

Police Scotland introduce what3words app to help callers to identify their location

Members of the public calling 999/101 can now use a mobile phone app to identify their location when they are in an unknown or remote area.

From Tuesday, 9 March, Police Scotland will introduce what3words as an additional location sharing tool.





What3words grids the Earth into 3x3 metre squares by encoding GPS coordinates to give each square a unique set of three words.

This means that when someone contacts Police Scotland, they have the option to use what3words if they are in an unfamiliar area, rural location or one that is difficult to describe. However, Police Scotland service advisors will always ask for a postal address as default when someone calls 999/101 – this will not change.

The app is already in use by the majority of emergency services across the UK, including Scottish Fire and Rescue and Scottish Ambulance Service.

What3words will also help to support local policing incidents and pre-planned operations and events.

Superintendent Iain MacLelland, Digitally Enabled Policing Programme, said: “What3words will help front line police officers and staff to locate members of the public quickly when they are calling from an unknown or rural area.

“The introduction of what3words is a great additional resource for our communities and our officers who serve them.

“It’s also important to highlight that, when Covid-19 restrictions begin to ease, we know that people may want to

venture further from home, to remote or rural locations.

“What3words does not change the requirement to ensure that you are properly prepared if heading to the hills, always have a map and compass and ensure that you have your route planned out in advance.”