

Scottish Ambulances to have defibrillators on board

The new Laerdal HeartStart MRX machines were chosen after an extensive procurement process, which included weeks of field trials with ambulance crews around the country. They include 12 lead ECG diagnostic and interpretive capabilities, which provide greater detail on patients' cardiac rhythm and diagnosis. This allows better quality information to be transmitted to specialist receiving cardiac centres while the ambulance is en route.

Pauline Howie, Chief Executive, Scottish Ambulance Service, said: "In most instances of heart attacks, ambulance staff are the first response. It is important that our paramedics and technicians have the most advanced technology available to help them deliver the highest standards of care to patients. The new defibrillators will be introduced into all of our 526 emergency ambulances by the end of the year and will make a significant contribution to saving lives in Scotland on a daily basis.

"Our staff were heavily involved in the process of choosing the preferred solution and the combination of portability, functionality and reliability were key factors in the final decision. Ambulance crews work closely with cardiologists at centres around the country and the increased diagnostic functionality of the new machines will enhance the quality of information available to specialists, improving the likelihood of a positive outcome for patients. "

Health Secretary Nicola Sturgeon said: "Getting the best possible treatment, at the earliest possible opportunity, is vital when it comes to saving people's lives.

"That's why the Scottish Ambulance Service has fitted defibrillators in all their accident and emergency ambulances to ensure that when people need this potentially lifesaving treatment it is available – wherever they are.

“The rollout of the latest technology will help the ambulance service deliver an even better service to patients throughout Scotland.”

The SAS responds to over 33,000 cardiac related emergencies in Scotland every year and currently reaches more than 80% of them in under 8 minutes, against a standard of 75%.