

# Initiative to raise awareness of domestic abuse over festive period



Police in Edinburgh are teaming up with Heart of Midlothian F.C., Hibernian F.C. and Edinburgh Women's Aid to raise awareness of domestic abuse over the festive period.

DI Kevin Harkins of the Public Protection Unit said: "Reports of domestic abuse increase over the festive period, and we're working with Hibs and Hearts to reinforce the message that there is no hiding place for perpetrators.

"Domestic abuse exists in all sections of our communities. These types of crimes are typically underreported and we want to encourage all victims to come forward. There is a common misconception that domestic abuse is solely about violence within a relationship, but it can also be sexual, emotional and mental abuse either by a current or former partner.

"Victims are often made to feel frightened, isolated or ashamed by their abuser, and the impact on them and their family can be devastating. Our message to victims is that you are not alone and you are not to blame. Help and support is available from officers, and through the excellent support services offered by our partners such as Edinburgh Women's Aid."

Since the beginning of the campaign, officers have been speaking to members of the public and handing out information at Ocean Terminal and the Gyle Shopping Centre. They have also attended educational institutes, including The University of Edinburgh, Gorgie Mills High School and Liberton High School, to raise awareness of domestic abuse among young people.

Officers will be in attendance at the Hibs v. Queen of the South match at Easter Road Stadium on Saturday 19 December, and the Hearts v. Dundee United match at Tynecastle Stadium on Wednesday 30 December to speak to supporters.

Police Scotland's national domestic abuse awareness campaign runs from Christmas Eve to Tuesday 5 January, with Edinburgh Division running a local campaign from Tuesday 8 December until Christmas Eve also.