

AED REGISTRATION ACROSS THE NATION

There has been a good uptake nationally to the AED register to date, since the scheme was first mooted at 'Respond 2016' earlier this year. Now advanced paramedic Andy O'Toole, who is leading the initiative alongside CFR Ireland, is calling on all voluntary and CFR groups to help them register as many such defibs as possible. Report by Grace Heneghan.

Following the roll-out of the national register to pinpoint the location and examine the condition of AEDs throughout Ireland, it may be too soon to quantify the actual numbers currently being registered, Andy O'Toole told 'Emergency Services Ireland'.

However, initial investigations have revealed that a significant number of AEDs have either outdated pads or batteries, or even both. "This alone is a significant reason to register AEDs to allow for reminders of maintenance, so that the equipment is fit for purpose," noted the HSE advanced paramedic, who is behind the initiative in association with CFR Ireland.

O'Toole first announced the move to set up an AED national register at this year's 'Respond' conference in Mullingar in early March. During his presentation he told delegates that anyone could register AEDs in their community, once they had a basic knowledge of how to check the function and dates on the respective units.

Referring to the HIQA report, published in December 2015, which reviewed the PAD (public access defibrillation) scheme nationally and found that approximately 9,000 AEDs were dispersed around the country, Andy O'Toole pointed to the urgent need to now know their exact location.

"They're not a lot of good if they are locked away in someone's press; they need to be in the public eye. We now want to make those AEDs more cost-effective by registering them and to have particular details of where they are stored and can be readily accessed 24/7."

IMPROVED MAINTENANCE

Registration will also enable those who own the defibrillators to increase their knowledge of the equipment, in addition to improved maintenance to ensure that the batteries or pads are not outdated. And also, in terms of a theft or loss, if the AED is properly registered, then it will have a serial number, thereby making it easier to identify the owner.

"We have received some commitment from the National Ambulance Service (NAS), and when we gather particular data about the defibrillators the NAS will put the information on their



Andy O'Toole first announced the AED national register at this year's 'Respond' conference in Mullingar in early March.

system. So, if you ring 999 or 112, the emergency dispatcher will be able to tell you where the nearest AED is located to you."

AEDs can be found everywhere, from sports facilities, schools, community centres to GP and dental surgeries. However, Andy O'Toole is also keen that urban areas such as business parks and large housing estates are targeted, to find out where the AEDs are located and to register them.

"They firstly need to be inspected to ensure they're all in working order. It's important to check the batteries work, the pads are ok and that the 'ok' indicators are on, and then to inform the owner of the best location for them and proper maintenance measures."

ELECTRONIC ENTRIES

The registration process is electronic, and each entry should include the owner's name and contact information, details of their defibrillators, such as serial number, make and model and its exact location.

"GPS is fantastic but in order to register with the NAS we will also now need Eircode details because the NAS works of this system. Regular check-ups will be needed to ensure that AEDs are all in working order, and registration details will be used to inform the owners of when maintenance is required."

While many counties have been covered, O'Toole said they could certainly do with more volunteers to help out with the registration process.

Anyone who wants to register an AED or go in search of AEDs in their community should email him at aedregister@cfr.ie