

Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	27 June 2023
Title of Report:	Public Access Defibrillators
Lead Member:	Councillor Mrs Mary Aspinall
Lead Strategic Director:	Ruth Harrell (Director of Public Health)
Author:	Ruth Harrell
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Your Reference:	Click here to enter text.
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

On 30th January 2023, a [Motion on Notice](#) was raised and subsequently referred to the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This specifically addressed defibrillators in Council- owned Public Buildings, in particular the Council House. This paper makes recommendations to the Motion on Notice, but it also covers a broader scope.

Recommendations and Reasons

Rapid access to a defibrillator can help to save lives. Having reviewed PCC provision, and the information on the wide distribution of PADs, the following recommendations are made;

That Plymouth City Council

- That PCC works with partners to promote 'Restart a Heart Day' which takes place on and around 16 October each year.
- That PCC works with partners to promote CPR training.
- That all defibrillator owners across Plymouth are encouraged to register their defibrillators on The Circuit [The Circuit - the national defibrillator network](#)
- That all defibrillators owners across Plymouth suitable for public access should consider whether access could be widened to 24/7, if not already.
- That PCC promote schemes to access funding for publicly accessible defibrillators amongst communities.
- That Plymouth City Council commission defibrillators at the locations identified which includes the Guildhall
- That PCC work with partners to provide defibrillators at St Budeaux library and Southway library

Alternative options considered and rejected

Doing nothing would rely on current provision. The closed PADs are limited in the hours that they can be accessed and so this option has been rejected since Councillors and the Public use our sites out of those usual working hours.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

Plymouth's vision is to be one of Europe's most vibrant waterfront cities where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone. Although the risk of needing to use a public access defibrillator, if it is needed, it can save lives; and even if unsuccessful, those present and the family and friends will know that every effort was made.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

Minor – the costs of the additional PADs is low

Financial Risks

None

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

None

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

The action plan will be developed in partnership with the Child Poverty Action Plan and supports the implementation of this Plan to reduce child poverty in the City. This will ensure we consider a whole family, multi-generational approach.

Appendices

**Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Report							
B								

Background papers:

**Add rows as required to box below*

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)
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	<i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Ruth Harrell											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes Date agreed: 05/06/2023											
Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Mary Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care) Approved by email Date approved: 06/06/2023											

INTRODUCTION

The heart is controlled by an electrical impulse that normally makes it beat in a regular rhythm. When a person has a sudden cardiac arrest, the normal rhythm becomes disrupted and disorganised, meaning that their heart stops being able to pump blood around the body and also affecting their breathing.

If this happens to someone, it is essential that CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation) is performed straight away; this helps to keep oxygen moving around the body to the organs that need it

A defibrillator gives a jolt of energy to the heart, which can help restore the heart's rhythm, and get it beating normally again.

The sooner this can happen, the better the chances of survival; data from British Heart Foundation suggests that if a defibrillator is used within 3-5 minutes of cardiac arrest, survival rates jump from 6 per cent to 74 per cent.

This simple piece of equipment is easy to use and doesn't require training, but it could make the difference between life and death – so it's important to find and use a defibrillator in an emergency.

You might also hear a defibrillator be called a defib, an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) or a PAD (Public Access Defibrillator).

Motion on notice

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INFORMATION ABOUT DEFIBRILLATORS

How often is a defibrillator needed?

Across England, there are approximately 30000 cardiac arrests that happen outside a hospital per year. It is estimated that around 70% of these happen at home and only 20% occur in public places.

Broadly then, there might be around 30 cardiac arrest a year in the population of Plymouth, in a public space, in a year. As can be seen from this figure, it is very difficult to predict where one might take place in order to ensure that there is a defibrillator close by and accessible at the time.

How would you decide where one is needed?

Firstly, it is important to note that this is not a system which is overseen by the NHS and very much depends on people (businesses, community and voluntary sector, and communities) coming together to decide to provide one.

