

Standard Operating Procedures

Agreed between



Bedfordshire Police
&
Bedford Street Angels

For the deployment of Street Angels
in
Bedford Town Centre

March 2011

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Street Angels is a nationwide Christian organisation, which started in Halifax in 2005. They seek to provide support through locally based Christian volunteers. These volunteers are known as ‘Street Angels’ and come from many of mainstream churches but all with one aim in mind – to provide support to vulnerable people on the streets.
- 1.2 These Standard Operating Procedures intend to provide guidance to ensure that both the independence and safety of the Street Angels are preserved.
- 1.3 Bedfordshire Police is keen to support any initiative that prevents vulnerable people either committing or becoming a victim of crime within our busy town centres during the weekend.
- 1.4 The Bedford Street Angels are keen to preserve the independence of Street Angels, so that they can care for vulnerable people. Bedfordshire Police however, recognises that as law-abiding citizens, Street Angels also have a duty to work within the law and where necessary to report incidents or crime taking place to the police.
- 1.5 Bedfordshire Police respects the independence of the Street Angels, but also recognises that it also owes a duty of care to all those frequenting town centres at night.

2.0 Operating Conditions

- 2.1 Street Angels will be deployed at any time within 2200 and 0400 hours currently on a Saturday night, although this may be expanded subject to availability of volunteers.
- 2.2 Street Angels will work in groups of no less than three.
- 2.3 Bedfordshire Police will provide a liaison officer for use by the Street Angels. This will either be the Duty Inspector, or where they are unavailable, the Duty Sergeant at Grey friars Police Station.
- 2.4 Street Angels will wear any issued uniform provided by the organisation, which will clearly identify the volunteer’s role. All volunteers will be required to wear a name badge as a further clear sign of identification.

- 2.5 Within each group, Street Angels will have a Nite-net radio linking them with Bedford CCTV. All Street Angels wherever practicable, will work within sight of the Bedford Town CCTV.
- 2.6 Any issues or comments should be directed to Ali McGAW -Licensing and Night-time Economy Officer. Regular meetings will be held to ensure that any learning points are addressed and best practice circulated between all partners within the Bed:safe group.
- 2.7 At the conclusion of any deployment, contact must be made with Bedford CCTV operators to inform them the Street Angels have concluded their duties for the evening.

3.0 Recovery of Property

- 3.1 The Street Angels should not ordinarily handle property and any enquiries should be directed towards the police. It is also understood that Street Angels have no powers of seizure.
- 3.2 There will be occasions, however, where Street Angels may be handed property that has been surrendered by someone they have been talking to. It is important that Street Angels are therefore in pairs to negate any later allegation of theft.
- 3.3 Bedfordshire Police understands that in some cases, drugs or weapons may be surrendered to Street Angels for disposal. It is better that this takes place than the item remaining in use on the streets. The overriding concern is whether the item has been used in a previous crime and that its surrender is a tactic to dispose of evidence.
- 3.4 Where property has been surrendered, the Street Angels will call Police Control Room as soon as possible to arrange for the item to be collected.
- 3.5 The Street Angels will ensure that the item is packaged using exhibit bags or knife tubes as provided by Bedfordshire Police.
- 3.6 Police Officers or Police Community Support Officers attending the scene will make an assessment and check previous incidents to ensure that the item has not been used in crime.

- 3.7 If the item has not been used in crime, the item will be booked by the officer into the property system and disposed of in the usual manner. There is no need for the police to enquire or demand the name of the person surrendering the item.
- 3.8 If the item has been used in crime or that the quantity of drugs surrendered is large, then the officer will ensure that the matter is investigated and the individual Street Angel called back and spoken to. Bedford CCTV will also be contacted to assist further.
- 3.9 If a firearm (real, imitation or replica) is surrendered, the Street Angel will not handle the firearms, but will diplomatically withdraw and call the police immediately. Officers will then be in a position to both deal with the incident and to make the item safe. It is important that Street Angel feel empowered to contact the police in such instances without diminishing their impartiality.
- 3.10 Street Angels should not seize alcohol and where this is surrendered, people should be encouraged either hand it to the police themselves or pour it away.
- 3.11 Any instances of items surrendered will be brought to the attention of Ali McGaw –Licensing and Night-time Economy Officer.

4.0 Dealing with Potential Conflict

- 4.1 Street Angels may find that they may either come across or unintentionally be part of violent or confrontational incidents. In order for them to remain impartial and independent, they should diplomatically withdraw to a safe area.
- 4.2 They will assess whether the incident requires police attendance in order to protect any property or people involved. Bedfordshire Police may require Street Angels to provide witness statements.
- 4.3 Bedfordshire Police will not tolerate any abuse or assault on Street Angels and will act positively upon being called to deal with such incidents. It is important that where a Street Angel is assaulted, they receive medical attention. The details of any assaults should be made aware of to the Volunteer Co-ordinator who will forward them to Ali McGAW – Licensing and Night time Economy Officer to ensure that any learning points are addressed and that a thorough investigation is made.

Contact details are as follows.

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