

‘Where is it?’

A review of information accuracy regarding
the location of defibrillators across
Manchester City Centre



August 2024

Thomas Carr

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Background and Rationale.....	2
3. Methodology.....	4
4. Findings	6
5. Conclusions.....	6
6. Recommendations.....	6
Acknowledgements.....	7

1. Introduction

1.1 This report aims to present the findings and recommendations from a review of information regarding defibrillator locations.

1.2 From May to June 2024 Healthwatch Manchester (HWM) used information from the CityCo website to assess the accuracy of defibrillator locations and accessibility.

1.3 The review focused on defibrillator locations in Manchester City Centre within the inner ring road. In total there were 63 locations subject to review.

1.4 Online information regarding defibrillator locations is abundant and the true source of information regarding defibrillator locations is not immediately clear to the public.

1.5 Considering the nature and need for defibrillator use, accurate information regarding their whereabouts is of paramount importance.

2. Background and Rationale

2.1 Manchester is a city with a high population density. Official ONS data from the most recent national population survey(2021) revealed that ‘Manchester was home to around 34.1 people per football pitch-sized piece of land, compared with 31.1 in 2011. This area was the most densely populated local authority area across the Northwest’¹.

2.2 Therefore, it would be ideal if there was a proportionate number of readily accessible defibrillators located across the city, specifically in areas with high footfall such as Manchester City Centre.

2.3 Therefore, it was deeply concerning to hear from a Manchester citizen regarding the difficulty they faced when attempting to locate a defibrillator earlier this year. Their story is as follows:

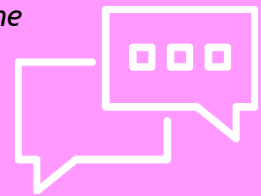
On 12/01/2024 at 8:50 in the morning I was on the No.1 bus route. As the bus approached the Charlotte Street stop, an elderly lady onboard suddenly became unconscious after trying to exit the vehicle. Other passengers and I found her unresponsive and breathing faintly.

A passenger called 999 and following the instructions given by the hotline operator, I got off the bus with another person and tried to find the defibrillator. I was told this would be on the corner of Chorlton Street which was less than 5 minutes away.

However, we walked all the way down the street and could not find this. Finally, I went to the coach station on Chorlton Street and asked the information desk for a defibrillator. It took us almost 15 minutes to get the defibrillator back to the bus and by the time we got back, the ambulance was there.

This experience comes back to me sometimes and I keep asking myself why I spent so much time trying to find a defibrillator when the lady in distress could have received treatment sooner if the defibrillator was where we were told it was.

It was traumatic for me to feel so helpless as I watched someone suffering in front of me. It really was a matter of life and death. I think nobody should have to face the same situation when they need a defibrillator.



2.4 The HWM trustee board approved an investigation into the accuracy of information regarding defibrillator accessibility in Manchester City Centre. This was approved at the March 2024 Board Meeting and the project was to begin in May 2024.

2.5 When we started planning this review, we used the information provided on the now defunct CityCo website. Initially this website stated that CityCo ran an easy-access heart defibrillator scheme in collaboration with the Northwest Ambulance Service (NWAS).

2.6 However in July 2024, after the completion of our assessment, the website was taken down unexpectedly. Information and Communications Manager Thomas Carr contacted CityCo in regard to this and was told that responsibility for the scheme had been passed to The Circuit who have established a national network to provide the NHS ambulance services with information about the location of defibrillators across the UK².

¹ Office for National Statistics(2021). How life has changed in Manchester: Census 2021. Date Accessed 03/07/2024. [Website link](#)

² The Circuit(2024). What is the Circuit? Date Accessed 13/08/2024. [Website link](#)

2.7 It is important to note that not all defibrillators in the city are registered with the Circuit or any other database. The Circuit provide a platform to do this via their website³.

2.8 Also of note, a number of safety focused organisations are recommending that further legislation is considered around the hosting, maintenance and information surrounding defibrillator.

