With thanks to the British Heart Foundation

**ACCESS TO DEFIBRILLATORS IN LONDON’S SCHOOLS, LOCAL AUTHORITES & PHARMACIES**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Patients’ Forum is campaigning to promote greater access to defibrillators in London’s, schools, colleges and pharmacies to save the lives of young people and adults who suffer a cardiac arrest. A survey of London Councils demonstrated that very few recognised that they might have a leadership role in supporting the local population to train in the use of CPR and defibrillators. We wrongly assumed that the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which is a key strategic tool for the Health and Wellbeing Board, would be used to promote the saving of lives following a cardiac arrest. It became clear that the saving of lives rather than the prevention of illness was not a high priority for the HWBB and public health in most cases.

We focussed on schools because we believe that in the event of a child going into cardiac arrest, that a defibrillator in an area of high footfall in the town centre, would be less useful than one located in schools, and that children should be prime recipients of CPR and defibrillator training. Pharmacies have staff trained in CPR and are ideal locations for defibrillators and Councillors trained in CPR are like to get the message to other bodies in the Councils area. Saving lives of friends, family and strangers is core of this project. Department of Education, guidance still fails to promote the installation of defibrillators and it will take a national campaign to persuade them to produce guidelines that will save the lives of children.

London’s most outstanding local authorities in this survey, were Sutton, Kingston, City of London, Hillingdon, Ealing and Islington. Each of these boroughs had pro-actively worked with schools to install defibrillators. Other boroughs aspired to move in the same direction, especially Barking and Dagenham, Hackney, Richmond, Lewisham, Southwark and Wandsworth. Evidence of training in CPR and defibrillator use was weak in schools, but fortunately, the survey coincided with the European Restart a Heart Day run by the BHF which promoted the training of school children.

We were disappointed that Bromley, Ealing and Sutton have misunderstood the guidelines and advised that training in the use of defibrillators is not necessary.

We had hoped for a more pro-active response from local authorities to working with their local Boots and contacting the Managing Director of Boots to persuade every pharmacy to install an external defibrillator. Several councils did agree to make contact and we see this as an important approach to ensuring the pharmacies live up to their public duty.

**INTRODUCTION**

In 2014 the Department of Education (DE) produced its first guidance on access to defibrillators, following the tragic deaths of children from cardiac arrest.This statutory guidance: “Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions” (DE 2014) provided advice for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies inEngland. This followed ‘good practice’ guidance on first aid for schools published in

2000, which made no mention of the use of defibrillators (DE 2000).

The 2014 DE guidance was updated in June 2017 with: ‘Automated external defibrillators (AEDs). A guide for schools’, which described how they can buy, install and maintain an automated external defibrillator. The guidance recommend that AEDs are located in publicly accessible places where there is a reasonable probability of one cardiac arrest every five years, and suggests that they are located in places with the highest footfall, with consideration given to the fact that there are more cardiac arrests in evening and weekends, e.g. stations, shopping centres, leisure centres and large sports/music venues and stadiums.

In relation to schools, the DE statutory guidance suggests that where a school has children who have high risk medical conditions, that they purchase defibrillators as part of their first aid equipment, but the guidance does not recommend they do so. The decision as to whether to purchase a defibrillator is the responsibility of the Head Teacher and school governors.

In 2017, the Forum approached local authorities in London to seek their help and support to increase the number of schools, colleges and pharmacies in their area which are equipped with defibrillators and staff, pupils and students trained to use them. We approached local authorities, because although they don’t have decision making powers for education, they do have close links with schools and colleges, host public health, have a Health and Wellbeing Boards which produces a Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA) for their area, and they have Councillors in every ward, i.e. wherever there is a school, college or pharmacy, there is also a local Councillor. We also asked local authorities to train Councillors in CPR and the use of defibrillators.

In the past, the Forum has had great success in persuading large organisations like Sainsbury’s and the John Lewis Partnership to install defibrillators and we are currently campaigning to persuade Boots UK to install defibrillators. We want to make London as safe as possible for people suffering a cardiac arrest.

