

Warning messages about drug taking to be sent to anyone attending Terminal V

People attending Scotland's biggest dance music event in Edinburgh will be discouraged from taking drugs via messages sent directly to their phones.

It comes following the death of a teenager last year at Terminal V, and there has also been a high number of concert goers hospitalised and charged with drug possession at the event over the six years it has been held.

The Halloween-themed festival will go ahead for three days at the Royal Highland Centre next month. This is one day longer than usual, and the capacity has been reduced from 15,000 to 6,000.

Representing organisers at a council meeting where the event's licence was considered, solicitor Niall Hassard said in an attempt to dissuade anyone attending the festival from taking illegal, harmful substances there would be "a suite of messages" sent to everyone who downloads the Terminal V app on their phones before and during the event.

"It really forms the first pillar of our strategy which is to deter people from high risk behaviours," Mr Hassard told councillors.

The licensing sub-committee delegated authority to officers to

approve the event if no issues were raised following an all party oversight group (APOG) taking place next week.

Mr Hassard said a dedicated medical team would be in attendance as well as welfare staff and members of local drug harm reduction charity Crew2000.

Cllr Neil Ross said: Neil Ross: "I appreciate always at these events some people will inevitably, despite your communications, attend either intoxicated or in anticipation of becoming more intoxicated."

At last year's Halloween rave 19-year-old Maya Nager was taken to hospital where she died. The event had been given the go ahead despite police concerns about several hospitalisations at a Terminal V event just months earlier.

Officers have previously said there is "extremely high risk of drug misuse associated with the event" with "an alarming number of attendees" at the over-18s festival – including children under 16 – requiring medical treatment and charged with drug possession offences since it launched in 2017.

Cllr Ross asked if there were "any other messages that can be put out" to avoid similar scenes this year.

Mr Hassard said one of the lessons learned from the Easter Terminal V held this year was "around the pre-event messaging".

He said: "One of the takeaways from that event was getting further engagement from Police Scotland colleagues and having a suite of messages.

"Everything is moving towards app-based so the ability for attendees to download the festival app and then be able to have messages sent direct to their phone.

"It really forms the first pillar of our strategy which is to deter people from high risk behaviours."

He added: “Rather than going for the large 15,000-capacity event it’s felt by the venue and promoters that that works best at Easter at times when you can utilise inside and outside.

“Smaller capacity works much better from a management point of view, but also from a production point of view.

“What they want to do it spread absolutely the best of dance music talent they can get on the bill across three days and the three days will be different to each other.”

by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter

