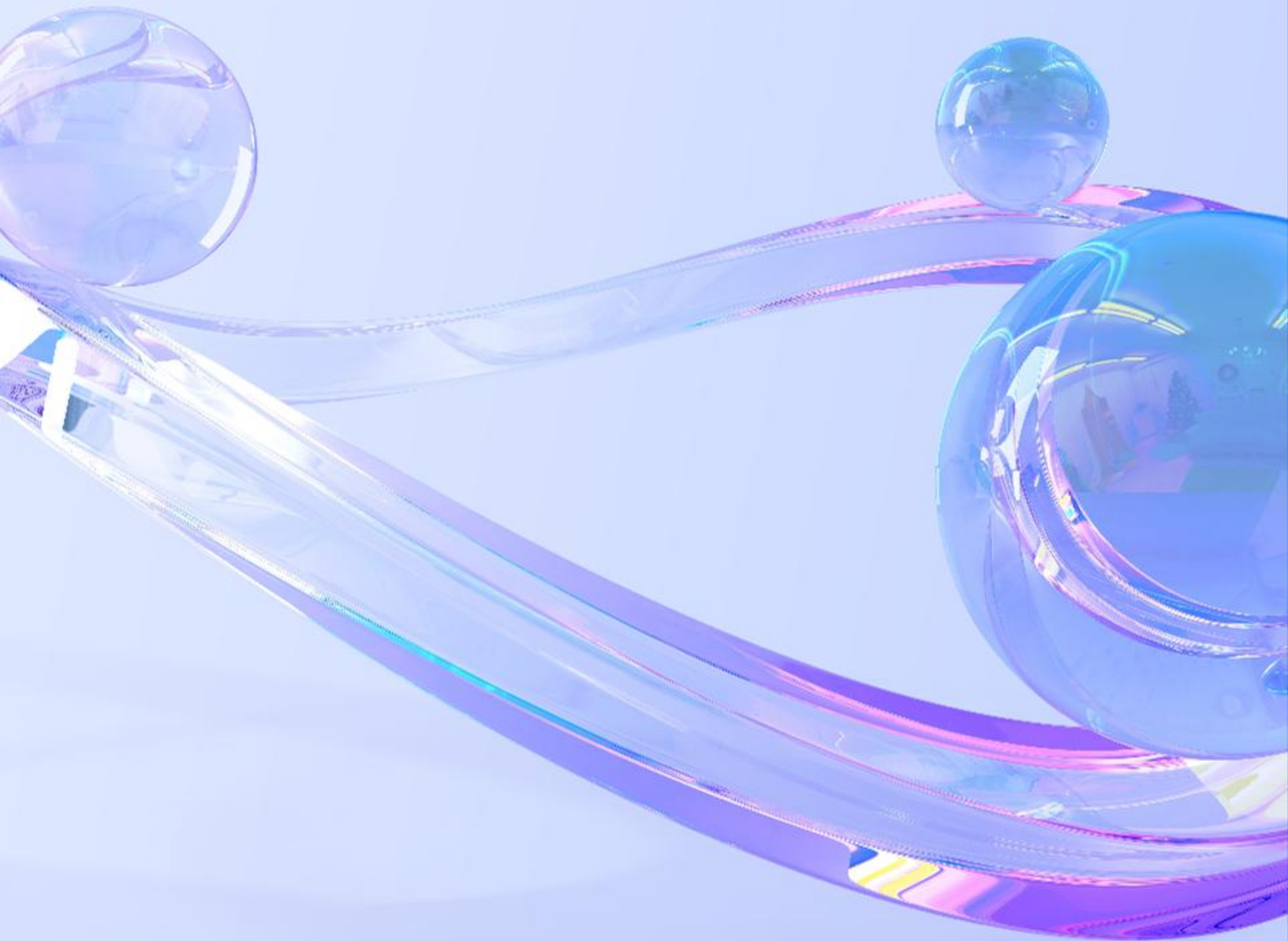


# How Air Ambulances UK uses Vuelio during its busiest week of the year



**Air Ambulances UK is a national charity that aims to champion, support, and represent the lifesaving work of air ambulance charities across the entirety of the UK.**

With a vision that working together will ensure the best possible chance of survival and patient outcome for all in need of lifesaving pre-hospital care, the organisation supports and champions the invaluable work of the air ambulance community at a national level.

Air ambulance charities are collectively dispatched to over 126 lifesaving missions each day across the country, and AAUK raises national funds to continue this important work, acting as the voice on issues of nationwide importance.

A key part of the calendar for the AAUK team is Air Ambulance Week, which kicked off on 9 September 2024 with the message 'Today's Supporter, Tomorrow's Lifesaver'.

