

# Setting up a Street Angels Project Help and Ideas to assist you!

[www.streetangels.org.uk](http://www.streetangels.org.uk)

## Introduction:

Street Angels is an exciting ministry. It shows that the church cares about the community it serves and about the problems associated with the night time economy. So many of our town and city centres change on Friday and Saturday nights.

Street Angels is about offering safe people and a safe place within this culture. It is about offering those who become vulnerable a safe solution that will see them getting home safe. Be it people leaving the theatre, those who work in the town centre, those waiting for a bus or taxi home, or those out clubbing and in the pubs - Street Angels can be a visible presence that makes a massive difference!

Halifax Street Angels was launched by Paul Blakey of Churches Together in Halifax in November 2005. Inspired by God and a working party to look at needs in the Town Centre, the thought of running a safe place café (Fairtrade Café) was put to the Police at a Town Centre Forum meeting. Two weeks later Street Angels was launched, running every Friday and Saturday 9pm - 3am since! Very much of God, very much a heart to make a difference, very much local Christians wanting to put faith into action!

Three years later and Halifax Street Angels is still going strong. Street Angels have

contributed to a 42% reduction in violent crime in the town. Street Angels have become an example of good practice for many other towns and cities across the UK and around the World. Street Angels have invested 8000 volunteer hours per year into the town centre.

This document, and the [www.streetangels.org.uk](http://www.streetangels.org.uk) web site, will be a help to those wanting to set up a similar initiative. As Halifax Street Angels our heart is to share what God has given us and assist those in other towns in any way we can. We are here to help you...



## Partnership:

This is the key to the success of Halifax Street Angels. This is not the church presuming it knows what the problems are! The first move is to approach other agencies, such as Police, Council, Town Centre Management, Halifax Ambassadors, pubs and clubs, and see what your local problems are. Once you have found out go and see for yourself. Keep partnership key and important in all you do - this is a project for the whole community the church can be the lead group on - celebrate and promote this.



## Churches:

This project is far too big for one single church to sustain. Street Angels works best where people from different churches come together to work on the project. In Halifax we decided at the start of our project that our volunteers wouldn't be limited to those within the church - anyone (who has satisfactory CRB and references) can volunteer to be a Street Angel. But a core group of Christians are needed to ensure that the project retains its Christian ethos, very much the key to its success.

## Policies:

We developed the Halifax policies over our first few months and review them regularly. You can view, download and copy our Volunteers Handbook on the web site.

You will need a system of checking existing or applying for new CRB (Criminal Record Bureau) checks for all volunteers. Two references would also be a good idea - an Application Form is part of our Volunteers Handbook. Remember Data Protection

when storing details of your volunteers on computer.

Encouraging volunteers to add to the Policies is a great idea - yearly Reviews may be one way of seeing what those involved really think.

### **Insurance:**

You need to ensure your volunteers are insured - in Halifax we have linked with the YMCA, so we are all YMCA volunteers and hence covered by the YMCA Insurance Policy. The insurance company will need to know what is involved, but we have found them to be sympathetic! Make sure your premises are covered as well - especially if you are running a drop in café late at night. If the project employs a person to oversee Street Angels they will need separate Employers Insurance. It may also be worth adding legal expenses, property and Public Liability (£5million), so you are covered if you have stands at galas, etc.

### **Charitable Status and / or Company Structure:**

Some supporting structure is needed to supervise and advise, and to deal with the finances. If you are working as a project of one church, your church may give you such support but clarify exactly what and who is insured, and that the structure of the 'committee' is fit for purpose, both for the church's mission and your project's activities. You will have charitable status via your church.

A joint or ecumenical project will need to set up a new supervising body with charitable status. Donors may

demand/prefer to give to registered charities, (and Gift Aid can be claimed). The Charity Commission website is the place to get help. No great skill is needed - just lots of patience! The new charitable structure called 'Charitable Incorporated Organisation', or CIO, will give both registered charity and limited liability status. The Charity Commission is very helpful over the phone as they want charities to get it right.



### **Volunteers:**

Value your volunteers! They are the most important part of Street Angels. Run regular thank you and social events (ranging from mystery trips, picnic in the park, barbecues, events at peoples homes, roller blading, ice skating, raclette). Find out if they have ideas or can contribute to the success of the project.

In Halifax we publish a monthly Newsletter which as well as Street Angels news and events includes volunteer birthdays (these are available on our web site). Birthday cards go a long way in saying that as an organisation you invest in and value your volunteers! Social Networking sites such as Facebook help your volunteers feel part of the project outside the Friday and Saturday nights.

Also involve the volunteers in award ceremonies, etc.



### **Funding:**

Always a key area! First of all though - don't stress! If God has called this ministry into being he will sustain it! Trust in him to supply your needs and to provide you the ability and wisdom about what to apply for. Don't just look on funding opportunities as funding - use it to network, to share with a wider audience what the project is about and what God is doing through it! We are aiming to develop possible funding stream links on the [www.streetangels.org.uk](http://www.streetangels.org.uk) site. The Police, Council Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership, businesses, pubs and clubs, churches, Rotary, Community Foundation, Volunteer Bureau, Bank and Building Societies Foundations (for example if any of your volunteers work at HBOS, the HBOS Foundation may donate £250 when they have volunteered for 60 hours) are all possible sources of funding.