The British Heart Foundation suggest that a risk assessment takes place which considers;

- consideration of how many people may be in, near, or passing through your workplace (as the likelihood of cardiac arrest increases with more people)
- the age of those people (as age is a risk factor for heart disease)
- the nature of the location (as remoteness may affect emergency service response times and the availability of alternatives).

They also make the point that this is a relatively low cost device, which could save a life.

How much do they cost?

The costs of defibrillators are of the order of £1700 excluding VAT for an automated defibrillator plus an external cabinet with fitting costs on top of this.

What are the ongoing costs?

A defibrillator should be checked once a week if not used. Batteries and pads need to be replaced approximately every 5 years at a cost of £250 – with pads needing replacement if used for a cardiac arrest.

DEFIBRILLATORS IN PLYMOUTH**Where are they sited?**

Previously, Ambulance Trusts did what they could to keep an up to date list of defibrillators which were available to the public and would direct people to them if required. However, there were ongoing concerns that this was not comprehensive and so opportunities to save lives may have been lost.

In response, a national central database has been set up to manage this information more effectively and efficiently; The Circuit (www.thecircuit.uk). This is run in partnership with all ambulance Trusts, the Resuscitation Council UK and St John Ambulance.

Since this is a relatively new initiative, one of the recommendations in the paper is for PCC to promote this site widely across Plymouth to encourage anyone with a public access defibrillator to register on the site. We have ensured that this has been completed for those owned by PCC.

There are a large number of defibs accessible across Plymouth according to the website, in excess of 120. These range from businesses, community groups, public spaces and schools; many are not available 24/7 and /or have restricted access to the public. It would not be appropriate to list them here since the list is often updated, and the advice from the Ambulance Trust is to call them (using 999) if there is an incident so that they can signpost to the nearest one, as well as giving advice and dispatching an ambulance. However, if people would like to see what is available near to them, a map can be accessed here www.defibfinder.uk.

Do we need more?

There are no standard quantified measures of how many are needed. However, a risk assessment process is recommended by the BHF which suggests that the locality of a defibrillators is assessed on the amount of footfall in the area and the likely age of those people.

Plymouth City Council have undertaken a review of council owned buildings, taking account the proximity of defibrillators to our buildings and the BHF guidance, and have reached the following conclusions;

- 59 of our sites have a defibrillator is close proximity suitable for emergency use.

Of those building reviewed, 6 have been identified as having a high risk profile and therefore a defibrillator is recommended;

- 5 defibrillators to be installed at The Guildhall, Chelson Meadow, Raglan Court, The Reatch Centre and Colwell Lodge, funded by capital borrowing and managed by FM revenue budget
- 2 other locations, St Budeaux library and Southway library to have defibrillators installed funded with partners.

Considering the city as a whole, though it is not possible to answer the question of how many are needed, it is certainly reasonable for a number of actions to be recommended;

- That all defibrillator owners across Plymouth are encouraged to register their defibrillators on The Circuit [The Circuit - the national defibrillator network](#)
- That all defibrillators owners across Plymouth suitable for public access should consider whether access could be widened to 24/7, through use of an external cabinet for example.
- That PCC promote any schemes to access funding for publicly accessible defibrillators amongst communities to widen the reach of these throughout the city

PUBLIC AWARENESS

To increase the chances of someone surviving a cardiac event, it is important to call 999, perform CPR and use a defibrillator if there's one available nearby.

The Resuscitation Council UK along with the British Heart Foundation, British Red Cross, St John Ambulance and others work together to help raise awareness of cardiac arrest and teach CPR. They run "Restart a Heart Day" which takes place on and around 16 October each year and we propose that this is promoted across Plymouth.

Part of this is promoting CPR training - this is an essential part of emergency treatment for someone in cardiac arrest and must be done until a defibrillator is accessed. There are many courses available including this online course from the British Heart Foundation which is free, and takes just 15 minutes. [Learn CPR in 15 minutes | RevivR | BHF - BHF](#)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That PCC works with partners to promote 'Restart a Heart Day' which takes place on and around 16 October each year.
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