

Socially Responsible Guildford Cathedral installs a State of the Art DOC Defibrillator

Guildford Cathedral is primarily a place of worship with three or four services held every day of the week all year round. The Cathedral is also a major visitor attraction and holds many concerts and events. Within the grounds there is a shop, restaurant and the Diocesan Education Centre. The Cathedral building itself welcomes over 150,000 people each year.

Cardiac arrest is when the heart stops pumping blood around the body. When someone has a cardiac arrest, defibrillation needs to be prompt, as there is between a three and five minute timeframe to take action. For every minute that passes without defibrillation chances of survival decrease by 14%. Research shows that applying a controlled shock within five minutes of collapse provides the best possible chances of survival. Cardiac arrests are one of the major causes of mortality in Europe - 700,000 per annum. Over 124,000 people suffer a heart attack every year in the UK; this is the equivalent to one every five minutes.

In the UK, only 5% of cardiac or heart attack victims survive outside of a hospital, unless they get adequate medical assistance very quickly. In the USA the chance of surviving a heart attack outside of hospital has risen to about 40%, due to the large number of defibrillators available in public places. A defibrillator is a life-saving machine that gives the heart an electric shock in some cases of cardiac arrest. This is called defibrillation and can save lives. In the UK, there is a strong commitment to deploy defibrillators throughout the country.

For this reason, Guildford Cathedral has had a fully automated external defibrillator installed. It is supplied, fitted and maintained by BST (Butler Safe Technologies) and is their state of art DOC system, which is the world's first fully connected and operational defibrillator. The Red Cross provide training for the system. The Cathedral has a team of First Aiders within its staff who are all going to undergo training. However, any person, medically-trained or not, is authorised to use automated external defibrillators.

The main benefits of this revolutionary new DOC system are:

- The moment the defibrillator unit is removed from its case a GPRS signal is sent directly to Mondial Assistance. A coordinator at Mondial Assistance immediately makes contact with the person holding the unit through the two way speaker system (the unit acts as a hands-free mobile telephone). They establish that it is an emergency situation (rather than the unit being moved in error) and send the GPS coordinates straight to the emergency services letting them know that it is a cardiac arrest. In other words those at the scene do not need to call for an ambulance which can waste valuable minutes.
- The Mondial Assistance operator continues to talk to the person who will be operating the unit and will guide them through the process. Guidance will differ depending on the situation as the emergency may be in the Cathedral building, one of the other buildings on site or even outside in the car park in the pouring rain.
- As soon as the defibrillator is correctly attached to the patient, a full ECG (electrocardiogram) is carried out. This determines whether that person is in fact suffering from an arrest. This takes away any judgement needed by the user. The ECG reading will determine the power of the shock required. The unit will give clear instructions to the user to stand back from the patient before shocking and will then talk them through the CPR procedure. It even provides an audio metronome rhythm for the heart massage rate.
- The unit is monitored remotely 24 hours a day to make sure that it is fully charged and in full working order. Full maintenance on equipment is provided by BST. Because of this **all liability** remains with BST, not the Cathedral.

Guildford Cathedral has joined the mission to deploy defibrillators throughout the UK. If you would like further information, please contact Mrs Penny Peters, one of Guildford Cathedral's first aiders, at penny@guildford-cathedral.org.