



For visitors and residents! City Helpers on the streets of Krakow for the third time

2023-07-11

This year - dressed in blue and white T-shirts and orange caps - *City Helpers* will welcome visitors to Krakow! To also ensure residents' comfort, *City Helpers'* working hours have been extended compared to the previous programmes of this kind. *City Helpers* will be available in the Old Town and Kazimierz until 31 August. During the weekends, they will work until 1 a.m.

City Helpers play an important role in building an appropriate image of Krakow as a welcoming and open city, but also in communicating the rules on shared use of the most valuable space. The historic centre bustles with life almost around the clock, so it is important to ensure the mutual comfort of its users. There are times when we are confronted with undesirable behaviour of visitors to our city, but also of residents of Krakow and the surrounding areas. To address this problem, the city's #RespectKraków initiative was launched in 2019, when tourist traffic reached its peak. The *City Helpers* project is part of #RespectKraków, which has just commenced for the third time.

This is the third time the programme has been run

City Helpers are tasked with detecting inappropriate behaviour in the historic city centre, as well as providing information and promoting local events and cultural institutions. The *City Helpers* pilot project, carried out in the summer of 2021 as a tool to support sustainable tourism policies, was well received and yielded positive results. The project was carried out from Thursday to Sunday in July and August.

Last year's project, held for the second time, was on a larger scale, with *City Helpers* present on city streets from 23 May to 11 September, seven days a week. In the period of almost four months in which they worked, ***City Helpers* took action in more than 31,000 cases.** Visitors to the city mainly asked questions about the most famous attractions and events and festivals in the city. They also asked about recommended places to try regional dishes, and about recommended restaurants and cafes. A lot of questions concerned the location and operation of stores and bureaux de change, as well as public transportation and the transportation network in Krakow. Importantly, *City Helpers* provided first aid in cases of injuries, bruises, and fainting spells, and were given training by the Save Life Foundation on using a defibrillator. **In total, they provided aid to 1,958 individuals.** *City Helpers* have a good command of foreign languages (mainly English and Ukrainian) and they were also given training during workshops and meetings with representatives of the City of Krakow, representatives of the tourism industry, and the municipal police. This knowledge was especially useful when responding in cases of inappropriate behaviour, including causing a disturbance at night and drinking alcohol in public places. Last year, *City Helpers* responded in 1,630 cases of this kind. Knowledge of the operating rules of the Old Town and Kazimierz with Stradom cultural parks allowed *City Helpers* to take care of Krakow's historic city centre. They monitored the number and placement of advertisements in the form of "swing signs" and monitored activities that were prohibited, such as trading on the street without a permit, or using illuminated advertisements outside buildings. In total, they took action in 2,950 cases of this kind. Close cooperation with the City Guard resulted in 197 joint responses in the most difficult situations.



New developments in the *City Helpers* project

With residents in mind, *City Helpers*' working hours have been extended this year - from 16 June to 31 August, they will be present in the Old Town and Kazimierz until **9 p.m. on weekdays, and until 1 a.m. at weekends**. This will allow better management of the night-time economy in Krakow, especially in view of the growing tourist traffic, the peak of which is expected during the holiday months. The leaflets used by *City Helpers* have also been revised. Visitors are welcomed in Krakow, a UNESCO city that is tourist-friendly, hospitable, and safe. They are invited to enjoy a range of cultural events, taste local products, and discover new places off the beaten track. Universal rules, such as not causing a disturbance at night, maintaining order, being dressed in city areas, and not consuming alcohol in public places, continue to be communicated. Each year also brings new challenges, so **visitors are encouraged to use scooters and bicycles sensibly**, make sure that the short-term tourist rental facilities they use are registered, and behave in a broadly eco-friendly manner, for example by avoiding use of plastic, using public transportation, and exploring green spaces.

The latest project of this kind is now taking place and is fully integrated in terms of graphic design with the #RespectKraków initiative, which is why this year's *City Helpers* are dressed in the colours used in #RespectKraków, reflecting the colours of Krakow. The cargo bike station in the Main Square, provided for the project by the Public Transportation Authority, will also get a new colour scheme.

In order to provide more effective information - in the baggage claim hall at Kraków Airport - messages are displayed for arriving passengers. The #RespectKraków graphics will also be seen on city media: *citylights*, Krakow City Card vending machines, and posters encouraging quiet behaviour at night. In addition, an online information campaign is being conducted, from 1 June to 15 September, targeting tourists planning to visit Krakow and foreign visitors who are already in the city.

***City Helpers* work schedule:**

1 July to 30 August, from 1 pm to 9 pm (until 1 am at weekends)

Cooperation

The *City Helpers* project is carried out by the Municipality of Krakow in cooperation with the Krakow Cultural Forum in implementation of recommendations under the "Sustainable Tourism Policy of Krakow for 2021-2028". Anyone interested in graphic materials and the project is invited to contact the Tourism Department of the Municipality of Krakow at wt.umk@um.krakow.pl.