

Dublin Nights Help Zone “The Nee Naw”

Six Month Impact Summary

Pilot phase: July to December 2025



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Department of Justice



Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

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What is the Dublin Nights Help Zone

The Dublin Nights Help Zone, known publicly as The Nee Naw, is a late night welfare and medical support service operating in Dublin city centre. It provides a visible, staffed presence after midnight, helping people who are unwell, vulnerable, distressed, or separated from friends. It also supports safer, calmer streets by resolving many issues on site before they escalate.

In practice, the Help Zone acts as:

- a first response medical support
- a welfare and safeguarding point
- a calm de-escalation presence
- a public reassurance measure
- a visible symbol of coordinated night time leadership

Over the six month pilot phase, the service recorded approximately 2,000 total engagements, establishing itself as a trusted safe haven for night time revellers.

Headline Activity

Across the pilot period, the Help Zone recorded:

- 141 medical interventions
- 259 welfare supports
- 244 general help interactions, including directions, lost items and phone charging
- 18 escalations to emergency services
- 1,071 passerby engagements

Recorded engagements totalled 1,733, with additional incidental contact bringing the estimated operational total to approximately 2,000 engagements.

A key takeaway is that the vast majority of incidents were resolved on site, with only 18 cases requiring escalation to emergency services.

What we Saw Across the Seasons

The type of support needed changed over the six months.

Summer

- high footfall
- lower severity incidents
- minor injuries and intoxication cases
- higher ambulance escalation, with 9 escalations

Autumn

- increase in welfare cases
- Halloween surge and extended ambulance response times
- growing public awareness and trust

Winter

- increased medical complexity, including falls, assaults and suspected fractures
- higher intoxication and illness cases
- reduced escalation to emergency services, with 2 escalations, despite higher intervention volume
- greater engagement with vulnerable individuals

Key observation

As the weather worsened, case complexity increased, but escalation to emergency services decreased. This points to stronger on site triage and resolution as the pilot progressed.

Nature of Interventions

The Help Zone responded to a wide range of situations, including:

- head injuries and suspected fractures
- severe intoxication
- assault related injuries
- mental health distress
- dehydration and vomiting
- monitoring unconscious individuals pending ambulance arrival

Beyond medical support, the Help Zone also functioned as:

- a safe waiting space, particularly for young women
- a reunification point for separated groups
- a recovery and cooling off space
- a visible and trusted landmark after midnight

Escalation Prevention and Resource Impact

The Help Zone operates as a frontline prevention service, resolving the majority of incidents on site.

Across the pilot period:

- 141 medical interventions were delivered
- only 18 required escalation to emergency services
- approximately 2,000 total engagements took place

Based on conservative modelling of ambulance deployment and emergency department attendance costs, the service contributed to an estimated reduction in frontline demand in the region of €60,000 across emergency and policing responses.

More importantly, the Help Zone has:

- reduced pressure on statutory agencies
- improved safety outcomes for vulnerable individuals
- enhanced public reassurance
- supported a better managed night-time economy

How the Service Operates

The Dublin Nights Help Zone is delivered through a multidisciplinary team including medic, security and welfare personnel.

Operational model:

- late night Friday and Saturday deployment
- strategic positioning in high footfall areas
- close coordination with An Garda Síochána

In effect, the service has become an escalation prevention service that releases pressure on statutory agencies.



Public Response

Public feedback has been consistently positive.

- all Google reviews to date have been five star
- high levels of positive passerby engagement
- tourists frequently noting that similar services are rare in other cities
- young women regularly using the vehicle as a safe collection point
- strong visible community recognition

Common feedback themes include:

- safe haven after midnight
- reassuring presence
- brilliant idea for the city

Stakeholder Support

Statements and feedback are being sought from a range of stakeholders including An Garda Síochána, the Lord Mayor and Dublin City Council leadership.

“The Dublin Nights Help Zone has provided a visible and practical support presence in the city centre...”

Chief Executive Dublin City Council, Richard Shakespeare said:

“This pilot demonstrates how coordinated night-time planning can improve safety outcomes and reduce pressure on statutory services.”

Assistant Commissioner Jonathan Roberts, Dublin Metropolitan Region, added:

“The Dublin Nights Help Zone has provided a visible and practical support presence in the city centre. By resolving lower-level medical and welfare issues on the ground, it has helped reduce demand on frontline resources.”

Paul Clinton, Owner, Flannery’s Late Night Bar, Camden Street

“The Help Van has been a great support on weekend nights and a real source of comfort. Knowing it is there to help people in difficulty, and to avoid long waits for an ambulance, makes a genuine difference. It shows that the city cares for everyone, even in the early hours. Long may it continue.”

Paul Malone, Resident, Harcourt Mews, Camden Street

“I’ve lived on Camden Street since 2006 and weekends could often be challenging. Since the Nee Naw arrived, the area feels calmer and safer outside my home. It’s a very positive addition for both residents and visitors.”



Learnings and Next Steps

The pilot indicates that a visible, staffed, medically supported late night service can make a measurable difference to how a city manages activity after midnight. Dublin City Council is now considering options to support longer term operation of the Help Zone model.

If you need help, or want to learn more, please contact: nights@dublin.ie





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