Put First Aid on the Curriculum to Help Londoners Save Lives Urges St John Ambulance

Thursday 4 September, 2014

Legislation to protect everyday heroes from legal action if they step in to help in an emergency will have little effect on people **London** if more is not done to promote first aid training, St John Ambulance reveals today.

Before a Commons Committee hears evidence on the Social Action, Responsibility and Heroism Bill (SARAH) this Thursday, the nation's leading first aid charity has published new research* showing people in **London are** more likely to be deterred from helping in an emergency situation due to a lack of confidence in their first aid knowledge **(65%)** rather than concerns about legal repercussions (**27%)**.

When asked if the SARAH Bill would make any difference to helping or not, the majority **(62%)** in **London** said it would not.

The survey also showed that only **54%** of people in **London** had first aid training, **with 23%** having no training at all.At the same time only **17%** would immediately step in to help in the case of a life-threatening injury and **23%**would help only if no one else was available to help.

While St John Ambulance welcomes legislation that will encourage more people to help their fellow citizens, the charity believes the SARAH Bill does not go far enough. With the largest proportion of the population without any first aid training being 18-24 year olds (53% of this age group), St John Ambulance is today calling on the government to commit to putting first aid on the national curriculum, in order to ensure the next generation have the confidence to save lives.

Len Bamber, London Regional Director at St John Ambulance said: 'This bill has the potential to encourage more Londoners to offer help in an emergency, but it will have little impact if people don't have the training and confidence they need to step in and treat someone in urgent need of first aid. We meet countless people each year whose first aid training has meant they could act quickly, and save a stranger or family member's life. First aid saves lives. We must ensure that every London child leaves school with the skills to be the difference between a life lost and a life saved.'

St John Ambulance is also calling for a change to Clause 4 in the Bill which refers to courts taking into account individuals who act 'without regard to their own safety'. This is contrary to first aid practice which advocates never putting your own safety at risk in the event of an emergency.

The research is published during Save a Life September, St John Ambulance's annual first aid awareness campaign to encourage more people to learn life saving skills.

For further information, visit www.sja.org.uk.

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Notes to editors

*ICM interviewed a random sample of 2035 adults aged 18+ via online between 22nd - 25th August. Surveys were conducted across the country and the results have been weighted to the profile of all adults. ICM is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. Further information atwww.icmresearch.co.uk

About St John Ambulance

As the nation's leading first aid charity, St John Ambulance believes that nobody should die because they needed first aid and didn't get it. Yet every year thousands of people die in situations where first aid could have given them a chance to live. St John Ambulance teaches people first aid so that they can be the difference between a life lost and a life saved.

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