

## Shot in the arm <sup>26/12</sup> for air ambulance

THE Kent, Surrey & Sussex Air Ambulance has received a £1.5 million shot in the arm from the Government.

Chancellor George Osborne announced the significant grant for the life-saving charity in his autumn statement.

The seven figure sum will go towards the air ambulance's capital investment programmes to fund a new helicopter and future basing needs.

The chief executive of the KSS Air Ambulance, Adrian Bell, said: "The Chancellor's grant is a very clear and ringing endorsement of the critical service this charity provides to its patients."

The Chancellor also promised to exempt all air ambulance expenditure from VAT, which will save the charity in the region of £100,000 a year - the

equivalent cost of running more than 30 of the 1,800 missions flown annually.

Mr Bell added: "We still have to raise more than £6 million annually to provide this life-saving service but I hope our many supporters will, like me, rejoice in the fact that yet more of their generous and so gratefully received donations will support this vital cause so directly."

The Kent, Surrey & Sussex Air Ambulance, which celebrates its 25th anniversary next year, became the first air ambulance service in the country to operate a 24-hour Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) last September.

Lions clubs across the South East have pledged to raise £250,000 for the helicopter over 10 years to help ensure the 24-hour service continues.