

[News story: Duke and Duchess of Cambridge visit North Wales helicopter base](#)

Their Royal Highnesses have been meeting with crew members and their family, many of whom they knew when the Duke worked as a search and rescue pilot at RAF Valley between 2010 – 2013.

In 2015, search and rescue air operations transferred to HM Coastguard with Caernarfon one of ten new bases opening.

The Duke and Duchess had an opportunity to see the Sikorsky S92 helicopters, and meet members of the current search and rescue team, many of whom worked alongside the Duke during his time at RAF Valley. The Duke and Duchess heard about the support provided to promote mental health and wellbeing by the Maritime & Coastguard Agency and its SAR partners.

Damien Oliver, aviation programme director at the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) said: 'As a former search and rescue pilot, His Royal Highness understands the challenges our crews face and the risks they take to save lives. The Duke was very interested in our search and rescue helicopters' capabilities and the work that they do.

'We were pleased to be able to share with the Duke and Duchess the work we do to support frontline responders who face rescuing people in traumatic circumstances.'" Capt Martin Shepherd, deputy chief pilot at the Caernarfon base, said: "A number of our crew are former colleagues of His Royal Highness, so it was a real pleasure for them to spend some time catching up on their work together, and talking about how the service is evolving.

"The Duke and Duchess have shown their unwavering support for mental health services and awareness through Heads Together. Our colleagues were able to offer their views on how support for those affected by mental health issues within the search and rescue community continues to improve."