Promoting the only dedicated week to raising awareness and funds for the lifesaving work of air ambulance charities, AAUK's Communications and Marketing Manager, Glen Picknell, and the team sought to engage people, organisations, national organisations, and partners across the UK. They used stories of those whose lives have been saved by critical care medics to encourage support for local initiatives.

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## The challenge

Air ambulance charities are reliant on the generosity of their local communities, so a successful Air Ambulance Week would hinge on achieving visibility and engagement via specifically targeted outreach.

Key goals for the team ahead of Air Ambulance Week 2024 were:

- ◆ **Exceeding previous campaign reach:** Surpassing the reach achieved in 2023 and 2021, and aiming to overcome the external challenges experienced in 2022.
- ◆ **Securing national and local media coverage:** Engaging the press at every level to amplify the campaign's visibility.
- ◆ **Enhancing high-profile PR opportunities:** Leveraging existing relationships and fostering new connections with key figures, influencers, and media contacts.

- ◆ **Strengthening MP support:** Building on connections with MPs, particularly in light of the UK General Election earlier in the year.
- ◆ **Incorporating visual impact:** Expanding the 'lighting-up' initiative, ensuring prominent landmarks would be illuminated in support of Air Ambulance Week.

Core objectives were to raise awareness of the specialist critical care provided by air ambulance charities, further establishing Air Ambulance Week as the key annual event highlighting their lifesaving work. The team also wanted to address misconceptions about funding by communicating clearly that air ambulance charities rely on public donations rather than NHS or government funding. They sought to showcase the incredible work of the UK's air ambulance charities through patient stories, crew insights, and mission statistics.

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## The plan

'The campaign for 2024 aimed to create a significant national impact by reaching out to diverse audiences through a multi-channel strategy,' explains Glen.

Target audiences for the team were member air ambulance charities; existing supporters, including donors and social media followers, current and potential partners; peer emergency services and charities.

Key stakeholders such as the RAF, Red Arrows, and The Royal Family would also be important, as would national and regional media outlets, influencers, celebrities, and ambassadors, and MPs and relevant government departments, including DHSC and the Department of Transport.

Key campaign elements encompassed storytelling and information sharing with existing and new networks via:

- ◆ **Compelling video content:** Featuring ambassadors, charity staff, and patient stories to engage audiences emotionally.
- ◆ **Case studies:** Highlighting real-life stories provided by local air ambulance charities to demonstrate impact.

- ◆ **Comprehensive campaign packs:** Distributed to air ambulance charities and external stakeholders to ensure consistent messaging.
- ◆ **Media outreach:** Dedicated efforts to engage press contacts and secure widespread coverage across print, online, and broadcast media.

estimated 600,000 readers; and a front page feature on The Week Junior, with additional coverage inside alongside seven air ambulance charities, reaching 90,000 readers.

Alongside print publications, coverage was achieved in the broadcast sector – TalkSport Radio Weather featured AAUK in partnership with Kwik Fit, gaining a reach of 3.7 million.

And it wasn't just media getting the message out to the public – the initiative featured on all Royal Mail franked mail during the week, with a minimum estimated reach of 64.4 million.

Overall campaign reach was more than 83 million people nationally, excluding the additional impact made by local air ambulance charities.

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## How AAUK shared stories of saving lives

In the run-up to Air Ambulance Week, and throughout the week itself, Air Ambulances UK utilised the full PR, comms, and marketing mix to share powerful stories via a number of platforms.

The AAUK website posted blogs featuring regular updates and case studies showcasing the impact of the air ambulance sector.

On social media, daily posts featured different content themes, including specific coverage for 999 Day.

Press releases were sent to key national and regional media outlets to maximise coverage.

Extra information was provided with campaign packs featuring tailored resources for members and stakeholders, enabling them to amplify the campaign locally.

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## The role of Vuelio, this year and in the future

'Vuelio played an essential role in monitoring campaign success. The platform allowed Air Ambulances UK to track print coverage and gain insights into media reach,' says Glen.

'The recent upgrade to the Vuelio package means that for 2025, the team will be able to monitor radio, television, and some social media coverage, significantly improving analytics capabilities.

'Local air ambulance charities also utilised Vuelio to keep track of campaign performance, with one charity reporting their ability to monitor multiple radio features.

'Looking ahead to 2025, the enhanced use of Vuelio will help refine media outreach and bolster reporting accuracy, ensuring even greater campaign success.'

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## Successes

'The campaign achieved several notable successes, including surpassing previous reach and engagement metrics,' shares Glen.

Highlights included massive social media engagement, with posts by the Royal Family across X, Instagram, and Facebook reaching an audience of over 500,000.

Media cut through was also significant, with coverage in The Sun via print adverts and an online feature reaching an estimated 7.1 million people; coverage in three prominent equine magazines reaching an



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