

Referrals and responding to allegations

Introduction

The Guildford Town Centre Chaplaincy is committed to a positive working relationship with the Police and other statutory and voluntary agencies. Our aim is to complement and support their work, not to hinder. This guidance is to assist Street Angels in responding to allegations or criminal activity.

Referrals

It is likely that Street Angels will, from time to time, encounter people with specific needs for support and/or treatment which Street Angels are qualified or able to provide. These needs may arise from physical disability, mental illness, addition/substance misuse, spiritual or emotional crisis and many other causes.

When such situations arise, Street Angels should offer to refer the individual to a specialist provider. A directory of specialist providers will be available at the YMCA base and is kept up to date by the Coordinator.

Referral information should, where possible, be given to the person in need together with a Guildford Town Centre Chaplaincy contact card. If the person needs further assistance which involves meeting them on a later date to introduce them to another agency then the Street Angel should agree arrangements for meeting them with the Coordinator. Such arrangements must involve at least two people (usually the Coordinator and the Street Angel in question) meeting the person in a safe public place such as the YMCA cafe. Street Angels should not arrange to meet anyone alone or in any other way put themselves in vulnerable situations (such as offering someone a lift home).

Allegations or criminal activity

There is no obligation on Street Angels to report crime except in some specific cases (such as terrorism) where the law requires it. They will from time to time come into contact with the perpetrators of crime as well as the victims.

Where allegations or admission of potentially criminal activity are involved then, with the person's consent, the matter should be reported to the Police. Where there is mention of a crime involving an ongoing situation of abuse, where an individual's life is in immediate danger, where an individual's life has been endangered or even taken, Street Angels should inform the Police.

If a Street Angel encounters someone who says they are a victim of sexual assault the starting point must be that what the victim says is true. The person

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needs to be treated with understanding and made comfortable. The victim can be male and female - treat both with the same respect. It is good practice to let them speak to a person of the same gender.

Street Angels must contact the police straight away having checked with the victim that this is ok with them. To protect evidence the victim needs to be encouraged to refrain from washing, changing clothing or visiting the toilet or drinking anything, although we cannot stop them. Leave questions to the police. Street Angels must not ask leading questions and must take in depth notes of any conversations that take place with the victim (having first asked the victim's permission).

Details of any allegation of crime should be recorded in the incident record log.

Children and vulnerable adults

There are likely to be a number of missing persons and young people on the streets. Street Angels will come into contact with a number of vulnerable persons for a variety of reasons and must take care when dealing with these individuals.

If they feel that a minor has been the victim of a serious assault or even sexual abuse without consent, they must notify the Police regardless of the individual's wishes. If Street Angels encounter a minor who is at risk of significant harm, they should accompany them to a police station or place of safety and must always ensure the presence of another Street Angel or other responsible adult. If the child refuses to go to the police station the Street Angel should call the Police for assistance.

Where any allegation or admission of abuse is made against a Street Angel volunteer or member of staff, the matter must, in accordance with the Policy for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults, be reported to Chaplaincy Child Protection Coordinator (or the Police or Social Services) regardless of the views of the person reporting it.