

Police out in force today in Edinburgh city centre



The police were out in force today in Edinburgh city centre – as a single force. Since Monday the new single police service was launched and the new Divisional Commander for the City of Edinburgh, Chief Superintendent Mark Williams was keen to hit the ground running and show off some of the benefits of the new arrangements.

So this morning, 12 officers from the north and west of Scotland, members of the National Alcohol and Violence Reduction Unit arrived by train in the capital to help 20 of the city's own police officers in a joint operation to tackle violence and anti-social behaviour in and around the city centre in what is a dry run for a series of planned Campaign Against Violence (CAV) days which begin next week.

The operation was declared a success by this afternoon when 3 people had been arrested:- a 38-year-old male was arrested in connection with recent city centre robbery, a 48-year-old male was arrested for shoplifting and a 40-year-old man arrested for a drugs related offence.



Officers based in Edinburgh were working along with Environmental Wardens from The City of Edinburgh Council, as well as police officers from the national unit. In addition to actual arrests they believe the success of the operation can be measured in knowing that their presence alone caused disruption to known and travelling criminals in the city centre, particularly in the areas of the High Street and the

Old Town, and they gained a lot of intelligence simply by being out and about. They also checked on various licenced premises in the city centre and made enquiries about some stolen property. So even though the operation was designed to target violent crimes, many other matters were brought to the police's attention over the course of the morning.

Chief Superintendent Mark Williams welcomed the assistance of the extra officers to police what is now known as E Division in Police Scotland and said:-“This is a really unique day for Police Scotland and for Edinburgh City and I offer a very warm welcome to Chief Super Hamilton and his team from the National Alcohol and Violence Reduction unit who are working with our own Alcohol and violence reduction team today.

“It is week one of the new force and this is the opportunity at last to bring our resources together to make a difference in Edinburgh. These kind of joint operations were more routine in the old Strathclyde force, but this is a fantastic new advance for us here in the capital, and something we hope to take advantage of in the weeks and months ahead.



“Edinburgh is no different from any big city across the country. The crimes include serious assaults, robberies, aggressive begging, alcohol and violence. All these things are typical of course and today is the chance to try out the new policing arrangements. Violent crime has actually gone down in Edinburgh but we have to keep a focus and this helps us achieve the visible policing presence. We have the same number of police officers in Edinburgh as we have always had, but now we can call on extra resources. The national unit has about 50 officers in it.

“This is not a one-off. There will be more CAV days in the weeks ahead, and the next one is on Friday 12 April when 50 extra officers will be out on the street to carry out

operations similar to those today in Police Scotland's aim of keeping people safe.

"We will address areas where we know there is on street drinking too. Anything which affects and undermines the quality of life for people living and working in the city centre will be targeted.

"The fact that we are all here together is important and we will see more of this joint working. The people of Edinburgh will see a far bigger police presence than they are used to today and this is a great opportunity for us and the new force."

Councillor Cammy Day, Community Safety Leader, said:- "Two of our Environmental Wardens took part in the joint initiative with Police Scotland officers in Edinburgh's city centre today. We regularly work in close partnership with the Police to provide a high visibility presence, which gives reassurance to members of the public as well as acting as a clear deterrent to antisocial behaviour and other criminal activity. This is another example of our partnership approach with Police Scotland to make the City Centre a safe place to live, work and visit."

