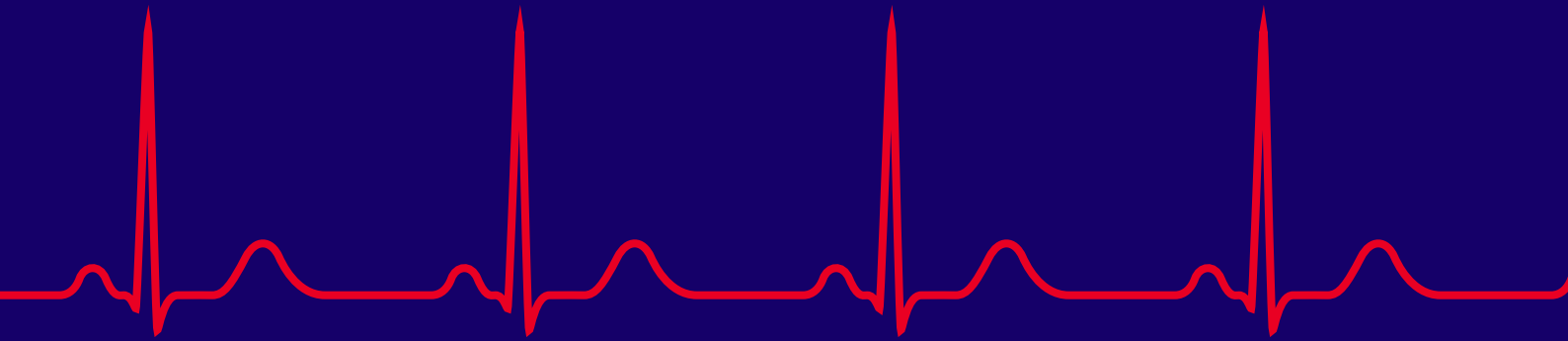


Resuscitation Council UK manifesto: Saving lives from out-of-hospital cardiac arrest in Wales



Despite advances in resuscitation science and increased bystander CPR, survival from an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest (OHCA) remains low in Wales, lagging behind comparable countries worldwide. We can, and we must, do better.

The upcoming Senedd election presents a vital opportunity to drive up cardiac arrest survival rates in Wales and reduce inequalities in resuscitation. A person's ethnicity, where they work, or where they live should not determine their likelihood of surviving a cardiac arrest, nor affect the quality of care they receive. With health and education devolved to the Welsh Government, targeted actions can build on its [2017 OHCA strategy](#).

Creating a CPR-trained society will save more lives, improve public health, and enhance community resilience during emergencies. The Welsh Government can achieve this by building on their work with [Save a Life Cymru](#) and partners in the resuscitation community. This manifesto by [Resuscitation Council UK \(RCUK\)](#) explains how this vision can be achieved by outlining the next steps in Wales' journey to improving from OHCA.

Priorities for improving survival from OHCA in the next Senedd term:

- ✓ **All cardiac arrest survivors to access appropriate, ongoing, personalised support:** RCUK calls on the Welsh Government to establish a formal aftercare pathway for cardiac arrest survivors in the next Senedd term. Our policy paper, *The weakest link: Recovering from cardiac arrest*, sets out recommendations for government, MSs, health systems, and the voluntary sector, using [RCUK's Survivors Quality Standard](#) as a blueprint.

Survival alone is not enough. Many survivors are left with long term, and often unseen, physical and psychological effects. Unlike stroke or heart attack rehabilitation, there is currently no standardised pathway in Wales. A consistent, comprehensive approach, from physical rehabilitation to psychological support would improve quality of life, reduce hospital readmissions, and help survivors regain independence. This builds on existing resources, such as [RCUK's support after cardiac arrest discharge resource](#), developed in partnership with Save a Life Cymru and supported by NHS Wales.

- ✓ **Ensure CPR training in schools is being carried out:** In 2021, the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act placed lifesaving skills within statutory guidance, ensuring CPR education forms part of the new curriculum. However, [nearly 4 in 10 students](#) report they have not received CPR training during their school career. RCUK calls on the Welsh Government to ensure this commitment is fully delivered by providing clear guidance for schools, and signposting [free teaching resources](#). A curriculum advisor has recently joined the Save a Life Cymru Research Hub at Cardiff Metropolitan University to support embedding CPR and defibrillation awareness across the school curriculum over the next three years.
- ✓ **Continue supporting 'Restart a Heart' through Save a Life Cymru:** Every October, RCUK leads Restart a Heart (RSAH) month to increase survival from OHCA by improving CPR awareness and education. RCUK calls on the Welsh Government to continue supporting Save a Life Cymru in delivering RSAH activities across Wales, including targeted campaigns in cardiac arrest hotspot areas and participation in [RSAH Live](#), the 24-hour live-stream CPR training initiative led by Save a Life for Scotland.

[Save a Life Cymru](#), developed by Welsh Government, is a national NHS Wales programme and part of the Welsh Ambulance Services University NHS Trust, plays a central role in coordinating public engagement with OHCA.

RCUK also calls on the Welsh Government to ensure that Save a Life Cymru is equipped with the appropriate resources to continue and further develop their important work. Sustained investment in these programmes will ensure that communities have the opportunity to learn lifesaving skills.

- ✓ **Continue to collect and utilise OHCA data:** Data saves lives. Routine collection of comprehensive OHCA data to identify and target hotspot areas is essential for tackling inequalities. National OHCA registries drive success worldwide. The Welsh Government must continue supporting and enhancing data collection within existing frameworks, such as the [Welsh Government's 2017 OHCA plan](#). Robust data enables analysis, reporting, benchmarking, and continuous improvement, driving targeted interventions and better outcomes across Wales.
- ✓ **Strengthen public access defibrillator (PAD) coverage and registration across Wales:** PADs are vital in the minutes before an ambulance arrives, yet many remain unregistered, inaccessible, or unavailable 24/7. RCUK calls on the Welsh Government to work with Save a Life Cymru, local authorities, health boards, and community groups to improve PAD coverage in cardiac arrest hotspot areas, ensure all devices are registered on [The Circuit](#), and increase the number of defibrillators accessible at all times by ensuring they remain in unlocked cabinets. Strengthening Wales' PAD network will reduce geographical inequalities in emergency response and improve survival from OHCA.