

## First Aid

By Sara Hanton

The first aid course was run by Niamh Roche took place on the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 21<sup>st</sup> of January.

The course entailed instructions on how to assess a trauma scene and determine whether it is safe to enter, and how to assess a patient using two simple methods: AVPU and SAMPLE.

AVPU stands for Alert; how alert the patient is and their response, whether they are awake and able to talk; Voice; whether the patient responds to voice – i.e., if they groan or make noises to acknowledge they can hear you – Pain; when pinched at the soft tissue part of the ear, do they respond in any way?; Unresponsive; they do not respond to any outward stimuli, meaning that they are completely unconscious.

If the patient can respond, SAMPLE can be used to assess the patient's condition. Signs/symptoms; how they have been feeling; Allergies; are they allergic to anything; Medications; are they currently taking anything and if so for why; Past medical history; any surgeries or important events to take note of; Last oral intake; when they last ate and drank, and; Events leading to the event; what has happened since the day began.

Both acronyms can help determine the course of action for response and treatment.

We learned about asthma, diabetes, anaphylaxis and epilepsy, and how to treat and manage each of these in simple and extreme cases.

Asthma attacks occur when mucous builds up in the airways and the walls of the airways narrow. The treatment and management of asthma is the use of inhalers, which should clear the airway.

Diabetes occurs as Type 1 and Type 2, the first of which is medical, so difficult to treat unless glucose can be administered, the second of which is treatable when triggered by administering sugary food and drinks, followed by a carb so that the glucose works properly.

Anaphylaxis is an allergic reaction which can be treated by an EpiPen, though the most common issue is when the EpiPen is out of date and doesn't work. EpiPens contain adrenaline, which constricts the blood vessels to increase blood pressure and opens the airways.

Epilepsy is a seizure disorder. We discussed two different types of seizures; a partial and focal. A partial seizure generally presents as a loss of awareness in surroundings, whereas a focal seizure can result in full-body tremors. Calling an ambulance for a seizure is not necessary unless the seizure lasts more than five minutes and/or it's the

first seizure the person has had. When someone has a partial seizure the most important thing to do is clear the area to make it safe and remove any obstacles while keeping a close eye on the person and timing. During a focal seizure, make sure the area is clear to prevent additional injury and put something under the person's head to protect it, and turn them on their side, but do not restrain them or put anything in their mouth. Make sure to time the seizure also.

We also learned how to put someone in the recovery position; we practised the recovery position in pairs and taking medical history using the SAMPLE acronym.

Following this we practised triage by splitting up and having half the class outside while those inside decided what trauma to undergo so those outside could treat them, switching positions so the other half of the class could practise triage also.

Following break, we were instructed on how to do CPR on a baby, child aged one-to-eight, and anyone above that age, as well as how to apply and use a defibrillator, practising on various mannequins.

We then learned how to save a baby, child, and adult from choking, and that the time limit in which you should do so – four minutes – before permanent damage can be caused, practising with mannequins and each other.

Following lunch, we learned how to apply a sling in case of fracture, dislocation, and an elevated sling in cases of extreme swelling, administering each to our partners.

We also learned manual handling, which is a legal requirement for working, and basically is just learning about how to lift, put down and push and pull boxes on a shelf. We were also instructed on the legal limit for one person to lift – twenty-five kilograms – and the legal limit for four people to lift – one hundred kilograms.

It was an incredible experience that I am glad to have been able to take part in, and I think everybody should be able to learn these basic and life-saving procedures.