



**STREET
ANGELS**
CHESTER



University of
Chester

Street Angels Learning Report

June 2024
Dr Kim Ross

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Introduction

Street Angels Chester is a project hosted by Vineyard 53, working in consultation with other churches from LinkUp , aimed at enhancing safety on the streets of Chester. Collaborating with local services, groups of volunteers patrol the city streets between the hours of 10pm Friday to 3am Saturday, providing care and practical assistance for those in need. ROC Angels, an umbrella organisation that enable community-minded individuals to unite and collaborate for the betterment of safer and more resilient communities in social settings such as the night time economy, provide ongoing advice and support to Street Angels. ROC Angelsan, an umbrella also assisted with the application for £5,000 from Safer Streets of funding for this initial pilot, with Hitched Communities supporting through in-kind funding for the project lead.



This report provides an independent analysis of the data compiled by Street Angels Chester from December 2023 to March 2024. It assesses the scope of the undertaken activities thus far and considers the potential future impact of the project if it continues. Specifically, this report has drawn upon data collected and provided by Street Angels Chester in the following forms:

- Questionnaire which was sent to Street Angels volunteers as well as relevant stakeholders in Chester’s night time economy.
- Nightly reports on interventions delivered (quantitative).
- Nightly reports on interventions delivered (qualitative).

Linkup is a membership organisation of all Christian denominations
www.linkup.uk.net
www.cheshire.police.uk/police-forces/cheshire-constabulary/areas/cheshire/campaigns/safer-streets



Harms in the Night Time Economy

The night time economy encompasses a variety of economic pursuits and social engagements that take place from evening until early morning (Roberts & Eldridge, 2009). These include but are not limited to: leisure and recreational activities, dining and fast food, cultural events and institutions, night life entertainment (such as pubs, bars and nightclubs), and related services such as transportation, hospitality, and security. The night time economy forms a crucial part of the leisure and tourism industry. Aside from its economic advantages, the night time economy plays a pivotal role as a leisure destination, offering opportunities for socialising.

Despite these benefits, there are a number of complex and intersecting harms associated with the night time economy:

The night time economy is intrinsically linked with the consumption of alcohol, which comes with a range of associated risks. Research has demonstrated that those who are on a night out intend to drink more than the Chief Medical Officers' (Department of Health, 2016) low risk drinking guidelines (Quigg et al, 2018). In relation to physical health, alcohol use can contribute to liver damage, cardiovascular problems, and an increased susceptibility to some cancers, in addition to risks of overdose and the development of addiction (Rehm et al, 2010; Shield et al, 2014). Moreover, as a depressant, alcohol impairs cognitive function and motor skills, elevating the likelihood of accidents and injuries (Bellis et al 2015, Rehm et al, 2010; Chikritzhs & Livingston, 2021). Psychologically, alcohol can exacerbate underlying mental health issues such as depression and anxiety (Rehm et al, 2010).

The consumption of illicit drugs has also been associated with a number of complex risks within the night time economy. Similarly to alcohol use, the use of illicit drugs is associated with a number of health related risks including overdose and addiction as well as acute and chronic disease depending on the nature of the substance (Degenhardt & Hall, 2012). Furthermore, the nature of drug transactions can foster an atmosphere of exploitation and vulnerability, especially for marginalised populations (Black, 2020).

There is an increased risk of being a victim or perpetrator of crime, including violent crime and sexual assault, in the night time economy. As discussed above, both alcohol and drug use can impact upon cognitive functioning which can lead to reduced reasoning and increased aggression for some, depending on the substance in question (Institute for Alcohol Studies, 2020; Hoaken & Stewart, 2003). The night time environment amplifies the risk of sexual assault (Quigg et al, 2020) as well as victimisation of violent crimes (Institute for Alcohol Studies, 2020). In addition to this, nightlife patrons have reported fears surrounding different forms of spiking (Burrell et al, 2023). In addition to individuals who participate in the night time economy as consumers, harm can also affect those who are marginalised and find themselves situated in the night time economy due to their vulnerability, such as individuals experiencing homelessness who are at risk of increased victimisation (Crisis, 2016).

Local Context – Chester City Centre

Population size & age

- Chester has a population of 92,742 (ONS, 2021).
- Despite the surrounding area of Cheshire West and Cheshire having an ageing population, 61.2% of the population in Chester are aged between 16-24 years.

