

**Community First Responders are groups of volunteers who live and work in the local community. They are trained and activated by North West Ambulance Service to attend certain emergency calls where time can make the difference between life and death. The responder provides care until the ambulance arrives. In Endmoor, South Lakeland, there has been an active group of First Responders for over ten years.**

## Background

Under the banner the 'hero next door' the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) recruits and support First Responders:

*"Our volunteers are ordinary people who do extraordinary things. They find time to save the lives of their neighbours whilst going about their normal routines. They are everyday heroes and you could be too..."*

The Endmoor and District group began training in 2006 following a NWAS talk at an Endmoor Parish Council meeting. Martin Smith is a founder member and one of several who have been involved since then:

*"When I heard about First Responders I was very keen that we should start a group here. Now I've been doing it for over ten years I know it's great to be able to help near neighbours. It really puts a smile on my face knowing that I helped to get someone back on their feet."*

The area covered has grown to include the parishes of: Preston Richard, Preston Patrick, New Hutton, Low Hutton, Lupton, Stainton, Natland, Oxenholme, and parts of south Kendal.

When required, the Ambulance Service call First Responders using GPS pagers to identify the person closest to an incident, saving valuable time, sometimes lifesaving minutes. There are 12 active members in the group, with 3 trained to Enhanced First Responder level. All have been involved in call outs and report an average response time of 6 minutes.



*Endmoor First Responders are presented with the Long Service Award (10 Years) in 2017*

## The Project

One of the initial catalysts for community based First Responders was an acknowledgement that every second counts in a potential cardiac arrest event. Providing chest compressions and respiratory assistance until an ambulance is on scene saves lives. The Endmoor and District group are all trained to use and carry defibrillators.

Training is a significant commitment for the volunteers with regular sessions on average 2 hours a month. It builds confidence and skills across a range of medical emergency situation including: Oxygen Therapy; Abdominal or Chest Pain; Sepsis; Dementia; Resuscitation; Asthma; and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (an umbrella term used to describe lung disease).

There are also administrative and safeguarding training elements to ensure individual and public safety, and that information flows efficiently and safely throughout an incident.



One of the CPAD devices for Endmoor & District



Heart start training with other groups

## What has been achieved?

**In 2017 Endmoor and District First Responders responded to over 180 call outs.**

**In the ten years since the group started they have been on site at incidents on more than 1200 occasions.**

Whilst these numbers may not be the highest for a First Responders group, they reflect the hundreds of lives touched by the efforts of these committed volunteers.

First Responders groups have to pay for their equipment; the group has also been a driving force behind securing money and public support for lifesaving Community Public Access Defibrillators (CPAD) in 13 different locations in the area.

Work has been carried out with schools, pubs, hotels, sports clubs and village halls to place equipment in prominent locations.

Each of the 13 defibrillators costs around £850 which, added to all the other First Responders kit, is a significant amount of local fundraising.

## The Learning

- Local media and Facebook pages helped to raise profile and build identity.
- The group could not do what it does without the generosity from sponsors and fundraisers. Most of the funding needed for equipment has been raised through coffee mornings, community cream teas and from personal sponsors and donations. This investment from the community has paid for all of the defibrillator equipment carried by the responders, and a great deal more.
- Volunteers need to be valued and supported; sometimes a simple “thankyou” or “well done” is sufficient but other times people may need support following a difficult call out.
- Take advantage of the support from NWS staff; they are interested in the welfare of all Community First Responders and value their huge contribution to saving lives.

## Contact Details

For further information about First Responders visit: [www.nwas-responders.info](http://www.nwas-responders.info)

The first step to becoming a First Responder is to contact NWS direct via the website.

Send your name and address to:

[CFR.Recruitment@nwas.nhs.uk](mailto:CFR.Recruitment@nwas.nhs.uk)

## ACT champions community and rural issues

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