

# **Police chief appointed Visiting Professor at Edinburgh Napier University**

**Police Scotland Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Gary Ritchie has been appointed as a Visiting Professor at Edinburgh Napier University (ENU), ahead of his retirement from policing this month.**

Joining Strathclyde Police in 1991, ACC Ritchie was later promoted to Chief Superintendent, then Divisional Commander of Dumfries and Galloway, before becoming an ACC in 2019.

In one of several leading roles at Police Scotland, as Head of Community Wellbeing, ACC Ritchie worked with ENU academics while they researched the police use of overdose treatment naloxone.

The evaluation of a Police Scotland pilot recommended the wider use

of the nasal spray, and the project has since been recognised by industry awards.

Following a national rollout, naloxone has been administered by Police Scotland officers to reverse the effects of a drug overdose on hundreds of occasions.

ACC Ritchie also played a leading role in the policing of the

Glasgow-held COP26 climate summit in 2021 and has the held to title of Executive Lead for Operational Support since August 2023.

As Visiting Professor, he will continue to work with academic colleagues at ENU and the Scottish Institute for Policing Research – which is hosted by the University – on areas of policing and public health.

ACC Ritchie said: “I am surprised, flattered and humbled to be asked to join Edinburgh Napier University as a Visiting Professor. I intend to repay the university’s confidence in me in every way I can.

“As part of Police Scotland’s mission, my focus has always been on prevention and the adoption of public health attitudes and approaches to policing. Collaborating with academic experts has demonstrated the value in what we try to do as police officers, and showed the potential of what policing can be.

“The naloxone project was hugely important to me. It has provided police officers with a tool which has helped to save the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in our communities.

“The evaluation of the pilot conducted by ENU was tremendous and persuasive. The fact is we would not have achieved this remarkable change in policing approach without the independent and objective academic evidence provided by the evaluation.

“During my time here, I am looking forward to contributing to further evidence-based research and representing the University positively in both academic and public service environments.”

**Dr Inga Heyman, Associate Professor of Policing and Public Health at Edinburgh Napier University said:** “We are truly delighted Assistant Chief Constable Gary Ritchie has been

awarded the title of Visiting Professor at Edinburgh Napier University.

“It is highly unusual that such a title be awarded to a non-academic leader in their field, however such an acknowledgement is richly deserved.

“ACC Ritchie is recognised nationally and internationally as a distinguished leader in policing based on public health principles. An example of such is in his leadership in driving the carriage of naloxone by Police Scotland officers – an internationally acclaimed initiative to prevent drug related deaths in Scotland.

“Such innovative practice reinforces how important it is to recognise and acknowledge where criminal justice and health come together, and that collaborative approaches are developed and strengthened.

“At Edinburgh Napier University we very much look forward to continuing our work with Professor ACC Ritchie in fostering an interdisciplinary research and teaching culture to advance policy and practice in the field of policing and public health.”