
Response to the Council Motion relating to the use of phone boxes for defibrillators

Report being considered by:	Health and Wellbeing Board
On:	19 May 2022
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Report Sponsor:	Zakyeya Atcha
Item for:	Decision



1. Purpose of the Report

To consider the motion submitted in the name of Councillor Adrian Abbs at the Council meeting on 8 July 2021, which was referred to Health and Wellbeing Board for further consideration, namely:

This Council notes:

- *That existing telephone boxes are being offered to the council for free or as little as £1.*
- *That telephone boxes make ideal environments to place public access defibrillators due to their existing power and the shelter they offer.*
- *That defibrillators are known to save lives.*
- *That those minutes and seconds are critical to a positive outcome where defibrillators are used.*

This Council, therefore resolves to:

- (1) take a default position where it would adopt any telephone boxes being offered throughout West Berkshire for use as an Open Access Defibrillator location.*
- (2) install an Open Access Defibrillator in each adopted box should another defibrillator not be present within 100 metres.*
- (3) make residents local to that defibrillator aware of its presence*
- (4) provide a "how to use a defibrillator" guide to all residents within 400 metres of the device.*
- (5) ensure the location of the device is added to the emergency services register of defibrillators.*
- (6) undertake the minimal servicing required to keep the devices active or devolve this to the local parish or town council.*

Cost

Costs are maximum £1500 per defibrillator including purchase and installation.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1 It is recommended that the Health and wellbeing Board:

- (a) Contacts West Berkshire Council's elected Members to remind them that they are able to use their Members' bids to part-fund community defibrillators.
- (b) Signposts town and parish councils to existing sources of funding for public access defibrillators.
- (c) Reminds town and parish councils of the need to undertake regular maintenance checks of AEDs and suggests that they nominate a 'guardian' for each unit.
- (d) Encourage South Central Ambulance Service to identify any units that are approaching the end of their useful service life.
- (e) Give consideration to funding a programme of First Aid training in schools and colleges and the wider community, to include the use of defibrillators. (If the Council was to support first aid training, then funding would need to be identified.)
- (f) Encourage residents to download the Save a Life app as part of a publicity campaign to support British Heart Week (7-15 June 2022).

3. Executive Summary

At its meeting in September 2021, the Health and Wellbeing Board considered the motion to Council. It was agreed further work be done with town and parish councils in West Berkshire to consider the feasibility of using redundant phone boxes for AEDs and to identify where additional units should be provided based on a cost-benefit analysis. The Health and Wellbeing Board also agreed to look at funding as well as measures to improve public awareness of AEDs and knowledge of their use.

4. Supporting Information

Previous Work and Recommendations

- 4.1 In response to the motion to Council, Councillor Graham Bridgman (Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board) addressed an enquiry to BT which resulted in a response that 34 telephone kiosks had been adopted across the district (but with no details of the uses they have been put to). The response suggested that there were (apparently) only two "live" kiosks left within West Berkshire that hadn't been adopted or removed - one outside the Post Office in High Street, Hungerford (RG7 0DP) and the other outside the Telephone Exchange in Newbury Street, Lambourn (RG17 8PD). It was considered that this response might underestimate the number of telephone kiosks (suitable for other uses) that exist in the district (whether adopted or not).
- 4.2 Also, officers identified that there are several databases of defibrillators available on the Internet, but most only appear to have partial data sets, and are therefore of limited value, as well as being confusing to members of the public. The Circuit (<https://www.thecircuit.uk/>) is promoted as the national data set and is supported by the British Heart Foundation, St John Ambulance, Resuscitation Council UK and the

Association of Ambulance Chief Executives. This database is also used in the Save a Life mobile app.

4.3 At the meeting on 30 September 2021, the Health and Wellbeing Board agreed to undertake the following research / actions:

- Ask all town/parish councils to confirm the locations of telephone kiosks within the town or parish and whether they are in use or defunct and, if defunct, identify whether they have been adopted via the BT scheme, and if so by whom and for what purpose.
- Ask all town/parish councils to also identify publicly accessible Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) within their local area and to check these against the locations on the Save a Life App, with any missing devices registered via The Circuit.
- A cost-benefit analysis to assess whether additional defibrillators should be provided and where any new devices would be most effectively deployed.
- Following that analysis, and where additional units are considered likely to be effective, to approach town/parish councils and local communities to identify suitable sites (including phone boxes), and to ask those respondents if they would be willing to take responsibility for the installation and ongoing maintenance of any new AEDs.
- An investigation into all available funding streams for new AEDs.
- Initial publicity to ensure residents are aware of existing AED locations and how to locate them in the event of encountering someone experiencing cardiac arrest.
- Consideration of funding a programme of First Aid training in schools and colleges and the wider community, to include the use of AEDs.

