New Search and Rescue base for HM Coastguard's rescue helicopter

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HM Coastguard has opened a new seasonal base in west Scotland as part of its ongoing UK Second-Generation Search and Rescue Aviation programme (UKSAR2G)

A new Search and Rescue (SAR) helicopter base has entered service with HM Coastguard to support search and rescue response over the summer months.

The base in Oban, Argyll and Bute launched on Sunday 15 March, and includes a modern Search and Rescue Hangar, an operational planning room, offices and rest areas for crews. An HM Coastguard AgustaWestland AW189 rescue helicopter will be based at Oban from April to September, with a readiness of 15 minutes between the hours of 9am and 9pm.

On the same day, HM Coastguard received a new helicopter operating 24/7 out of HM Coastguard's established helicopter base in Caernarfon, Gwynedd. The AgustaWestland AW139 helicopter will replace the base's current Sikorsky S-92 aircraft.

The new seasonal base at Oban, along with another set to open in Carlisle, will increase search and rescue provision in two of the busiest locations for summer tourism. They have been brought into service through HM Coastguard's national UKSAR2G programme, which delivers next-generation SAR capability across the UK via HM Coastguard's fleet of helicopters and aeroplanes.

Delivered by Bristow Helicopters Ltd, the two aviation contracts will provide enhanced value for money for the taxpayer and support ongoing innovation throughout the life of the 10-year contract.

Chief Coastguard Paddy O'Callaghan said:

> We're pleased to take into service a new seasonal base at Oban and a state-of-the-art new aircraft further down the coast at Caernarfon.
>
> Both form part of the UKSAR2G programme, demonstrating HM Coastguard's commitment to innovation and ongoing enhancement, as well as continuing our core work in saving lives at sea and on the coast.

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-search-and-rescue-base-for-hm-coastguards-rescue-helicopter