

Inspector's hard work and innovation leads to 25% drop in crime at disorder hotspot

Hard work and innovation from an Edinburgh police officer has led to a 25 per cent drop in crime at one of the city's disorder hotspots. This has resulted in him being recognised at an awards ceremony this week.

Inspector David Duthie wanted to solve the issue of anti-social behaviour at Hunter Square, in the city's popular Old Town, which had plagued authorities for decades.

He rallied together a range of agencies and secured £3,000 in funding to create an alternative "safe space" for those who gathered there to instead meet at a local library.

Realising that vulnerable people chose Hunter Square because of the welcoming nature of similar individuals, Inspector Duthie wanted to replicate that atmosphere in a more appropriate place.

As a result, reported incidents at the square dropped by a quarter, while the vast majority of people – most of them homeless and with addiction issues – reported an improvement with their physical and mental health.

'Wellbeing Wednesday' was such a success that further funding has been secured to run it long-term. Plans are also in place to extend the initiative elsewhere.

A survey of users resulted in widespread praise for DI Duthie, his colleagues, and the project itself, with one homeless female describing those involved as "angels".

Chief Inspector Mark Hamilton, who made the nomination, said: "I have worked in the city of Edinburgh for over 20 years and

Hunter Square has always been an area blighted by problems.

“Wellbeing Wednesday provides an excellent operational example of how productive partnership can support transformational results.”