Further Work

Parish Council Consultation

- 4.4 Following the meeting, all 63 Parish Councils in West Berkshire were approached and responses have been received from 37.
- 4.5 The vast majority of Parish Councils reported that they already had at least one defibrillator in their area. Of these, only one was found not to be registered on The Circuit.
- 4.6 Only three Parish Councils reported that they did not have any defibrillators – Catmore, Tidmarsh & Sulham, and Wokefield. However, these do not have any major centres of population and none of these indicated that wished to install a defibrillator in their local area.
- 4.7 When asked about phone boxes, 19 Parish Councils confirmed that they had at least one in their area, while 14 did not have one, and 4 did not provide this information. Only 3 Parish Councils reported to still have working phone boxes.

- 4.8 Of the redundant phone boxes, 5 had already been used to accommodate defibrillators, while others had been converted to other uses such as book exchanges or food banks. Only one was reported as not in use for any purpose.
- 4.9 A number of the Parish Councils indicated that they already had a defibrillator at a nearby location (e.g. village hall), so there was no need to utilise a phone box for this purpose. Several of the responses indicated that it was difficult / costly to provide power to phone boxes – this is necessary to supply the heater that maintains the required temperature of at least 4-5°C throughout the winter period.
- 4.10 Parish Councils actively looking to provide additional defibrillators included: Inkpen, Pangbourne and Shaw-cum-Donnington. However, only Inkpen Parish Council indicated that they were looking to utilise a redundant phone box for this purpose.
- 4.11 In addition to consulting the Parish Councils, officers have sought to identify local geographical gaps in the provision of defibrillators using the map in the Save a Life app. Communities that are not currently served include:
- Upper Lambourn
 - West Woodhay
 - Hamstead Marshall
 - Marsh Benham
 - Enborne
 - Upper Basildon
 - Lower Basildon
- 4.12 These are mostly lightly populated areas.

Cost Benefit Analysis

- 4.13 As set out in the report to the September meeting of Health and Wellbeing Board, there is a wealth of data available that demonstrates the benefits of deploying a defibrillator in the event of a patient experiencing a cardiac arrest.
- 4.14 Overall, the use of defibrillators has been shown to be effective in increasing survival rates for victims of cardiac arrest, especially if they are used early. Therefore, the use of a defibrillator during cardiac arrest can be attributed to an individual who is a high quality survivor. The use of a defibrillator is likely to help reduce the demand on the NHS, but also the cost, as patients are more likely to be discharged from hospital.
- 4.15 Unfortunately, in terms of cost-benefit analysis, there do not appear to be many studies. A paper in the [British Medical Journal from 2003](#) suggested that the cost per quality adjusted life year represented poorer value for money than some alternative strategies for improving survival after prehospital cardiopulmonary arrest, such as the use of other trained first responders. However, the study was only looking at provision of defibrillators in major public transport interchanges and it was acknowledged that more widespread provision of public place defibrillators would increase these figures.
- 4.16 A separate study by [Glasgow University](#) suggested that While highly targeted provision of automated external defibrillators in areas of greatest risk, such as casinos and airports, may be cost-effective, it will have little impact at a population level. The

study suggested that provision of more widespread AEDs to sites with lower incidence of cardiac arrest would be unlikely to be cost-effective, and may represent poorer value for money than alternative healthcare interventions in coronary artery disease.

