

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Deputy Mayor of Bath unveils public access defibrillator at Beechen Cliff School



From L to R: Peter Polledri, Sam Polledri Foundation / Derek Taylor, Facilities Site Manager at Beechen Cliff School / Tim Markall, Headteacher at Beechen Cliff School / Ian Halsall, Deputy Mayor of Bath / Louise Polledri, Sam Polledri Foundation / Caroline Kivungi, Defibrillator Officer at Great Western Air Ambulance Charity / Andrew Seal, Deputy Headteacher at Beechen Cliff School.

On Monday 1 June 2026, Beechen Cliff School in Bath celebrated the launch of its new public access defibrillator, the first one installed in Bath by the [Sam Polledri Foundation](#) in partnership with Great Western Air Ambulance Charity (GWAAC). The School was joined by the Deputy Mayor of Bath and representatives from the Sam Polledri Foundation and GWAAC. Attendees took part in a CPR and defibrillator training session by GWAAC's Defibrillator Officer Caroline Kivungi, so they know how to help someone in an emergency.

Mr Tim Markall, Headmaster of Beechen Cliff School, said: "We (Beechen Cliff School) are honoured to receive this defibrillator, funded by the Sam Polledri Foundation. We hope we will never need to use it, but it is a great comfort to know it's here and will increase chances of survival for our students and local community in the event of a cardiac arrest."

Bystander CPR and defibrillation in the first few minutes of a cardiac arrest can give someone their best chance of survival before GWAAC's Critical Care Team arrive. For every minute that passes, that chance goes down by 10%, but right now, only 40% of people receive early CPR and fewer than 2% have a defibrillator used prior to the ambulance arriving.

Louise Polledri, mum of 24-year-old Sam Polledri who sadly passed away from a cardiac arrest in 2022, says: "Sadly for Sam, although he was surrounded by defibrillators where he collapsed none of them were accessible to



the general public. We have over 84 public defibs up now in Sam's honour. Hopefully, many families will be spared our devastation."

Almost one in five of GWAAC's call-outs to B&NES were for cardiac arrests in 2025

In 2025, GWAAC's crew rushed to help 121 people in need of urgent medical care in Bath and North East Somerset in 2025. Cardiac arrests were the joint most frequent type of incident that the crew responded to along with road traffic collisions, making up 18% each (36% combined) of GWAAC's total missions to Bath and North East Somerset.

GWAAC, through its Great Western Hearts programme, has helped place 220 public access defibrillators (including those in partnership with the Sam Polledri Foundation) in the communities it serves. Although the charity has had presence in the City with its shop on Moorland Road since April 2024, yesterday marked an important milestone, launching their first defib in Bath. GWAAC is looking to place many more in B&NES and is calling for individuals, groups and businesses to get in touch if they do not have a defibrillator within a three-minute return trip.

If you would like to fundraise or purchase a defibrillator for your community, please get in touch with the GWAAC team by emailing hearts@gwaac.com or visiting.gwaac.com/aed

ENDS

Notes for editors

1. GWAAC provides the critical care and air ambulance service for 2.1 million people across Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire, North Somerset, and parts of Wiltshire.
2. The GWAAC Critical Care Team consists of highly trained and experienced Critical Care Doctors, Advanced Practitioners and Specialist Paramedics in Critical Care, who bring the skill and expertise of a hospital emergency department to the patient.
3. 2025 was GWAAC's busiest year on record with 2,344 people in urgent need of medical care. GWAAC's Critical Care Team is needed by more than six patients a day on average and rushes to treat them by helicopter or critical care car. On average each mission costs around £2,200 to attend.
4. The charity needs to raise over £4 million a year in order to remain operational yet receives no day-to-day funding from the Government or National Lottery.

For further information about GWAAC's Great Western Hearts programme, contact:

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