

**WOLVERHAMPTON
KEEP IT
SAFE**

Keep It Safe!

Project update March 2009

PROJECT UPDATE

In December 2008, Wolverhampton's public, voluntary and private business organisations broke new ground. Together, they launched Keep It Safe – a co-ordinated campaign to tackle alcohol misuse and its consequences. Three months on, what has Keep It Safe achieved?

Above all, Keep It Safe was a practical response to the dangers of alcohol misuse. It included:

- an increased police presence, reassuring evening visitors to the city centre, Bilston and Wednesfield
- volunteer street pastors, providing help and advice
- 'Safe Havens' for revellers, offering places to rest, alcohol-free drinks and a phone to call for licensed taxis
- on the spot medical care in a temporary minor injuries clinic and a roving triage ambulance
- an information campaign, encouraging young people in particular to enjoy themselves responsibly.
- issuing survival kits and key rings containing advice on sensible drinking, a sticking plaster for sore heels, contact numbers for local taxi firms and condoms.

Campaign activity carried through until March 21, 2009. This briefing concentrates on Phase 1 – the Christmas and New Year activities.



Keep It Safe – who was involved?

The Keep It Safe project was managed and funded by Wolverhampton City Primary Care Trust – the PCT. Project director Ros Jervis, consultant in public health, said: "Our overall aim was to reduce the harmful impact of alcohol misuse by creating a safe and positive night-time economy in Wolverhampton.

"We realised from the start that this was something that couldn't be done through advertising alone. We needed the support of our partners in the police, the city council, the voluntary sector and the business community

to back up the Keep It Safe message with concrete action."

Keep It Safe partners West Midlands Police added to public reassurance by putting more officers on the beat in the city centre and in Bilston and Wednesfield. Meanwhile, Wolverhampton City Council co-ordinated its licensing, public protection and environmental safety activities – and took action against irresponsible alcohol retailers and unlicensed taxi operators.

The city's voluntary sector made a vital contribution too. Wolverhampton's street pastors worked as independent street ambassadors, offering revellers help, comfort and advice. Elsewhere, the British Red Cross provided mobile medical support in Bilston and Wednesfield, complementing the temporary medical centre set up by the PCT at WCitystop.info in Victoria Street in the city centre.

But Keep It Safe could not have succeeded without the support of the city's licensed trade. Wolverhampton City Centre Company worked closely with licensees, explaining the reasons for the campaign and offering additional training for bar and door staff.



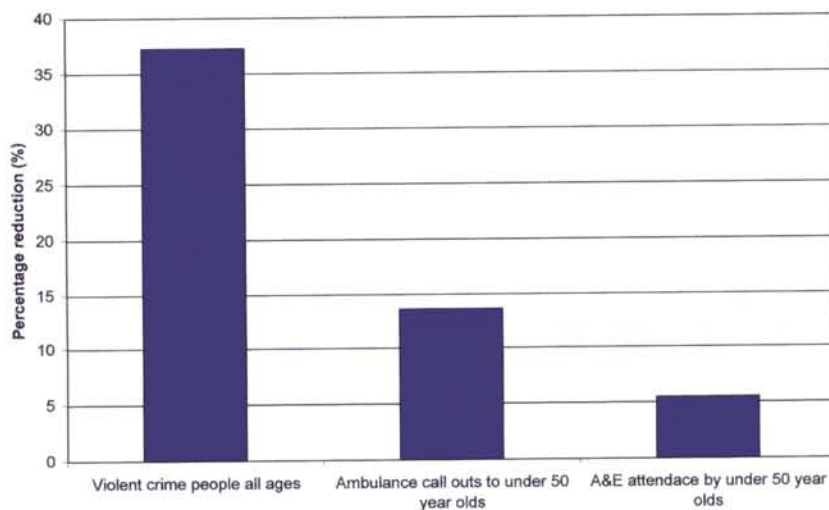
Results from Phase 1 – December 5 2008 to January 3 2009

Three objectives were set to measure the campaign's effectiveness:

- a reduction in the number of alcohol-fuelled violent assaults
- a reduction in the number of alcohol-related ambulance call-outs
- a reduction in the number of alcohol-related Accident and Emergency (A&E) attendances.

Initial findings suggest that Keep It Safe had a dramatic impact on violent crime. In the city centre, violent crime was down by 40% when compared with the same period in 2007/08. In the rest of the city, there was a 30% reduction in violent crime and a 60% reduction in serious assaults.

**Reduction in violent crime,
ambulance call-outs and A&E
admissions in 2008/09
compared with 2007/08**



Meanwhile, data from West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust comparing the same periods suggest that alcohol-related call-outs dropped by 13.6%. This comparative reduction in call-outs became more evident as the campaign progressed. On New Year's Eve, alcohol-related call-outs fell by 28% and in the final weekend of Phase 1 by over 33% – again in comparison with the same period in 2007/08.

The impact of the campaign on A&E attendances has been harder to judge. This is largely because the figures do not distinguish between alcohol-related attendances and any other kind.

Nevertheless, once the results are adjusted to take account of 'winter pressure', there was a 4.4% drop in A&E attendances compared with the same period in 2007/08. Paralleling the data from West Midlands Ambulance Service, the most dramatic fall was on New Year's Eve, where a 34.5% reduction was seen.

On the enforcement side, Wolverhampton City Council's food and environmental safety team was very active, working alongside the police and gathering intelligence. Formal action has since been taken against a number of premises – for two premises licence reviews are pending and several more are expected.

The council's public enforcement team also carried out a number of undercover and open operations against unlicensed taxis. A number of drivers are now facing prosecution for 'plying for hire' offences.

Throughout, the licensed trade took a positive view of Keep It Safe and gave the project tremendous support.

Licensees also considered the campaign to be a success. In a letter to the PCT, the city's Pubwatch Group, 'Knightsafe', commented:

"Over the festive period licensees have reported a feeling of safety around the city centre with the creation of a better atmosphere and better working relationships with our outside partners".



The next steps

Phase 2 of Keep It Safe ended on Saturday March 21, 2009 and its impact is still being evaluated. This phase of the campaign focused strongly on enforcement activities, including:

- continued use of the 'early intervention' tactics successfully used by the police over Christmas and the New Year
- increased multi-agency licensing enforcement activity in the city centre
- continued enforcement of under-age sales legislation
- an enhanced strategy to counter domestic violence, with victim support through a 'crisis intervention service'
- increased activity in anti-social behaviour hotspots.

The signs are that, so far, Keep It Safe has produced extremely positive results for the city and its people. This is entirely due to Wolverhampton's public agencies, private sector companies and voluntary organisations having the will to work together – and to make it happen.

The Keep It Safe Partnership

