

Drugs operation highlights benefits of speedy referrals in East Lothian

Police Scotland is to expand working with partners and third sector agencies in East Lothian as part of an operation to reduce the impact of drugs on vulnerable people in communities across the county.

Operation Juneau, launched at the beginning of October to address priorities in the 2020-2021 Policing Plan for East Lothian, is actively targeting those who manufacture, use and supply drugs, and major aim was to help those who are affected by drugs by getting them the help they need quickly and efficiently.



Police Scotland. Photo: Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com
The initial phase of Operation Juneau has identified the positive effect of a speedy referral process for those impacted by drugs and a new East Lothian multi-agency strategic drugs taskforce will now be set up.

When officers executed drug warrants there was also a welfare officer in attendance to identify those at risk to enable them to get help from the NHS and third party organisations. As part of this a bespoke information pack was provided with support contacts for people who were arrested and charged as well as their families.

As part of Operation Juneau, so far some 60 people have been referred to the NHS and third sector substance misuse agencies

and over 200 leaflets put through letterboxes in towns across East Lothian in a joint approach with wardens from East Lothian Council.

So far, during the operation 18 drugs warrants have been executed and drugs with a street value of £32,000 seized along with £10,000 in cash. Some 58 people were charged, including 38 relating to the supply and possession of drugs and 11 in connection with drug driving.

Chief Inspector Neil Mitchell, Local Area Commander, said: "This approach will now be used going forward as a template for working together, particularly the real-time referral process which provided immediate help to some of the most vulnerable people in East Lothian."