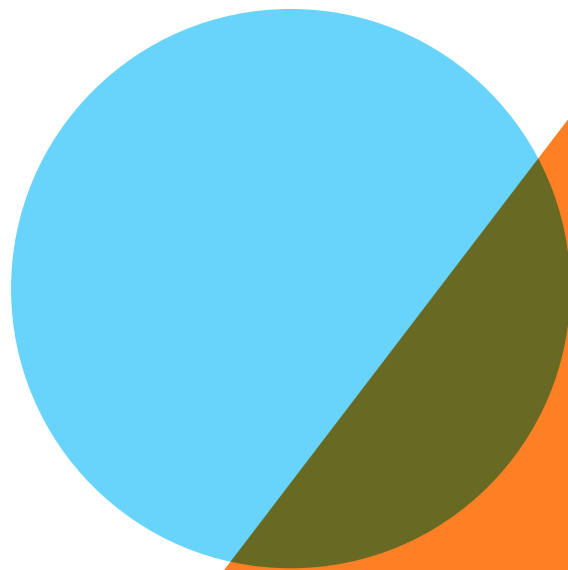




# Case Study

Thames Valley Air Ambulance



# Thames Valley Air Ambulance



**THAMES VALLEY  
AIR AMBULANCE**

## Industry

Pre-hospital emergency medicine

## Headquarters

Stokenchurch, Bucks, United Kingdom

## Board Management Goals

- Modernise communications and information-sharing
- Improve governance of complex operations across multiple domains
- Position organisation to expand and improve service

## Results

- Easy and secure access to board resources
- Digital communication and collaboration tools are now preferred
- The organisation is more efficient and professional

## OnBoard helps this emergency medicine charity manage a complex operating environment and a significant risk register.

Thames Valley Air Ambulance (TVAA) provides emergency medical services to Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxford in South East England. Operating one helicopter (currently G-TVLY, an Airbus135) from RAF Benson and five ground vehicles, TVAA supports the National Health Service (NHS). It provides fast incident response across the three counties. Each vehicle is deployed with a doctor and a paramedic to provide the best possible pre-hospital emergency medicine (PHEM) care.

“If you have a critical injury or a life-threatening medical emergency, you want to know there’s help,” says Sarah Roberts, one of TVAA’s Non-Executive Directors. “We need to know that we can get people to hospital the fastest way possible.”

Critically, TVAA is a charity funded entirely by public donations, operating through the Thames Valley Air Ambulance Charitable Trust.

“Many people support us because they say, ‘I use it, or I might use it,’ Roberts says. “They think of it as a kind of insurance policy. They want that fast response if anything happens to them or anyone they know.” Assisted by volunteer charity collectors as well as fund-raising events and a lottery, TVAA is a complex operation spanning helicopters, road vehicles, medical care, patient data management, charity, gambling and training, as well as the more usual challenges associated with any operation of comparable size.

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Good governance is critical to its success and sustainability, but the organisation needed more than manual, paper- and email-based systems could deliver. It needed to update its board and governance capabilities to thrive and continue providing its life-saving services.

“The old system was that board papers were mostly just emailed out,” says Roberts. “Some people like working with paper, but if anything had to be updated ... here’s another email.”

OnBoard provided the security, convenience and board-related capabilities that TVAA needed across every part of its complex structure. From helicopter operations and treating patients to staff training and volunteer fundraising, TVAA’s board now have secure access to the information they need to make good decisions faster, no matter where they’re located.

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— Sarah Roberts, Non-Executive Director,  
Thames Valley Air Ambulance

### Building a stronger board

Managing the TVAA’s operations and opportunities while ensuring the organisation is well-governed falls to the board. Unsurprisingly, TVAA’s board has diverse skills, reflecting the organisation’s various capabilities, responsibilities and compliance obligations.

“We have a mixture of skills that one would need on any board, plus some that are unique to us,” says Brooks. “Finance, marketing, clinical skills, management and strategy, governance skills, helicopters – we’re a real mixed bag.”

OnBoard’s Zoom integration makes it easy for the board to meet. Remote connections became a critical tool during the COVID-19 lockdowns, and they have remained so even as lockdowns have ceased. The benefits go beyond ‘mere’ convenience and include voting and approvals, meeting briefs and analytics, secure messaging, task management and more.

“We keep debating whether we should carry on just meeting online,” says Brooks. Significantly, the benefits go beyond the convenience of secure, information-rich online meetings, as Brooks notes:

“OnBoard allows us to flex digitally. The interesting thing is, in terms of ensuring the board represents our community, we can now attract a wider range of candidates.” This extended digital reach ties in with the platform’s skills-tracking capabilities, which aid recruitment and succession planning.

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— Saskia Brooks, Governance and Secretariat Manager  
Thames Valley Air Ambulance

### More than just a board portal

OnBoard does more than provide a full-featured, secure and easy-to-use board portal. It helps any organisation to fulfil its mission and meet its strategic, operational and financial goals.

There’s no doubt that OnBoard has helped the TVAA, and its board, to perform better. They’re more efficient, better informed and better connected.

“OnBoard has made us much more professional,” Roberts says. “It saves time. It’s more secure. It’s easier. Everything feels as though we’ve been elevated to another level.”

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