

RUGBYSAFE ESSENTIAL GUIDE

Automated External Defibrillators (AED)

What are they?

An Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is a life-saving device that is used to give a controlled electric shock in some cases of cardiac arrest.

When and how are they used?

In the UK approximately 60,000 people sustain cardiac arrest outside hospital and are treated by emergency medical services (EMS) each year. Defibrillation is well established as the only effective therapy for certain cardiac arrests (approximately 59% - 65% of cases).

If defibrillation is delivered promptly, initial survival rates as high as 75% have been reported. The chances of successful defibrillation decline at a rate of about 10-20% with each minute of delay. It should be recognised however that CPR (combined chest compression and rescue breathing or chest compressions alone) will help to maintain a shockable rhythm until a defibrillator arrives but is not a definitive treatment.



Defibrillation is not however used in all cases of cardiac arrest, even if available immediately, an AED would not be of use in 25% - 30% of heart disturbances caused by cardiac arrest, and CPR is the appropriate treatment. CPR should be commenced in all cases of cardiac arrest and the AED applied. The AED will analyse the heart rhythm and will advise on whether defibrillation is advised. In just under a 1/3 of cases, defibrillation is not advised but CPR should be continued.

Do we need one?

80% of cardiac arrests occur in the home, and of those in public places under 1% occur in a leisure facility or sports ground.

AEDs are easily used by lay people with some training, and it is recommended by bodies such as the Resuscitation Council UK, that they are of most value when placed in areas where there is a high incidence of cardiac arrest and where it's difficult for an ambulance to get to quickly e.g. rural areas, communities with poor road networks or traffic congestion, and where large crowds gather.

When considering the purchase of an AED; consideration must be given to the cost for ongoing maintenance and regular training of users. The general consensus among experts is that refresher training should occur every six to 12 months. The UK Heart Charities collectively have supplied more than 8,000 defibrillators in community settings but still advocate that:

“It would be better if more people were trained in CPR, which buys time before defibrillation.”

Being able to do CPR more than doubles the chance of survival. This can be taught as part of a first aid course and the RFU's Emergency First Aid course includes CPR training – more information on this and other courses is available at www.englandrugby.com/rugbysafe/education.



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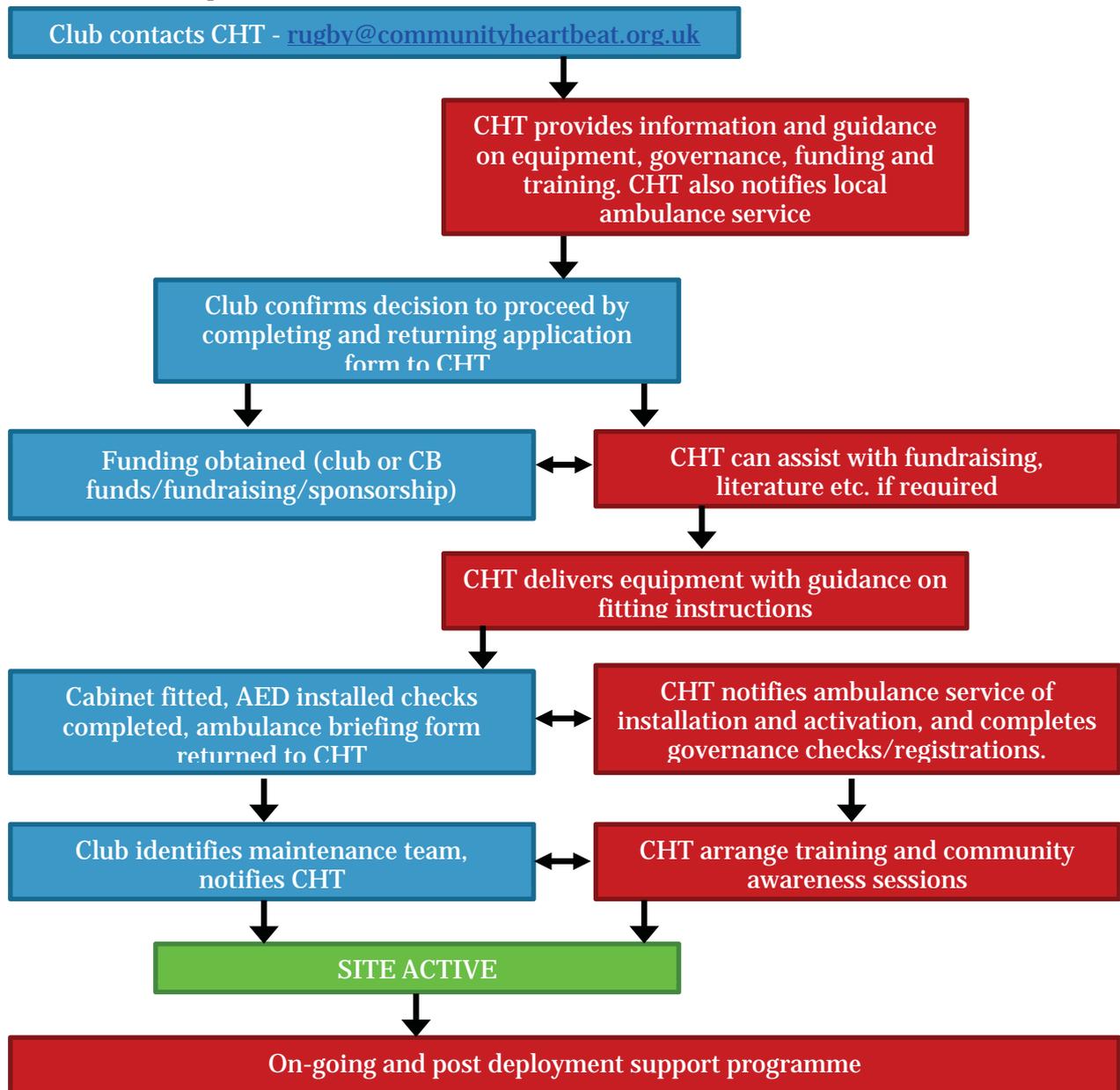
How do we get an AED?

The RFU are working with the Community Heartbeat Trust, a leading charity in community public access defibrillator schemes. They are linked with the NHS Ambulance service and can provide support to clubs, schools and colleges/universities with all aspects of procurement, training and maintenance.



For more information to go: www.englandrugby.com/rugbysafe/playing-environment or www.communityheartbeat.org.uk/rugby-clubs-schools

AED Procurement process:



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