

Belfast-made defibrillators sell out at German retailer

HUNDREDS of Belfast-made heart defibrillators put on sale on the website of a top German discount retailer have sold out within days, it was revealed yesterday.

It was the first time anywhere in the world that a defibrillator was put on sale direct to the public.

Heartsine Technologies was shipping 100 more of its Samaritan Public Access Defibrillators (PAD) out to Germany yesterday after 300 were snapped up by health conscious Germans since the machines went on sale last Thursday.

Demand for the simple to use cardiac life saver has been growing with thousands sold by Heartsine since the beginning of the year.

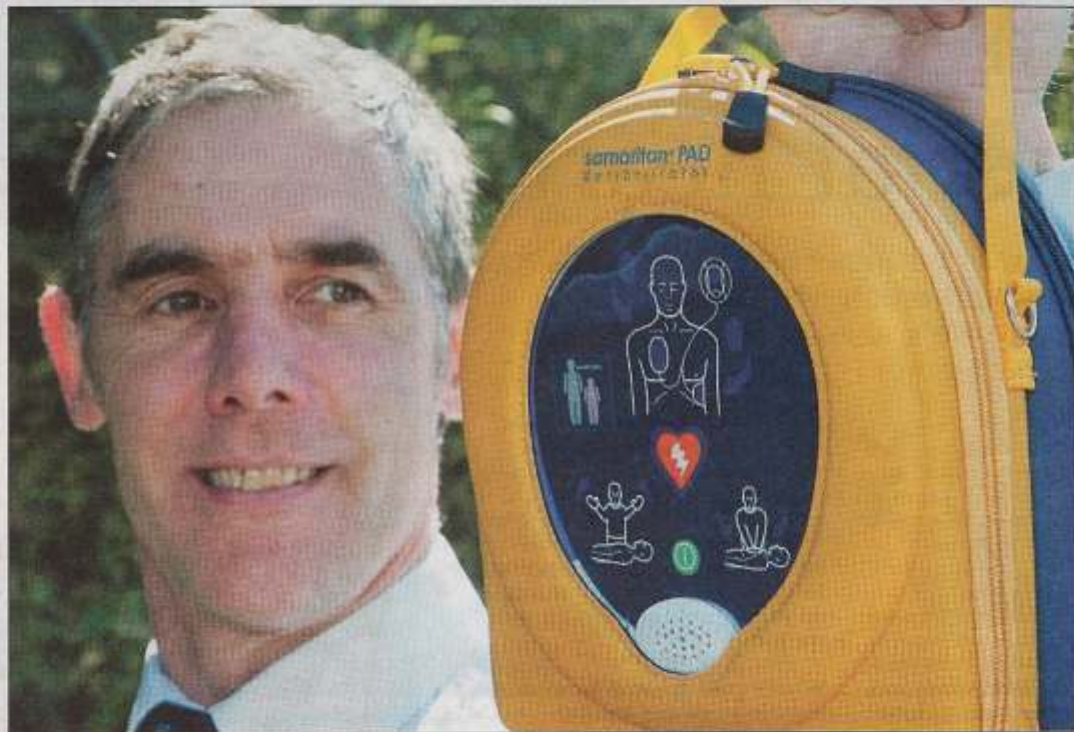
"We had already stepped up production but this is a whole new ball game and we will have to increase it again," Jeremy Bowden, international sales manager at the company, said.

"It is the first time in the world that a defibrillator has been sold direct to the public.

"Normally we sell to organisations such as the Red Cross, hotel chains and companies."

Now top German discount retailer PLUS – part of the country's Tengelmann OBI and Kaisers A&P retail chain, which has over 10,000 outlets in 15 countries, is selling the defibrillator through its website – www.plus.de – and network of German stores.

The deal was done by Volker Brand, Heartsine's vice president Europe,



■ **LIFE-SAVER:**

Heartsine Technologies international sales manager Jeremy Bowden holds a portable heart defibrillator

PICTURE: Paul Faith/PA

who said: "Heart attacks are the greatest cause of sudden death worldwide, a problem Northern Ireland, Germany and other European countries share.

"PLUS has identified an opportunity to enable people to do something positive themselves and has come up with an initiative which makes this life-saving device readily available outside hospitals or clinics."

Research shows that the lives of

people who suffer a sudden cardiac arrest can be saved if they receive CPR and defibrillation within the first 10 minutes, he said.

"Some European countries are resistant to lay [people] using these life saving devices and this is difficult to understand given the wide acceptability of the suitability of defibrillators for use by lay people who have received appropriate training.

"The Samaritan PAD can now be

part of the first-aid kit which many people have at home, where 84 per cent of heart attacks occur, or in their cars or public places," he said.

Because of their bulk buying, PLUS are able to offer the machines at just under €1,000 (\$682).

The machines come with illustrated instructions and verbal guidance – programmed to German but available in 30 languages.