



To: All GDS practices in Wales

Cc: All Health Boards - Heads of Primary Care and Dental Leads

WAST - Medical Director

HIW - Clinical Director and Dental Lead

WDC - Chair

HEIW

GDC

23 January 2019

Dear Colleagues,

**Use of practice Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) by others in an emergency**

We would like all dental practices in Wales to consider registering with Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST) to allow their AED to be available in an emergency

The Welsh Government and Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST) aim to improve survival from out of hospital "cardiac arrest". This includes making automated external defibrillators (AED) as accessible as possible.

You may have seen AEDs in locations such as railway stations and shopping centres - the more AEDs that are readily available, the greater a person's chance of surviving a cardiac arrest. WAST is aware that dental practices have AEDs and would like to implement a system whereby they can be accessed by third parties in an emergency for use outside the practice. A similar system is being developed with GPs.

The issues relevant to dental teams, WAST, health boards, Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW), Health Education and Improvement Wales (Dental section) and the General Dental Council (GDC) are outlined in the attached paper - which also includes supportive information and how to register with WAST.



In some circumstances dental practices may have the nearest available AED and its use may mean the difference between life and death for a person having a cardiac arrest. This is an opportunity for dental practices to support lifesaving care by sharing their equipment.

I hope you will choose to register with WAST.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colette Bridgman', written in a cursive style.

Colette Bridgman  
Prif Swyddog Deintyddol  
Chief Dental Officer

## **Automatic External Defibrillators (AED) in dental practice – use by others in an emergency**

The Welsh Government and Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST) are looking to improve survival from out of hospital “cardiac arrest”. This includes making automated external defibrillators (AED) as accessible as possible. This is described in the Welsh Government *Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest Strategy 2017* which underpins the approach taken by WAST and includes the use of “Public Access Defibrillators” (PADs).

WAST is aware that dental surgeries have AEDs and are seeking to implement a system whereby they can be accessed by third parties in an emergency for use outside the surgery. Whilst dental practice AEDs are not Public Access Defibrillators, they can potentially help to meet the requirement for PADs.

Dental Practices in Wales can choose to register their AED’s with the WAST so they can be utilised by the general public in the event of a cardiac arrest in the vicinity of the practice.

In some circumstances, dental practices may have the nearest available AED and its use may mean the difference between life and death for a person having a cardiac arrest. This is an opportunity for dental practices to support lifesaving care by sharing their available equipment. A similar system is being developed with GP practices.

This paper outlines some of the issues relevant to dental teams, WAST, Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW), Health Education and Improvement Wales (Dental section) and the General Dental Council (GDC).

**We would like all dental teams in Wales to consider registering with WAST to allow their AED to be available in an emergency.**

### **Background**

Dental Practices have AEDs to use in an emergency situation for their patients (and others in the dental practice such as relatives attending with patients). This is in line with GDC requirements and as agreed by the Resuscitation Council. **Dental practice teams must maintain their AED properly and ensure a ready supply of in date pads for use in an emergency.** As part of regular checks on emergency equipment, practice teams must ensure the AED is always ready for use when required which includes ensuring the battery is charged.

HIW include all aspects of dealing with medical emergencies, including AEDs as part of their dental practice inspection programme.

Outside the practice environment, dental team members can provide appropriate support for people with a medical emergency in line with their training and responsibility as a health professional.

Dental team members are not *Community First Responders* (CFR) for emergency situations outside the practice (unless they are trained and volunteer specifically as CFR) and are not expected through this scheme to be the WAST first responders.

## **Why does WAST want to utilise AEDs ?**

WAST teams have access to AEDs as part of their equipment on ambulances or other emergency vehicles. AEDs are also available in a wide range of other venues, such as railway stations, shopping centres, libraries and workplaces.

Dental practice AEDs would be used by bystanders who are present when a person suffers a cardiac arrest. A bystander who dials 999 will be directed by WAST to collect the AED, **as long as there is another person available to stay with the casualty. WAST direct bystanders to the nearest available AED. In some cases this will be a dental practice.**

If a cardiac arrest is reported within a set radius of 500 meters of the practice and there are at least 2 bystanders at the scene, WAST ambulance control will give the location of the practice AED. Only WAST will be able to direct a bystander to the practice.

WAST has changed the deployment process for AED's and they will only be deployed to patients in cardiac arrest. To give some context, WAST attended 6,012 reported cardiac arrests with only 46% of those having resuscitation attempted which equates to 8 a day across Wales.

## **What will the practice be asked to do if we sign up with WAST?**

The dental practice will agree to release their AED to a member of the public sent to retrieve the device for a cardiac arrest. The AED should be returned to the dental practice post event by the member of the public. In the event that the device is used, the dental practice should ensure they follow manufacturer guidelines to put the AED back into service, including replacing any used shock pads.

If the type of AED used is compatible with the ambulance services stock of AED pads i.e. Zoll, a new set of pads can be requested from WAST who will arrange delivery to the practice. If the type of PADS are not compatible with those provided by WAST the dental practice should ensure they have a supply of spare PADS.