**LOCATING DEFIBRILLATORS**

Defibrillators cost about £600 and can be instrumental in saving the life of a young person or adult that suffers a cardiac arrest. The time taken to start CPR and use a defibrillator is critical in increasing the chances of survival reducing the loss of function, e.g. in brain tissue. Locating defibrillators in sufficient numbers in areas of highest incidence and risk is essential, but so is locating defibrillators in places where there are staff trained to use them like pharmacies.

Other locations such as schools and colleges, where young lives could be lost due to the absence of a defibrillator should be considered as important locations for installation of a defibrillator. Cardiac arrests in young people maybe a rare and unusual phenomenon, but the impact of saving one child’s life using CPR and a defibrillator is profound. Schools and colleges also provide significant potential for teaching young people, and adults who work in the schools how to perform CPR and operate defibrillators. We believe therefore, that the purchase of a defibrillator is a fundamental necessity for all schools as a social good for young people and the wider community and they will live and work in.

The argument based on footfall appears unhelpful and based on a poorly constructed economic model, because in this case the cost is low the outcome potential is high, and even if a school found itself unable to afford a defibrillator, raising funds is possible through crowd-funding and other methods.

We were therefore disappointed that the Director of Public Health in Richmond and Wandsworth, Dr Al Sharifi responded to our request regarding the installation of defibrillators as follows:

“Whilst any cardiac event in a child or adolescent is of concern, in considering whether to install a defibrillator, schools will need to consider the likelihood of a cardiac arrest in the school environment. Only about 2-3% of out of hospital cardiac arrests (OHCAs) occur in children and adolescents, approximately 8–10 cases per 100,000. Based on this, we would expect around 3-4 OHCAs in school-age children in Richmond and Wandsworth per year. Of these, only a small proportion would be expected to take place in the school environment: probably less than 0.5%”.

The loss of a child or adult who has suffered a cardiac arrest because of the absence of adequate numbers of people trained in CPR or because of the absence of a defibrillator is unacceptable in our view, bearing in mind the cost and potential value of a defibrillator. Deaths due to fire in a building, where there no fire extinguishers or a sprinkler system are rightly considered unacceptable – nobody argues that fitting fire extinguishers is a waste of money because fires only happen every 50 years.

**Dr Al Sharifi did however recognise that: “**...CPR is valuable in almost all cases of out-of-hospital cardiac arrest and schools provide opportunities for us to promote health and life-saving skills”.

The British Heart Foundation is actively promoting the installation of public access defibrillators and many London boroughs supported the BHF campaign aimed at encouraging schools to take part in the “Restart a heart” campaign (16th October 2017) and get the training kit:

www.bhf.org.uk/heart-health/how-to-save-a-life/cpr-kits/cpr-training-for-schools

CPR training for schools



Less than 1 in 10 people who have a cardiac arrest outside of hospital in the UK survives. With your help we can change that. Help us create a nation of life savers across the UK by teaching your young people CPR.



Defibrillator Sign Outside Deptford Park School, Evelyn Street, SE8 5RJ

**METHODOLOGY - SURVEY OF LONDON COUNCILS**

In July 2017 the Patients’ Forum wrote to the Leaders of all local authorities in London (with copies to every Councillor, Mayor, Chief Executive and Chairs of Health and Wellbeing Boards) with the following questions:

1. Has your Council developed a programme to ensure that every school and college in your Borough has at least one defibrillator installed - and that staff and students are offered training in CPR, and the use of defibrillators?
2. Are Councillors and Council staff invited to participate in CPR/defibrillator training? Is the installation of defibrillators in schools and colleges part of your JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment)?
3. Will you contact the Managers of your local Boots stores to ask them to purchase defibrillators for Boot’s stores in your borough?
4. Will you write to Elizabeth Fagan, Managing Director, Boots UK Limited, 1 Thane Road West, Nottingham, NG2 3AA, to ask her to purchase defibrillators for Boot’s stores in your borough?

