

Dangers of fireworks highlighted by play

✘ An informative play about the dangers of misusing fireworks will be performed for pupils in fourteen Edinburgh secondary schools in the lead-up to Guy Fawkes Night.

The annual play teaches children about the dangers of fireworks as well as issues like peer pressure, bullying and managing aggression.

'Toast', which was originally commissioned by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) in Northern Ireland, has been adapted for Edinburgh and will be staged by the Strange Theatre theatre company.

The powerful 30-minute production involves two actors playing 11 different characters, with the scene shifting between a hospital, a home and a housing estate. The principal character is drawn into an ill-fated escapade with stolen fireworks, with ultimately tragic consequences.

The weeks leading up to Bonfire Night are traditionally a time of increased complaints to police and councillors about excessive fireworks noise. Elderly people, the very young and domestic pets are often left particularly distressed by noise from fireworks.

Councillor Robert Aldridge, Environment Leader, said: "Guy Faulkes night is great fun and families enjoy the spectacle of fireworks as the nights get darker. However, fireworks can be extremely dangerous if handled improperly.

"The play 'Toast' is an excellent way of helping young people understand the risks and dangers of misusing fireworks. We will be carrying out test purchasing in shops where fireworks are on sale to make sure that retailers are adhering to the

legislation.”

Community Safety Manager for Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service, David Lockhart, said: “As the Service gears up for one of their busiest nights of the year we are urging parents and carers to be mindful of the potential risks from fireworks and the need to heed fire safety advice to ensure this year’s Guy Fawkes celebrations stay safe.

“We work closely with partners including the City of Edinburgh Council to deliver fire safety advice to schoolchildren across the area and Toast, which highlights the dangers associated with fireworks, is an excellent example of this type of initiative.

“Every year, hundreds of people in the UK are injured by fires and fireworks, people can be seriously hurt by misusing fireworks which are very similar to explosives. Most at risk are unsupervised children, particularly those who play with fire or who get too close to bonfires. We want everyone to enjoy this time of year but to stay safe and advise they stick to supervised bonfires and firework displays”

Photo courtesy of Edinburgh Inspiring Capital