Student Population

- Chester City Centre is in close proximity to the University of Chester, which has a student population of around 19,000 students (The Times Higher Education, 2024).
- Students are a demographic frequently associated with problematic drinking practices and are often targeted by drink promotions within nightlife venues (Ross-Houle & Quigg, 2019).

Night time economy

- Chester City Centre has 'Purple Flag Status' (Cheshire West and Chester Council, 2024). Purple Flag cities are distinguished for their vibrant evening and night time economies whilst prioritising the safety and well-being of both residents and visitors.
- A survey with nightlife users in Chester City Centre in 2018 found that those who were drinking on a night out expected to consume around 16 units of alcohol (which is above the Chief Medical Officers' recommended number of units for low-risk drinking) and 46.5% had experienced harms related to alcohol in the previous 3 months (Quigg et al, 2017).

Crime

- Data from Cheshire Constabulary (2024) demonstrates that over a 12-month period, between March 2023 to February 2024, the most common crimes recorded in Chester City Centre were violence and sexual offences (1000, 29.8% of all offences for the year) followed by anti-social behaviour (612, 18.2% of offences for the year). Additionally, there were 355 public order offences (10.6% of total offences for the year) and 243 drug offences (7.2% of total offences for the year).

It should be noted that this data was collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic which has impacted upon drinking practices, however this remains to date the only academic survey carried out with night life users in Chester City Centre.

Data Review

Overview of work carried out by Street Angels Chester

The pilot of Street Angels Chester, funded through Safer Streets and Hitched Communities, took place between December 2023 to March 2024. The funding covered the following:

- Project setup/mobilisation which included partner planning and coordination meetings and night time economy train-the-trainer bystander training for the volunteer project lead.
- Development (October-December) which included planning, recruitment, training and initial orientation, logistics and shift set-up.
- Venue hire for training and pre- and post- shift briefings.
- Volunteer recruitment and project awareness, including website, graphic design, social media setup and advertising, outdoor signage, using Street Angels brand guidelines.
- Training and support from ROC Angels.
- Uniforms, first aid, bags and communication equipment to support shift activity.
- Implementation of consistent shift patterns utilising trained volunteer base, this required personal expenses, DBS checks and insurance to be covered.
- Evaluation including data capture and reporting software licences and recording equipment.

The lead for Street Angels Chester also worked closely and took advice from former members of the Chester Street Pastors team, who had previously provided a support service within Chester's night time economy but was not re-established following the COVID-19 pandemic. Twenty-five volunteers took part in the initial

pilot. Twenty of these were from local churches; one identified as a non-church attending Roman Catholic and 4 identified as non-Christian. Whilst many of the volunteers cited religious beliefs as motivation for volunteering, the support from Street Angels Chester was available to all regardless of their faith or non-faith status. Whilst those receiving support could discuss faith related issues with the volunteers, this was not a condition of support. Some of the volunteers received 'You're Safe Here' signposting training in addition to e-learning positive bystander training and had access to a range of online training and resources through ROC Angels. The majority of volunteers had previously attended and completed first aid training. Each shift was led by an experienced member of the team. Over the course of the pilot the total number of volunteer hours across the whole team was 451.5.

“I want to care for people who may be vulnerable on a night-time.”
(Street Angels Chester Volunteer)

“I love the idea of churches and organisations working together to make the streets safer and how simply being a presence can lower the dangers for others.”
(Street Angels Chester Volunteer)



Street Angels team with Eastgate Clock lit up purple in the background to celebrate Chester retaining Purple Flag accreditation for its evening and night time economy in 2024.

Teams of volunteers would patrol the streets of Chester City Centre on Friday nights between the hours of 10pm-3am. Initially the intentions were to split these shifts, however following advice from previous service providers it was decided that one longer shift tended to work better. The Street Angels Chester volunteers also made use of the Walk Safe app to allow others to track their location so that they knew where support was available.

