



Community First Responders

Frequently Asked Questions

► **What is a First Responder?**

The Resuscitation Council (UK) states that a First Responder is “a person, trained as a minimum in basic life support and the use of a defibrillator, who attends a potentially life-threatening emergency.”

► **Who is a Community First Responder?**

A Community First Responder is a local volunteer who agrees to undertake training in Basic Life Support. This then enables them to provide life saving treatment to those people within the community who are critically ill, in the first few minutes prior to the arrival of an ambulance.

► **Why do we need Community First Responders?**

In 1990 Dr Richard Cummins from Seattle, USA discovered if a series of events took place, in a set sequence, a patient suffering from a heart attack stood a greater chance of survival. These events are now known as the 'Chain of Survival'.



- *Early Recognition & Call for help*
- *Early CPR*
- *Early Defibrillation*
- *Early Advanced Care*

Community First Responders are an integral and valued link in the 'Chain of Survival' in areas that experience an extended journey time, as they can provide essential simple treatments in those crucial first few minutes prior to the arrival of the Ambulance.

► **Do Community First Responders replace Ambulances?**

NO, as with the 'Chain of Survival' Community First Responders can provide the early CPR & Defibrillation but in order to complete the sequence and increase the patient's chance of survival, Early Advanced Care or an Ambulance Response must also be despatched to the incident.

► **What type of incidents do Community First Responders get sent to?**

Community First Responders can expect to be sent to:

- Chest Pain,
- Cardiac Arrest
- Difficulty in Breathing or Choking
- Medical Collapse or Unconscious Patients

Community First Responders will not knowingly be sent to:

- Assaults or Incidents of a violent nature
- Incidents in a Public house
- Road Traffic Collisions
- Children under the age of 16 years old
- Traumatic Injuries



► **Who can be a Community First Responder?**

Community First Responders are adult volunteers who have completed an application form and undergone an Enhanced level Disclosure check. All applicants will also be required to hold a full driving licence. Successful applicants will then be expected to undergo a basic two day training course and pass the end of course written and practical assessments.

► **What is a Community First Responders scheme?**

Community First Responders volunteer as part of a team, and as such are collectively known as a Community First Responder scheme. A local volunteer co-ordinator will organise an on-call or on-duty rota between all the volunteers in the scheme. Each scheme will aim to have 24 hour cover seven days a week, therefore in order to increase the on-callability of the group there is a minimum requirement of six volunteers per scheme.

► **How are the Community First Responders called out?**

The Emergency Medical Dispatch Centre (EMDC) will identify incidents that are appropriate for the First Responder to attend, and then contact the on-call First Responder via a mobile phone or pager.

► **How big an area are Community First Responder schemes expected to cover?**

The Scottish Ambulance Service will agree with the Community First Responder scheme an area that they can safely respond to within a set time.

► **What equipment do Community First Responders use?**

The Scottish Ambulance Service will identify particular items of equipment the Community First Responder scheme will require, this will depend upon their certificated skill level. Self Funding Community First Responder schemes will be expected to purchase their own equipment; this may be done through fundraising activities or sponsorship.

In areas that have been identified by the Scottish Ambulance Service as communities who would benefit from having a Community First Responder scheme, they will directly fund all equipment.

► **What training do Community First Responders receive?**

All First Responders will undergo IHCD (Institute of Health Care & Development) FPOS (First Person on Scene) Basic training. This course has been devised in association with the Royal College of Surgeons.

Some First Responders schemes may include IHCD FPOS Intermediate training where the Scottish Ambulance Service has deemed intermediate skills as appropriate.

► **Are Community First Responders exempt from any driving laws?**

All First Responders will undergo a driving and driving licence check, but on no occasion will Community First Responders be driving with blue lights or sirens nor will they be exempt from any Driving Laws.

► **Who is responsible for the First Responders?**

As volunteers within your community, acting on behalf of the Scottish Ambulance Service, an appropriate level of conduct must be adhered to at all times.

Only when a Community First Responder has been dispatched by the EMDC to a specific incident, are they then acting on behalf of the Ambulance Service. At all other times they are responsible for their own actions.