

# New Cyber-crime hub to be established in Edinburgh



A new hub to tackle the growth in cyber-crime is to be established in the East of Scotland.

The state-of-the-art facility will house specialist investigators who carry out forensic digital examinations of hardware in support of police investigations from child sexual exploitation to serious organised crime.

The cyber-crime hub, to be located in Edinburgh, brings together existing units in Glenrothes, Falkirk and the capital itself. It will help Police Scotland respond to a huge rise in the demand for digital forensic services to support cyber investigations and also help to protect the country's computer infrastructure from cyber attacks.

Approval for the new facility was given by the Scottish Police Authority and £1.5 million will be invested in the project.

There has been a 47 per cent increase in demand for digital forensic examinations since the inception of Police Scotland just over two years ago. The amount of memory in devices submitted for examination doubles approximately every two years and has placed a significant demand on police resources which requires ever increasing server space to cope with the data demands of a modern society.

Deputy Chief Constable Iain Livingstone, who leads on Crime and Operational Support, said: "Very few investigations today do not have a digital aspect to them – the darker side of the web is all too evident for us to see on a daily basis, whether it relates to the sharing of illegal images of children, online grooming, radicalisation, orchestrating serious

organised crime or cyber-bullying.

“The ease with which we can access the internet through various devices has become part of every day life. Inevitably, criminals are also increasingly exploiting this. That means law enforcement has to be up to the task of preventing and detecting crime in the online and digital world.

“The creation of a new, modern facility brings together the expertise which exists in Police Scotland.

“The new hub will become a centre of excellence and will also allow for more effective integration with key partners in academia and business. This kind of partnership working has the potential to turn the cyber threat into a significant opportunity to grow an industry sector that can be of major benefit to Scottish policing, the Scottish economy and the people of Scotland.”

The development will be overseen by Detective Superintendent Stevie Wilson, who said: “The growing digital economy has seen the public adopt a vast array of personal devices including PC’s, tablets, mobile phones, gaming consoles and Sat Nav equipment. With the ever increasing sophistication of these devices, we need to be able to effectively examine them when it is suspected they have been used in criminal activity.

“The investigation and prevention of online Child Sexual Exploitation is one of the highest priorities for Police Scotland, and we have been at the forefront of the use of new proactive technologies to identify those individuals who represent a threat to our children.

“As a consequence, two-thirds of the work of our digital forensic units involves investigations into indecent images of children. The ability to process cases more efficiently with new upgraded technical equipment means that offenders will be brought to justice more quickly

“Police Scotland has recognised the increasing dependence that our people and business have on the internet and have developed the Safer Virtual Communities strategy to keep them as safe in the virtual world as they are in the physical world. This strategy is underpinned by the foundation of effective digital investigations and the East cyberhub will significantly enhance this capacity.”

Vic Emery, Chair of the Scottish Police Authority, said: “The SPA and Police Scotland are on a journey of longer-term reform and transformation of policing. That’s why we need to strike a balance between investing in the immediate needs of the service, and investing for the long-term.

“Investing in a single cybercrime facility creating equity of access to specialist support and national capacity is an important step in that journey as we seek to future proof policing for the decades ahead.”