

‘Here to help and not to be assaulted or abused.’

“Here to help, and not to be assaulted or abused” is the message that Chief Inspector Stuart Davidson of Police Scotland, and colleagues across the other emergency services want to get out as we head into what is always one of the busiest times of the year for our emergency services.



“Figures for the period 1 April to 30 September 2018 show that there were some 98 reports of assaults on those working in our emergency services, either police, ambulance, fire or hospital staff explains Chief Inspector Davidson.

“That’s one in ten incidences of assaults reported to police during this period involved a crime against one of our emergency workers, and it’s simply just not acceptable. We are taking a zero tolerance stance against this type of behaviour. Emergency service workers are there to assist and help the

public and not to be abused or assaulted, either verbally or physically, in the line of their duty.

“The festive period is always one of the busiest times of year for the emergency services and the last thing our staff need is to be faced with any abusive type of behaviour when out and about, 24 hours a day, carrying out their duties across our communities. Anyone found committing any crime against any of our emergency workers can expect to be dealt with using the full force of the law.

“In policing terms, our officers are appropriately trained to a high level and are issued with personal protective equipment and receive regular refresher training. We are also currently training a number of conventional uniformed officers to carry, and use where necessary, conductive energy devices, commonly known as Taser. Some of these officers are already deployed across the division to improve the safety of the public, police officers and others providing an emergency service in the region.”

Kenny McFadzean, Head of Ambulance Services within Dumfries & Galloway said, “It is now a sad reality that verbal and physical assaults by members of the public is now almost a daily occurrence for ambulance crews across Scotland. Ambulance crews are available and respond on a 24/7 basis to medical and traumatic emergencies experienced by members of the public and should not have to face this type of unwarranted behaviour towards them whilst carrying out this challenging, and on occasions, stressful essential role.

“From the 1 April to 11 December 2018, there were 89 reported verbal/physical assaults on ambulance crews in the West of Scotland alone, with one of these occurring within the Dumfries and Galloway Region, it should be noted however, that the vast majority of verbal assaults go unreported as it so commonplace.

“The Scottish Ambulance Service does not condone assaults of any kind on its staff members and will fully support and cooperate with Police Scotland colleagues in pursuing anyone suspected of committing such assaults in line with the Emergency Workers (Scotland) Act.”

Hamish McGhie, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Local Senior Officer for Dumfries and Galloway said, “Attacks on emergency responders are completely unacceptable and I am sure the public would be outraged by incidents where police, firefighters and NHS and ambulance service staff have been targeted while working to protect people and property.

“We value our communities and know they greatly appreciate the work of their emergency services. However, while it’s clear the vast majority of people would never dream of attacking an emergency responder, we will always stand united with our partners in condemning such attacks.”

Doctor Peter Armstrong from the Accident and Emergency Department at Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary said, “At this time of year we want people to enjoy themselves but to do so safely and know your own limits. If you are drinking alcohol remember your tolerance might not be the same as others you are drinking with.”