## **Are practice staff expected to attend the emergency as well as lend the AED?**

Practice staff are not Community First Responders (unless they have received formal training and are accredited as such). They do not have to attend the emergency and may not be able to do so if they are actively providing dental treatment to a patient. However, in some instances practice staff may choose to attend the emergency to support the casualty in line with training they have received.

## **Who returns the AED to the practice?**

A formal system has not yet been agreed with WAST but experience to date suggests that AEDs are returned promptly by the bystander or other member of the public.

**The practice is usually open during daytime working hours so the AED is not available "all day every day".**

When registering the AED with WAST you will be able to define the times the practice is open and therefore, the availability of the AED.

### **Will WAST provide replacement AED pads?**

There is a wide range of makes and models of AED in dental practices. Some health boards provided practices with AEDs but in others the practice has been required to purchase its own.

Where the practice has the same make of AED as used by WAST, any used pads will be replaced by WAST.

In other cases the practice will be required to replace the pads.

As part of their overall responsibility to public healthcare and delivery of the *Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest Strategy* the Welsh Government strongly advises that health boards provide dental practices with an additional set of adult AED pads or fund replacement pads to encourage practices to register with WAST and thereby support the community use of the AED. Charitable funds or dental resources can be used.

### **Will WAST replace an AED that is lost/stolen/damaged while being used during the WAST programme?**

In the unlikely event that this happens, WAST will aim to replace the AED the next working day or within 24 hours. The AED will be one taken from WAST stock, so will be their current AED of choice. (If the practice is very rural it may have to accept a temporary replacement).

### **Will WAST arrange for a used AED battery to be replaced?**

WAST are unable to replace or replenish batteries. The Welsh Government has asked health boards to consider providing replacement batteries to practices with an NHS contract.

### **What will happen if I need the AED when WAST wants to borrow it?**

In the unlikely event that WAST request the AED when it's required for a patient in the practice, the practice takes precedence and will not be able to lend the AED. Practices can refuse to lend the AED when care is being provided for patients who may be at increased risk (e.g. those have had a previous cardiac arrest or are being treated under sedation).

### **Requests from others – such as care home staff**

There are examples of care home staff asking to borrow dental practice AEDs in an emergency. Care homes should be properly equipped to handle medical emergencies and their staff should be appropriately trained. Practices which are approached by care homes may decide to lend their AED in the emergency but they should contact the health board to report this and advise the care home that they will do so.

### **Our practice would like to sign up with WAST. How do we do that?**

Your practice may already be on the WAST database. You can check this by looking at the NHS Direct website:

<http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/>

Go to Find Local Service and select Defibrillator locations on the Find menu. Type in your practice address to see if you are already on the database.

If you are not on the database please go to:

<https://www.ambulance.wales.nhs.uk/en/383>

to register your AED.

Please notify WAST if the practice moves to another address or closes down.

### **The General Dental Council (GDC) and Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW)**

The GDC and HIW have responded to questions regarding the loan of dental practice AEDs to WAST:

- Would HIW and the GDC support the principle of WAST directing third parties to use dental surgery AEDs in a life threatening situation?

Both organisations have advised they are supportive.

In addition, we would suggest, if practicable, each practice which supports this initiative has two sets of pads so that if one is used another set are available immediately if needed.

- The likelihood of an AED being required in the surgery at the same time as the AED is out of the building is "extremely rare". However, if the AED is being used elsewhere it is obviously not available to use on a patient in the dental surgery. What would your view be if there was a patient incident/complaint that the AED wasn't available?

GDC: Presumably the arrangement with WAST would be supported by some recording of events and in the unlikely event of a complaint coming to the GDC it would be a fairly straightforward matter of checking with WAST and closing the issue down. (WAST has confirmed it keeps records of all instances where an AED is borrowed from a dental practice).

- In the unlikely event that the AED is damaged/lost/stolen it may take WAST up to 24 hours to replace it. What would be the view of GDC and HIW to the practice working without an AED for that time?

GDC: We would look for the practise to have made some form of assessment of the risk to individual patients (e.g. heart conditions) and to take appropriate steps. Perhaps by postponing treatment until the AED is replaced.

HIW: Would support the risk assessment of patients as outlined by the GDC and in addition suggest that WAST is required to replace a used defibrillator as soon as possible (within 1 working day or 24 hours) if it has been damaged to protect both patients and the practice.

### **Training and Education for dental teams**

The GDC identify CPD topics that dental professionals are highly recommended to do as part of the minimum verifiable CPD requirement. These include:

Medical Emergencies: at least 10 hours in every CPD cycle – GDC recommend that you do at least two hours of CPD in this topic every year;

HEIW (Dental section) provide subsidised in-practice team training which all practices in Wales (NHS and private) can access:

<https://dental.walesdeanery.org/dental-courses/practice-based-courses>

In addition, teaching sessions are available in all postgraduate centres in Wales.

As part of the dental practice inspection programme, HIW seek assurance that annual training has been completed by all dental team members.

Lisa Howells, Deputy CDO, Welsh Government (October 2019)