PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Lift Broadlands School students learn lifesaving skills from local air ambulance for Restart a Heart Day

CPR and defibrillation training gives students the confidence to act if someone suffers an out of hospital cardiac arrest in their community.

Heartstarters Volunteers from Great Western Air Ambulance Charity (GWAAC) trained the whole school over two days on 15 and 16 October 2026. Through interactive sessions, which included practising the correct rhythm and pressure needed for effective CPR on manikins, students learnt what to do in an emergency and how to confidently administer CPR and use a defibrillator.

For one Lift Broadlands student and his family, the training was especially poignant. Hugo had a cardiac arrest while playing in a football tournament earlier this year. He is now back at school thanks to a chain of survival that included immediate CPR, defibrillation, and treatment from GWAAC's Critical Care Team.

Hugo's mum said: *"I know from first-hand experience just how important it is to know CPR and how to use a defibrillator. When Hugo suffered a cardiac arrest, every second counted, and I'm incredibly grateful to everyone who helped save his life. I'm so thankful to Great Western Air Ambulance Charity and to Dr Glyn Thomas for the care and support he gave Hugo and our family. It's great to see every student at Lift Broadlands learning these skills. You never know when you might need them, and having the confidence to act could make all the difference. I'm also very grateful to Kate and the GWAAC team for the training they've given our family."*

Mr Dan Jackson, Associate Assistant Principle for Community and Health at Lift Broadlands said: *"Following Hugo's cardiac arrest earlier this year, it was vital that our school took direct action. We have been raising awareness all week through whole-school assemblies and listening to Hugo courageously share his personal story, alongside hosting a 'Wear Green for GWAAC' day. Rounding off the week on Restart a Heart Day with every student receiving defibrillator and CPR training is a huge milestone in our ambition to make Lift Broadlands the UK's safest school. You never know when these skills will become invaluable, and seeing our pupils embody our values of effort, bravery and kindness throughout the week has been incredible."*

Kate Amor, Education Lead at GWAAC, said: *"Delivering two full days of CPR and defibrillation training to the whole school was a wonderful way to celebrate this year's Restart a Heart Day on 16 October. The students were fantastic. They even wore green for GWAAC! Thank you to Lift Broadlands for working with us to help build a lifesaving community in Keynsham to increase out of hospital cardiac arrest survival rates in the area. Knowing how to perform CPR and use a defibrillator can make a real difference when someone suffers a cardiac arrest, and we want more people to feel confident about stepping in to help."*

Why being prepared is important

Around 25% of the missions that GWAAC's Critical Care Team attend are cardiac arrests – where someone's heart and breathing have stopped. In a situation where someone's life is in danger, every minute counts. GWAAC's team can be anywhere within its region (Bristol, Gloucestershire, Bath & North East Somerset and beyond) within 20 minutes, but the care the patient receives before the team get there can play a vital role in their survival.

Currently, less than 10% of people who suffer an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest survive, but receiving early CPR and early defibrillation can improve their chance of survival – which is why it's important that members of the community have the confidence and skills to deliver early lifesaving interventions.

GWAAC's CPR sessions are delivered by a range of healthcare professionals who are basic life support trained and volunteer to deliver the training to students in secondary schools, community groups and local businesses.

In 2025, GWAAC's Heartstarters Volunteers visited over a quarter of the secondary schools in GWAAC's region, training over 7,000 school children with these potentially lifesaving skills.

GWAAC also provides resources to Primary schools including a video and age-appropriate classroom activities designed to engage and inspire Year 5 and 6 children.

For more information, contact hearts@gwaac.com or go to Education - Great Western Air Ambulance Charity.

To find out more about GWAAC visit Great Western Air Ambulance Charity or pop into its Keynsham charity shop on Bath Hill.

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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.

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