
The East London man taking on Boots over refusal to pay for life-saving equipment outside every shop'

Having a defibrillator near someone suffering a cardiac arrest can help save their life

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Malcolm Alexander has started a campaign via an online petition to have lifesaving defibrillators installed in Boots.

Thousands of people are demanding that Boots installs lifesaving defibrillators in its High Street stores. The pharmacy giant is refusing to provide the devices that restart the heart despite having staff in store specially trained to use them after a cardiac arrest.

The man at the forefront of the campaign is Malcom Alexander, from Stoke Newington in East London.

Malcolm took on other major retailers such as Sainsbury's, Tesco and M&S, forcing them to agree to put them in all larger stores and is demanding Boots does the same. Malcolm's petition has gained 11,000 signatures in less than 24 hours and is continuing to grow.

Malcolm told MyLondon:

"Boots would be the ideal place because they've got pharmacists that are trained in CPR and the use of defibrillators. They told us we [the voluntary sector] have to pay for them, which I thought was scandalous. Their absolute refusal was quite astonishing.



Malcolm Alexander has started a campaign via an online petition to have life- saving defibrillators installed in Boots chemists on U.K. high streets.

"They can't expect local communities to pay for something which should be absolutely basic. When fewer than 1 in 10 people survive an out of hospital cardiac arrest, having a nearby defibrillator is absolutely vital.

"The point is, if someone collapses you give them CPR but the quicker you get to a defibrillator, the quicker you save someone's life. If you leave it for half an hour, the person is dead. People think CPR saves lives, but it doesn't - it just keeps you alive. You need a defibrillator nearby to save a life."

A defibrillator provides an electric shock that jolts the heart back into a normal rhythm. Public-access defibrillators are used in less than 10% of cardiac arrests with almost all other cases seeing the patient die before they get to hospital.

Malcolm runs the Patient Forum for London Ambulance Service and has been in correspondence with Boots dating back five years lobbying for them to be installed. Last June Boots said they could be installed on the outside of its buildings if his voluntary group paid for them.

A spokesperson for Boots said: "If a local need for a defibrillator is identified, we are happy to support local groups who provide them by having them sited where possible on the exterior of our stores so they can be accessed 24 hours a day.

"Our opening hours are often much shorter than supermarkets and many of our local pharmacies do not open on Sundays, which is why we believe our strategy to support defibrillators to be positioned on the outside of our stores where they can be accessed at any time by a network of local responders best suits the local communities in which we serve."

Malcom said his passion for campaigning for patient safety all began in the 80s, where he successfully prevented the closure of St. Leonards Hospital in Hackney.

"I could see what we could achieve by banding together to fight for better healthcare," he added. But his latest bid is for defibrillators to be commonplace.