

City police (CP) medic – partnership patrols to prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG) incidents in the night-time economy (NTE)

Conducting partnership patrols between City of London Police (CoLP) Cycle Team and St John Ambulance Cycle Response Unit (SJA CRU) to create safer spaces and protect women from victimisation.

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Key details

Does it work?	Untested – new or innovative
Focus	Prevention
Topic	Operational policing Violence against women and girls Vulnerability and safeguarding
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Key details

Partners	Police Business and commerce Community safety partnership Health services Local authority Private sector Voluntary/not for profit organisation
Stage of practice	The practice is implemented.
Start date	November 2016
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Adults Children and young people Communities General public Victims Women Workforce

Aim

The aim of the initiative is to:

- build trust and confidence by keeping those who live, work, and visit the city safe
- create safer spaces by working collaboratively with partners to protect women from victimisation
- provide a public health approach to violence against women and girls (VAWG) in the night-time economy (NTE), to ensure women have an alternative pathway to support if they mistrust the police
- provide a visible presence to deter criminal activity and ASB

- educate police, partners and the public on VAWG themes
- conduct high visibility patrols in harder to reach areas

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes are to:

- increase the number of high visibility cycle patrols in harder to reach areas
- improve the coverage of patrols
- increase the number of nighttime guardians
- reduce the number of sexual assaults in the NTE, while being mindful that encouraging reporting may increase these figures
- reduce the number of homelessness and vulnerable people by joint working with local charities and outreach organisations

Description

The City of London Police Cycle Team (CoLP Cycle Team) have collaborated with the St John Ambulance Cycle Response Unit (SJA CRU) to create a weekly patrol partnership. The purpose of the partnership is to ensure officers remain on the streets and London Ambulance Service (LAS) can be deployed to the most urgent calls. The overarching purpose is to reduce the number of vulnerable people becoming victims of crimes such as sexual assault and thefts. These crime types make up the majority of incidents within the City of London. During the period from April 2022 to December 2024 there were 4,404 incidents of violence and sexual assault (17% of all offences); second only behind theft which accounted for 12,655 offences (49%). The majority of these crimes happened during the NTE hours of hours of 1800-0600. In response, a multi-agency, partnership response was launched to address this public safety challenge in the City's NTE.

In 2016 the CoLP collaborated with the LAS Cycle Response Unit to cover the City of London area during the five-week lead up to Christmas. During the five-week period the initiative was able to triage numerous injuries and illnesses preventing 76 ambulance call outs. The initiative continued until December 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic prompted the disbanding of LAS Cycle Response team to cover other vital roles.

Following smaller scale trial in May 2025, the Eastern City Business Improvement District (BID) committed to funding two cycle medics from St John Ambulance (SJA) responsible for patrolling the Square Mile every Thursday night from 1800-0000hrs. This is increased to three times a week, Thursday to Saturday over the busy festive period.

The Eastern BID is a private, not-for-profit organisation funded by the local business community. Their remit is to provide various initiatives to enhance the experience of those working, visiting and living in the United Kingdom's financial district.

The BID funding commitment is available until 31 March 2027 and is matched by a resourcing commitment from the CoLP, who will provide two of their specially trained cycle officers to deploy alongside the medics on every shift. The funding originates from the Late Night Levy, and their presence enables the medics to attend and assist with police incidents. SJA agreed to support the initiative by utilising its volunteer workforce. The partnership provides:

- Safer streets - a visible presence supporting crime prevention efforts and fostering public reassurance across the Square Mile. In line with CoLP's priority to keep those who live, work and visit the city, safe.
- Rapid response - cycle responders are uniquely equipped to navigate dense and pedestrianised areas in the Square Mile, often reaching incidents faster than traditional vehicles.
- Easing pressure on statutory services - SJA cycle response unit's highly trained and experienced volunteers deliver immediate on-scene care, significantly reducing demand on police and ambulance services.

The initiative links in with Operation Reframe (dealing with VAWG within the NTE). The initiative is coordinated by the City of London Police's licensing team, who resource, supervise deployments and collates the outcomes.

There has been minimal funding from the Late Night Levy to implement the initiative.

Overall impact

Between May 2025 and December 2025, the SJA cycle medics have completed 17 shifts alongside their police counterparts and attended 52 incidents:

- 17 injury or illness

- nine mental health
- eight intoxication
- seven road traffic collisions
- seven assaults
- three other crime types
- one spiking

During 21 of those incidents, the medics' presence meant an ambulance was not required or stood down. This approximately saved £470 per call-out or a total of £9,870. The number of mental health calls attended is notable, but the medics' training and impartiality often leads to optimal outcomes. A voluntary mental health assessment is conducted as opposed to being sectioned which is a complex and timely for the police and distressing for the patient.

Feedback from the initiative includes:

- *"In only a short space of time, the weekly deployment of the cycle medics has become a fundamental part of the City's community safety programme. Feedback on the initiative is overwhelmingly positive from our local business community who appreciate the reassurance and support it brings to their staff who are the primary demographic found within our evening and night-time economy."*
- *"The CoLP commitment to match our funding of the medics with resource from their Cycle Team has been impressive and is testament to their embrace of partnership working which embodies the 'right care, right person' ethos. The outcome is a substantially better one for victims and the wider public which reduces vulnerability (in turn potentially preventing crime or further harm), improves confidence in the police and saves vital emergency service resource."*

Learning

- It is essential to have good organisational skills and stakeholder management. There have been occasional resourcing issues due to the medics from SJA being volunteers.
- To date, no evaluation has been conducted, hence it has been difficult to assess the impact of the initiative.
- Partners with regulatory responsibilities should have firsthand experience of the NTE and support police post after 4pm on a Friday.

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