



## SUCCESS FOR YEAR LONG ANTI-VIOLENCE CAMPAIGN

A year-long anti-violence campaign has proved a success in targeting knife and alcohol related violence across Scotland.

The alcohol enforcement phases of the Safer Scotland campaign, which saw a clamp down on street drinking, saw police seize 17,451 litres of alcohol – enough to fill a petrol tanker.

Meanwhile the campaign's crackdown on those carrying knives saw some 1375 knives seized nationwide.

Detective Chief Superintendent John Carnochan, Head of the Violence Reduction Unit, said that the results of the campaign showed that headway was being made in the fight against violence, but warned that more work was needed in order to sustain the current impetus.


“We cannot rest on our laurels. The successes of the past year show that violence will not be tolerated in Scotland, but there is still work to do. Knife amnesties and alcohol enforcement campaigns alone are not enough to reduce violence long term. We need to tackle Scotland's historical propensity for violence at its roots in order to effect attitudinal change.”

The results of the campaign were welcomed by the Minister for Community Safety, Fergus Ewing.

“Too many communities in Scotland, particularly in deprived areas, suffer the consequences and casualties of violence on our streets. There are no overnight solutions to tackling this type of behaviour but the Safer Scotland campaign has achieved a great deal – ridding our streets of over 14,000 weapons and enough alcohol to fill a petrol tanker - sending out a clear message to communities that violence and knife crime will not be tolerated.

“Tough enforcement will continue but we must be equally focussed on prevention and addressing the underlying causes of violent crime - underage and binge drinking, illegal drugs, and a lack of self-esteem and positive activities for young people are all significant factors. I believe this twin approach of hitting hard on serious crimes whilst understanding and addressing the root causes can make Scotland stronger and safer for the long-term.”

The Safer Scotland campaign began in April 2006 and featured a range of initiatives including a month-long knife amnesty at the end of May during which more than 12,000 knives and weapons were handed in. The subsequent enforcement phase, which operated under new guidelines set by the Lord Advocate featured stop/scans using hand held



metal detectors and airport style Ferroguard pole scanners. This was complemented by a Crimestoppers 'Shop a Knife Carrier' campaign, where members of the public were encouraged to call the crime hot line and report people carrying knives and weapons on our streets.

During the holiday season, a holiday weapons initiative was launched in all of Scotland's major airports. The aim of the campaign was to prevent holidaymakers from bringing back illegal and potentially lethal weapons into Scotland. The initiative was supported by HM Revenue and Customs and BAA.

The Safer Scotland campaign then embarked on an education phase followed by a crackdown on alcohol, underage drinking and the sale of alcohol to minors during the autumn.

Campaign messages were reinforced throughout the year through a series of powerful marketing campaigns including the "Knives. Let's not scar another generation" and "Save Face, Walk Away" poster campaigns and the Cocktail for Violence carrier bags distributed to off licences.

Plans are now being developed for the campaign's second year.


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## NOTES FOR NEWS EDITORS

1. The Safer Scotland anti violence campaign is supported by the Scottish Executive, and is being delivered throughout Scotland by ACPOS and the national Violence Reduction Unit. A small team of officers seconded from different police forces is co-ordinating the campaign.

2. The strategic aim of the campaign is to build appropriate local alliances to respond to their respective levels of violence. The campaign's main objectives are to find sustainable innovative solutions to our violence problems through a series of targeted and locally focused campaigns, with particular emphasis on problem solving violence, and identifying what works to:

- Tackle the highest instances of violent offending behaviour in our hardest hit communities.
- Educate violent and aggressive young men to become less violent.
- Reduce possession and access to weapons, particularly knives.
- Reduce youth access / consumption of alcohol.
- Divert our youth away from street gang membership.



3. The Safer Scotland knife amnesty ran from May 24 – June 30 2006 and was followed by a series of enforcement phases under the new guidelines from the Lord Advocate, the first of which was timed to coincide with the end of the amnesty.

4. On May 22 2006 the then Lord Advocate, Lord Boyd of Duncansby, introduced tough new measures to combat knife crime. The measures, which relate to sections 47 and 49 of the Criminal Law (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 1995, came into effect on 26 June 2006. Under these guidelines:

- i. Anyone caught carrying a knife, whether they have used it in a separate offence or not, will be arrested and kept in custody pending their appearance in court.
  - ii. When individuals appear in court, prosecutors will oppose bail if the accused has one or more previous convictions involving possession or use of a knife. Bail will be opposed if an accused has a previous conviction for an offence of violence which resulted in a custodial sentence
  - iii. When prosecutors are deciding on the appropriate court for proceedings, where the accused has a previous conviction for a similar offence there will be a presumption in favour of prosecution before judge and jury
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For more information and to obtain a copy of the report, please contact Caroline Foulkes, Communications Manager, Violence Reduction Unit, on 0141 532 5835.

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**VRU/CF**