

Police Scotland will tackle violence head on this summer

A Scotland-wide campaign to tackle offensive weapons, disorder and anti-social behaviour was launched in Wester Hailes today.



Chief Inspector Helen Harrison explained that there have been some serious crimes in the area in recent months including a murder, 2 serious assaults and an attempted murder of a 16 year-old at Quarryknowe Park.

The three month long Safe Summer campaign was discussed at a Community Safety Partnership meeting first before officers went out to deliver leaflets to local households and also talk with residents in the area. The hope is that more people will feel they can report incidents of violence to the police.

Alcohol was a topic of discussion at the meeting, and the police said it is a big driver in violent crime. As it is often bought in supermarkets and off licenses it can lead to domestic violence taking place 'behind closed doors'.

The Safe Summer campaign was launched by Assistant Chief Constable Mark Williams, who has the national violence portfolio in Police Scotland, at the police station in Wester Hailes where he was a young cop about 20 years ago.

Earlier this morning the police had already been out to find known violent offenders and had made one arrest.

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Edinburgh Division has already taken positive steps to address violence in the city as part of their ongoing Operation Myriad which began in the north of the city at the beginning of this week. Over the past few days officers across the city have

reported numerous individuals to the Procurator Fiscal for breaches of the peace, drug possession and breach of bail.

Operation Myriad disruption activity will continue throughout this week to send a clear message to communities that violence and other forms of serious crime will not be tolerated.

As well as the police other partners such as the environmental officers from the City of Edinburgh Council and housing support officers were in attendance, and will be involved in the initiative.

Assistant Chief Constable Mark Williams said: "Tackling violent crime and disorder is a priority for us and Operation Myriad is a great example of the local work being undertaken to tackle this issue.

"Whilst overall violent crime continues to drop across the country, we have seen increases in some specific crime types such as murder, serious assault and robbery.

" Violent crime has a substantial economic and social cost to Scotland's communities and it is really clear that the over consumption of alcohol is a major factor. Local crime analysis indicates that alcohol is a factor in over half of all violent incidents we deal with and whilst understanding the root causes of violence is complex this clear link is very concerning.

"Over the summer ahead local officers will be working closely with the licensed trade to implement measures that can reduce violence such as 'Best Bar None' staff training, or education and diversionary work with young people on the triggers and consequences of violence.

"This work will complement the range of operations carried out by divisions to target violence that is specific to them at a local level."



ACC Mark Williams and Edinburgh SW Commander
Chief Inspector Helen Harrison

Chief Inspector Helen Harrison is the Area Commander for the South West region. She was in charge of the meeting and briefing today and explained that while crime follows the usual pattern and that this is similar to this time last year, there have been some recent incidents of note in the area.

She said : "What we're here to do today, and this is a particularly important strand throughout our campaign, is we are looking at engaging with members of the public. We are taking a more proactive, preventative approach in terms of recent incidents of violent crime that have occurred.

"So officers are out this morning to engage with members of the public, to speak to them and to understand a bit more about their thoughts about the area and what work we could be doing."

Councillor Donald Wilson has a new responsibility as Convener of Culture and Communities was in attendance at the meeting to find out about the partnership working.

He told us : "My new role includes community safety and community justice and so this is a new area for me, but this locality and topic are not new to me. There are always initiatives like this going on across Edinburgh, but this is a national programme.

"There has been a large number of violent crimes in this area in recent months and so it has been picked as the place to launch this campaign.

"There has always been partnership working involving the police and other stakeholders as the police cannot solve these problems on their own. They work with others in a whole global approach."