

Stirling Street Pastors

Review of 2015-16



Caring, Listening, Helping

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Introduction

2015/16 has been a year of transition for Stirling Street Pastors. We have been able to look back over our development since our launch in February 2009, acknowledge what has been achieved and make plans for the next phase in our life.

For 6 years we have fielded teams of volunteers who have patrolled the city centre between 10pm until the night clubs empty and the city quietens, normally about 3 – 4am. Our volunteers come from churches in Stirling and the surrounding towns. All our volunteers are trained to the standards required by the Ascension Trust.



We have volunteers from: The Baptist Church, The Church of Scotland, The Free Church of Scotland, The Methodist Church, and Independent Churches in and around Stirling.

Our teams are available to “care, listen and help” and, as opportunities arise, share the Gospel in word as well as in example. We are available to all - regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation and religion. We are

however especially concerned for those who are at risk or vulnerable in any way.

We work closely with the Police and the Council as part of an understanding known as The Urban Trinity. We have been grateful for the support of our Council colleagues, in particular Peter Walker who has provided great encouragement over the years, and also the CCTV staff and the “Safe Base” staff who work alongside us during the weeks before Christmas. We have appreciated the encouragement of Chief Inspector Paul Rollo, Area Commander, Police Scotland and Sergeant Robert Russell of the Community Policing Team.

The Three Pillars

We have continued to operate with the concept of “3 pillars”:

Stirling Street Pastors



Volunteers

This year, for the first time, we were able to plan a rota that scheduled a team out every Friday and Saturday night during the year.

We rostered a team on **100** Fridays and
Saturdays combined

84 teams went out

84% is the highest coverage we have achieved to date.

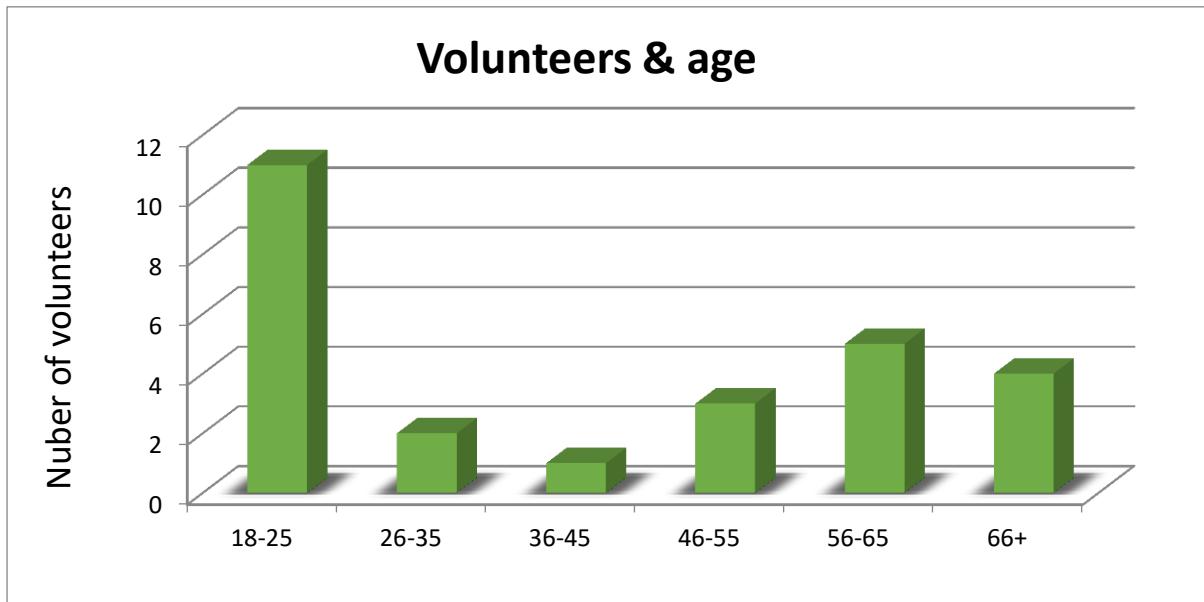
In contrast to 2009/10 when we needed female volunteers, we now have more female than male volunteers. On 31st of March 2016 we had:

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Trained volunteers	8	19
Volunteers in training	3	1

