

Police launch festive campaign to tackle domestic abuse



Reports of domestic abuse increase by 25 per cent over the festive period, Police Scotland said today, as it launched its latest campaign to tackle domestic abuse.

Between Christmas Eve 2016 and 5 January 2017, Police Scotland received on average 199 reports of domestic incidents daily, compared to 158.5 reports daily on average outside of this period.

Launching Police Scotland's domestic abuse marketing campaign, Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Gillian MacDonald, said, "The festive season is traditionally a time when people get together to celebrate but for some the threat of domestic abuse hangs over them.

"Last year, reports of domestic abuse increased by 25 per cent over the festive period. This is a matter of huge concern and that's why, each year, we run a campaign to raise awareness of domestic abuse, deter perpetrators and to prevent offending during this period of heightened risk."

Domestic abuse is not just physical, it is often about power and control. The #every9minutes campaign is primarily aimed at perpetrators but using the language and controlling behaviours we hear of from victims.

The campaign includes cinema and radio advertisements and will also run across digital channels. It will also encourage reporting, signposting people to partners who can provide support.

ACC MacDonald, said, "Domestic abusers want to control the actions and thoughts of their victims, this can take the form of violence but equally it can be threats or other abuse which demean their victim, destroying their confidence, and isolating them financially or from family and support. This type of abuse is often subtle and not necessarily as obvious as physical violence. However, this behaviour is equally as damaging, with some saying it can be worse than physical violence.

"Our officers are called to a domestic incident on average every nine minutes. Over Christmas this increases. Domestic abuse affects every community regardless of ethnicity, religion, gender, age or sexual orientation.

"We will not tolerate domestic abuse. If you commit domestic abuse there will be consequences. We are coming for you."

Justice Secretary Michael Mathieson, said, "Even though we know it happens every year, it's no less disheartening to find police experience a surge in domestic abuse calls during the festive period. This Police Scotland campaign is an excellent challenge to all perpetrators, reminding them that police officers take a zero tolerance approach and are fully prepared to take on what is one of society's most insidious crimes.

"Tomorrow, we continue to progress our Domestic Abuse Bill – a step towards making psychological abuse and coercive control a criminal offence. I want victims of domestic abuse to know they will be taken seriously and be supported by the justice system even if it seems like they are alone. If passed by Parliament, this legislation will deliver more effective powers to pursue perpetrators, helping us on our way to eradicate domestic abuse from our society."

Police Scotland also announced over £110,000 additional funding used to procure new domestic abuse alarms for high risk victims. Using new technologies, the alarms have the

ability to immediately connect victims to the Police, enabling an enhanced response to emergency situations. They will form one of many existing methods already in use to maximise the safety of victims of domestic abuse. The devices will be rolled out across Scotland early next year.

You can access our advice on domestic abuse at [Keep Safe pages here](#).