

Derbyshire County Council

Guidance for First Aiders who may be required to undertake CPR during the COVID-19 outbreak

During the current ongoing situation regarding COVID-19 if you are at work and a first aider you may still be called upon to undertake CPR. As there is no way of knowing whether the casualty has COVID-19, we would advise all first aiders to follow the advice below:

- As with any first aid situation assess the area for dangers before approaching the casualty.
- Where you can, you should wash your hands before commencing any first aid procedure. As a minimum you should put on gloves (and if you have them a fluid repellent facemask and apron)
- Recognise cardiac arrest by looking for the absence of signs of life and the absence of normal breathing. **Do not listen or feel for breathing by placing your ear and cheek close to the patient's mouth.**
- Make sure an ambulance is on its way and if there is a defibrillator and trained operator available ask for that to be brought to you. (If COVID 19 is suspected, tell them when you call 999. This will generally be for staff working in establishments with clients where we are aware that they are symptomatic).
- If you are in any doubt about confirming cardiac arrest, the default position is to start chest compressions until help arrives.
- If PPE is not available or there is a perceived risk of infection, first aiders should place a facemask over the casualty's mouth, if a mask is not available loosely place a cloth/towel or piece of clothing over the victims mouth and nose and **begin compression only CPR**, and where available defibrillation, until the ambulance (or advanced care team) arrives, do not attempt to give rescue breaths.
- When working with the casualty either performing compressions or undertaking defibrillation, keep your face away from the casualty's (for example compressions can be undertaken with your face turned away from the casualty's)
- Early use of a defibrillator significantly increases the person's chances of survival and does not increase risk of infection.
- Continue to perform CPR until either: emergency help arrives and takes over, the person starts showing signs of life and starts to breathe normally or you are too exhausted to continue (if there is a helper, you can change over every one-to-two minutes, with minimal interruptions to chest compressions)
- If the casualty shows signs of becoming responsive such as coughing, opening eyes, speaking, and starts to breathe normally, put them in the recovery

position. Leave their face covering in place and remember to keep your face as far from theirs as possible. Monitor their level of response and prepare to give CPR again if necessary. If you have used a defibrillator, leave it attached.

After performing compression-only CPR, all rescuers should wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water; alcohol-based hand gel is a convenient alternative. They should also seek advice from the NHS 111 coronavirus advice service or medical adviser.