

Hundreds of communities to be equipped with lifesaving defibrillators and CPR skills for second year running

November 14, 2016



ORGANISATIONS IN THE WEST MIDLANDS URGED TO APPLY FOR FREE EQUIPMENT TO SAVE LOCAL LIVES

Today the British Heart Foundation (BHF) and the Department of Health (DH) are encouraging organisations in the West Midlands to help make their communities safer as they launch another £1 million partnership to make public access defibrillators and CPR training more widely available across England.

In 2015, thanks to the first round of funding from the government, 700 more defibrillators were made available in communities across England¹, including 36 in the West Midlands. So far, the BHF has helped fund over 14,000 life saving defibrillators in communities across the UK.

Latest figures from the BHF show just 12% people in the West Midlands would use a defibrillator in an emergency². The charity warns this lack of awareness and confidence could be wasting valuable time and costing lives.

Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt, said:

"I'm delighted to be working with the British Heart Foundation for a second year. Our £1 million investment will provide hundreds of defibrillators as well as training in CPR to communities across the country.

"I congratulate the British Heart Foundation on their tireless work in this important project. It will empower people to know what to do in an emergency and save lives."

[Continue](#)

When someone suffers a cardiac arrest, their heart stops pumping blood around their body and they will die within minutes without treatment. For every minute without CPR and defibrillation, a person's chance of survival decreases by around 10 percent³.

However, a bystander giving immediate CPR and defibrillation can double a person's chances of survival in some cases.

There are more than 30,000 out of hospital cardiac arrests in the UK every year. However, fewer than one in ten people survive⁴. In places where CPR and defibrillator awareness is more widely taught, survival rates are up to three times as high. The BHF say that if UK survival rates were boosted to match those seen in parts of Norway, where up to 25% of people survive, nearly 5,000 additional lives could be saved each year⁵.

The programme will be managed by the BHF with support from a network of charities and organisations concerned with improving the UK's low survival rates from out of hospital cardiac arrests. This includes the Arrhythmia Alliance, the Resuscitation Council (UK), the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives, NHS England and the Department of Health.

Organisations, including charities, social enterprises, community groups and commercial organisations working in partnership with the NHS Ambulance Service can apply to the BHF for free community packages. This includes up to five public access defibrillators, the BHF's Call Push Rescue CPR training kit and defibrillator cabinets. This will help equip local communities with the life saving skills and equipment to improve survival rates from out of hospital cardiac arrest in their areas.

Simon Gillespie, Chief Executive at the British Heart Foundation, said:

"Right now just one in ten people in the UK survive a cardiac arrest. Sadly not enough people have the skills and confidence to perform CPR and too few defibrillators are readily available in public places.

"We're urging organisations up and down the country to join us in creating a Nation of Lifesavers by making public access defibrillators readily available in their communities and by giving people the skills and confidence to save a life.

"This partnership could mean the difference between life and death for the thousands of people who suffer a cardiac arrest in England every year."

Organisations can check if they are eligible, and apply for the free community package including up to five public access defibrillators and a Call Push Rescue training kit by visiting: [bhf.org.uk/defibengland](https://www.bhf.org.uk/defibengland)