**We explained the background to our questions as follows:**

1. The Department of Education’s guidance (2017) for schools on the installation of defibrillators aims to encourage schools to install defibrillators in case a child goes into cardiac arrest. Staff must be trained to use them – and in addition students and children should be taught CPR and how to use defibrillators to save the lives of both children and adults.
2. Councillors and Council staff should be trained to do CPR and use defibrillators in case of a cardiac arrest in council buildings or the adjacent area.
3. The Forum has run successful campaigns to persuade major supermarkets to install defibrillators in their stores. Boots UK has persistently refused to purchase public access defibrillators to install on the outside of their stores, despite having staff trained to use them and being a natural location for life saving equipment. Councils could promote the campaign objectives by asking Managers of their local Boots and Elizabeth Fagan, Managing Director, Boots UK to install defibrillators.

Where no reply was received we sent the following questions to Councils under the Freedom of Information Act:

**What action has been taken to -**

1) Ensure that, should a child/student go into cardiac arrest at a school or college in your Borough, defibrillators are available - and staff trained to use them - to save a young person’s life.

2) Train all Councillors and Council staff to ensure that they are able to attempt to save the life of a colleague, or other person, in cardiac arrest?

3) Encourage and persuade the Managers of your local Boots, the Chemist, to purchase defibrillators to install at their stores, in order to save the lives of customers and staff who go into cardiac arrest?

4) Encourage and persuade Elizabeth Fagan, Managing Director, Boots UK Limited, 1 Thane Road West, Nottingham, NG2 3AA, to purchase defibrillators to install in all its stores, in order to save the lives of customers and staff who go into cardiac arrest?

**RESPONSE TO OUR REQUESTS**

All but 4 local authorities responded to our requests. Newham failed to respond and refused to answer the FOI request. Hammersmith and Fulham, and Enfield failed to answer and have again been requested to respond, and we missed out Haringey from our request and made a late request to them. Brent did respond but not to the first question concerning installation of defibrillators in schools and training of staff and pupils a response is awaited.

**QUESTION ONE**

**Has your Council developed a programme to ensure that every school and college in your Borough has at least one defibrillator installed - and that staff and students are offered training in CPR, and the use of defibrillators?**

**INSTALLATION**

Of the 27 local authorities that replied to the first question about the installation of defibrillators, 18 said that it is the responsibility of schools to decide on this issue. Local Authorities do not have a statutory duty in relation to operational matters in schools but they do have shared duties in relation to their local JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment) and school nursing teams commissioned by the local authority. Schools also have a ‘school doctor’.

Several Local Authorities did give a very positive response to our questions about installation of defibrillators. Sutton reported most high schools have a defibrillator and primary schools are purchasing them. In Kingston 24 schools are equipped with a defibrillator and 26 are not. The situation is similar in Islington (18 of 59 schools), Lewisham has a least one school with an external defibrillator sign (see photograph above) and Richmond. Lewisham and Southwark are carrying out reviews to determine their approach and in Southwark the HWBB has agreed that installation is the right approach.

In Hillingdon all schools have been offered defibrillators funded by the Council. Ealing is currently procuring defibrillators for every school and Barking and Dagenham, Barnet and Hackney say they are encouraging schools to consider buying them. The City of London has two schools and both have defibrillators and staff who are trained to use them.

Redbridge Council refused to collect data from schools because in their view collecting the data was too expensive, Harrow said it was too expensive to install defibrillators and Havering provided no information.

**SOME OF THE RESPONSES ON INSTALLATION**

**“THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THE NUMBER OF DEATHS FROM CARDIAC ARREST COULD BE DRAMATICALLY REDUCED IF SCHOOLS WERE DEFIBRILLATOR PROTECTED”.**

**LAMBETH COUNCIL – SEPTEMBER 21st 2017**

**“IN RESPONSE TO THE DEs RECENTLY PUBLISHED GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF AEDs IN SCHOOLS, THE COUNCI L IS SEEKING TO ESTABLISH THE FEASABILITY, EFFECTIVENESS AND COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF INSTALLING AND MAINTAINING AEDS IN SCHOOLS”.**

**LEWISHAM COUNCIL – SEPTEMBER 8th 2017**

**“INTEREST IN PURCHASING DEFRIBRILLATORS AND CPR TRAINING IS INCREASING”.**

**TOWER HAMLETS COUNCIL – SEPTEMBER 5TH 2017**

**“WE CAN CONFIRM THAT ALTHOUGH THE NEED FOR DEFIBRILLATORS IS NOT COMPULSORY, WE BELIEVE THAT ALL OF SUTTON’S HIGH SCHOOLS HAVE AT LEAST ONE DEFIBRILLATOR IN PLACE”. SUTTON COUNCIL – SEPTEMBER 7th 2017.**

