



NHS

East of England
Ambulance Service
NHS Trust

Wrentham & District Community First Responders

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Community first responders (CFR) are volunteers who are trained by the ambulance service to attend certain types of emergency calls in the area they live or work. Their aim is to reach a potential life-threatening emergency in the first vital minutes before the ambulance crew arrives.

Their role is to stabilise the patient and provide the appropriate care until the more highly skilled ambulance crew arrives on scene to take over the treatment.

It is a voluntary role that was initially set up as a lifesaving force and for which the training now enables attendance at paediatric, mental health and first aid emergencies. Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults training also enables the detection of abuse at all levels. CFRs attend monthly training to maintain their skills and further the care of patients. The group are all trained to attend non injury falls where the patient does not need to attend hospital and can stay safely at home. We use a special chair (raizer) to assist getting the patient off the floor and back onto their feet.

Practically everyday Responders from the area attend emergencies within the local communities. CFRs attend types of medical emergencies where it is essential for them to receive immediate life-saving care. This includes such categories as:

- Cardiac arrest
- Chest pain
- Breathing difficulties
- Unconscious patients
- Fitting/Seizures
- Stroke
- Catastrophic bleeding

All CFRs carry a full range of emergency equipment including an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) and an oxygen cylinder.

When a 999-emergency call is received by the Ambulance Service, the call is prioritised to establish if it is suitable to send a CFR, if so the nearest CFR will be dispatched. As far as possible an Ambulance will be dispatched at the same time, though at times there have been considerable delays. Every CFR is equipped with an up-to-date mobile phone, which now has GPS technology to identify their exact location and pinpoint the destination to the patient with greater accuracy.

Once an ambulance, or in some cases the air ambulance arrives, the CFR hands over to the crew and may be asked to assist.

There are currently 3 CFRs in the Wrentham group covering a radius of around 20 miles. One of the Wrentham group has just recently relocated to Wrentham from a CFR group in Norfolk. I will introduce him to the Parish Council once he has had a chance to settle in.

The Reydon & Southwold group also cover the Wrentham area, as and when required.

Between January 2025 and December 2025, the group have provided 3883 hours on call and attended 454 calls, of which there were 14 Cardiac Arrests. Plus 26 stand downs (stood down before arrival at scene)

There were 23 calls in Wrentham which we attended. This does not include any calls that the Southwold & Reydon group may have attended in Wrentham.

The importance of a fast response to an emergency in such a rural area is crucial as early intervention can literally make the difference of life and death, especially as the Ambulance Service and Hospitals, at times, continue to experience long handovers for patients.

The ambulance trust is very keen to use CFRs to teach the public life saving skills of doing CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) and the safe use of an AED (Automatic External Defibrillator). If any group in Wrentham would like a free short training session, please contact Chris Levett On 07340816913, who will be happy to oblige.

If anyone is interested in becoming a CFR, full training is conducted by the East of England Ambulance Service Trust (EEAST), please contact Chris on the above telephone number for more information.

Following training last year Interviewing for the CFR role is now conducted by the Wrentham group.

Chris Levett CFR Admin

