



**SUDDEN  
CARDIAC  
ARREST<sup>UK</sup>**

**SUPPORT GROUP**



**PEER SUPPORT FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY AN  
UNEXPECTED AND SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST**

## ABOUT SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST

**Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) occurs when there is a problem with the heart's electrical activity, resulting in the heart being unable to perform its vital job of pumping blood around the body. There is usually no warning that an arrest is about to happen and often no history of any heart problems. The person will lose consciousness instantly and unless immediate CPR and defibrillation is administered, it will cause death within minutes. An SCA can occur to anyone, at anytime and at any age and it doesn't matter how fit you are.**

Although an SCA may be triggered by a heart attack, the causes are different. A heart attack is a "plumbing" problem caused when blood flow to the heart is blocked. Symptoms of an imminent heart attack may be experienced for sometime beforehand and importantly the heart keeps pumping and the patient remains conscious.

The road to recovery can be a long and bumpy one and survivors and families often have many questions. Understanding what's happened can be hard, especially in cases where there is no cause found (idiopathic). This is where we can help.

© Cover image by survivor Richard Wiseman

## WHO WE ARE

Sudden Cardiac Arrest UK was started by an SCA survivor as a Facebook group in May 2015. This was after a meet-up with fellow survivors and family members who were coming to terms with the trauma and recovery of their respective events. The group has grown considerably, but is still friendly, non-judgemental and empathic.

It aims to help its members in their recovery by providing answers to any questions they may have.

As well as the online support group there have been a number of meet-ups and activities. Meeting others who understand can be a real help on the road to recovery.

SCA UK are supported by the cardiac charity SADS UK.



New beginnings down under for two group members



Group members reach the top of the O2 Dome walk

## WHY YOU MIGHT NEED US

**You may feel like you have gone through one of the biggest events in your life and yet know very little about it. You are given your life back, but might find yourself unable to really live again and you might have no idea what to do next. We are here to offer help, hope, advice and support at any stage of your recovery.**

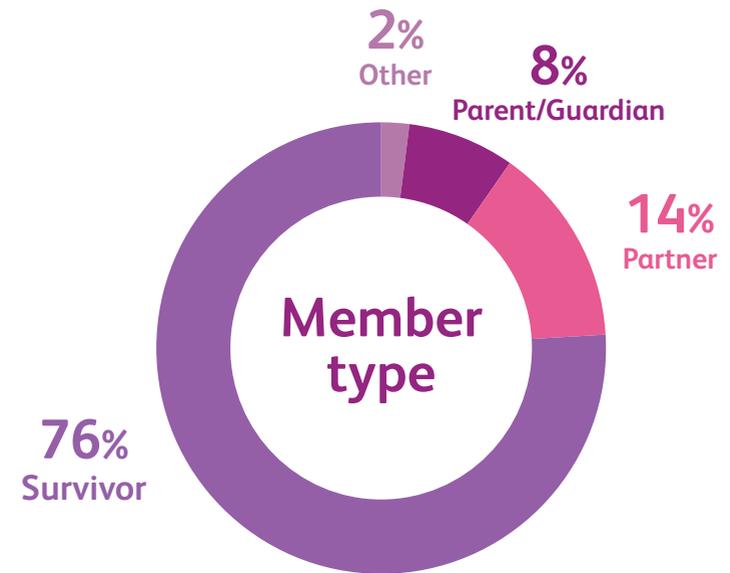
Lifestyle changes often need to be made and the health, psychological and practical issues addressed. These can include:

- Managing tiredness and fatigue
- Dealing with anxiety and depression
- Neurological issues including memory problems
- Headaches and brain fog
- Adjusting to having an ICD
- Work and financial considerations
- Returning to sports & social activities