**WE HAVE WORKED WITH OUR LEISURE PROVIDER, GLL, WHICH HAS INSTALLED DEFIBRILLATORS IN ALL ITS GYMS AND LEISURE CENTRE, AND TRAINED 1,500 OF ITS STAFF ACROSS LONDON. WE HAVE ALSO WORKED WITH THE ARSENAL TO INSTALL AND MAINTAIN DEFIBRILLATORS AT THE EMIRATES STADIUM. ISLINGTON COUNCIL JULY 24th 2017.**

**TRAINING**

**Are staff and students offered training in CPR, and the use of defibrillators?**

Responses to this question were poor, but as it is not the duty of Local Authorities to monitor staff in schools regarding their first aid and defibrillator training this is not surprising. It was however disappointing that very few Boroughs focussed on the value of training pupils/students in life saving skills, as recommended by the BHF e.g. during the ‘European Restart a Heart Day’ on October 16th 2017.

Positive responses were provided by Barking and Dagenham, Hackney, Kingston, Richmond, Southwark and Wandsworth Councils which said they were either encouraging schools to participate in the training of students in CPR and how to use a defibrillator, or considering the matter. Barking and Dagenham, Hackney and Wandsworth specifically mentioned the ‘Restart a Heart’ day. Other schools either did not give an answer or said no information was available. Redbridge again refused to answer the question because of the associated costs. Southwark Council HWBB has included training of pupils, students in their JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment).

We were unable to get a reasonable response from the Southwark Council’s Leader Peter John despite several requests, but we were fortunate to receive assistance from Neil Coyle, MP for Bermondsey and Old Southwark

**SOME OF THE RESPONSES ON TRAINING**

**THE ABILITY TO DO HANDS-ON CPR IS VALUABLE IN ALMOST ALL CASES OF OUT-OF-HOSPITAL CARDIAC ARREST AND THE BHF IS ENCOURAGING SCHOOLS TO TAKE PART IN THEIR ‘RESTART A HEART’ CAMPAIGN ON OCTOBER 16 2017 AND WHICH THE COUNCIL WILL SUPPORT. BARKING AND DAGENHAM COUNCIL – JULY 28th 2017**

**INCREASING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS THROUGH SCHOOLS OF CPR AND THE USE OF DEFIBRILLATORS COULD BE OF SUBSTANTIAL BENEFIT AND WOULD IMPACT WIDELY ACROSS SOUTHWARK. THIS IS RECOMMENDED BY THE BHF AND IS THE APPROACH RECOMMENDED BY THE SOUTHWARK HWBB. SOUTHWARK - SEPTEMBER 11th 2017.**

**THE COUNCIL’S HEALTH AND SAFETY TEAM ENCOURAGES SCHOOLS TO … TRAIN STAFF AND STUDENTS IN THE USE OF DEFIBRILLATORS**

**HACKNEY COUNCIL – SEPTEMBER 15th 2017**

**THIS TOPIC WAS DISCUSSED AT KINGSTON’S HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD ON SEPTEMBER 14th AND THE BOARD APPROVED ENCOURAGING SCHOOLS TO TAKE PART IN THE BRITISH HEART FOUNDATIONS ‘ RESTART A HEART’ CAMPAIGN. THIS IS BEING PROMOTED THOUGHOUT ALL SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KINGSTON.**

**KINGSTON COUNCIL – OCTOBER 10th 2017**

**CPR IS VALUABLE IN ALMOST ALL CASES OF OUT OF HOSPITAL CARDIAC ARREST AND SCHOOLS PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR US TO PROMOTE HEALTH AND LIFE-SAVING SKILLS. THE BHF IS ENCOURAGING SCHOOLS TO REGISTER TO TAKE PART IN THEIR ‘RESTART A HEART’ CAMPAIGN. SCHOOLS CAN APPLY FOR A TRAINNG KIT FROM THE BHF. RICHMOND AND WANDSWORTH COUNCILS – AUGUST 16th 2017**

**QUESTION TWO**

**Are Councillors and Council staff invited to participate in CPR/defibrillator training? Is the installation of defibrillators in schools and colleges part of your JSNA?**

Fifteen councils confirmed that their staff were first aid and defibrillator trained and ten councils confirmed that their staff are first aid trained but did not refer to defibrillator training.

