

Police set up grotto to ensure that people enjoy a safe holiday season



Police in Edinburgh have set up their own 'grotto' in the heart of the city centre to ensure that people enjoy a safe holiday season.

As part of Operation Winter City – Edinburgh's festive policing campaign – officers will be stationed at the specially-built cabin, which is based within the iconic St Andrew's Square.

The grotto will provide a visible and engaging presence during the Christmas and New Year period to residents and tourists alike.

It will be open from 11am until 10pm daily, except on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day, when the unit will be closed.

There will also be reduced opening hours on Christmas Eve and Hogmanay.

Members of the public are welcome to drop in to obtain useful crime prevention and public safety leaflets, which will be on display within the grotto.

Anyone wishing to report a crime, a missing person or who has a lost property enquiry can also do so through the officers who will be working from here.

Operation Winter City will run from Monday 21st November until Saturday 7th January and over the coming weeks officers will issue various messages to help people to stay safe at home,

online, while out partying and when shopping.

To help promote these key messages, the division has created a special 'Countdown to Christmas' calendar for social media, which launches on 1st December.

The star of the calendar is PD Chase – an 8-month-old German Shepherd – who will appear in a range of scenarios aimed at providing relevant safety advice during the festive season.

Superintendent Lesley Clark from Edinburgh Division said, "This is an amazing city to live in and visit during the festive period and, for the first time we'll have a base within the centre of the celebrations.

"Unlike the other grottos within the city centre, however, we won't be selling gifts or refreshments.

"What we will be offering is really helpful information aimed at keeping people safe throughout their Christmas and New Year preparations and celebrations.

"Being based at St Andrews Square allows us to be more visible in the areas that are likely to see an increased numbers of the public within the city and this Festive operation will enable us to appropriately respond to the sort of incidents which typically arise at this time of year.

"We're also extremely excited for the public to meet PD Chase and his pals as they appear daily on our social media pages to deliver adorable but useful crime prevention and personal safety advice.

"You can see these posts by liking the Edinburgh Division Facebook page and following our @EdinburghPolice Twitter account."