

## Automated external defibrillators (AED)

### What is a Defibrillator (AED) ?

An AED is a machine used to give an electric shock when a person is in cardiac arrest, i.e. when the heart stops beating normally. Cardiac arrest can affect people of any age and without warning. Early intervention such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and defibrillation (where appropriate) can help save a person's life.

### Do I need one ?

There is no specific legal requirement for employers to provide AED's in the workplace, or to buildings/sites open to the public. Therefore, in general, AED's will not be used within WCC premises unless the manager/headteacher/Site Responsible Person has undertaken a first aid needs assessment which has identified that one is required. If further advice and guidance on the assessment process is required, contact the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Service.

The Department for Education have produced a guidance document for schools on the provision, installation and maintenance of AED's. Schools should refer to this document in conjunction with this WCC guidance. The document can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/automated-external-defibrillators-aeds-in-schools>

### Who do I buy it from, what type of machine do I need, and how much will it cost me ?

A defibrillator can cost anything between £800- £950 and be bought from various online suppliers. Our advice would be to ensure that you purchase one that is very simple to use with easy instructions, as even with the training people forget what they have been trained to do, therefore the more basic model is better.

After an AED is used, information should be downloaded immediately after the event as the record can provide crucial information that may be needed to ensure that the patient receives the correct treatment afterwards. This downloading will usually be done by the ambulance service. The process is usually straightforward with modern devices (merely connecting the AED to a computer) but **details of how this is done should be clarified when buying the AED. Special software is usually required and is provided by the manufacturer.**

The Department for Education working with the Department of Health has negotiated an arrangement with NHS Supply Chain **for schools to purchase AEDs** from them at reduced cost. Please refer to the guidance for more information.

### Where shall I locate my Defibrillator ?

In view of the importance of responding swiftly to a cardiac arrest, AEDs should be located strategically to ensure that they can be accessed quickly in an emergency. We would also advise that, if it will be available site wide, then it should be sited in view and able to be accessed by anyone that can use it, therefore we would advise that it is located outside. Where complete coverage cannot be provided, devices should ideally be situated no further than a maximum of two minutes brisk walk from the areas where they are most likely to be needed. You should purchase weather proof units if it is to be housed on an outside wall.

The Defibrillator sign (see picture below) should preferably be placed on the front of the unit door. If this is not possible, then place it immediately above, or beside the unit.



## What about training ?

The manager/headteacher/Site Responsible Person is responsible for:

- providing appropriate training to employees who will use the AED.
- maintaining a list of those trained for each site.
- debriefing anyone involved in a resuscitation attempt, regardless of the outcome.

From December 2016 it is a legal requirement for all first aid training providers to include training on the use of defibrillators within the Emergency First Aid and First at Work syllabus, therefore the WCC first aid training providers who deliver first aid at work training via WILMA now include this.

**The provision and use of AED's should be an additional first aid measure along with CPR.**

Employees appointed as first-aiders should already be trained in the use of CPR and therefore this provision should be factored into your first aid needs assessment and for formalising arrangements for the response to incidents of cardiac arrest.

The Resuscitation Council (UK) has produced further guidance information on the training required to use an AED. This information may be useful to the manager/headteacher/Site Responsible Person where AEDs have been located for use in the wider community and to customers, members of the public etc. Their statement can be accessed at <https://www.resus.org.uk/defibrillators/training-required-to-use-an-aed/>

The Department for Education guidance also provides further information for schools on training requirements and sources of training.

## What about maintenance ?

Once the AED is installed it will need to be maintained, therefore regular testing of the equipment and the replacement of batteries and pads will need to be planned for. The manager/headteacher/Site Responsible Person is responsible for:

- ensuring robust arrangements are in place for its installation, use and maintenance.
- ensuring a programme is in place for the maintenance of the AED by an approved authorised engineer (in accordance with the manufacturer instructions) and also by onsite staff. For further details, please go to the maintenance section of [this document from the Resuscitation Council \(UK\) and British Heart Foundation](#)
- notifying Facilities Management Team (if on a Centralised site) with the arrangements that are in place for its use and maintenance etc.
- notifying ambulance services of the location of the AED (this assists 999 operators).
- maintaining a list of those who will be responsible for the maintenance side of things.
- having arrangements in place to receive and action any alerts, safety warnings or recalls issued that relate to the AED, e.g. from the provider, manufacturer, installer etc. The [Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency](#) provides a medical device email alert service on their website which can be subscribed to receive alerts that relate to AED products and others designated as medical devices by the agency.