Some Councils emphasised that the guidance states that training in the use of a defibrillator is unnecessary, e.g. Bromley, Ealing and Sutton Councils said: the DE’s own guidance states: ‘AEDs are designed to be used by someone without any specific training.

Few Councils responded to our question about the training of Councillors, but Bexley and Lambeth said that some Councillors had been trained. Lewisham, Waltham Forest and Wandsworth said that the matter is being considered and Hounslow said training was available on request. Hackney, has agreed to offer training to all new Councillors in the May 2018 cohort. Camden and Kensington and Chelsea have the matter under development or consideration.

Hillingdon Council provided interesting details of their extensive training programme:

Since 2015 the following training events have been offered to First Aiders / staff within Hillingdon.  The table below shows the training that has been supplied providing delegates with the tools to assist a colleague, or young person, going into cardiac arrest**.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Course title** | **No. of bookings** |
| Emergency First Aid at Work Level 2 Award | 259 |
| **Emergency Paediatric First Aid - Level 3 - 1 day** | **11** |
| First Aid at Work Level 3 Award | 121 |
| **Paediatric First Aid - Level 3 - 2 day** | **57** |
| Refresher First Aid at Work - Annual Update | 15 |
| **Refresher Paediatric First Aid at Work-Annual update** | **1** |
| Renewal First Aid at Work  Level 3 Award | 76 |
| **Automated External Defibrillator Training (LBH) Defibrillator Training (London Ambulance Service)** | **20 15** |

**SOME OF THE RESPONSES – TRAINING OF COUNCILLORS AND STAFF**

**ANY MEMBER OF STAFF CAN USE DEFIBRILLATORS AS THEY DO NOT REQUIRE TRAINING. YOU JUST FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN BY THE MACHINE. BROMLEY COUNCIL AUGUST 21st 2017.**

**ANYONE CAN USE AN AED – IT IS NOT A LEGAL REQUIREMENT THAT PEOPLE/STAFF HAVE TRAINING IN ORDER TO USE ONE. EALING COUNCIL 29th AUGUST 2017.**

**WE ALWAYS ENCOURAGE AND HAVE ADEQUATE NUMBER OF STAFF AND COUNCILLORS TRAINED IN BOTH FIRST AID AND THE USE OF DEFIBRILLATORS AND ALSO HAVE IN ADDITION, ON-GOING ARRANGEMENTS IN PLACE FOR FREE “TRAIN THE TRAINER” COURSES TOWARDS A HEARTSTART INSTRUCTOR’S CERTIFICATE FOR THOSE WITH NO PREVIOUS FIRST AID OR TEACHING EXPERIENCE.**

**LAMBETH COUNCIL SEPTEMBER 21st 2017.**

**THE COUNCIL WILL CONSIDER STRATEGIES INCLUDING PROMOTING C TRAINING IN SCHOOLS AND EXTENDING CPRTRAINING TO COUNCILLORS AND OTHER COUNCIL STAFF. LAMBETH COUNCIL SEPTEMBER 21st 2017.**

**YOUR PROPOSAL THAT ALL COUNCILLORS AND COUNCIL STAFF BE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN CPR/DEFIBRILLATOR TRAINING IS A VERY POSITIVE ONE. WALTHAM FOREST SEPTEMBER 7th 2017.**

**QUESTION THREE/FOUR  
Will you contact the Managers of your local Boot’s stores and write to Elizabeth Fagan, Managing Director, Boots UK Limited, 1 Thane Road West, Nottingham, NG2 3AA, to ask them to purchase defibrillators in Boot's stores in your borough.**

