HUMBERSIDE LAUNCH – NATIONAL RELEASE

Press Release

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CIVILIAN SEARCH AND RESCUE HELICOPTER SERVICE LAUNCHED

The launch of the civilian UK search and rescue (SAR) helicopter service was marked today (Thursday 26 February 2015) in a ceremony held at the new SAR base at Humberside Airport.

Bristow Helicopters Ltd, will operate the Search and Rescue Helicopter service for the UK on behalf of HM Coastguard. The UK limited company was awarded the ten year UK SAR contract by the Department for Transport in March 2013. It will deliver the service from ten bases strategically located close to areas of high SAR incident rates.

These bases will go live in a phased approach from 1 April 2015. The first bases to open will be at Humberside and Inverness. Bristow crews will deliver the UK SAR helicopter service with state-of-the-art helicopters, equipped with the latest search and rescue technology including night vision, mission management and increased onboard medical capabilities.

Today’s ceremony was attended by the Rt Hon John Hayes MP, Minister of State at the Department for Transport, Sir Alan Massey, Chief Executive of the MCA, representatives from the military and other search and rescue organisations who will work with the new service, and a host of invited guests who have been instrumental in preparing the new service.

John Hayes MP, Minister of State at the Department for Transport said: “As the Minister responsible for Her Majesty’s Coastguard, I am delighted to be in Humberside on this historic day when we are on the cusp of launching this new state-of-the-art helicopter service.

“Although I would clearly rather everyone avoid the circumstances where a search and rescue helicopter rescue is needed, I very much look forward to hearing about the professionalism and commitment that resides in all that work here and which will surely save lives from 1 April.”

Sir Alan Massey Maritime and Coastguard Agency Chief Executive said: “I am hugely proud that HM Coastguard has been entrusted with the UK’s search and rescue helicopter service. For us this is a continuation of the high-quality service that we have been providing in selected areas of the UK for the last 30 years.
“The RAF and RN have set the bar incredibly high, and I would like to thank them for their service and recognise the outstanding work they have done both inland and on the coast over many decades. We will take their legacy forward with the utmost pride and care”.

Samantha Willenbacher, Director of UK Search and Rescue at Bristow Helicopters Ltd, said: “It is an honour to have been chosen to deliver this vital service across the UK. We know this is a service that people rely on in times of great need and we are committed to continuing the great work of the military.

“We have enormous respect for the dedication that our military colleagues have demonstrated in delivering search and rescue over the past 70 years and we have always understood how vital it is that their knowledge and expertise is maintained. We have worked closely with them in preparing for the civilian service to go live and have also welcomed many of them into the new civilian SAR force, including Chief Pilot here at Humberside Liz Forsyth, a former SAR Commander at RAF Lossiemouth and Pilot Flight Commander at RAF Valley.

“I would like to thank the local community in and around Humberside for making us feel so welcome and to thank Humberside Airport for their ongoing support. We look forward to the base going live and will continue to strive to deliver the best possible SAR helicopter service to the UK.”

The UK SAR bases at Caernarfon and Kent will go live on 1 July 2015, followed by St Athan on 1 October 2015. Prestwick and Newquay will become operational on 1 January 2016 and the remaining three bases at Lee-on-Solent, Sumburgh and Stornoway will follow in 2017.

Ends

For further information please contact the Bristow Helicopters Communication team on 01224 806 602 or via bristow@webershandwick.com

Notes to Editors:

About HM Coastguard

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) is a frontline delivery and emergency response organisation which is part of the Department for Transport. Its job is to ensure that the threat of pollution from ships is managed and tackled if it occurs and the public can be rescued if they get into difficulties.

Part of the MCA is HM Coastguard, which provides a UK-wide maritime emergency prevention and response capability which responds to calls for help by radio, satellite or the 999 service and coordinates maritime search and rescue (SAR) within the UK SAR region. The agency helps approximately 25,000 people each year with 21,000 incidents coordinated by its rescue centres.

About Bristow Helicopters Ltd

Bristow Helicopters Ltd is the leading provider of search and rescue (SAR) services in the UK, on behalf of Her Majesty's Coastguard, having been awarded the UK SAR contract and the Gap SAR contract for Northern Scotland. Bristow Helicopters has a long history of providing world class SAR services in the UK, beginning in 1971 and has flown more than 44,000 SAR operational hours in the UK and conducted over 15,000 SAR missions, during which more than 7,000 people have been rescued by our crews and helicopters. For more information on Bristow’s SAR operations, please visit www.bristowsar.com
Bristow Helicopters Ltd. has served the offshore oil transport industry in the UK for nearly 60 years. Bristow Helicopters Ltd. is an affiliated company of Bristow Group Inc.

About Bristow Group
Bristow Group Inc. is the leading provider of helicopter services to the worldwide offshore energy industry based on the number of aircraft operated and one of two helicopter service providers to the offshore energy industry with global operations. The company has major transportation operations in the North Sea, Nigeria and the U.S. Gulf of Mexico, and in most of the other major offshore oil and gas producing regions of the world, including Australia, Brazil, Canada, Russia and Trinidad. For more information, visit the Company’s website at www.bristowgroup.com.