



STRATEGIC CONFERENCE ON VIOLENCE REDUCTION 'AN ALLIANCE FOR A SAFER FUTURE'

0845 HOURS MONDAY 27 MARCH 2006 ROYAL CONCERT HALL, GLASGOW

Agencies from across Scotland will join forces today to give their commitment to tackling violence.

More than 250 senior representatives from police, health, education, social work and many other organisations will attend today (Monday's) strategic conference 'An Alliance for a Safer Future' in Glasgow's Royal Concert Hall.

The aim of the conference is to put violence reduction in Scotland on everyone's agenda. Organised by the Violence Reduction Unit, the conference will be opened by Justice Minister, Cathy Jamieson MSP.


The conference will kick start a 12 month anti-violence campaign under the banner of Safer Scotland. An 'Action on Violence' web site will also go live at the conference – www.actiononviolence.com.

This will provide organisations with best practice and allow members of the public to log on for all the latest news and violence reduction initiatives from around Scotland.

In addition, the Violence Reduction Unit will present a report on its work since it was formally established in January last year. Entitled 'Reducing Violence – An Alliance for a Safer Future' the document will outline the initiatives and policy introduced by the Unit. It will also map the way forward, as the Violence Reduction Unit gears up to become a national resource and centre of best practice for Scotland.

Justice Minister Cathy Jamieson said:

"Violence in Scotland is not a new problem, but it is one which must be addressed if we are to create communities where people can lead their lives without fear and intimidation. There are no easy solutions but the broad approach, taken by the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), in which a whole range of partners work together to address both the causes and effects of violence, is starting to have a real impact on rates of violent crime in the West of Scotland.



“I am determined to build on that, and the action which Scottish Ministers are already taking to address the booze and blades culture in Scotland. Expansion of the VRU to create a national centre for violence prevention is a key part of that work and today’s conference is an important step in that process, bringing together key interests from Scotland and overseas, to drive forward our shared aim of safer daily lives for all.

“Today also sees the launch of a year-long Safer Scotland campaign to tackle specific types of violence - which will at the end of May include our first ever national knives amnesty. We are also today launching a national website for those working in the field of violence prevention and reduction, to share best practice, highlight what works and provide ideas for local solutions.

“I believe that we now have a unique opportunity to work together across the criminal justice system, health service, education system and beyond, to take progressive action against violence in Scotland, bring renewed confidence to local communities and ensure that we stop this senseless blood-shed once and for all.”

Detective Chief Superintendent John Carnochan, Head of the Violence Reduction Unit, said:


“Violence has a devastating effect on communities throughout Scotland. Violence infects every community to a greater or lesser degree, and its’ impact affects every public agency, including health, education, enterprise and social work.

“We know from our work over the past 15 months, that the efforts of criminal justice agencies alone will not solve the problem of violence. However, there is no doubt that concerted and co-ordinated action involving every individual and organisation with a responsibility or interest in reducing violence will make Scotland a safer place for everyone.”

Det Chief Supt Carnochan explained:

“For decades the police in Scotland have reacted to all types of crime, and in the main we are good at that - a crime is reported, we investigate and we detect the offender.

“In recent years there have been welcome reductions in many areas of crime. Our detection rates in Scotland for all types of crime are the envy of many Forces elsewhere. The public can be assured



that we will continue our efforts to detect offenders and ensure they are dealt with appropriately by the criminal justice system.

“Yet, we have been taking this approach for decades - and despite slight reductions along the way - levels of violence have remained relatively constant for the past four decades.

“This conference aims to focus our collective energies towards identifying and addressing some of the causes of violent behaviour, rather than treat only the symptoms. We want to try and prevent violence from happening in the first place. Our aspirations are ambitious and, undoubtedly it will take time, but aiming for a safer Scotland is a legitimate and worthwhile endeavour.”