The Forum targeted Boots UK in this campaign because they have the largest number of pharmacies in the country, and the space and resources to install defibrillators in a significant number of their stores. We developed effective communications with the leadership of Boots and facilitated discussions between them and the London Ambulance Services. As a result Boots UK agreed to fund the fixing of external defibrillators at their stores if the LAS or other organisations are willing to purchase the defibrillators for them. In view of the huge profits made by Boots UK and the fact that a considerable proportion of their profits come from prescriptions funded by the NHS/UK taxpayer, we thought this response unreasonable. We thought that local authorities, Health and Wellbeing Boards and public health would value strong working relationships with their local pharmacies as suppliers of NHS care, and that they would welcome the opportunity to raise with them the opportunity for Boots to fund and fix defibrillators to their stores to both save the lives of staff, patients and member of the community who suffer a cardiac arrest. We were of the opinion that Boots UK would see this opportunity a chance to enhance their reputation.

The response from local authorities to this question was poor with some notable exceptions. The City of London immediately contacted their local branches of Boots UK and their Chief Commoner also agreed to make contact with Boots UK’s chief executive. Barking and Dagenham, Hackney, Richmond and Wandsworth all responded positively to our request for them to make contact with Boots. Islington and Tower Hamlets said they would explore the promotion of public access defibrillators and 21 local authorities would not make contact with Boots either locally or nationally – in some cases local authorities stated that they thought it was inappropriate to make contact with Boots, even though it is a major supplier of health care in every borough in England and receives about £2bn a year for dispensing prescriptions.

**SOME OF THE RESPONSES - PHARMACY**

**ASDA IN BARKING AND DAGENHAM AS PART OF ASDA’S NATIONAL SCHEME HAS A DEFIBRILLATOR IN ALL ITS STORES AND STAFF TRAINED TO THEM. IT MAY THEREFORE BE THAT OUR LOCAL BOOTS CAN BE PERSUADED TO FOLLOW ASDA BARKING’S EXAMPLE AND PARTICIPATE IN THE SCHEME WITH LAS SUPPORT. BARKING AND DAGENHAM COUNCIL. JULY 28th 2017.**

**THE COUNCIL IS WILLING TO LEND ITS SUPPORT BY CONTACTING THE MANAGER OF LOCAL BOOTS AND THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF BOOTS UK TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO CONSIDER JOINING THE DEFIBRILLATOR SCHEME, SO THAT COVERAGE ACROSS AREAS OF HIGH FOOTFALL CAN BE IMPROVED. BARKING AND DAGENHAM COUNCIL. JULY 28th 2017.**

**THE CITY OF LONDON PUBLIC HEALTH TEAM HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE BOOTS LOCAL AREA MANAGER TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO INSTALL DEFIBRILLATORS IN THEIR BRANCHES IN THE CITY OF LONDON. CITY OF LONDON SEPTEMBER 12th 2017**

**CROYDON IS A "HEART TOWN" AND HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN SUPPORTING THE PURCHASE AND LOCATION OF DEFIBRILLATORS AROUND CROYDON. IF FURTHER RESOURCES BECOME AVAILABLE WE WILL ENSURE THAT WE ENCOURAGE BOOTS TO APPLY. CROYDON COUNCIL. OCTOBER 13th 2017**[**www.croydon.gov.uk/healthsocial/phealth/hearttown/heart-town**](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/healthsocial/phealth/hearttown/heart-town)

**GOING FORWARD THE COUNCIL WILL CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE BUSINESSES AND OTHER VENUES IN AREAS OF HIGH FOOTFALL WITHIN THE BOROUGH TO CONSIDER JOINING THE DEFIBRILLATOR SCHEME ACCREDITED BY THE LAS. RICHMOND COUNCIL AUGUST 16th 2017**

**THE COUNCIL SUPPORT THE RESUSCITATION COUNCILS GUIDANCE THAT DEFIBRILLATORS SHOULD BE AVAILABLE IN PUBLIC PLACES WITH AND INCREASED FOOTFALL OR AN INCREASED RISK OF CARDIAC ARREST. THE COUNCIL HAVE NOT YET LOBBIED FOR ACTION FROM BOOTS UK. TOWER HAMLETS COUNCIL AUGUST 16th 2017.**

