

Police launch 'Keep Safe' initiative



Chief Constable Phil Gormley has joined the Solicitor General Alison Di Rollo QC and charity 'I Am Me' to raise awareness of joint work to tackle Disability Hate Crime today at Police Scotland College, Tulliallan.

The ongoing partnership work between Police Scotland and the 'I Am Me' charity and other stakeholders highlights the issues and effects that Disability Hate Crime can have on individuals.

Today sees the launch of the 'I Am Me Cinebus', which is a coach that has been transformed into a mobile cinema. The 'Cinebus' will be used to visit schools and communities across the country, to raise awareness and educate groups of all ages, on disability hate crime.

In addition, the 'Keep Safe' initiative, which works with local businesses to create 'Keep Safe' places for disabled, vulnerable and elderly people when out in the community, has now been rolled out nationally.

People can access the 'Keep Safe' premises to seek assistance and help if they feel lost, confused, scared, in danger or have been a victim of crime.

A 'Keep Safe App' has also been launched which allows users to find their nearest 'Keep Safe' place, map a journey identifying any 'Keep Safe places' that can be used on route, contact police or make an online hate crime report via a link to the Police Scotland website and find community information via local authority links.

Chief Constable Phil Gormley said, "Disability Hate Crime can have a devastating effect on individuals, their families and wider communities and we will do everything we can to tackle it. We are delighted to support the work of 'I Am Me' with the launch today of the 'Cinebus' and the national roll-out of the 'Keep Safe' initiative and mobile app.

The I Am Me Cinebus

"We have identified officers throughout the force area who will work closely with partners and communities to support the local delivery of this initiative. Police Scotland recognises that Disability Hate Crime can often go unreported and this may be due to a number of reasons.

"I would however like to reassure our communities that we take all forms of Hate Crime seriously and would urge anyone who has been the victim or witness to any Hate Crime to come forward and report it with confidence.

The Solicitor General Alison Di Rollo QC said: "I am proud that COPFS is playing a key role in this initiative. Those who have become targets for hatred and harassment should have somewhere they can go for safe haven.

"Everyone has the right to feel safe in their community, free from the fear of abuse or intimidation. We will not tolerate the actions of those who seek to target vulnerable members of Scotland's communities.

"The Keep Safe Initiative, mobile app and the new 'Cinebus' are inspiring additions for the 'I Am Me' initiative in the efforts to tackle Hate Crime"

Carol Burt, 'I Am Me' Project Manager, said, "Disability Hate Crime is recognised as being one of the most under reported crimes in the UK. 'I Am Me' Scotland works in partnership with Police Scotland to help raise awareness of Disability Hate Crime and the effects that incidents can have on individuals

and communities.

“The charity works closely with disabled people, young people and the wider community to highlight the importance of reporting and the various ways that people can make reports.

Both Police Scotland and COPFS have supported the work of the charity and are committed to working alongside us to tackle Disability Hate Crime and help ensure disabled people can enjoy community life free from the fear of harassment and abuse”.