



Debbie Bird  
16 Tudor Grove,  
Cullompton  
EX15 1XG

South Western Ambulance Charity  
c/o SWASFT  
Abbey Court  
Eagle Way  
Exeter  
Devon  
EX2 7HY

20<sup>th</sup> May 2025

Dear Debbie Bird,

Telephone :  
0300 369 0108

**We need YOUR help to save lives! Can you help to fund a vehicle for our Volunteers so that they can attend ambulance emergency calls, saving and changing lives?**

Our Charity works alongside the South Western Ambulance Service and local communities to enhance care and support for patients in critical moments. We help to equip volunteer Community First Responders and engage with communities to improve cardiac survival rates.

We are asking you to please consider supporting our major **fundraising appeal for £30,000 to buy, convert and equip a second Community Response Vehicle (CRV)** dedicated for use by our incredible volunteer Community First Responders in North & East Devon. They support patients in their local communities, providing care and reassurance ahead of ambulance arrival and often saving lives when every second really counts.

Each car carries a full medical kit bag, a defibrillator, oxygen and patient observation equipment. They could be called to a patient who isn't breathing, has chest pains, is unconscious or has had a fall. They also carry a Raizer lifting chair that enables one volunteer to help a vulnerable person who has had a fall to get off the floor.

In isolated, coastal communities, or at times when our ambulance service is under extreme pressure, the contribution that our volunteers can and do make is immense.

- In 2023/24 volunteer Community First Responders **attended 20,611 patients** who had called 999 across the South West.
- At **9% of those incidents** they were the only resource required, freeing up ambulances for other life-threatening calls.
- **5,502 of the incidents** they attended were the highest priority, most urgent calls.

**[www.swambulancecharity.org](http://www.swambulancecharity.org)**

The South Western Ambulance Service Charity is a registered charity in England and Wales (1049230).

In 2023 South Western Ambulance Charity secured funds to buy our first 7 Community Response Vehicles (CRVs) for our volunteers across the South West. One of those cars came to North & East Devon. We know now that these cars enable more volunteers to book on for more hours, travel more miles and get urgent support to more patients in an emergency.

In the first 12 months of having dedicated 7 Community Response Vehicles they were allocated to **2,751 incidents**, including cardiac arrests, seizures, strokes, falls, etc. Of the incidents they attended, they were the **first to arrive on scene in 86% of cases**. We urgently now want to raise £30,000 to get a second Community Response Vehicle active across the North and East Devon operational area, ready to support more patients and communities.

### **A Life-Saving Story**

In 2023 a family was on holiday in a caravan park, somewhere on our beautiful but remote coastline. Their young child started to choke and was struggling to breathe. They called 999. An ambulance was dispatched as a Category 1 (most urgent and life-threatening) call. A local volunteer Responder responded to the call in the sign-written Community Response Vehicle (CRV). The volunteer was first to arrive at the scene, members of the public spotted the car and directed it through the maze of caravans. The family spotted the CRV approaching and guided it to the child and the volunteer Responder began to assist the patient. The ambulance arrived soon after, spotted the CRV and knew exactly where to go. Seconds were saved. Together they all ensured that the patient outcome was a good one.

### **Can you contribute to our life-saving mission?**

We are contacting all the Parish Councils across North and East Devon asking them if they could make a **1% donation of £300** to our Community Response Vehicle Appeal please. Payment can be made by BACS (email [charity@swast.nhs.uk](mailto:charity@swast.nhs.uk) for details) or <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/crv-nedevon>. In return, we would like to offer you a CPR and defibrillator training session in your community, giving more people the confidence to take lifesaving action if needed.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

Kind regards,

**Louise Walsh - Fundraising Manager**  
**07825 853630**  
**[charity@swast.nhs.uk](mailto:charity@swast.nhs.uk)**

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[@swambulancecharity](#)



**P.S.**

My colleague from the South Western Ambulance Service, Jacob Maddams, is the Volunteering and Community Services Officer (VaCSO) for North & East Devon. He has asked me to also let you know that they are keen to expand the Community First Responder (CFR) volunteer scheme and if you could support him to establish a new group of volunteers in your area then a donation of £3,500 would fund a full Community First Responder kit. Do please get in touch with [Jacob.maddams@swast.nhs.uk](mailto:Jacob.maddams@swast.nhs.uk) if you want to find out more or discuss this further.