



City centre marshals scheme wins prestigious award



Bristol has won a top award for an innovative scheme aimed at tackling anti-social behaviour and violence in the city at weekends.

Nightsafe, which is a partnership between the Police, the council, First Bus and the licensed taxi trade, is the first of its kind in the UK. The scheme enables safe management and dispersal of taxi and bus passengers.

The scheme has been nominated for the award for Innovation at the [Local Government Chronicle Awards 2007](#). The results were announced at the awards ceremony in London on 12 March 2007.

The taxi and bus marshal strategy was launched in 2004, when the [Safer Bristol Partnership](#) Violent Crime delivery group identified an increase in alcohol-related violence in the city centre. Problems arose when large groups of people, tired and impatient to get home, queued for buses and taxis late at night. We approached the problem by introducing **taxi marshals** at the city centre taxi rank, and improving CCTV cameras in the area.

Under the scheme, the taxi marshals:

- Ensure no food or drink is taken into the taxi
- Are easily identifiable in branded, fluorescent jackets
- Manage the queues and discourage anti-social behaviour
- Are trained to Security Industry Authority (SIA) standard
- Only allow licensed and reputable Hackney carriages to use the rank
- Prevent people from using taxis when they are not in a fit state to travel
- Have a direct radio link to the CCTV headquarters and to a dedicated police officer

In 2006, the second phase of the Nightsafe project was launched. **Bus marshals** were introduced on eight weekend Night-Flyer bus services out of the city. The bus marshals operate in a similar way to the taxi marshals, but also travel on the bus to

help prevent any anti-social behaviour. The marshals work in pairs and are fitted with head cameras, which are able to record any incidents that might occur.

Since the launch of the bus marshal scheme, **8,800 passengers** have travelled on Night-Flyer services with marshals. **Only 13 minor incidents** have been reported in that time, all of which were successfully managed by the bus marshals. In addition, the police report that incidents of violent crime in the areas near the taxi rank and Night-Flyer bus stop have fallen by 40% since 2004.

In the awards submission, Deputy District Commander, Supt. Tim Lee said:

"The joined-up taxi and bus marshal service has made a major contribution to making the city centre a better place for everyone at weekends."