

Police launch 'One Punch Can Ruin Two Lives' campaign



Twelve per cent of recorded violent crime in Scotland (2015-16) involved a single punch, and Police Scotland is today launching its national 'One Punch Can Ruin Two Lives' campaign at Glasgow's Garage nightclub.

The four-week campaign, which forms part of "Safe Summer", urges people to think about the long-term consequences of their actions and consider that alcohol is often a factor in these incidents.

Launching the campaign at The Garage in Glasgow, Assistant Chief Constable Mark Williams said: "Drinking too much can make you vulnerable and it increases your risk of becoming a victim of crime or getting into trouble.

"One punch can kill and could result in you facing a jail sentence. I want people to enjoy their nights out but at the same time to drink responsibly and consider how much alcohol they are consuming and the effect it has on their decision making and judgement."

The "One Punch Can Ruin Two Lives" campaign will see Police Scotland working closely with partners including the NHS and licensed premises to urge people to consider the consequences and change their behaviour. Posters and advertising will be displayed in bars and clubs, at ATMs and other public locations.

Cabinet Secretary for Justice Michael Matheson said: "Identifying and tackling the root causes of crime and the issues that cause harm in our communities is a responsibility for the police, our partners and communities.

“The ‘One Punch’ campaign is part of the Safe Summer – Action Against Violence campaign and I am encouraged by this initiative to reduce the number of violent incidents and improve the safety and wellbeing of individuals and communities.”

Dr Christine Goodall, Director of Medics Against Violence, Honorary Consultant and Lead Clinician for Oral Surgery said, “We are pleased to support Police Scotland with their important ‘One Punch’ Campaign. ‘One Punch’ can be enough to take a life or to result in permanent and life changing disability. This not only affects the victim and their family but leaves the perpetrator facing a long prison sentence with their future and that of their family also significantly affected. There are no winners.

“We would like to reinforce, to young people particularly, how easy it is to cause serious injury. We see this all too often in hospitals and even if the victims survive their lives can be very difficult and different going forward.

“We would appeal to young people to make sensible choices about their actions and around alcohol and to groups of friends to look out for each other when out socialising, because impulsive action taken when judgement is clouded can result in a lifetime of regret.”

National Licensed Trade Partnership’s Chair Donald MacLeod said, “The newly formed National Licensing Trade Partnership (NLTP) is more than happy to lend its support to Police Scotland’s anti-violence and responsible drinking campaign.

“While it has never been safer for the general public to visit a restaurant, pub or club to enjoy a night out with family or friends, acts of violence and crimes associated with alcohol are still a national concern, particularly for local communities. As such, the NLTP fully supports any rational targeted campaign, including this one, which promotes

responsible drinking of alcohol and highlights the dangers, damage and suffering that can occur when someone has one drink too many and throws 'One Punch'."

Alison Douglas, Chief Executive of Alcohol Focus Scotland said, "With more than half of violent crime in Scotland linked to alcohol, this campaign delivers a really important message. Binge drinking can cause people to lose self-control and situations can quickly escalate with devastating consequences.

"While everyone is responsible for their own actions, there's no doubt cheap, highly visible and easily accessible alcohol encourages us to drink too much. Measures to reduce our overall alcohol consumption will reduce crime, make our communities safer and ease the burden on the police and emergency services."

Security Industry Authority (SIA)'s Dave Humphries, Director Partnerships & interventions said, "The SIA is committed to ensuring public protection and we fully support this excellent initiative by Police Scotland. Security operatives have a vital role to play in reducing the risks of violence in the night time economy."

Violence Reduction Unit's Will Linden said: "When we drink alcohol, it impacts upon our behaviour, and we can react to situations in a way that we wouldn't whilst sober. One punch can lead to another then another, one punch can seriously injure someone, one punch can kill and one punch can mean prison. One brief moment can change your life and those around you forever."

The campaign is supported by the charity 'Every Action Has Consequences' (www.eahconsequences.com) which was launched by the family of Adam Rogers, who was killed as a result of one punch in 2009. Having lost Adam his family and friends through the charity urge people to think about the consequences of their actions.

Pat Rogers, Mother of Adam and co-founder of the charity 'Every Action Has Consequences' said, "Dave, Tim and I are really pleased to see the 'One Punch Can Ruin Two Lives' Campaign being launched in Glasgow this week. We are so glad that Adam's Story is being used and we hope it continues to have a powerful impact on those who see it. Many people don't realise that fists can be as dangerous as a knife or a gun. One punch killed our lovely son when he was trying to act as a peacemaker. We fully support this campaign it is so important to get the message across loud and clear – one punch is too many."

Key tips to ensure you have a safe night out:

- Avoid drinking in rounds – it's easy to have too much when trying to keep up with others
- Recognise the signs that it's time to slow down, drink a soft drink between alcoholic drinks
- Walk away from arguments and confrontation
- If confrontation arises, be responsible and seek out security staff or a Police Officer and make them aware of the issue
- Enjoy your night out but behave responsibly, stick with your friends and look after each other.