

Police launch Operation Summer City



Police in the Capital have launched their annual campaign – Operation Summer City – to keep the public safe during the Edinburgh Festival.

Every summer the population in the city doubles, with hundreds of thousands of people visiting to experience the unique and iconic month-long event.

With 2018 being labelled ‘Year of Young People’, officers are particularly keen to ensure this year’s Festival safety messages are equally as relevant to children and young people, as they are to older members of the public.

Advice and guidance on preventing acquisitive crimes such as theft and robbery will be offered, as well as useful information on getting home safely following a night out, or after attending a Festival performance.

In addition, police will, as always, be warning about the risks associated with the over-consumption of alcohol and taking drugs.

For the third year in a row, Police Scotland's iconic 'Unofficial Fringe Venue 999' will be in place, this year basing itself at Princes Street Gardens. The Police Information Centre will also be open to the public, with both facilities serving as Festival police stations within the heart of the city.

Any members of the public wishing to speak with an officer to report a crime, or to receive any information on crime prevention and personal safety, are welcome to drop in for a visit.

As part of this year's focus on children and young people, a number of specially-created 'trauma teddies' will be stocked within Venue 999 and the Information Centre, in partnership with Children 1st's Parentline service. These knitted toys can be provided to any children seeking reassurance following a distressing or criminal incident that has occurred to them.

Police are also inviting skilled knitters to create more of the trauma teddies, using the specified knitting pattern and specifications available online at <https://www.children1st.org.uk/what-we-do/news/bear-withthe-trauma-teddy-knitting-pattern-is-here/>. This will ensure the toys are available for the duration of the summer.

The age group celebrated as part of Year of Young People is 8-26 and 28 of the dedicated Summer City officers fall within this range, the youngest being 20-years-old.

Throughout The Festival, Edinburgh Division will be utilising its social media channels to highlight the important contribution these young officers make in keeping the public safe.

Operation Summer City was officially launched for summer 2018 on Wednesday 1st August at the Museum of Childhood on the Royal Mile.

Speaking at the launch, Chief Inspector Helen Harrison, Local Area Commander for the City Centre, said: "Edinburgh during the Festival is one of the most vibrant and exciting places in the entire world and we want to ensure all of those enjoying the festivities remain safe throughout.

"Over one million people will be within the Capital over the coming months, many of those being children and young people. To mark 2018 being Year of Young People, we will be targeting our messaging accordingly to reach this age group. However, our commitment to keeping the public safe stretches to those of all ages.

"Residents and visitors to the city, can expect to see a high-visibility police presence within the city centre and other busy areas over the coming month. Officers will be on hand to engage with the public, deter criminal activity and deal with any issues, which arise.

"Our mobile police station, Unofficial Fringe Venue 999, also returns this year and anyone wishing to speak face-to-face with an officer can do so by visiting the unit at Princes Street Gardens.

"I hope everyone has an enjoyable, memorable and safe Festival and rest assured, we are doing everything we can to maintain Edinburgh's status as one of Europe's safest cities to live, work and visit."

Mary Glasgow, interim Chief Executive, Children 1st said: "Trauma teddies are delighted to be joining Operation Summer City this year, to comfort and support children experiencing distress.

"The teddies, kindly knitted by local community members, show children that people care about what they are going through. They also provide contact details for Parentline, Children 1st's helpline and online family support service, so that children and families can access additional support to help

recover from their traumatic experiences and move on with their lives.

“We are always looking for more trauma teddy recruits, to join Police Scotland and Children 1st. By picking up your knitting needles and having a go at the very simple knitting teddy pattern, you can help a child get the support they need.”