

Belfast Street Pastors – *Frequently Asked Questions*



What is Street Pastors?

Street Pastors is a church-based scheme through which Christians from different churches get together and go out onto the streets of Belfast at night, to **care, listen and help**. Street Pastors was started in Brixton, London in 2003 and there are now over 250 schemes and over 9,000 volunteers in the UK and now in other countries.

Is it linked to the Police and other services?

It is a **church** initiative that works closely with the Police, City Council and Belfast City Centre Management. Street Pastors UK has been highly praised by the Prime Minister, Mayor of London, Archbishop of Canterbury and many local services, and of course people who are helped!

What do Street Pastors wear?

We wear a uniform to help people identify us as an organised scheme, and to distinguish ourselves from other services such as the police. We have summer and winter uniforms which have high visibility markings. Wearing a uniform often helps people approach us and start a conversation.

What do Street Pastors do?

We go out in teams of 3 or 4 around Belfast City Centre. We talk to pub and club owners and security staff, start conversations in the street and look for people who need some help or a friendly ear.

We **don't** preach or give out tracks, **but** we are often asked about Christian things and are able to share and pray with people if appropriate. We are not trained to physically break up fights, but with humour and wisdom, can often help diffuse what might otherwise become a nasty incident.

What happens on a typical night?

Every night is different, but often we:

- Pick up bottles and glasses which could be used as weapons
- Give out flip-flops to girls in high heels who have had too much to drink
- Help people get taxis/other transport - sometimes staying with them until someone collects them
- Help prevent anti-social incidents
- Help with simple first aid
- Point people to other appropriate services
- Answer questions and share our faith with people

When does it operate?

From 10pm to 2 am on Friday and Saturday nights in the centre of Belfast.

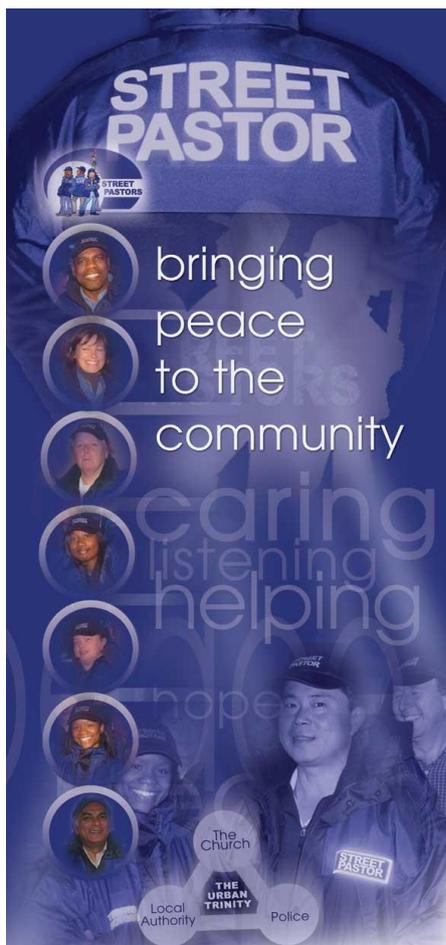
What difference does it make?

- We take some pressure of the emergency services – we have time they don't have
- Street Pastor schemes have contributed to a fall in crime rates
- Glasses and bottles are removed from the street so they cannot be used as weapons or trodden on by bare feet



The church in action on the streets to: care, listen and help

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- The town becomes a safer place
- We can phone for help
- We present a caring face of the Gospel
- We help protect vulnerable people

What are the requirements to be a Street Pastor?

- A passion for Jesus and the community
- At least 18 years old (no upper limit!)
- Commitment to a local church for at least a year, a recommendation from the church leader and an Access NI check
- Commitment to going out at least 1 once a month
- Commitment to undertaking 12 modules of training

What does it cost?

Primarily your time and effort! There is a contribution to the uniform which sometimes churches help with.

Are there other ways of helping?

Yes, we need people who are able and willing to pray, give and help with special events.

What training will I receive?

There are 12 modules in the training which cover roles and responsibilities, alcohol and drugs awareness, roles of Police and other services, understanding our community etc.

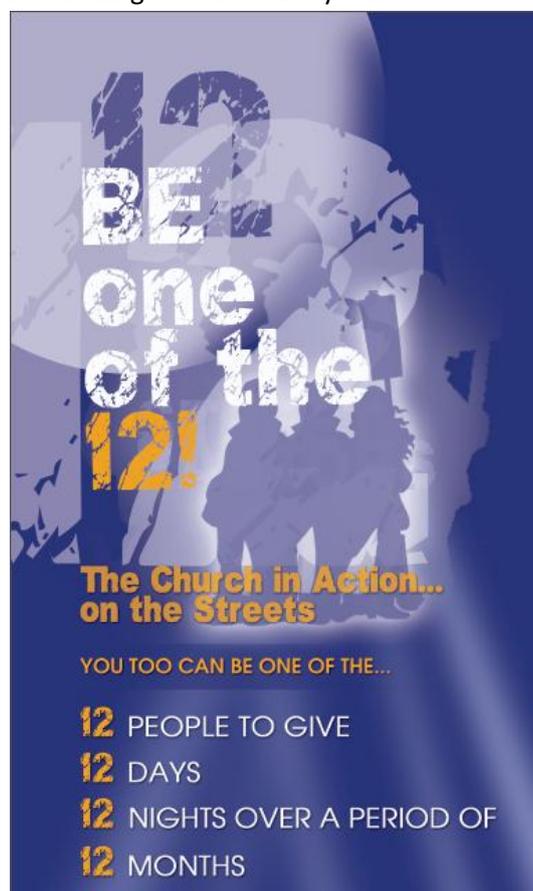
Who runs the scheme

There is a management committee with representatives from different churches, Police, Belfast City Council and Belfast City Centre Management.

How can I find out more?

Phone 075 1623 0181
Facebook Belfast Street Pastors
Twitter BelfastStreetPa
Web www.belfast.streetpastors.org.uk
Email belfast@streetpastors.org.uk
Mail Belfast Street Pastors c/o BCCM,
Sinclair House, 95-101 Royal Avenue,
Belfast, BT1 1FE

We are always looking for more volunteers so come and be part of this exciting initiative!



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