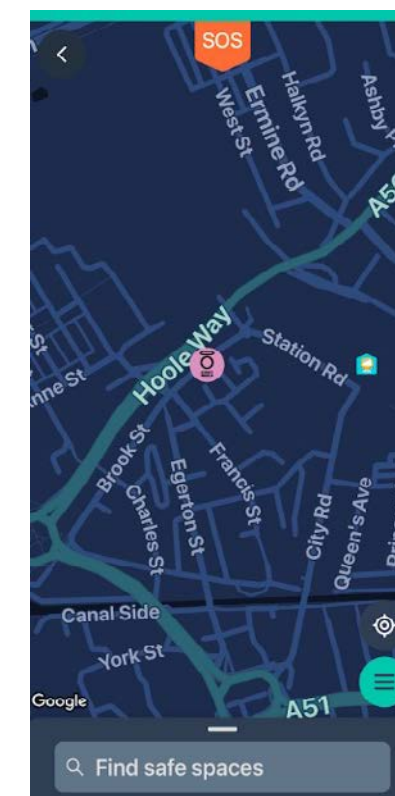
In addition to the weekly Friday nights, of which a total of eighteen are included within this report, a Saturday night was also trialled on 30th March. In addition to actively seeking out those who needed

support, Street Angels Chester received a number of referrals from other stakeholders in the city centre. This included sixteen referrals from nightlife venues, one referral from an emergency service and four referrals from other agencies.

www.walksafe.io

It should be noted that at the time of year when the pilot was carried out Friday nights do tend to be quieter compared to Saturday nights and race days.

“I want to keep our streets a safe place in Chester.”
(Street Angels Chester Volunteer)



Screenshot taken from Walk Safe app

Interventions Delivered

Interventions Delivered

Data collected across the eighteen nights of the pilot demonstrated delivery of the following intervention:

Type of intervention delivered	Number of occurrences across the pilot study
Advice given on drug and alcohol related issues	27
Conversations about life issues	100
Intervening or supporting with those who experienced violence on a night out	5
Supporting someone who has experienced sexual assault on a night out	1
Supporting someone who was intoxicated	75
Supporting someone who was homeless	83
First aid delivered	2
Assisted to get home safe	23
Bottles or broken glass collected	417

Furthermore, Street Angels Chester handed out equipment to help reduce risks and harms (such as dehydration, hypothermia, drink spiking and stepping on broken glass) that could have potentially been experienced by those in Chester’s night time economy:

Type of equipment handed out	Number of occurrences across the pilot study
Space blanket	5
Spikey (to help prevent drink spiking)	2
Flip flops	61
Bottled water	69

Data from the qualitative end of night reports provided additional context that helps highlight the significance of these interventions to the individuals who received support from Street Angels Chester:

- Some of the interventions related to serious incidents that had occurred in Chester City Centre’s night time economy

“We started the night with a potential spiking outside [name of venue], which got a bit emotional for some of the people surrounding the individual and also ourselves, but we got through that”
(Street Angels Chester Volunteer)

“We got called to the [name of venue], the bouncers had asked for a female Street Angel. There was a lady who had been assaulted in another pub but she had gone there for shelter. I was able to chat with her and support her.”
(Street Angels Chester Volunteer)

“The bouncers at [name of venue] called us about two ladies that were being stalked. We got them to their hotel. One was quite intoxicated and couldn’t remember her room number, but we got her to her room and the gentleman was moved on.”
(Street Angels Chester Volunteer)

“A lady who fell, she had bit too much to drink, banged her head. Her friend was with her but there were reports of her being unresponsive. The paramedics came and she didn’t need medical attention so we walked her home as she wouldn’t have been able to get in a taxi.”
(Street Angels Chester Volunteer)

“We had a guy who stabbed himself with a bottle. So, we waited with him for the ambulance.”
(Street Angels Chester Volunteer)



Interventions Delivered

Interventions Delivered

- Some volunteers discussed how they were able to offer interventions that enabled people who were alone to feel safe:

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(Street Angels Chester Volunteer)

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- Some of the interventions related to serious incidents that had occurred in Chester City Centre's night time economy

“Someone who had cerebral palsy had lost her friends and called her mum to pick her up, so I just stayed with her while she waited because she was feeling quite vulnerable.”
(Street Angels Chester Volunteer)

“We spent time with a girl who had lost contact with her friends and was quite distressed. So, we supported her for a bit and then some of her friends found her so we left her with them.”
(Street Angels Chester Volunteer)

“We helped a young girl who had drunk too much, we gave her some water and a sick bag and hair bobble.”
(Street Angels Chester Volunteer)

“We had a call on the radio about a drunk female at [name of venue]. We gave her water and a sick bag, and a bit of reassurance whilst we waited for her husband to pick her up.”
(Street Angels Chester Volunteer)

- Street Angels Chester were also able to offer support to those experiencing mental health vulnerabilities including both those on a night out and those who were homeless.