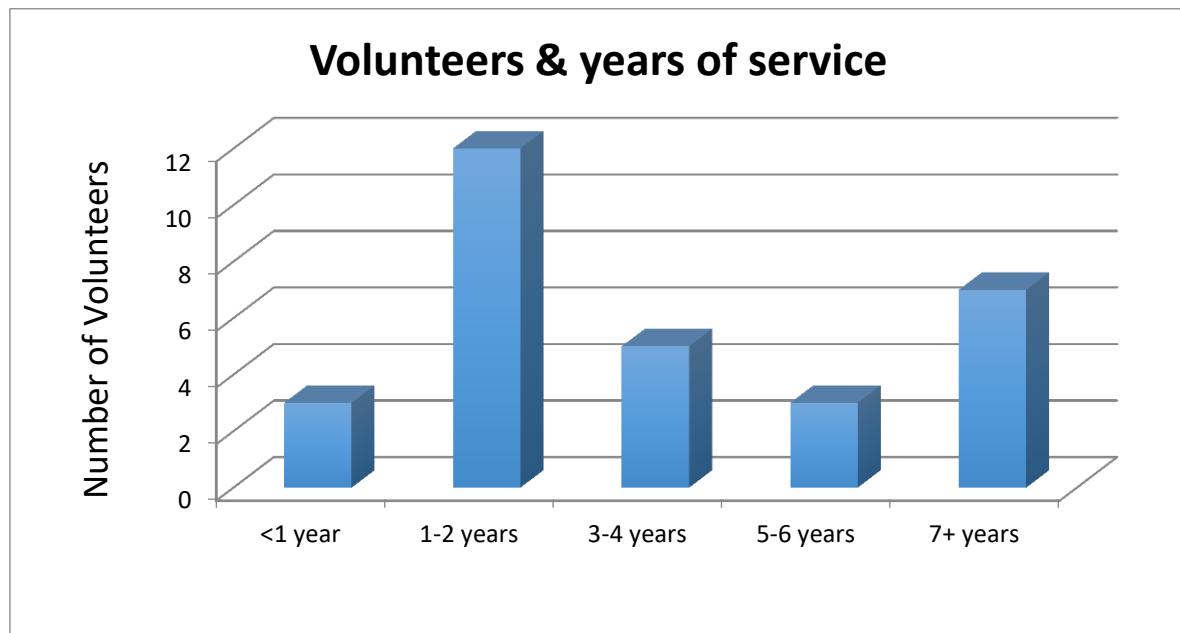
Following consultation with our volunteers we began a pilot to field all-female teams. The pilot worked well and, although we would prefer to have mixed gender teams, all-female teams have been accepted by our volunteers and the public.

We have relished having students, recruited in the past 3 years from Stirling University, in our volunteer group. Our teams are now made up of volunteers in their early 20s through to their 70s. (The oldest volunteer in Scotland is 93!)

Age Distribution



Length of Service



We retain the support of volunteers who became Street Pastors in 2009, and enjoy seeing new volunteers join us each year. It is natural to have some turnover and we know that our students will be moving on soon. We pray for new volunteers to join us in the knowledge they come into a group where there is much experience to share.

We continued an earlier pilot of putting teams out on Thursday nights during term time when large numbers of students are in the city centre. This was made possible through the generosity of our volunteers many of whom went out on patrol over and above their 4 weekly commitment.

32 possible nights 10 patrols 31% coverage

Prayer

Prayer is a cornerstone of our activities. Our Prayer Coordinator, Susan Rushton, introduced “Call2Pray”, a bi-monthly information sheet that highlights our needs for prayer – for ourselves and people we have met on the streets. The circulation list for Call2Pray has grown steadily and we rejoice that friends in churches in and around Stirling support us in prayer.

We are very conscious that we are representatives of our churches in and around Stirling, and that we are taking the love of Christ out of our individual churches and on to the streets at night. We value the support of our churches through individual and communal prayer during services. We welcome observers from churches who would like to join us on patrol for whole or part of our nights out.

We encourage our volunteers to have at least 2 Prayer Partners, at least one of whom should come from their own church (or, in the case of our students, the church they attend in Stirling). Prayer Partners support volunteers in many ways: by coming in before patrols to join volunteers for their time of prayer, holding their Street Partners in regular prayer, and praying for the our work in Stirling as well as for specific issues.

Four times a year we meet for Prayer Nights. These evenings are wonderful occasions when our volunteers and their Prayer Partners can share concerns, give thanks and enjoy a time of fellowship within a prayerful context.

Finance

Our income continues to come from 2 sources: donations and grants.

We are enormously grateful to the churches and individual supporters who provide us with donations each month. The steady flow of income month by month provides us with great encouragement.

Individual supporters who donate monthly do so through the “Be One of The Hundred” Scheme. The majority gift aid their donations. At any time we have about 30 donors in the scheme. We would love to see this number increase!

We also grateful to the individuals, churches and church organisations that donate during the year. Often donations are raised at lunches, coffee mornings and sales. Some churches make us one of their charities of choice for a given period and commit funds to us.

We are so grateful to you all. Thank you!