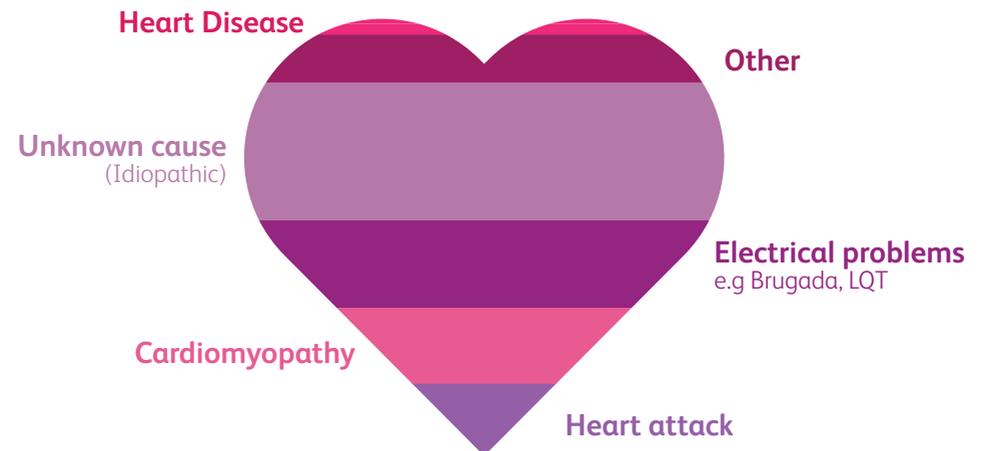
A wide range of subjects are discussed by the group's members such as health and travel insurance, driving and the DVLA, implications of an Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD), physical and mental health issues, medications and survivor stories. Regular polls help give members an idea of where they are in their recovery and for many, simply having others to talk to who understand, is a great relief.

Close family members, particularly those who might have helped save a life or have been present when the arrest happened, can also experience post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). They too will find support and advice from the group from others that have had similar experiences.

## WHO IS IN THE GROUP



## Diagnosis



## GIVING BACK

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### Feeling incredibly lucky to be alive?

- Why not raise funds for an Automated External Defibrillator and help save someone's life
- Support the SADS UK Big Shock Campaign urging Government to legislate for defibrillators in all schools
- Nominate your lifesaver for a SADS UK National Lifesavers Award
- Register your interest to speak about your experience at meetings and conferences

With our link to SADS UK we can help you achieve these wonderful ways of saying thank you

## CARDIOLOGIST Q&A WEBINAR

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It's often difficult to get all your questions answered when you have your appointments so we had a Q&A session with a consultant cardiologist. This was streamed live to our Facebook group and was incredibly well received and as such more are in the pipeline.

## COUNSELLING

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It's well recognised that recovery from an SCA can be quite a roller coaster in both psychological and emotional terms. Through our connection with SADS UK members of our group\* may be eligible for up to six free counselling sessions with an BACP accredited counsellor in their local area.

## SADS UK

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Sudden Cardiac Arrest UK is supported by the charity SADS UK, which aims to save lives, provide information, fund research and medical equipment to prevent premature sudden cardiac death. SADS UK highlights the fact that young people and even children can be affected by potentially fatal cardiac conditions.



\*Survivors or other family members.

## TESTIMONIALS

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“ I was 24 when I had my SCA, and the group has been such a great help in putting me in touch with others of a similar age who've been through a similar experience ”

**Dawn Foster, Survivor**

“ Dying, as it turns out, is easy. Surviving is a whole lot harder, and when you need help to make sense of it all there is no better place to turn to than the incredible, supportive and often inspirational people in this group. ”

**Gareth Cole, Survivor**

“ As a family we realised we were not alone. This has been a lifeline to me as a mother of a 10 yr old SCA I needed to be strong for him, his siblings and keep the family together. On good days and bad days there is always someone willing to help you through and give support. ”

**Hayley Thomson, Mother**

“ [The group] allows me to see what others are experiencing and assists me in dealing with what my wife went through whilst helping to support her in the process. I also benefit from sharing our experience with others in the group. ”

**Stuart Menzies, Partner**

# JOIN US

Join our Facebook group for social interaction, chat, sharing stories, asking questions, getting advice:

 /groups/SuddenCardiacArrestUK

Like our Facebook page to see related articles of public interest:

 /SuddenCardiacArrestUK



We are here for all those affected by a sudden cardiac arrest, whether you are a survivor, rescuer, partner, family member or an interested medical professional.

 [suddencardiacarrestuk.org](https://suddencardiacarrestuk.org)  
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 @WeAreSCAUK

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