“A guy had had a panic attack, we were called over by the bouncers to help out so they could get back to the door and he could have someone less threatening help out.”
(Street Angels Chester Volunteer)

“We met a guy who had relapsed. He had ended up leaving and said he had PTSD. We were able to give him a referral of somewhere to go tomorrow.”
(Street Angels Chester Volunteer)

“We met a street sleeper and had a chat with him. He hadn't been here long and had just got out of the army”
(Street Angels Chester Volunteer)



Potential for Impact

The following data from The Kings Fund (2023) provides some estimated costs of ambulance call outs and visits to accident and emergency (A&E) departments. Whilst it is not possible to determine how many of these were prevented during the Street Angels Chester pilot, it does give an indication of the potential economic benefits from such interventions:

- For someone who attends an urgent care centre and receives the lowest level of investigation and treatment the average cost in 2022/23 was £86.
- For an individual who attends a major A&E department and received more complex investigation and treatment the average costs in 2022/23 started at £418.
- The estimated average cost (2020/2021) of a patient being taken to A&E by ambulance was £367.
- The estimated average cost (2020/2021) for ambulance call-outs that did not result in a trip to A&E was £276.

Questionnaire Findings

There were thirty responses to the questionnaire, which was completed by Street Angels Chester Volunteers in addition to local stakeholders such as security staff from night life venues, Pub Watch and Purple Flag members and Cheshire Constabulary. Questions asked participants about their experiences of working with or as part of Street Angels Chester as well as their perceptions regarding the impact that the work of Street Angels Chester has had on the local night time economy. It should be noted that due to the number of responses it is not possible to infer any quantifiable patterns or significance from the findings, however it can give some qualitative context to local perceptions of Street Angels Chester. Those who participated in the questionnaire were largely positive about the support that Street Angels Chester offer. Many responses from those external to Street Angels Chester praised the commitment of the volunteers. Responses focused on how, from their perspective, Street Angels Chester are able to relieve some of the burden of supporting people in the night time economy from other stakeholders and support services.

“ They are a HUGE help to the NTE. Take so much strain off door staff, emergency services etc ”
(Pub Watch Member)

“ Help take pressure off emergency services and always available if needed. ”
(Pub Watch Member)

“ The volunteers are extremely enthusiastic and committed to providing a safe environment in Chester’s night time economy. ”
(Purple Flag Committee Member)

“ Excellent team, the city would be lost without them. Nothing but positive feedback from partners, public, NTE ”
(Chester Against Business Crime)

“ They take the strain from the emergency services and can assist easier and quicker most of the time ”
(Pub Watch Member)

Questionnaire Findings

Volunteers from Street Angels Chester who completed the questionnaire were positive about their experiences and reported on how they felt valued by wider stakeholders and those who received their support. Many of the responses from the volunteers reflected on how rewarding they found their role.

“It’s very fulfilling to be part of a team of volunteers actively making a difference to vulnerable people in a time of need.”
(Street Angels Chester Volunteer)

“Great being out on the streets with an amazing team of people. Feel valued by both the public and venue staff.”
(Street Angels Chester Volunteer)

“Feel valued as a Street Angel out on the streets. Door staff are very appreciative and I feel we provide a valuable service.”
(Street Angels Chester Volunteer)

“Street Angels helps the Night Time Economy because we work closely with the other services by providing support and back up, freeing them to do other jobs”
(Street Angels Chester Volunteer)

“Our team are now recognised and welcomed by the public enjoying a night out, and by the professionals that have expressed their gratitude at Street Angels presence, support and participation when assisting those in need of help.”
(Street Angels Chester Volunteer)

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Questionnaire Findings

Those who responded to the questionnaire were keen for the support provided by Street Angels Chester to continue. Responses reflected the ongoing need for the service as well as highlighting their perception that the service should also be expanded to provide support on Saturdays as well as for special events relating to race days and student nights.

“Need to be out on Saturdays and all race days.”

”
(Pub Watch Member)

“Would love to see them out on Saturdays and student nights especially when freshers starts.”

”
(Pub Watch Member)

“Would ideally like it to be on Saturday nights due to the increased number of people out compared to a Friday.”

