

7 Minute Briefing

7. Questions to consider

- Do I know the location of my nearest defibrillator, where I work & live?
- Do I know how to provide Basic Life Support?
- Is my community AED registered with the emergency services via The Circuit?

6. Support resources

[The Circuit: The National Defibrillator Network](#)

St John Ambulance [How to use a defibrillator](#)

Resuscitation Council UK [A guide to AEDs](#)
including training, installing & maintaining devices

St John Ambulance [First Aid Courses](#)

5. AED use in babies & children

Under 1 year - AEDs are not suitable for use in the community.

Children 1 to 8 years - ideally paediatric pads should be used in this group; if only adult pads are available, these should be used.

For children over the age of 8 years, adult pads can be used.

1. Background

If someone has a sudden cardiac arrest, their heart rhythm can become disorganised and disrupted – their heart can't beat properly and they won't be able to breathe normally.

A defibrillator is a simple, portable piece of equipment that anyone can use to safely deliver a jolt of energy to help restore and reset the heart rhythm. It does this via pads applied to the patient's skin.

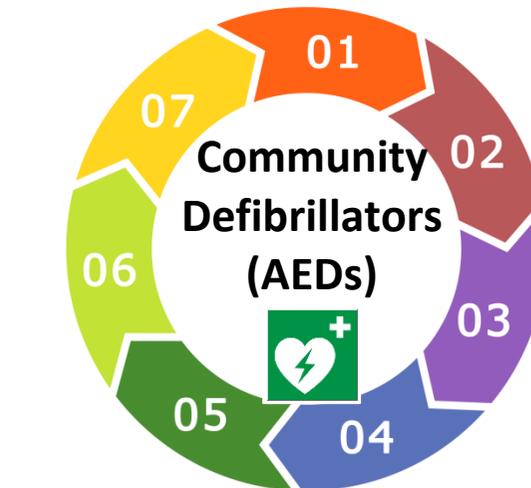
2. Why it matters

Rapid access to a defibrillator in the event of a cardiac arrest can save lives.

Many communities have automated external defibrillators (AEDs) kept in public places ready to use. Public awareness of the location of defibrillators and registration of AEDs with emergency services can help rapid access at the point it is needed.

3. Key Messages

If someone is breathing abnormally or unconscious, ring 999 and ask for an ambulance; the call handler will guide you through how to perform CPR. They will also tell you where your nearest defibrillator is, and provide the code (if needed) to open the cabinet.



4. Registering defibrillators

Community defibrillators are not automatically registered with emergency services. There are currently a large number of community defibrillators in different locations, but they are rarely used; if a device is known to the Ambulance Service, it is far more likely to be used. If the exact location of a defibrillator is available to emergency services, they are better able to guide members of the public.

The Circuit is the national defibrillator network, funded by British Heart Foundation; it is connected to EMAS, (along with every Ambulance Service in the UK) to help direct bystanders to the nearest defibrillator. The Circuit also helps communities and organisations to look after & maintain their defibrillators.