

Charity bike ride to help people affected by violence



Those who work to break the chain of violence got on their bikes yesterday to cycle from Glasgow to Edinburgh in a bid to raise money to help those trying to build new lives.

Around forty people from police officers, to medics, community workers and those whose lives have been affected by violence took part in Recycle which travelled more than fifty miles along the canal network.

The cycle started at Glasgow Royal Infirmary where the Navigator programme was first successfully piloted in 2015 in association with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and finished in Edinburgh where Navigators are now working with partners NHS Lothian, embedded in the A&E department of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh.

Navigator is a Scottish Violence Reduction Unit and Medics Against Violence scheme which aims to help stop the revolving door of violent injury in our hospitals. The programme engages with patients at a moment when they may be open to breaking free from the challenges trapping them in violent situations.

The small but dedicated team of four Navigators complement the work of medical staff. Using a wide range of contacts with services outside the emergency room the Navigators offer support to help patients change their lives. The aim is to break the cycle of violence for the individual and ease the pressure that violence places on the NHS.

Recycle is raising money for a fund set-up by the Navigators to help with small items that may be needed by those in immediate need like food and clothing. The fund has also been

used to help those affected by domestic violence with basic furniture as they attempt to build a new life free from abusive partners.

Navigator Alan Gilmour works at GRI and explains that small items can have a big impact on peoples lives as they try to break-free from lives blighted by violence. "The funds raised in the Recycle will make a huge difference to the lives of people experiencing real difficulties and challenges.

✘ "There is a vulnerability surrounding a person's journey toward a better and safer life. These small donations we make from time-to-time are received with such gratitude and appreciation as they can be so comforting and help so much.

"I'm not as young as I once was so the Recycle will be a challenge for me. However, the cause is so worthwhile and it's great to be supported by those we work along side. This will be all the inspiration I need. It's a privilege to be part of it."

Inspector Keith Jack of the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit is the project lead for Navigator and organiser of Recycle. Inspector Jack said, "I would like to recognise the contribution of everyone taking part and the work they carry out in their communities, which can sometimes go without the praise or recognition it deserves.

"We have enjoyed fantastic support from a number of organisations and from those who have contributed to our fundraising efforts.

"Scotland has come a long way in reducing violence. But every victim is one too many and at Navigator we do our best to break the cycle of violence that can have such a devastating effect on both the lives of individuals and communities."

Assistant Chief Constable Mark Williams said, "For too many people violence becomes a way of life and finding a way out

can seem impossible. 'Navigator' gives people a chance to break the cycle of violence, by supporting people to make different choices.

"Police Scotland is delighted to support "Recycle" and the fundraising efforts which will ensure that the incredible work of the 'Navigator' continues to deliver positive outcomes helping people to turn their lives around and make our communities safer."