**WE WILL BE WRITING TO BOOTS SHORTLY TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO PURCHASE AN AED AND JOIN THE LAS DEFIBRILLATOR ACCREDITATION SCHEME. WANDSWORTH COUNCIL AUGUST 16th 2017.**

**ISLINGTON WILL BE DOING SOME TARGETED WORK IN AREAS OF HIGH FOOTFALL, TO ENCOURAGE BUSINESSES AND OTHER VENUES TO CONSIDER JOINING THE DEFIBRILLATOR SCHEME ACCREDITED BY THE LAS. ISLINGTON COUNCIL JULY 24th 2017**

**THE COUNCIL HAS A RELATIONSHIP WITH BOOTS THROUGH THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICESTHAT ARE COMMISSIONED IN LOCAL OUTLETS; SENIOR MANAGERS HAVE CONFIRMED THAT THEY WILL ASK THEM TO CONSIDER INSTALLING DEFIBRILLATORS AND TRAINING STAFF IN THEIR USE. HACKNEY COUNCIL THE COUNCIL WILL ALSO WRITE TO THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF BOOTS TO SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN. HACKNEY COUNCIL SEPTEMBER 15th 2017.**

**CONCLUSION**

We assumed Councils would see a link between their public health role, the partnership created by their Health and Wellbeing Board and their school nurse commissioning role, as an opportunity to promote the health and safety of children in their borough, reducing the risk of death by cardiac arrest and teach children basic life saving skills. These skills will enable them to save the lives of friends, family members and the unknown stranger who may collapse nearby. The stories of such life saving events are inspiring and to have been the life saver is a great event in the person’s life.

The majority of authorities (18 out of 28 responses) dismissed our request for information about their role in promoting the installation of defibrillators as ‘not their business’, and the responsibility of head teachers and school governors. Most similarly took that view in relation to the training of school students in CPR and the use of defibrillators.

The 2017 Guidance for schools from the Department of Education, unfortunately does not require the installation of a defibrillator in every school, but suggests that it would be a good idea in appropriate circumstances, if the conditions are right and a need is identified. It was probably like this when campaigners suggested that schools should have fire extinguishers.

We wrote to every Councillor because we assumed they would use their positions on Council committees to push this campaign forward. We also wrote the all the leading figures in each Council including the Leader, Chief Executive and Mayor. It was clear from the responses we received that some Councillors are taking a leading position on this issue and other have used our request to promote the access to defibrillators and training in their areas.

Areas such as Sutton, Kingston, City of London, Hillingdon, Ealing and Islington have advanced well and other area such as Barking and Dagenham, Hackney, Richmond, Lewisham, Southwark and Wandsworth are moving in the right direction. In some cases e.g. in Southwark and Kingston the HWBB has agreed that installation and training is the right approach. Lambeth agreed that installation and training was a good idea but declined to take action. Tower Hamlets requested a meeting to discuss the campaign and more information but provided no follow-up.

Training in the use of defibrillators is a contested area. Some local authorities have misunderstood the advice they have been given relating totraining in the use **of** defibrillators. The advice says ‘if you haven’t been trained don’t worry – it better to have a go at saving a life than retreat because of a lack of training’. Some local authorities, e.g. Bromley, Ealing and Sutton, have unfortunately concluded that training is unnecessary – which isn’t true. Training in the use of defibrillators is essential to use them well, but untrained people can still use them successfully if necessary. Ironically, Sutton is one of the best boroughs in London for access to defibrillators.

It was disappointing that very few Boroughs focussed on the value of training pupils/students in life saving skills, despite the ‘European Restart a Heart Day’ on October 16th 2017 and the work of the BHF to alert schools and Councils of the importance of CPR and defibrillation. Barking and Dagenham, Hackney, Richmond and Wandsworth were the exceptions and the potential leaders amongst London boroughs on this issue, but the focus on footfall is a problem that needs to be resolved.

