

# LIFE SAVING SKILLS

Simple Skills, Save Lives

**NHS**  
North West  
Ambulance Service  
NHS Trust



## WOULD YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY?

### REMEMBER – DRSABC!

**ANGER**– Keep calm and check the scene is safe to approach.

**ESPONSE**– Shout “*Are you alright?*” and shake the person’s shoulders.

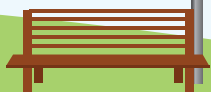
**SHOUT FOR HELP**– Send someone for help and call 999.

**AIRWAY**– Tilt the head back gently to open the airway.

**BREATHING**– Check for ‘normal breathing’:

- Look for the chest rising and falling
- Listen for ‘abnormal sounds’- infrequent and noisy gasps are called agonal breathing and are a sign of cardiac arrest
- Feel for breath on your cheek

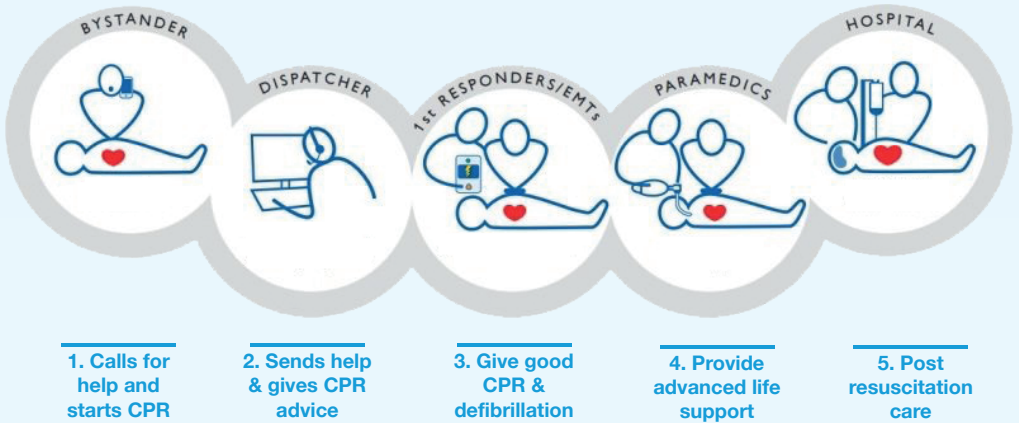
**COMPRESSIONS**– If the patient is not breathing normally, start hands only CPR; pushing hard and fast in the centre of the chest.



If there is a defibrillator nearby, send someone to get it. This could be vital in saving someone’s life.

# CHAIN OF SURVIVAL

When someone has a cardiac arrest, if certain things happen in a certain order, their chances of survival are hugely increased. This concept is known as the 'Chain of Survival'.



## CARDIAC ARREST VS HEART ATTACK



A cardiac arrest is the most extreme emergency and happens when the heart stops beating in a normal way, preventing blood from pumping around the body.

Someone who is having a cardiac arrest will suddenly lose consciousness and will stop breathing normally. Unless immediately treated by CPR, the person will die within minutes.

### HOW TO RECOGNISE A CARDIAC ARREST:

- They are unconscious and not breathing
- No obvious signs, symptoms or warning signs prior to patient collapsing
- Always remember cardiac arrest can happen at any age, anytime, anywhere



# 60,000

Approximately 60,000 people suffer an out of hospital cardiac arrest every year in the UK and



# 1 IN 10

Currently only 1 in 10 people will survive.



A heart attack can lead to a cardiac arrest but they are not the same thing.

A heart attack happens when there is a sudden interruption to the blood supply to part of the heart muscle and it is starved of oxygen rich blood. It is likely to cause chest pain and damage to the heart.

## HOW TO RECOGNISE A HEART ATTACK:

The person will usually be conscious, breathing and describing such symptoms as:

- Heavy or crushing chest pains
- Pains down the arms and into their back
- Nausea and vomiting
- Shortness of breath
- Pallor and clamminess

## EARLY TREATMENT IS VITAL

A heart attack is a serious life-threatening emergency and can lead to cardiac arrest if untreated.

Both a heart attack and a cardiac arrest are life-threatening medical emergencies and require immediate medical help – call 999 immediately.



# DEFIBRILLATORS

An automated external defibrillator (AED) is commonly referred to as a defibrillator or 'defib'. It is a device that gives an electric shock to the heart through the chest wall to someone in cardiac arrest.

AEDs can be used by anyone – even those without awareness training - in the event of a sudden cardiac arrest.

Without defibrillation a person in cardiac arrest will die. There are many defibrillators in public places which anyone can use in an emergency.

If an AED is used in the first few minutes of collapse, the person's chance of survival is significantly increased.

## FEATURES OF AN AED INCLUDE:

- Can be used by anyone!
- Gives verbal prompts on how to use it and what to do next.
- Found in most public places where there may be a high footfall of people – look out for those in your area.
- An AED will only deliver a shock to someone who needs one; it is not the responsibility of the user to decide whether a shock is necessary.
- A person suffering a cardiac arrest is clinically dead - you will never put that person into a worse condition.
- AEDs can be used on pregnant ladies.
- AEDs can improve chance of survival up to 80%
- No servicing is required; AEDs self-test and indicate when batteries and pads are required.



Speak to the ambulance service about getting an AED for your community, workplace or school.

[www.nwas.nhs.uk](http://www.nwas.nhs.uk) [www.nwas-responders.info](http://www.nwas-responders.info) [www.cardiacsmart.nwas.nhs.uk](http://www.cardiacsmart.nwas.nhs.uk)



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