnell, Director of Sales and Marketing with UK-based Sloane Helicopters, is pictured with John Kearney, CEO of Irish Community Rapid Response, after the contract was signed during the summer.

for missions nationwide and will co-ordinate with the existing Athlone-based Emergency Aeromedical Service.

Over the last number of weeks the ICRR Air Ambulance has toured the communities it will service to help raise awareness and support fundraising. With the service costing €2 million to run annually, it is to be funded through community and donor contributions.

## ICRR CALLS FOR PUBLIC SUPPORT

ICRR's CEO John Kearney said that lives will be saved and families' grief spared, and he called for strong public support in order to maintain and develop it.

"Since 2008, ICRR has developed a network of over 200 land-based volunteer doctors throughout Ireland who deliver critical medical interventions which prevent serious injury or death. We have ten Rapid Response Vehicles (RRVs) successfully in operation.

"We aim to mirror successful international models. The air service will include medical crew who can provide life-saving treatment to those who are seriously ill or injured, along with rapid transport to a critical care facility. It is hoped that €2 million can be raised per annum. The service will include medical crew

"The helicopter fuel costs €50 per hour, or roughly €5 per minute. We are spreading the word about ICRR's Fuel for Life Campaign during a tour of communities. We greatly appreciate all the support we can get," Kearney noted.

**CALL-OUT INCIDENTS**

Wales, a country of similar size and population, has a well-established fleet of four community air ambulances to respond to approximately 2,000 incidents a year. Examples of incidents which the air ambulance is expected to respond to include:

- **Retrieval and Transfer:** The airlift of a seriously ill patient from remote and rural medical hubs or accident scenes to specialist hospital care.
- **Trauma:** Injuries sustained in road traffic accidents, equestrian, agricultural, industrial and sporting incidents, falls and impact injuries.
- **Medical:** Including cardiac medical events, strokes, anaphylaxis, etc.

Medical care and swift transport within the 'Golden Hour' – the time in which medical interventions have the greatest impact on saving the life of someone critically ill or injured – greatly increases the chance of survival. And the ICRR chief executive said that this development will see the successful land service take to the air.

**MIRROR OF SUCCESSFUL UK MODELS**  
ICRR has now 10 Rapid Response Vehicles (RRVs) in operation to deliver an emergency service on land, which is also tasked through the 999/112 call system. The air ambulance service now aims to mirror successful models across the UK and continental Europe where geographically-challenging terrain warrants an air response.

It will complement emergency services including the Athlone-based Emergency Aeromedical Service, operated by the National Ambulance Service and Irish Air Corps.

"The people of Ireland have sustained our land-based rapid response volunteer doctors over 10 years and now we're calling on their support for this new lifesaving air service," noted Kearney.

*For more information visit [www.icrr.ie](http://www.icrr.ie)*