³ The Circuit(2024). Why should you register your defibrillator? Date Accessed 13/08/2024. [Website link](#)

3. Methodology

3.1 The CityCo website informed us that there were 135 defibrillators in Manchester City Centre. Due to this vast number and our own resource constraints, HWM visited 63 as a representative sample.

3.2 The HWM team decided upon three routes through the city centre, each one visiting roughly 20 defibrillators. Thus, this review was conducted on three dates between May - June 2024.

3.3 There are three types of defibrillators available in Manchester: Automated External Defibrillators(AED), community Public Access Defibrillators(cPAD) and Communication Hubs/Kiosk. See figures 1, 2 and 3.



Figure 1: An AED in Morrisons, Piccadilly Gardens



Figure 2: A cPAD at Deansgate Train Station



Figure 3: A Communication Hub/Kiosk outside Bridgewater Hall

3.4 An AED is ‘a portable lifesaving device that can give a casualty’s heart an electric shock, when it has stopped beating normally in a sudden cardiac arrest.’⁴ These can be found inside shops and cafés where access maybe limited by their opening hours.

3.5 A cPAD is a ‘special cabinet on the outside wall of a building so that the AED (Automated External Defibrillator) inside can be accessible 24/7 to anyone in the vicinity who requires it.’⁵

3.6 Communication Hubs/Kiosks were implemented by JCDecaux and The Community Heartbeat Trust as part of their #ProjectStreetside initiative since 2018. These hubs contain high technology Zoll AED 3 defibrillator equipment, in high footfall areas nationwide⁶.

3.7 When planning the routes, we used the now defunct CityCo website which contained a map of each location in the city, see figure 4. In total we visited 50 AED locations, 5 cPADs and 8 Kiosks.

3.8 Although most defibrillators were publicly accessible, others are inside private buildings like offices, which can prevent public access. Therefore, the HWM team wore ID badges to identify ourselves and upon questioning, explained our project.

⁴ St John Ambulance(2024). What is an automated external defibrillator (AED)?. Date Accessed 30/07/2024. [Website link](#)

⁵ Yorkshire Ambulance Service Charity(2024). Information on cPADS. Date Accessed 30/07/2024. [Website link](#)

⁶ The Community Heartbeat Trust(2024). Project Streetside - JSDecaux. Date Accessed 30/07/2024. [Website link](#)

3.9 On our visits, attempted to answer 2 questions to ascertain the following information:

Question 1: Is there a Defibrillator at the location?

Question 2: Are there staff here who are trained to use this?

3.10 It is important to note that both cPADs and Communication Hubs/Kiosks do not require staff to be trained on how to use them, instead they are to be used after contacting 999 or by following the on-screen instructions.

