

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymchwiliad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg i weithredu diwygiadau addysg](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee inquiry into Implementation of education reforms](#)

IER 01

Ymateb gan: Sefydliad Prydeinig y Galon Cymru

Response from: British Heart Foundation Cymru

Nodwch eich barn mewn perthynas â chylch gorchwyl yr ymchwiliad. | Record your views against the inquiry's terms of reference.

There are around 2,800 out of hospital cardiac arrests (OHCAs) every year in Wales, where resuscitation is attempted and the number of people who survive, according to Welsh Government is around [1 in 20](#). Every minute that passes without CPR or defibrillation reduces the chances of survival by up to 10%, but immediate CPR and defibrillation can more than double the chances of survival.

Currently, across the UK it is estimated that less than 1 in 10 cases of OHCAs receive bystander defibrillation. Although you don't need to be trained to use a defibrillator, in a recent UK-wide BHF survey, three quarters of people said they wouldn't feel confident enough to act if they saw someone having a cardiac arrest. This requires more CPR training and greater awareness.

Since 2014 we have helped train over 330,000 people across Wales in CPR skills – including around 190,000 schoolchildren - and over 230 secondary schools in Wales have joined our Nation of Lifesavers campaign. This along with adopting all best practices from the Chain of Survival could provide the opportunity to save countless OHCA victims each year.

BHF has been campaigning for CPR and life saving skills to be made a compulsory part of the Welsh Curriculum for secondary school pupils. When we launched this campaign in 2019 we worked with the British Red Cross to find out [the views of school pupils and the public](#) about learning first aid and life-saving skills.

- Almost nine out of ten young people surveyed in Wales (89%) said learning how to save a life is one of the most important lessons they could learn.



- Over nine out of ten children (94%) agreed that knowing first aid skills and knowledge would make them feel more confident to help in a first aid emergency.

There is also strong public support for this from parents and the wider public

- 79% of parents agreed that first aid and life-saving skills should definitely be on the curriculum in Wales.
- 97% of teachers surveyed agreed that first aid and life-saving skills should be part of the curriculum for Wales.

The [statutory guidance](#) around CPR and life saving skills currently reads:

*Schools should also consider what strategies their learners may need to be able to safely intervene to support others who may be at risk. This **may** include lifesaving skills and first aid.*

Because of the strength of evidence and support for compulsory CPR in schools, on 3 March 2022 then Minister for Education Kirsty Williams on behalf of the Welsh Government committed to amending the statutory guidance to schools on the new curriculum. The Minister [committed](#) to strengthening the guidance to read as follows:

*'Schools should also consider what strategies their learners will need to be able to safely intervene to support others who may be at risk. This **should** include lifesaving skills and first aid.'*

The Minister continued: *"I hope that this strengthened wording and this approach, which will, I hope, put it beyond doubt that this is a statutory element of the curriculum that must be provided to children and young people."*

The Minister made this commitment in response to a [proposed amendment](#) to make CPR and life-saving skills compulsory and asked that Members resist the amendment on the promise of the stronger statutory guidance. However, over a year after this statement, the guidance has still not be amended and strengthened to reflect this position.

- Not amending the guidance could lead to a post code lottery for out of hospital cardiac arrest depending on whether CPR has been prioritised by individual schools, as opposed to being a statutory element of the curriculum as promised by Welsh Government.



Recommendation: Welsh Government should amend the guidance to schools in line with the strengthened wording as promised by the Minister for Education in plenary in 2021.