We asked about the training of Councillors because it seemed likely that if many Councillors were trained in CPR and the use of defibrillators, that as the elected leaders in each borough, that they would be a catalyst to the development of local schemes in council buildings, schools, colleges and pharmacies. We asked about the use of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) because this document describes the local strategy to reduce morbidity and mortality. The JSNA is generated by the Health and Wellbeing Board which is a multi-agency body. We could not identify any systematic training of Councillors but Lambeth and Waltham Forest gave a very positive response, and Hackney Council said they would train their new cohort of Councillors in 2018. This is a model that we will propose to other boroughs. Hillingdon was exemplary in its ability to describe in detail the training provided to staff in relation to saving the lives of adults and young people. The response to our request that Councils contact their local Boots UK and the MD of Boots UK was received with interest by some Councils, but not much action followed. The resistance of Boots to purchasing defibrillators is baffling. They have probably assessed that the chance of any organisation purchasing a defibrillator for them to install is negligible so they can claim the ‘high and mighty’ ground by offering to install if others will buy.

The City of London, Barking and Dagenham, Hackney, Richmond and Wandsworth all agreed to make contact with Boots UK and we look forward to seeing the response. Clearly there are mixed feelings about the contact between local authorities and the commercialisation of medicine which Boots UK so strongly represents. But, they have taxpayer’s money though NHS funding of prescriptions (£2bn), medication reviews (up to £11,200/yr) and flu jabs at £9.14 each and should be held to account just as GPs are.

FOOTFALL

Whilst the footfall argument is valuable as a means of determining where a defibrillator should be fixed, bearing in mind the cost of each defibrillator, the argument has unfortunately been used to reduce access to defibrillators in locations where they would be of both life saving and social benefit, e.g. schools and colleges. The argument that a defibrillator should be fixed because of high footfall e.g. airports and stations, is a good one, but its converse – the argument for not fixing is illogical if resources are available. It is only when there is a tension due to a shortage of resources that a location might be rejected in favour of another. Every location where a defibrillator if fixed and the users of that location trained in its use, is a positive benefit to that community and wider society. We would like to see the footfall argument abandoned for schools and colleges in favour of a social model of installation and regular training.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. HWBB in every London local authority should consider the installation of defibrillators in schools and colleges and training of young people in order to reduce mortality in their area and equip future generations to save lives.
2. HWBB should ensure that all areas of high footfall have an appropriate number of defibrillators and staff trained to use them.
3. The Guidance for schools from the Department of Education should advise schools to install defibrillators and to train young people in their use.
4. Local councils should include CPR and defibrillator training in the induction programme for new Councillors in May 2018.
5. All organisations with a defibrillator should train staff in their use in addition to CPR.
6. Councils should develop a relationship with pharmacists though the Local Pharmaceutical Committees and directly with pharmacists that are not part of the LPC, and use this link to encourage the installation of defibrillators in every pharmacy.
7. Footfall should only be used as an argument not to install defibrillators when resources are challenged. The argument should not be used to resist fixing defibrillators in schools.

**REFERENCES**

Department of Education (2000) *Guidance on first aid in schools*; publication ref. DFEE-20025-2000 - www.gov.uk/government/publications/first-aid-in-schools

Department of Education (2014) Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions, DE 2014publication ref. DFE-00393-2014 – www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3

Department of Education (2017) Automated external defibrillators (AEDs). A guide for schools

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\_data/file/620028/AED\_guide\_for\_schools\_\_June\_2017\_.pdf

Resuscitation Council UK (2015) Pre-hospital resuscitation.

www.resus.org.uk

**KEY CONTACTS**

* Arrhythmia Alliance – http://www.heartrhythmcharity.org.uk
* Association of Ambulance Chief Executives – http://www.aace.org.uk
* British Heart Foundation – http://www.bhf.org.uk
* British Red Cross – http://www.redcross.org.uk
* IMPS (Injury Minimization Programme for Schools) – <http://www.impsweb.co.uk>
* Chris Hartley-Sharpe, Head of the First Responders, HQ Annexe, 18-20 Pocock Street, London, SE1 0BW
* Resuscitation Council (UK) – http://www.resus.org.uk
* Royal Life Saving Society UK – http://www.rlss.org.uk
* SADS UK – http://www.sadsuk.org
* St John Ambulance – http://www.sja.org.uk
* The Oliver King Foundation – http://www.theoliverkingfoundation.co.uk