

Police urge you to Think Twice on a night out




In an effort to reduce the number of alcohol related offences, Police Scotland and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) are launching a new initiative to keep people safe while enjoying a night out.

‘Think Twice’ is a Scottish Government-supported partnership approach to deterring a variety of offences, which are regularly reported within the city centre during evenings and weekends.

Previously, any individual responsible for criminal activity in or around the Capital’s licensed premises faced a number of exclusions or prohibitions if found guilty in court.

However, discussions between police and COPFS concluded that more robust measures were required to address re-offending by those awaiting trial and to prevent crime occurring in the first instance.

 The initiative aims to encourage drinkers within the city’s pubs and clubs to make the correct choices during a night out and not let alcohol lead to a decision, which results in a criminal record.

For less serious offences, the police will impose conditions on all those accused of a variety of crimes that take place in city centre pubs and clubs, barring them from all city centre drinking venues during the evening and night time until they appear in court.

For all cases, once the accused appears in court, the Procurator Fiscal will request the same conditions be imposed

by the Sheriff until the case concludes, or, in the most serious cases, oppose bail altogether.

Ultimately, however, bail conditions are a matter for the Sheriff.

A formal launch of the campaign takes place today at the CAV nightclub in Tollcross. Police Scotland, COPFS and the Scottish Government will outline the terms of the new bail conditions and reiterate their partnership commitment to tackling alcohol-related violence.

The relevant offences all have an element of risk to public safety and include:

- * Violent Crime
- * Sexual Offences
- * Serious Disorder
- * Carrying of Knives or Offensive Weapons
- * Hate Crime
- * Culpable and Reckless Conduct
- * Drugs Supply

The special bail conditions will not be used for minor offences such as breach of the peace or on occasions where a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued for antisocial behaviour.

However, in incidents where the individual has previously been convicted of crimes of violence, or where there is a clear intention to cause serious harm or injury during a fight or act of reckless conduct, the bail condition can be applied or requested.



Superintendent Matt Richards said: “Edinburgh has a vibrant night time economy and we want everyone to enjoy their night out without becoming involved in, or falling victim to, alcohol-related crime.

“The Think Twice initiative aims to keep people safe by excluding those charged with a relevant offence from city centre night time drinking venues until court proceedings are concluded.

“We also anticipate that public awareness of Think Twice will act as a deterrent. These incidents are often spontaneous in nature and it is hoped that awareness of the potential consequences of bad choices, will encourage drinkers to ‘think twice’, reflect on their behaviour and avoid confrontation.

“A night time ban on entering the city centre’s drinking venues will have a significant impact on a person’s social life and anyone who finds themselves in a situation that could lead to police involvement is encouraged to make the correct decision.”

Andrew Richardson, Procurator Fiscal for summary cases in the East of Scotland, said: “Police and prosecutors are always looking to find ways to tackle the issues that most concern people.

“Residents of Edinburgh, as well as our many visitors, should be free to enjoy the rich and varied nightlife that Edinburgh has to offer without fear of the inconsiderate minority. Anyone who thinks that drunkenness is an excuse for crime will find themselves very much mistaken.

“In all cases involving alcohol-related offences, as soon as the case calls in court prosecutors will either oppose bail or seek to have these bail conditions imposed. A breach of these conditions is a criminal offence in itself, and will be taken very seriously.”

Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill said: “We all want to have good time during the festive period and catch up with family and friends but it is important to do so sensibly and safely.

“This initiative shows that our police and prosecutors will

take robust action against the small minority who seek to cause harm and disorder, as well as being a powerful deterrent for would-be criminals.

“Crime in Scotland is at a 39-year low, backed by a thousand extra officers, and these close working partnerships play a crucial part in keeping our streets free from crime. I am grateful to everyone who is involved in keeping people safe this festive period.”

Photos by Thomas Brown