# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Additional £0.5 million funding to improve access to defibrillators** |
| **DATE**  | **25 February 2022** |
| **BY** | **Eluned Morgan MS, Minister for Health and Social Services** |

February is National Heart Month, an opportunity for us all to improve our heart health. Alongside this, a month long Defibuary campaign takes places each year **to raise awareness of out of hospital cardiac arrests and equip people with the skills and confidence to save a life.**

In Wales, 80% of cardiac arrests occur in the home and in many cases, their only chance of survival could be the action taken by their loved ones. Knowing what to do, being familiar with CPR as well as how to use a use and locate your nearest defibrillator, can potentially help improve someone else’s chances of survival.

When you ring 999, the call taker will stay on the line and will explain step by step what you will need to do. They will also tell you if there is a defibrillator nearby and ask if there is some else that can go and collect it.

Today I am announcing a further £0.5 million funding to make more defibrillators available to community groups, sports grounds and public organisations. This, together with the £0.5 million I announced in September last year brings our investment in improving access to defibrillators across Wales to £1 million in this financial year.

The previous funding helped purchase 500 defibrillators for which community groups and organisations could apply through Save a Life Cymru.

Organisations wishing to apply were asked to meet a number of access criteria, including that:

* There is currently no defibrillator within 500m of the proposed site;
* The organisation purchases or fundraises for a heated defibrillator cabinet, which will be installed on an external wall in an area accessible to the public 24/7
* There is an electricity supply so the defibrillator can be properly maintained;
* The organisation will register the defibrillator on The Circuit database;
* They will appoint a defibrillator guardian (for regular maintenance)
* Awareness sessions about CPR/defibrillation skills are held for individuals involved in the organisation/group.

Delivery of the defibrillator will only be undertaken once the applicant confirms they have complied with the criteria.

From the previous funding, Save a Life Cymru received 490 applications from local and town councils, residents’/housing associations, gyms, schools, sporting venues/organisations, childcare facilities and places of worship. So far, 433 applications have been approved, several were withdrawn and others are awaiting further information. 19 applications were not approved as they did not meet the criteria.

One successful application was from a residents’ association in Abergele, North Wales, which organised a ‘Go Fund Me’ page to raise funds to purchase the defibrillator cabinet.

Save a Life Cymru believes there is still significant demand from communities for more defibrillators and that there will be a good response to a new application round.

We would encourage all communities and organisations which already have defibrillators to register them on [The Circuit](https://www.thecircuit.uk/) – the national defibrillator network which maps defibrillators so that ambulance services can direct bystanders to the nearest device at the crucial moment. So far 6,188 in Wales are registered.

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Senedd returns I would be happy to do so.