

Niddrie left without water due to vandalism

A number of homes were left without water after youths vandalised fire hydrants in the capital.

They vandalised hydrants in the Niddrie area yesterday evening leaving some homes in the area without water for around an hour.

A number of residents in the EH16 area contacted Scottish Water just before 9 o'clock to say their water supply had stopped. The company sent a team to restore supplies and repairs were carried out shortly after they arrived.

The incident has prompted Scottish Water to reissue its warning to the public about the consequences of fire hydrant vandalism saying such damage can put lives at risk.

Earlier this month Scottish Water, Scottish Fire and Rescue, and Police Scotland issued a joint call urging people not to set off fire hydrants and asked anyone who sees this type of vandalism to report it to police.

Gary Caig, Scottish Water's Operations Manager, said: "Some may see it as 'harmless fun' but that's not the case. The reality is that as vandals play in the water, homes and businesses are suffering low water pressure or no water at all.

"What's more, firefighters rely on these hydrants for fighting fires and a shortage of water could endanger people's lives and property. Fire hydrant vandalism is completely reckless and selfish and communities need to help us put a stop to this

behaviour.

He added: "Fire hydrant vandalism incidents tend to spike during warm, dry weather and can cause disruption of water supply to customers, reduced water pressure or discoloured water and localised flooding in streets. "

Assistant Chief Officer Ross Haggart, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's Director of Prevention and Protection, backed the joint campaign by the three organisations. He said: "It is absolutely essential firefighters have access to water sources at times of emergency and having an operational hydrant close-by enables us to launch a quick attack on a fire and help protect lives and property.

"Those who tamper with fire hydrants also risk serious injury to themselves or others due to the potential sudden release of high water pressure. "

Inspector Alan Mulholland, of Police Scotland Safer Communities, said: "Police Scotland will take appropriate action against anyone found misusing or vandalising fire hydrants."

Fire hydrants can be accessed legally only by Scottish Water, Scottish Fire and Rescue and anyone who has been given permission from Scottish Water. Vandalising or setting off a fire hydrant can lead to a fine of up to £5000.