Funding Sources

- 4.17 The cost of a defibrillator can vary depending on the model and its features. Typically, defibrillators can cost between £800 and £2,500 (St John's Ambulance). South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) quote the cost of an AED at £1,850 including a secure box excluding fitting charges.
- 4.18 There does not appear to be any current Central Government funding support for provision of AEDs.
- 4.19 [AED donate](#) works with local communities to fundraise for public access defibrillators.
- 4.20 British Heart Foundation (BHF) has an [online application system](#) for public access defibrillators. However, this funding stream is currently paused due to the Covid 19 pandemic, but it is expected to resume in the future.
- 4.21 Some town/parish councils have secured funding for AEDs through the [National Lottery Community Fund](#), with grants for individual units to larger programmes.
- 4.22 [The Oliver King Foundation](#) provided funding for defibrillators in schools.
- 4.23 There are also a number of bodies offering funding for defibrillators for sports clubs, including:
- [The Club Cricket Charity](#)
 - [The Danny Jones Defibrillator Fund](#) (rugby)
 - [The Football Foundation](#)
- 4.24 In addition, elected Members of West Berkshire Council can also submit internal Community Bids to part-fund defibrillators in their ward. Any bids would require a minimum of 50% match-funding from non-West Berkshire Council sources.

5. Options Considered

- 5.1 The following options have been considered and rejected:
- (1) Do nothing – this is not a preferred option, since it would not delivery any public health benefits.
 - (2) Recommend to West Berkshire Council that they fund the purchase and installation of AEDs in all redundant phone boxes in West Berkshire – this is not considered appropriate, since the locations are often in close proximity to existing sites or are not in optimal locations. Also, there are very few redundant phone boxes available and there would be issues with ongoing maintenance checks and funding for power supplies that would need to be resolved for each site.
 - (3) Recommend to West Berkshire Council that they offer grant funding for additional AEDs in under-served communities – this would have limited public health benefits and is not considered to be the best use of Council funds,

since funding is already available through other channels and other courses of action would be more likely to deliver public health benefits.

6. Proposals

6.1 It is proposed that:

- (a) West Berkshire Council's elected Members be contacted to remind them that they are able to use their Members' bids to part-fund community defibrillators.
- (b) Town and parish councils be signposted to existing sources of funding for public access defibrillators. This would ensure that additional units can be provided where there are gaps.
- (c) Town and parish councils be reminded of the need to undertake regular maintenance checks of AEDs and suggest that they nominate a 'guardian' for each unit. This will ensure that existing units are in a usable condition when needed.
- (d) South Central Ambulance Service be encouraged to identify any units that are approaching the end of their useful service life. This would help to ensure that obsolete units can be withdrawn from service.
- (e) Consideration be given to funding a programme of First Aid training in schools and colleges and the wider community, to include the use of defibrillators. (If the Council was to support first aid training, then funding would need to be identified.) This would ensure that more people are able to administer first aid training and used an AED with confidence in the event that they are first on the scene following a cardiac arrest.
- (f) Residents be encouraged to download the Save a Life app as part of a publicity campaign to support British Heart Week (7-15 June 2022). This would ensure that they are able to easily locate their nearest AED in the event that they encounter someone having a cardiac arrest.

7. Conclusion(s)

If the above proposals were implemented, this would deliver clear public health benefits for residents of West Berkshire.

8. Consultation and Engagement

Consultation was undertaken with:

- All town and parish councils
- Zakyeya Atcha, Public Health Consultant

9. Appendices

None

Background Papers:

West Berkshire Council Agenda Papers (21 July 2021)

West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Board Agenda Papers (30 September 2021)

Pell, J., Walker, A. and Cobbe, S. (2007) Cost-effectiveness of automated external defibrillators in public places: con. *Current Opinion in Cardiology*, 22(1), pp. 5-10. (doi: 10.1097/HCO.0b013e3280118fec)

Walker, Andrew et al. "Cost effectiveness and cost utility model of public place defibrillators in improving survival after prehospital cardiopulmonary arrest." *BMJ (Clinical research ed.)* vol. 327,7427 (2003): 1316. doi:10.1136/bmj.327.7427.1316

Health and Wellbeing Priorities Supported:

The proposals will support the following Health and Wellbeing Strategy priorities:

- Reduce the differences in health between different groups of people
- Support individuals at high risk of bad health outcomes to live healthy lives
- Help families and young children in early years
- Promote good mental health and wellbeing for all children and young people
- Promote good mental health and wellbeing for all adults

The proposals contained in this report will support the above Health and Wellbeing Strategy priorities by improving access to and awareness of AEDs.
