

Fleeting look at new aircraft for Irish coast guard

The Irish Coast Guard has provided the first glimpse of the new livery for its next generation aircraft, to be provided under the new ten-year service contract, with the transition to the service scheduled to get underway later in the year.

The new contract, which was awarded to Bristow Ireland Limited (BIL) by the Department of Transport in August 2023, will provide for a year-round, day and night search and rescue (SAR) helicopter services, delivered through a fleet of six AW189 helicopters located in Dublin, Shannon, Sligo and Waterford.

For the first time, the Irish Coast Guard will also have a dedicated fixed wing service provided by 2EXCEL Ireland (2EI), which will be located at Shannon Airport. The fixed wing capability will enhance the Coast Guard's capacity to coordinate search and rescue missions and conduct environmental and ship casualty monitoring of Ireland's exclusive economic zone, an area encompassing approximately 132,000 square miles.

Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Jack Chambers with responsibility for the Irish Coast Guard said that the new contract represents "an exciting time" for the organisation.

He added that the new service will be introduced gradually over a phased basis with particular attention being paid to enable a smooth transition from the current operator CHC Ireland to Bristow Ireland Limited.

"The release of this livery for the new specialist aircraft, which will replace the existing fleet, marks another important step on the transition of our Coast Guard to the new service provision."

Neil Ebberson, Bristow's Director of Government Services, said: "Bristow Ireland is proud to work with the Irish Coast Guard to deliver a new, innovative search and rescue aviation service for the country. This unique



A fleet of six search and rescue configured AW189 helicopters will be based in Dublin, Shannon, Sligo and Waterford.

livery will feature across the new fleet of specialist helicopters, as well as the fixed wing aircraft operated by our partner 2EI, as we start the transition to the new service in late 2024."

In early February 2024, Bristow was awarded an Air Operators Certificate (AOC) by the Irish Aviation Authority

(IAA) – a significant step in the transition to the new contract. It was awarded after the successful completion of a lengthy application and assessment process run by the IAA and ensures the highest standards of professionalism and safety are met by the operator of the Coast Guard Aviation Service.



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