

Supporting Life-Saving Action After Traumatic Loss

We recognise that when someone has lost a loved one through violence or serious injury, the desire to prevent the same tragedy happening to others is powerful, deeply personal, and entirely understandable. Many families and communities wish to act in a way that honours the person they have lost and helps to save lives in the future.

We want to be clear from the outset: **that motivation is respected, valued, and shared** by everyone working within the NHS trauma system.

What helps most in the first minutes after serious injury

Severe bleeding can be life-threatening within minutes. In those first moments, before professional help arrives, the actions of people nearby can make a critical difference.

The strongest evidence we have shows that the most effective immediate actions are:

- **Calling 999 as early as possible**
- **Applying firm, continuous pressure to the bleeding wound**
- **Following instructions from the emergency call handler**

These actions are simple, require little or no equipment, and can be carried out using everyday items such as clothing or cloth if needed.

Why education matters more than equipment

Many people understandably ask whether providing public “Stop the Bleed” kits is the best way to help. National NHS trauma and ambulance organisations have carefully reviewed this question.

At present, there is **little evidence** that placing bleeding control kits in public locations leads to fewer deaths. By contrast, there is strong consensus that **knowledge and confidence** — knowing what to do and acting quickly — saves lives far more often than access to specialist equipment.

Teaching people:

- how to recognise life-threatening bleeding
- how to apply direct pressure confidently
- when and how to call for help

is something that can benefit *any* emergency, *anywhere*, at *any time*.

Why the NHS is cautious about endorsing bleed kits

Some bleeding control kits are placed in communities through charitable or local initiatives. While well-intentioned, these kits vary in content, location, upkeep, and training arrangements. In many cases, emergency services cannot be certain:

- where a kit is located
- whether it is stocked and in date
- whether the person using it has been trained

There is also concern that searching for equipment may unintentionally delay or distract from the most effective immediate action: **direct pressure**.

For these reasons, NHS trauma services and ambulance services do not routinely endorse or promote the purchase of bleed kits.

A positive and lasting legacy

Families often ask: *“If not kits, what can we do?”*

The NHS trauma community strongly believes that some of the most meaningful and lasting legacies come from:

- **Funding first aid and bleeding control education**
- **Supporting training in schools, workplaces, and communities**
- **Helping people gain the confidence to act in an emergency**
- **Raising awareness that anyone can save a life with simple actions**

These approaches reach far more people, reduce harm across many types of emergencies, and ensure that help is always available — not just where equipment happens to be located.

In closing

Your wish to prevent further loss matters. Your voice matters. Your actions matter.

By supporting education and training, you help create a community where more people are prepared, confident, and able to act when it matters most. That is one of the strongest ways to honour those we have lost and to protect others in the future.

If you would like further guidance on education-based initiatives or training programmes, NHS trauma networks and ambulance services are always willing to help.

With respect and thanks,

NHS England Major Trauma Clinical Reference Group

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