

MacAskill urged to introduce A & E Data Sharing

Stewart Maxwell, SNP MSP for the West Scotland, has written to Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill asking him to bring forward plans for the introduction of an innovative system which uses data collected from patients at hospital A&Es to help police target hotspots of violent crime.

The move follows recent research backed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) which found that a similar system introduced in Wales allowed police in Cardiff to reduce incidents of violent crime by 42%.

[The four-year study](#), led by Professor Jonathan Shepherd of Cardiff University, examined the impact of police using information gathered from patients at hospital A&Es on where and when violent crimes take place.

The key impact of the initiative is that police are able gather more detailed intelligence on the nature of violent crime – most of which tends to go unreported – and target their resources more effectively.

The data collected from patients is anonymous so that victims are not identified.

Commenting Stewart Maxwell MSP said:="The introduction of a system of information sharing between hospitals and police in Wales resulted in a remarkable reduction in violent incidents of 42%.

"I am more convinced than ever that the introduction of a similar scheme in Scottish hospitals would enable police to better target their resources and help significantly reduce violent crime across Scotland.

“I have campaigned for a reporting system of violent assaults in Scottish A&Es since 2006 when I undertook a study which found that almost 80% of knife-related injuries were going unreported to police.

“The World Health Organisation has stated that it hopes to see this model introduced across the World as a key strategy for crime prevention.

“I know that the Scottish Government is keen to implement a similar system across the country and has been working alongside the national Violence Reduction Unit to test and develop a practical system for recording and sharing the information.

“I believe that implementing this system alongside the SNP Government’s plans to reintroduce a minimum price for alcohol would represent a significant step forward in making Scotland safe from alcohol-fuelled violence and crime.”