



Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) Policy

1. Introduction

“Sudden cardiac arrest is a leading cause of death in Europe, affecting about 700,000 individuals a year. Many victims of sudden arrest can survive if bystanders act immediately while ventricular fibrillation (VF) is still present; successful resuscitation is unlikely once the rhythm has deteriorated to asystole. Electrical defibrillation is well established as the only effective therapy for cardiac arrest caused by VF or pulseless ventricular tachycardia (VT). The scientific evidence to support early defibrillation is overwhelming; the delay from collapse to delivery of the first shock is the single most important determinant of survival. The chances of successful defibrillation decline at a rate of 7-10% with every minute of delay; basic life support will help to maintain a shockable rhythm but is not a definitive treatment”.

2. Scope and Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide the Parish Council with protocols to handle requests for new AEDs.

3. Objectives

The objectives of this policy are:

- To ensure safe, prompt and effective operation of defibrillators
- To ensure accurate record keeping for effective auditing
- To ensure continuity of accountability and responsibility

4. Establishing an AED programme or Public Access Defibrillator (PAD) scheme

Is an AED needed here?

This question may arise because:

- A request has been received from an external organisation
- Someone has placed one in a similar location
- A cardiac arrest has occurred at the location and treatment had to wait for the arrival of the ambulance service. Not unnaturally there is a feeling that the event might have been managed more efficiently
- An approach is made by those promoting the purchase and deployment of AEDs.
- Employers are considering their statutory duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated regulations.
- Occupiers of premises (including sporting and recreational establishments) are considering their civil law ‘duty of care’ to visitors who use their facility.

5. Legal Issues

There is no 'Good Samaritan' legislation in the UK, so there is a major concern regarding the legal situation of those who attempt to resuscitate someone. Might a potential rescuer be sued after trying to resuscitate someone who has collapsed? The short answer is that it is very unlikely that a potential rescuer could be sued. In English Law, for someone to be held liable it would have to be shown that the intervention had left the victim in a worse situation than if there had been no intervention. In the circumstances of this policy (i.e. someone who is technically dead following a cardiac arrest) it is very unlikely that this would arise. No case brought against someone who tried to provide first aid has been successful in the UK, where the courts have tended to look favourably on those who try to help others.

6. Accountability and Responsibilities

The Parish Council will consider applications from outside bodies to enter match funding for the provision of AEDs. The organisation applying for the AED has overall responsibility and accountability for the AED.

7. Acquisition and Disposal of Equipment Acquisition

The Parish Council will purchase defibrillators on behalf of applicants. The application will request matched funding from the Parish Council. The AED will be passed to the applicant and the applicant must then insure and register the AED with the relevant ambulance services. The AED is no longer the responsibility of the Parish Council once handed to the applicant.

8. Defibrillator Training

It is the responsibility of the Responsible Organisation (i.e. Organisation that applied for Defibrillator) to ensure their staff are trained and provided with regular update training to use the models of defibrillator provided.

9. Recording and Reporting

It is the responsibility of the Responsible Organisation to record defibrillator use for adequate auditing and evaluation.

10. Maintenance of AED

It is the responsibility of the Responsible Organisation to monitor the life of the AED battery and organize replacements and to replace pads after use.

April 2019

Policy Review Date: April 2022