

Lean-on-Me saves NHS more than £40,000 by caring for injured and impaired in Hereford's night time economy



Lean-on-Me has saved the NHS more than £40,000 in three years

2 Jan 2017 / **Jessica Phillips**, Senior reporter / @jessphillips_HT

A TEAM of volunteers who have been caring for the injured and impaired in Hereford's night time economy over the festive period have saved the NHS more than £40,000 in just a few years.

In December 2014, Hereford Vennture opened Emilia's Place in the city's old youth court and it continues to offer revellers a safe place to recover on a night out.

It is part of a wider project called 'Lean-on-Me' which involves Street Pastors patrolling the city to help anyone they find to be in difficulty.

Lean-on-Me has helped 175 people, saving at least 100 ambulance call outs and reducing A&E admissions to save the NHS at least £43,300.

That figure is likely to be much higher as it does not include those who have been treated by Street Pastors on the streets.

Micha Reynolds, Vennture's project development manager, said: "Over the last three years, Lean-on-Me's working with the Street Pastors is reducing demand on the emergency services. We care for people by assessing their condition accurately and then supervising their recovery so they get home safely freeing the blue light services to respond faster to real emergencies.

"We want everyone to have a good time and come home safe.

"Popping someone who appears drunk in a taxi is not always wise – especially at Christmas time. Half the people who are referred to Lean-on-Me have some underlying medical condition. They need to be assessed properly and have their recovery supervised. The small number of people who we send to A&E go with a full medical history that makes it easier for the hospital to deal with them in the best possible way."

According to Lean-on-Me, there are no 'regulars' who need to be cared for and everyone is reminded to take care of themselves when out enjoying themselves.

Ms Reynolds said: "Our experience proves that everyone needs to take care of themselves when going out to celebrate. Contrary to what people think, we have no frequent flyers – it is all one-offs who never intend to end up in a bad way. Little People and Returning Mums are particularly vulnerable groups.

"The scrum half may drink the same as his friends in the forwards but because of his size he copes differently with the alcohol. Mums who have laid off the alcohol to have baby forget their bodies have changed and can no longer cope with the amount that they used to drink before."

To find out more about Lean on Me or becoming a volunteer, visit <http://vennture.org.uk/what-we-do/lean-on-me/>