In previous years we have received support from Stirling Council who have helped us with the purchase of uniforms and other equipment. This year we received funding from NHS Forth Valley Health Promotion Service in recognition of the positive impact of SPs on demand for emergency services.

The money we receive does not cover our outgoings. The largest item of expenditure we have relates to the employment of our Initiative Coordinator. We also have expenses relating to the recruitment and training of volunteers, equipment needed for patrols, office equipment and insurance.

We depend on grants to cover the gap between donations and outgoings. This year we have been blessed by the award of grants from the Church of

Scotland's "Go For It" fund and from The Robertson Trust. Both grants were made to support the employment of our Coordinator. They have allowed us to increase our bank balance to a level that ensures we can meet our needs for the foreseeable future and give us time to consider how we can increase our income from donations and identify new grants.

On the Streets

<i>Bottles of water given out:</i> <u>188</u>	<i>Flip flops given out:</i> <u>341</u>	<i>Foil blankets given out:</i> <u>30</u>
<i>We arranged transport for / helped <u>60</u> people to get home</i>	<i>We gave hot drinks to rough sleepers:</i> <u>84</u>	<i>On average, people we engaged with per month:</i> <u>251</u>
<i>We discussed faith issues with <u>114</u> people</i>	<i>We prayed with <u>10</u> people on the street (and for many more back at base)</i>	<i>We removed <u>936</u> bottles and glasses (on average 10 per patrol)</i>
<i>First aid administered on <u>16</u> occasions</i>		

We engage with a wide range of people while on patrol:



We provide practical help in a variety of ways but have particular concern for those who are vulnerable or at risk. We define those who are “**Vulnerable**” as:

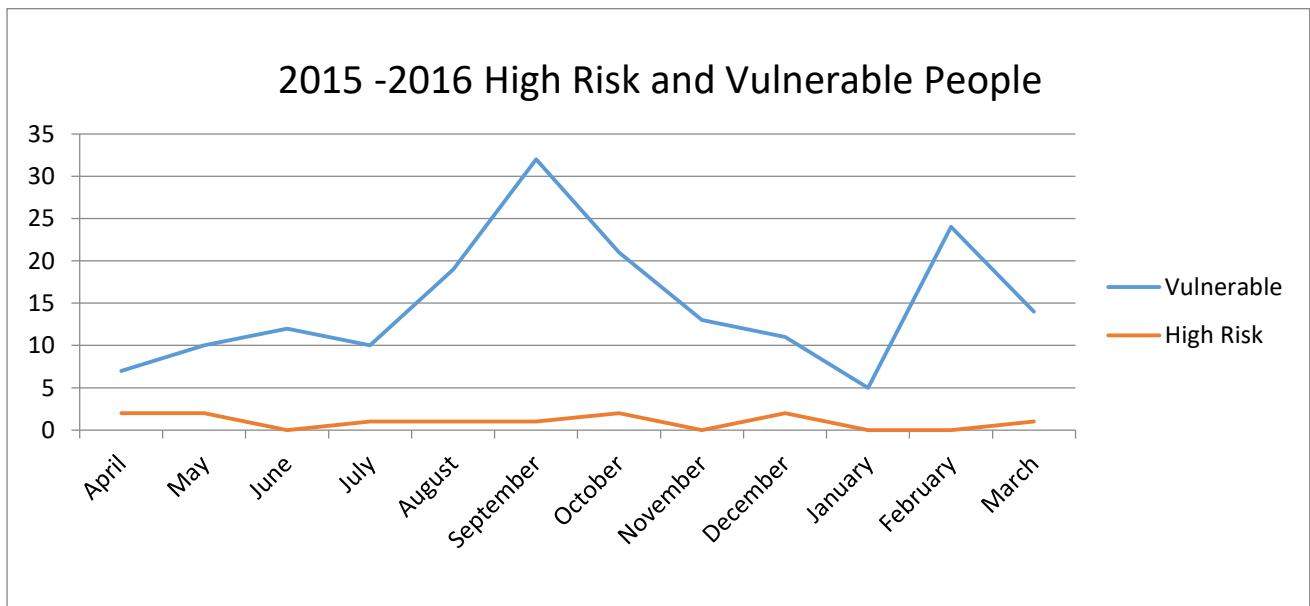
Those that are in a situation where Stirling Street Pastors can demonstrate early intervention, preventing an issue from escalating in nature. The majority of these situations revolve around alcohol and are most commonly resolved by finding appropriate transport to get the individual safely home.