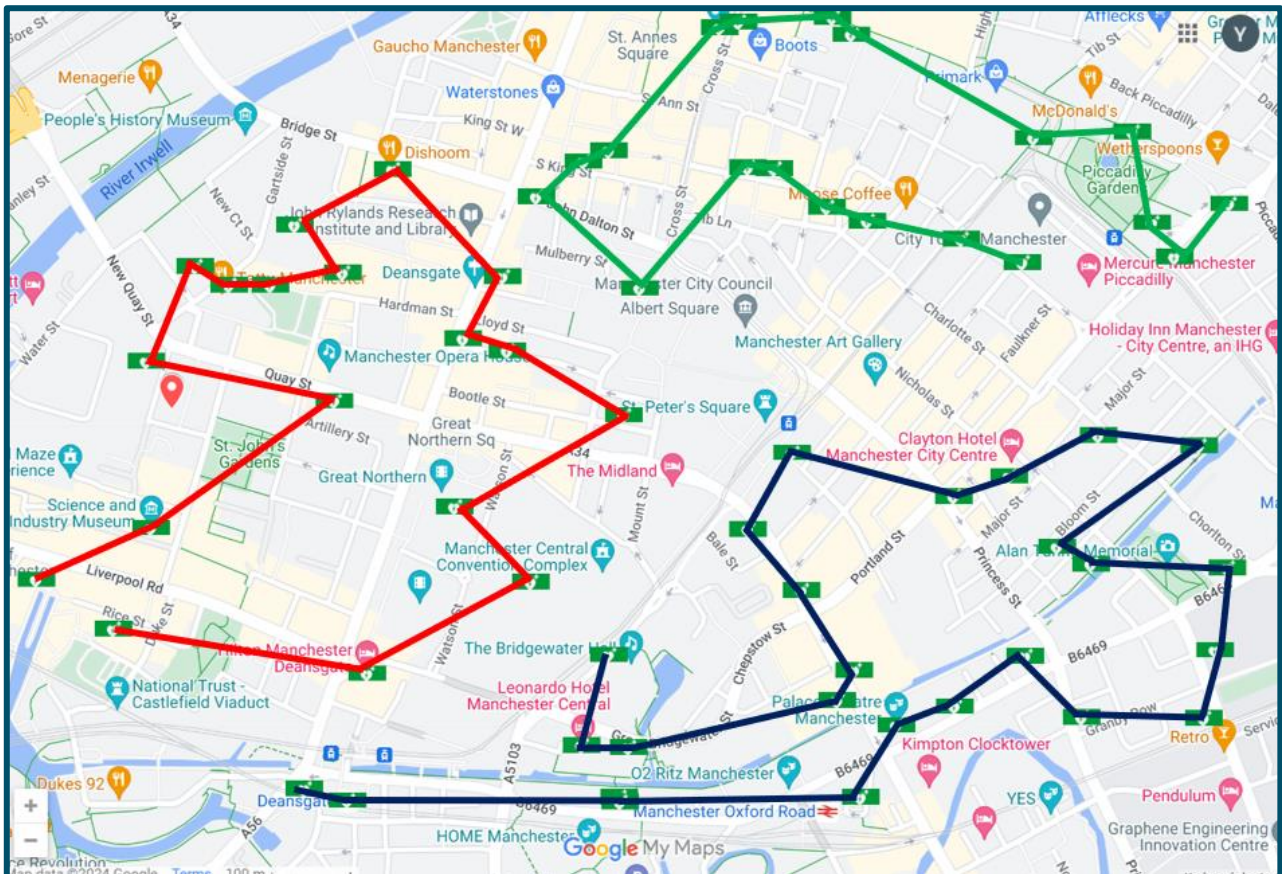


Figure 4: A map of defibrillator locations across Manchester City Centre from the CityCo website annotated to show each route HWM staff took when locating defibrillators.

4. Findings

4.1 Out of the 63 defibrillator locations we visited, we found 40 defibrillators in situ. Defibrillators were impossible to locate in 37% of locations.

4.2 Of the 40 locations we found a defibrillator, 13 were either cPAD or Kiosk's, meaning no staff were present at any time and thus we could not ask Question 2.

4.3 Out of the remaining 27 locations, 23(85%) had staff who were trained on how to use them. When compared to the original 63 locations, this equates to 37%.

5. Conclusions

5.1 The majority of defibrillator locations were accurate and accessible when using the CityCo website, now defunct.

5.2 A significant number of defibrillator locations were incorrect when using the CityCo website, now defunct. Thus, the risk through misinformation for people who require a defibrillator is high.

5.3 Where we were able to interview staff, the majority informed us that they were trained on how to use a defibrillator.

6. Recommendations

6.1 There needs to be accurate, thorough and accessible information regarding defibrillator locations available to the public. This information needs to be underpinned by regulation.

6.2 The lack of the above regulation is a national concern which will be brought to the attention of Healthwatch England and the national Healthwatch Network; NHS England, and our local elected members.

6.3 A second review such as this needs to be conducted by HWM using the information provided by The Circuit website. Comparative reviews should continue on a regular basis until information such as this is regulated.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to members of our Citizens Reading Panel for their support in the production of this report.



First Floor
Railway Cottage
33a Collier Street
Manchester
M3 4NA

0161 228 1344

info@healthwatchmanchester.co.uk

www.healthwatchmanchester.co.uk

Company Limited by Guarantee registered in England No. 8465025