

## STREET PASTORS

As well as serving the night-time economy, the Street Pastors model is being used in daytime and community settings, for example, in parks, schools and colleges.

In 2014 we started to train experienced street pastors for the role of response pastors - volunteers who provide physical and emotional support in times of crisis.

Whichever context they are in, street pastors offer reassurance, safety and support through listening, caring and helping. They work together with other partners to make communities safer.

Each SP group is set up by Ascension Trust, which is the governing body behind Street Pastors, and run by a local coordinator with support from local churches and community groups, in partnership with the police, local council and other statutory agencies.

*"Street Pastors is about Christians rolling up their sleeves and getting involved in practically responding to the problems of crime and safety. They are like beacons on our streets and I want to see them shining brightly in every constituency."*

*David Burrowes, Patron of Ascension Trust*

If you think you might be interested in joining us or you know someone who might be, please pass on the details below.

<https://www.streetpastors.org>

<https://streetpastors.org/locations/wigan/>

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[https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=Wigan%20Street%20Pastors&ep\\_a=SEARCH\\_BOX](https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=Wigan%20Street%20Pastors&ep_a=SEARCH_BOX)



## Street Pastors

### Caring Listening Helping

#### What they do

#### How you can help

The local Street Pastors began to patrol in Wigan town centre on Friday nights just before Christmas 2017, but like other aspects of life have been dormant for the last 14 months. We are now planning to recommence in the coming months, and would like to invite those interested to join us.

After so long since we patrolled we want to review our training and this would be a good time for others interested to join us. We are also losing one of our most experienced members so we need to boost numbers as well.

**A street pastor is someone who is...**

- a Christian and is part of a local church;
- concerned for society and their local community;
- willing to engage with people, whatever their perspective on life and wherever they hang out;
- happy to work in a team and in collaboration with other agencies and projects, both statutory and voluntary.

Prayer Pastors are a vital part of what Street Pastors do. A Prayer Pastor is someone with a desire to make a difference through prayer in the city/town they live in, and willing to invest in the lives of others.



Street Pastors are trained volunteers from local churches who care about their community. We patrol in teams of men and women, in Wigan usually between 10/10.30pm and 4am (maximum) on Friday nights, to care for, listen to and help people who are out on the streets.

We operate one evening a week when we have sufficient staff for a team to go out; there must be at least 3 people including a Leader, and preferably a balance of genders. Currently the team is not big enough for us to have three people out each week and for each of us to still do only one night a month, which is the aim, so new pastors are urgently needed.

The dynamics of interaction with the public are quite different depending on the gender balance of the team - an all male team as opposed to one where there is at least one woman involved, can get quite a different response.



We never return to our base at the Queen's Hall feeling we have wasted our time, although the weekly experience can be very varied, sometimes quite superficial chat, but building relationships, with door staff and some 'regular punters'.

On other occasions we have had some significant conversations, or an opportunity to pray with someone, at their request. People often find it easier to tell their troubles to a stranger and off-load their anger / guilt / lack of belief in God than to share with others in their lives.

So people often open up about their circumstances, of bereavement, broken relationship, debt, or a range of other situations of pastoral concern. It is a privilege to be witness to such sharing, and we can relay points for prayer to the Prayer Pastors back at Queen's Hall, as well as to continue to pray for folk we meet in our own private

devotions in the coming week or longer.

We are not there to evangelise but we try to answer direct questions about our motivation and faith if asked.

Trust is built week by week, so people running various businesses invite us for coffee, or people we chat with want 'selfies' with us to put on their (or our) Facebook pages.

While many we come into contact with are 'worse for wear' in terms of drink, we trust that some of the contact we have with them will be felt to be helpful. Often we are helping friends to deal with one person who is 'out of it' on drink or one drug or another, and that person will be well aware of the help we offer, even if the individual helped only discovers the next day!

We meet for prayer before we go out and when we take a break during the night. Prayer support is vital and we are aware it is an integral part of the overall scheme, ideally with a small group of 2 or 3 people at the town centre base. We are also in contact with individual prayer supporters by social media who are 'following us' from their homes.

'Street Pastors' was pioneered in London in 2003 by Les Isaac. On that first night, 18 volunteers took to the streets of Brixton - 15 women and 3 men. The oldest known SP was a woman in her early 90s!

Since then over 12,000 trained street and prayer pastors, have played an active part in strengthening community life and working for safer streets in places where they live. Currently, around 300 towns and cities around the UK have a Street Pastors team.

When you add prayer pastors, management teams and trustees, this means that there are over 20,000 volunteers in total associated with the Street Pastors network.

