

## Bus Marshals launch in Bristol



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Bus marshals are to be introduced on to late night weekend bus services from the city centre in a move aimed at boosting passenger comfort and safety.

Two trained marshals per bus, linked by walkie talkies and equipped with head cameras and visual and audio recording equipment, will meet, greet and accompany passengers boarding early morning services in the city centre.

The initiative is a partnership between First Bus, which operates the services, the Council's Directorate of Planning, Transport and Sustainable Development Team and the Safer Bristol Partnership, which spearheads the city's response to crime and community safety. In all, a total of six marshals will operate on eight bus routes between midnight and 3am on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

The marshals, who will wear fluorescent bibs bearing the words, 'Bus Marshal', will be operated by Safe and Sound, the same security firm which currently manages the very successful taxi marshal rank in the city centre.

The bus marshals will be linked by walkie-talkie to each other and their taxi marshal colleagues and to a dedicated police operative in Bristol City Council's CCTV control room.

Councillor Gary Hopkins, Chair of Safer Bristol, said: "Bus marshals on late-night weekend bus services is great news for people of all ages who wish to come into and enjoy the city centre at the weekend. They can feel confident that they will be able to travel from the centre safely and in comfort.

"The focus is on meeting and greeting passengers and ensure that they get home safely. However, anyone who seeks to commit a criminal offence or anti-social behaviour will be dealt with and face the real risk of prosecution."

Although security staff have operated on late-night bus services from the city centre previously, they have not had communication links with the taxi marshals. The bus marshals scheme will provide a joined-up service, one which is designed to ensure the safe journey home of those fit to travel.

In addition, it is the first time security staff on buses have been linked with the CCTV control centre and it is believed to be the first time that head cameras and visual-audio recording equipment have been trialled in a non-police capacity.

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