One idea in Halifax is to encourage businesses and churches to sponsor the jackets - in return for on street publicity week in week out publicity!

### **Publicity:**

Take lots of photos! This will make any publicity you do easier. Include as many of the volunteers as you can (you need permission of course) but avoid

photos on the streets with identifiable people in the background. Facebook is a great place to store photos (you can set up your own, free, Street Angels account) as volunteers can be tagged and all of this increases awareness of your project.

A web site is good - see [www.streetangels.org.uk](http://www.streetangels.org.uk) for the Halifax site and links to other similar projects.

Keep your local newspaper, radio, tv, community web sites up to date on what you are doing. Writing a press release is generally better than an interview. We can even include your news on the Halifax site - [paul@streetangels.org.uk](mailto:paul@streetangels.org.uk).

Other ideas such as: pull-up display banner; vinyl banners; leaflets; annual reports; newsletters; stands at galas and shows; talks to local churches, Rotary, etc; inviting the Mayor, councillors, MP, High Sheriff, Lord Lieutenant, etc to join you one night or to a launch event; yearly thank-you dinner evening; all help with publicity.



### Equipment:

A café or base; fluorescent jackets for volunteers to wear - branded is good (the best supplier Halifax has found is Red Oak Direct - [www.redoakdirect.com](http://www.redoakdirect.com)); CCTV radio link (each town will operate a CCTV / ShopWatch radio system) or mobile phones

to communicate between teams; kettle to make people (volunteers and visitors) endless cups of tea and coffee (disposable cups for visitors may be good idea); a computer with Internet access for recording incidents (this is so if a police statement is needed at a later time you can easily refer to what was recorded as the incident happened); first aid supplies; sick bowls; blankets; pens and pads; rubber gloves (for picking up bottles found on the streets as well as dealing with people); business cards with contact web site and times of operating (see [www.vistaprint.co.uk](http://www.vistaprint.co.uk)); willing people and someone to coordinate it all!!!

In Halifax we don't operate by rota - we aim for Street Angels to be flexible and for volunteers to decide when and how long they want to invest, though this is down to local choice.



### Training:

In Halifax we mainly offer 'on the job' training - ensuring people know the important safety aspects of working in a town centre at night. These points are summarised in the Volunteers Handbook.

Further training is on offer from time to time such as: Conflict Training; Sexual Assault Awareness; Drug and Alcohol Awareness; Basic First Aid and First Aid at Work (the 4 day course for those who may wish to be initial First Aid people); and Weapon Concealment. Your

Police contact may well be able to advise on where such training is available locally.



### Awards:

In Halifax we have received a good number of Awards - all of which help showcase what the project is achieving as well as help the volunteers recognise that the work they do is having a massive wider impact. Some examples of the Awards received are:

Duke of York's Community Initiative; Investing in Volunteers; Home Office Tilley Awards Yorkshire and Humber Regional Winner 2008; Faithworks Community Excellence Award; Community Foundation for Calderdale Project of the Year 2007; West Yorkshire Police Community Trust; Voluntary Action Calderdale Oscars (as a thank-you for Volunteers); Millennium Volunteers / The V Project (for volunteers aged 16-25).

Details of these are on [www.streetangels.org.uk](http://www.streetangels.org.uk) - with web links for you to nominate your project!



### First Aid:

Six months after Street Angels launched in Halifax, St John

Ambulance showed an interest in becoming part of the project. The concept was to offer first aid assistance on the streets so as to reduce the number of casualties and issues at A&E. This element of the Nightlife Project (which also included Nightlife Marshals) strengthened the role of Street Angels and very much added to our success on the streets. A change in circumstances has meant that St John's are no longer able to provide first aid cover, so Halifax Street Angels is now in the process of looking at further training for some of the volunteers so we can offer initial first aid assistance on the streets. Other localised first aid agencies or St John may well be willing to work within the town with you if you ask.

**Nightlife Marshals:**

These are SIA (Security Industry Authority) licensed door-staff who are based on the streets, employed by the Council. Their role is to act as first point of contact before police arrive on the scene. The Marshals can intervene in situations of

conflict. Some areas operate Taxi Marshals to ensure safety for those waiting in taxi queues.



**Christian Nightlife Initiatives Network:**

This Network was launched at the First Christian Nightlife Initiatives Conference in July 2008. This aims to be an informal way of celebrating all that God is doing through projects such as Street Angels, Town Pastors, NightStop, etc. The [www.streetangels.org.uk](http://www.streetangels.org.uk) web site has a section with links to the various projects around the world as well as resources and links. To become linked to the CNI Network email [paul@streetangels.org.uk](mailto:paul@streetangels.org.uk)

Faithworks and City Links Redeeming Our Communities are two excellent wider networks that compliment the

concept of Street Angels wonderfully:

[www.faithworks.info](http://www.faithworks.info)  
[www.citylinks.org.uk](http://www.citylinks.org.uk)

Above all Street Angels is a fun and dynamic way of investing God's Kingdom of love, peace, crime reduction, safer streets, lack of fear, hope, care into our communities and individuals. In Halifax we have seen a 42% reduction in violent crime with other towns and cities running the project seeing similar results. If we can help you in any way - please contact us!

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