

Learning to save lives as defibrillator arrives

School pupils get skills as part of community health campaign

BY KELLY PATTISON

PUPILS of a primary school near Carlisle are going to be learning life-saving skills as their village becomes the latest place in the county to get a new defibrillator installed.

A Community Public Access Defibrillator – also referred to as a CPAD or AED – has been installed outside Rockcliffe School following fundraising by the school and a grant of £1,000 from county councillor Val Tarbitt.

Its appearance is part of the North West Ambulance Trust's Cardiac Smart initiative which aims to see as many publicly accessible AEDs made available as possible.

BENEFIT

Located on a wall outside the school, it means that the Rockcliffe defibrillator is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Ambulance staff will now be going into school to train staff and pupils and local residents on basic life support skills. They will also be shown how to use the defibrillator.

David Hodgkiss, head teacher at Rockcliffe, said: "Having an AED so close at hand is a huge benefit for the school.

"We hope that we will never have to use it but we feel re-assured knowing that one is available. We are looking to train our pupils and members of our wider community; ensuring that all have these essential life saving skills."

Mrs Tarbitt said: "I am really pleased to have been able to help support such a worthwhile and essential



Emergency equipment: Oliver Barwick, seven, and Yasmin Burrows, six, received the new defibrillator at Rockcliffe School from Lauren Watson, left, of the North West Ambulance Service, and councillor Val Tarbitt, watched by headteacher David Hodgkiss

STEWART BLAIR

piece of equipment for the local community.

"Defibrillators help to ensure that we keep our communities safe by reducing coronary deaths."

In the UK there are over 30,000 cardiac arrests a year outside of hospital – in

homes and communities – where the emergency medical services attempt resuscitation.

However, less than one in 10 victims of cardiac arrest survive to be discharged from hospital.

After a cardiac arrest,

every minute without CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and defibrillation reduces someone's chance of survival by 10 per cent.

Prompt action can improve the chance of survival from seven per cent to more than 50 per cent.

Mapping Cumbria's life-savers

A CAMPAIGN to pinpoint the location of live-saving defibrillators has been met with overwhelming success.

The North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) say since October 1 they've been sent the locations of more than 250 defibrillators via social media – including 40 they didn't know about in the first week of the campaign.

The service has asked Twitter users to send a picture and location details of defibrillators they see or know about using the hashtag "findthedefib".

So far they've received over 2,000 tweets, including those from MPs, schools, gyms, youth groups, fire services, police officers, sports teams, the AA, supermarkets and businesses. When the location of a machine has been divulged the service will then check it against its records, to ensure 999 callers can be directed to the nearest one in the event of a cardiac arrest.

There were 883 incidents of cardiac arrest in Cumbria last year.

NWAS community engagement manager, Andy Redgrave said: "We thought we may get a few pictures but we never imagined the response would be so great.