

The defibrillator and how to use it

The defibrillator is easy to use as it speaks to you, giving voice prompts. It tells you what you can do to save the life of a person in cardiac arrest, whilst waiting for the ambulance to arrive. When you turn the defibrillator on you are prompted immediately to call the emergency services, 999. The defibrillator will then tell you to remove clothing from the patient's chest and stick two pads (electrodes) to the person; a diagram shows where the pads are to be placed. Once the pads are in place the defibrillator will analyse across the heart and a defibrillator shock will be advised if its needed. This shock can restart the heart. Again the defibrillator will tell you exactly what to do. It's like having a friend and tutor at your side helping you through the process. (If the defibrillator doesn't recommend a shock it will not administer this, even if an error is made by the rescuer). When you make the emergency call, the operator will stay on the phone with you to help give you confidence as you administer CPR and the defibrillator.

SADS UK and Ambulance services endorse defibrillators being in public places. The Ambulance Service responds as quickly as they can and they know when they arrive at the scene of a cardiac arrest that there is a much better chance of the patient surviving if the patient has received early chest compressions and defibrillation. The paramedic is able to take over and carry out more advanced treatment if it's needed.