We define those who are “**High Risk**” as:

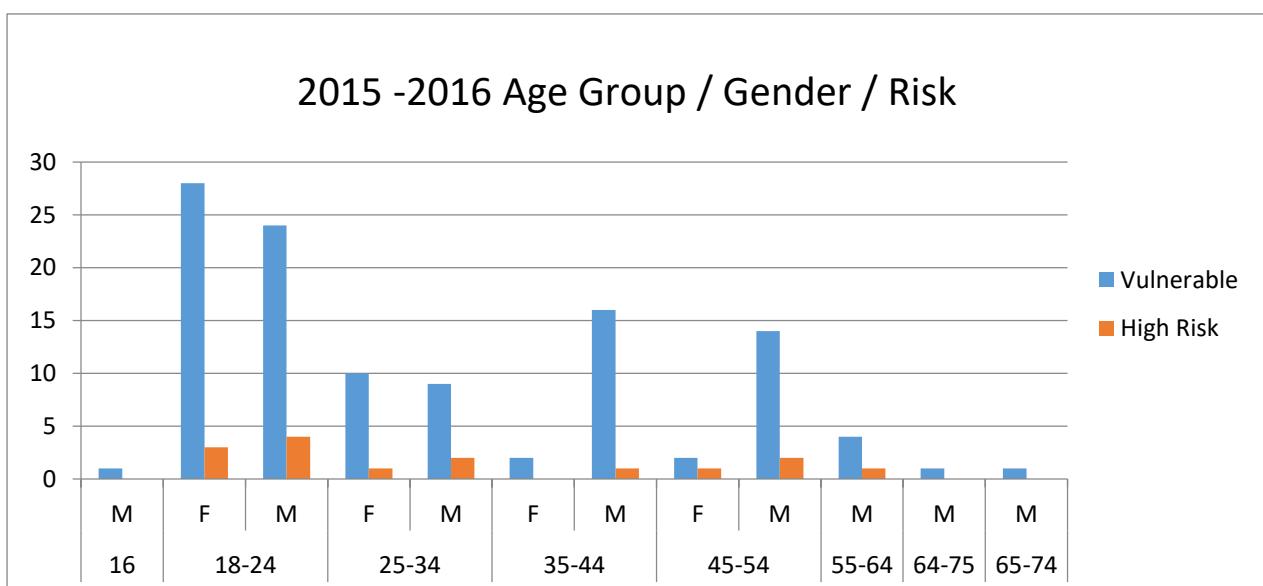
Those that are in a situation or have a problem that must be resolved by our partners in the Police and Ambulance services. Often, Stirling Street Pastors will be the first on the scene, identify the issue and then request the support of

the appropriate service. The team remains with the individual keeping them safe and warm until the response team arrives.

The monthly pattern shows that there were significantly higher numbers of vulnerable or high risk people in September / October and to a lesser extent in February. It is possible this links to student activity.



There were more vulnerable & high risk females than males in the 18 – 34 age range, but more vulnerable males in the age range 44 – 64.



Reasons for engagement	Predominantly
<i>Separated from friends</i>	<i>Females</i>
<i>Drink / Substance abuse</i>	<i>Males & Females</i>
<i>Fights</i>	<i>Males</i>
<i>Homeless / rough sleepers</i>	<i>Males</i>
<i>Injury</i>	<i>Males</i>
<i>Personal abuse</i>	<i>Males & Females</i>
<i>Without means to get home</i>	<i>Males</i>
<i>Suicidal</i>	<i>Males</i>

Management & Governance

Our Management Committee (MC) meets at intervals of approximately 6 weeks. MC members are elected by our members (volunteers) at the annual general meeting which this year was held on 25 September 2015.

The year saw a number of changes in personnel who had held posts since SSP was set up.

The Rev Stuart Davidson stepped down as Chair but continued as a volunteer. Gail Walker, our Vice Chair, took the Chair on an acting basis while we considered who our next Chair should be.

Anne Baird handed over as Treasurer to Alison Fyfe who brought experience in banking and as a church treasurer.

Jill McLeod, our Secretary, handed over to Beatrice Campbell.

Other committee members continued in post and we welcomed Anne Grier to the team.

Our original Coordinator, and founder member, James Mackenzie, left our employment in June. We were delighted to appoint Murdo Murchison to the post. Murdo is a Street Pastor in Stirling who trained with Aberdeen Street Pastors.

Murdo and the Management Committee had a planning day in February, facilitated by a member of the Methodist Church in Scotland's Faith and Development Team.

As a registered Scottish Charity we have to meet OSCR requirements. We submitted our annual report and accounts to OSCR and these are available for review on the OSCR web site.

What next?

We remain committed to being the presence of the church on the streets of Stirling at night on as many weekends, and Thursdays during term time, as possible.

We will need new volunteers in the coming year to replace those who are moving on and to ensure we can field teams every week.

We will continue to seek new donors and develop our regular donor base so that we are less dependent on grants to maintain our activities.

Prayer will continue to be central to our activities and we will seek to fulfil the will of God in all we do.

Thanks be to God!