”
(Pub Watch Member)

“Currently they are out on Friday nights only. Hopefully this would expand to Saturday night (much busier nights) and key dates (such as races, Christmas season, Welcome week etc)”

”
(Security Staff/Police)



Street Angels Volunteer

Finally, some questionnaire responses highlighted ways through which Street Angels Chester could also expand and improve on their current service. Many of these suggestions would require collaboration with other local stakeholders or additional funding in order to be able to implement.

“The provision of a safe room where we can bring people who are in a vulnerable state would be helpful

”
(Street Angels Chester Volunteer)

“We could report new rough sleepers to appropriate organisations, guide them to places where they can get help.

”
(Street Angels Chester Volunteer)

“Beyond their current service, there may be ways of providing helpful insight and data to continue to help shape / support & deliver new initiatives and access funding to develop the service with others.

”
(Purple Flag Committee Member)

“More awareness and branding.

”
(Chester Against Business Crime)





Conclusion and Recommendations

This report has presented findings from data collected by Street Angels Chester which has been independently analysed. The report demonstrates that Street Angels Chester have provided a service that is perceived to be valuable with Chester City Centre's night time economy. Due to the small scale of this study it is not possible to infer any direct impact and implications of the work that Street Angels Chester have carried out, yet it is clear that there has been potential for impact for those individuals who received support during the pilot project as well as potential benefits for wider stakeholders such as security staff for night life venues and emergency services. Based on the findings of this report the following recommendations have been made:

Further funding should be sought to support the ongoing provision of Street Angels Chester on Friday nights in addition to expanding the service to offer support on Saturday nights and on major events (such as race days).

It was clear from stakeholders who completed the process evaluation survey that there is a need for a similar service to be offered on additional busy nights in Chester City Centre. Whilst Fridays are busy there is further need for support on Saturday nights and at seasonal times of the year that often result in a busier night time economy, such as the Christmas period. Additionally, with Chester City Centre being close to a popular race course and the University of Chester there are certain nights which may not fall over a weekend when the night time economy is likely to be busy and the support of Street Angels Chester may be valued.

Discussions between local stakeholders and Street Angels Chester should take place to consider how more collaborations and joint ventures could be developed.

This could include considering a range of safe spaces for those using the night time economy to visit or be taken to if experiencing vulnerabilities. Working with more local stakeholders would also help to increase the visibility and awareness of Street Angels Chester. Furthermore, conversations could take place regarding the use of apps in safety provision in Chester City Centre's night time economy. Street Angels Chester made use of the Walk Safe App throughout the pilot study. Other stakeholders in Chester City Centre use the Holly Guard App as this is funded through the Safer Streets initiative. For consistency it could be beneficial for all stakeholders who are offering support within Chester City Centre's night time economy to use the same app which could help to support stronger collaboration.

Future research should include the calculation of the social value of the work carried out by Street Angels Chester.

The significance of Street Angels Chester's efforts becomes apparent when we consider their potential to positively influence individual well-being and enhance community safety through their work. This can be difficult to quantify and apply an economic cost benefit to. Social Value calculations on the other hand could be a useful way to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of their work. Social Value UK (n.d.) describe social value as moving "beyond using money as the main indicator of value, instead putting the

emphasis on engaging people to understand the impact of decisions on their lives... social value has a huge potential to help us change the way we understand the world around us, and make decisions about where to invest resources". If future funding and resources allow, a social value calculation should be commissioned to help understand more about the impact that Street Angels Chester is having within the local population.

Future research should also include data collection from those who use Chester's night time economy.

Volunteers for Street Angels Chester were able to give reports from their own perspectives which provides further context to the end of shift quantitative reports that focus on the number of interventions delivered. Often within the qualitative reports the volunteers would reflect upon the appreciation they received from those they were directly supporting as well as passers-by. Whilst this is useful context, it would also be beneficial to collect data from those who receive support and those who use Chester City Centre's night time economy to obtain their perspective. This could provide an understanding of the longer-term impact of the support provided by Street Angels Chester as well as helping to identify whether their presence impacts upon overall perceptions of safety within Chester City Centre's night time economy.



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VR
18 97

ANTHONY COLNET ARCHT. & BUILDER
B.C. ROBERTS BARRISTER 1897
L.C. WILKES MASON 1895

THIS GATE BEGAN AT THE END OF THE 18TH CENTURY JOHN KEL SAID THE ARCH
FINISHED AD. MDCCC XIX. CHAS. BOGGS THE ARCHT.



For more information about the work of Street Angels
please email info@streetangelschester.co.uk

www.streetangelschester.co.uk