

Community defibrillation: *a guide to Rotarians*

ROTARY has been at the forefront of supporting the placement of community defibrillators, ever since they were deregulated in 2009.

However, the keenness of Rotary clubs and its members has led to a plethora of different project types, styles, equipment and generally a lack of awareness of governance issues.

In 2017, Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland agreed to follow a standard process for community defibrillators, addressing the equipment, liabilities and governance.

Working with the national and leading charity, the Community Heartbeat Trust, all projects now have a standard high specification defibrillator choice;

- A cabinet choice to reflect different situations
- A full Governance package allowing Rotary to see all projects under way and installed
- A full training regimen to ensure that projects are accepted well into the community.

All funded or supplied projects should also show sustainability for at least 10 years. Most ambulance services also now insist on evidence of governance, and many will require a local contract to be agreed before they will activate.

There are now many defibrillators to choose from for placement into the public domain. However, few have been specifically designed for community use.

A modern device will be easy to use,

provide maximum support to the rescuer, have features enabling good CPR to be undertaken, allow easy access to the clinical data and are cost effective over the life of the unit, typically 10 to 15 years. Older designs are unlikely to have these modern features.

An Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is a powerful medical device and if used correctly as part of a system of integrated events, can save a great many lives and every community should have access to one, but done with knowledge and resilience, and not done just to 'tick the box'.

Most members of the public will not know or necessarily understand the subtleties in the differences of defibrillator equipment. Therefore, CHT helps communities by undertaking a review of all common defibrillators, asking some 52 questions of the device in its relation to use by untrained members of the community.

A score is applied and the top third are deemed as being very suitable for community use (we call these group 1 devices).

We do the same for cabinets, applying the ShockBox marque. Whilst cabinets can be locked or unlocked, the choice should be based upon need and local factors, and if a locked cabinet used, it should have a marine grade, vandal resistant lock or similar – you cannot afford to have a cabinet jam in a rescue.

It is unwise to use mild steel single-skinned cabinets within five miles of a coastal location, and if in Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Cornwall and some inner cities, dual language may be a requirement

(for example, adherence to the 'Welsh Language Act')

Undertaking a sustainable Rotary project

Firstly, all aspects of the project need to be considered, including the sustainability aspects, and a full understanding of the project and a map of the process to undertake.

In the recent project undertaken by Bedford Rotary Club, an analysis of the marketplace was undertaken, consultation with the local ambulance service and parish councils undertaken to ensure the placements were not duplicating already placed resources, and an analysis of suitable equipment undertaken.

In this case, the Cardiac Science G5 was chosen as this also matched another project undertaken with CHT and the Bedfordshire Fire service to place G5 devices throughout Bedfordshire, thus allowing compatibility and ease of support and training. At least one life has been saved by this Rotary project, with a successful rescue in October 2017.

Communities should also realise that community defibrillators are covered by 'Activation radii' set by the local ambulance service.

In the East Midlands this is 500 metres, but in the South West it is only 200 metres. This can have an impact on the equipment chosen, how it is activated, and also whether it is supported by a localised group of trained volunteers.

The ambulance service also will not activate a community defibrillator if there is a lone rescuer present.

Defibrillators and children

A child in defibrillator terms is anyone under 25Kg in weight. Typically in the UK this means seven and under, although a six-year-old weighing 29kg would be an adult.

Cardiac Arrest occurs very rarely in this age group, and for a community placement ambulance services recommend only using adult devices in the public domain. This reduces the liability of incorrect usage of paediatric devices on anyone over 25kg.

Some devices, such as the Zoll AED 3, have paediatric buttons which will automatically revert to adult settings, and thus are probably more appropriate than other devices with child 'switches'.

About the Community Heartbeat Trust charity (CHT)

CHT invented the concept of the community public access defibrillator – cPAD, as well as the concept of using redundant telephone kiosks.


As a national charity, working across the country and also supporting placements in Greece, we began by setting high standards and quality at a time that everyone else was trying to just cut costs.

As such we work to a high level, ensuring communities are protected, use the right/best equipment and making sure the projects are long term sustainable. In addition to Rotary, we also work with the Rugby Football Union, cricket, many commercial organisations such as Mid-Counties Coop, and about 600 town and parish councils.

To date we have delivered approximately 4000 sites across the UK, with the vast majority governed by the WebNos Governance system, the UK's only defibrillator governance system.

We are advisors to NHS England and also the Welsh Government, and also work with all 11 of the UK ambulance services, as well as many fire and police.

Like Rotary, we believe in 'service above self'. ●

 For more information, or to obtain your 'Guide to Community Defibrillation' please contact the CHT at our website or call **0845 86 27739**
www.communityheartbeat.org.uk



An old phone box becomes the new home for a defibrillator