

Improving Defibrillator Access and Survival from Sudden Cardiac Arrest

Out-of-hospital sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) **claims over 40,000 lives in the UK annually**. Despite significant advancements, survival rates remain critically low, with just 1 in 10 surviving an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. It is vital that the Government takes decisive action to address systemic barriers and improve survival outcomes. This Call to Action outlines five key recommendations for Government to support better access to defibrillators, enhance public readiness, and improve the care provided to sudden cardiac arrest survivors.

Our five recommendations:

1. **Mandate Defibrillators in All Publicly Accessible and New Buildings**

Out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occur predominantly in homes and public spaces. Defibrillators can significantly increase survival rates if used promptly.

Action: Use existing legislation, such as the Building Safety Act, & update HSE workplace guidance to require defibrillators are located and maintained in all newly constructed or renovated buildings frequently accessed by the public.

2. **Equip All Emergency Vehicles with Defibrillators**

First responders are critical in cardiac arrest emergencies, but many emergency service vehicles currently lack defibrillators.

Action: Mandate defibrillators in all police cars, ambulances, and fire service vehicles to ensure life-saving equipment is always available.

3. **Expand and Standardise CPR and Defibrillator Training in Schools**

Equipping young people with CPR and defibrillator skills ensures future generations are prepared to act during emergencies.

Action: Mandate age-appropriate first aid training, including CPR and defibrillator usage, in primary and secondary schools and integrate this into the school curriculum. This should also coincide with a firm commitment to monitoring the training so that it is properly tracked and supported.

4. **Introduce Targeted Screening for Cardiac Conditions**

Screening young people and those with a family history of cardiac conditions can identify risks early and prevent sudden cardiac deaths.

Action: Implement a targeted, national cardiac screening programme modeled on successful initiatives in countries like Italy.

5. **Improve Post-Cardiac Arrest Care and Mental Health Support**

Survivors and bystanders often face long-term physical and psychological challenges. A lack of coordinated care exacerbates recovery difficulties.

Action: Establish a formal care pathway for survivors and bystanders, including access to rehabilitation, psychological support, and post-cardiac arrest clinics.



Chain of Survival Call to Action



Defibrillators

We urge Parliament and Government to prioritise these recommendations and ensure that life-saving measures are implemented nationwide. By investing in education, infrastructure, and care pathways, we can make significant strides toward improving sudden cardiac arrest survival rates.

Support this initiative. Advocate for action. Save lives.

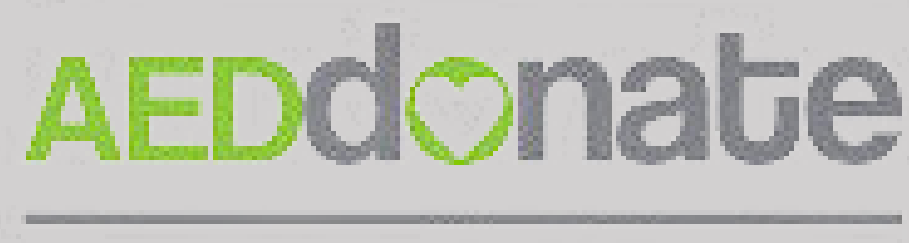


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