

“People who suffer out of hospital cardiac arrest must be given the best chance of survival” – Health Secretary Vaughan Gething

The Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest (OCHA) Plan sets out the key actions that should be taken to improve a person’s chance of survival from cardiac arrest.

Called the Chain of Survival, actions include:

- Prompt recognition and call for help;
- Early CPR to buy time;
- Early defibrillation to restart the heart;
- Rapid access to advanced resuscitation;
- Prompt, high quality post resuscitation care;
- Transport to the nearest appropriate hospital;
- Co-ordinated rehabilitation services.

In addition to the Chain of Survival, the OHCA plan highlights the positives of promoting life saving skills within schools and confirms all learners in Wales can learn about emergency aid procedures through Personal and Social Education (PSE).

The plan also encourages the use of fire crews and other rescue services to attend and respond to OHCA until the arrival of ambulance services. This has been shown to improve response times and patient outcomes

As part of the on-going implementation the plan, further work will be undertaken to map out organisations that provide CPR training within communities across Wales. This will help ensure that people Wales are not only given every opportunity to survive a cardiac arrest, but they also have access to CPR skills and resources such as defibrillators enabling them to save lives.

Vaughan Gething said:

“I would like to thank all of those who have worked together and been involved in the development of this plan.

“A patient’s chance of surviving an out of hospital cardiac arrest decreases by an estimated 10% with every passing minute. Between April 2016 and March 2017, the Welsh Ambulance Service responded to 5,800 OHCA of which 2,832 resulted in a resuscitation attempt.

“Survival rates are currently low but there is the potential for many more lives to be saved if cardiopulmonary resuscitation and early defibrillation were undertaken more often. This is why this

plan is so important.

“We never know when we might come across situations where action needs to be taken to help save a family member, friend, colleague, neighbour or stranger. Providing skills and knowledge would enable people to start the chain of survival as early as possible and give individuals who suffer an OHCA the best chance of survival.

“We need to ensure these opportunities are available to all people, in all communities across Wales.”

Joanne Oliver, Health Services Engagement Lead for BHF Cymru said:

“We are delighted at the commitment demonstrated by the Welsh Government to those who suffer from and those at risk of a cardiac arrest”.

“Cardiac arrest is a serious medical emergency, where the heart stops pumping blood around the body and unless treated immediately, it leads to death within minutes. The overall UK survival rate for those suffering a cardiac arrest out of hospital is currently less than 1 in 10”.

“There is still a lot of work that remains to be done and investment in research into the diagnosis and treatment of cardiovascular conditions must remain a priority in Wales. We look forward to continuing our work together with the Welsh Government to implement this plan and measure its outcomes.”

Dr Brendan Lloyd, Executive Director of Medical and Clinical Services for the Welsh Ambulance Service, said:

“Every minute counts when someone goes into cardiac arrest, and we believe this plan represents an important step forward in improving out of hospital cardiac arrest survival rates in Wales.

“Our new clinical response model, work with partner agencies and our dedicated volunteer network of Community First Responders are aimed at providing the earliest possible intervention for patients with life-threatening conditions, including those in cardiac arrest.

“We are committed to improving clinical outcomes for patients across the country and are delighted that the plan will allow us build on this by carrying out further research and innovation and collecting standardised data to measure the quality of care being provided.

“We will also continue to promote the key links in the chain of the

survival such as early CPR and defibrillation within our communities.”