

**Green boxes offer the gift of life: ILLUMINATED green boxes containing a life-saving piece of kit have been springing up outside village halls and community buildings across Tynedale.**

We all know defibrillators are important and that they've saved the lives of at least two Tynedale residents since 2015. But what are they, where can they be found and how are they kept ready for action at any moment? The devices are able to assess heart rhythms and, where appropriate, deliver a dose of electrical energy to the heart which actually stops the abnormal rhythm and allows the body's natural pacemaker to restart the heart into a normal rhythm. Statistics tell us that for every minute that defibrillation is delayed, the chances of survival decrease by between seven and 10 per cent. And if it is delayed by more than 10 minutes, that chance of survival plummets to just five per cent.

Such are the advances in technology that the machines now talk the user through what to do, as well as guiding a person through the delivery of good CPR. No training is necessary to use them, but organisations like the Stephen Carey Fund, which promotes the installation of the machines across Northumberland, offer CPR training and defibrillator familiarisation sessions to communities across the county. "We have volunteers who travel all over the county, at their own cost, to deliver the training," explained vice chairman of the Stephen Carey Fund, Dougie McEwan. And once a defibrillator is installed, community guardians are appointed to ensure it is maintained and ready for use. They are volunteers from the local community, living near a cabinet location, who visit the cabinet every two weeks to perform a series of simple checks to ensure that both the cabinets and defibrillators appear to be in good condition. Each time a machine is used, the guardians will also check it once it is returned to the cabinet and replace the removable chest pads with new ones. North East Ambulance Service operations manager Gareth Campbell said: "Every second counts when someone has a cardiac arrest and if a bystander immediately performs CPR, this can significantly improve the patient's chances of survival. "We work closely with charities like the Stephen Carey Fund to place defibrillators and carry out training in the community to show the public how easy it is to use defibrillators and the difference early CPR can make. "Although we hope the defibrillators never have to be deployed, it's great to hear when they make a difference."

Public machines are those found within cabinets and are accessible to the public via a phone call to the North East Ambulance Service. The call handler will provide an access code. Static defibrillators are those located within private establishments and may or may not be on the North East Ambulance Service register.

A map of defibrillators across Tynedale, plotted by the Stephen Carey Fund, shows almost 40 of the heart start machines are registered with the North East Ambulance Service and provide coverage across the district. Not included are the life-saving machines kept in many leisure centres, sports clubs and doctors' surgeries in case of an emergency.

**Defibrillator Locations as published with article**

**Public Access**

Bellingham Town Hall	Henshaw Primary	Barrasford Village Hall	Matfen Village Hall
Kielder Water & Forest	Barden Mill Cricket Club	Ridsdale, Armstrong St	Stamfordham Hall
Tarset Village Hall	Elsdon Village Hall	Birtley Village Hall	Slaley Rose and Crown
Stocksfield Cricket Club	Otterburn RTC Sports	Catton Village Hall	Hexham Abbey
Stocksfield Golf Club	Otterburn Memorial Hall	Tynedale Park,	
Riding Mill Parish Hall	West Woodburn First	Corbridge	
Falstone Village Hall	Rochester Village Hall	Hill Street, Corbridge	
Ponteland Middle	Byrness Village Hall	The Feathers Inn	

**Static**

Hexham Golf Club	Ponteland Leisure Centre	Bellingham Middle School	Otterburn FC
Close House	Border Park Rugby Club	Otterburn First School	