Welcome to the sixth online newsletter from the East Ayrshire Protecting People partners.

This is a special festive edition filled with advice and tips on how to stay safe and healthy over the winter months. It also contains news about work that’s going on to protect people across East Ayrshire, as well as useful contact details just in case you or someone you know needs help.

Wishing you a merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and safe New Year!
Giving alcohol to children is a foul!

The Child Protection Committee has been raising awareness about the dangers of giving alcohol to children with the installation of boards and banners at Kilmarnock Football Club. The eye-catching boards have been receiving a lot of positive attention from people attending Rugby Park.

Raising awareness through Snapchat

The Scottish Government recently worked with Young Scot and consulted with the National Child Sexual Exploitation Working Group to produce a short story to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation.

Aimed at young people and delivered over Young Scot’s Snapchat channel, ‘Bad Romance’ was viewed over 11,000 times over the course of two days.

The story unfolds snap by snap in a conversation between two young best friends dramatising one girl’s slide into an exploitative relationship.

Watch it here: http://bit.ly/2bhqybZ

CSE campaign

The first Police Scotland campaign on child sexual exploitation (CSE), ‘Grooming a child for sex? We’re on to you’, was launched at the end of August.

The majority of communications with the public on the subject of CSE concentrates on spotting the signs of a victim of CSE and reporting it. Police Scotland took a different approach though and focused on the perpetrator with a view to preventing people from ever becoming a victim.

The campaign reflected the complex nature of CSE and how perpetrator behaviour can at times be hidden under a veil of seemingly innocent contact when, in reality, the child is being groomed for the purposes of sexual abuse.

Although the main focus of the campaign was on perpetrators, Police Scotland also worked closely with a range of partners, including Barnardos, to ensure that victims of child sexual exploitation receive all the information and support they need to come forward with confidence. They also gave victims and the public essential information on spotting the signs of child sexual exploitation and how to report it.
Fire safety in the home: electrical meter tampering

Worryingly, in an effort to avoid paying utility bills, some people within our communities are tampering with their electricity meter and in some cases bypassing the meter completely.

This practice is illegal and potentially poses a threat to the lives of the occupier, family members, neighbours and firefighters.

The potential consequences include:

- fire, as a result of electrical ‘arching’ and overheating
- electrocution, from direct contact with exposed electric wiring or from other metal within the house which has been made ‘live’ during the illegal process

If you discover a meter which has been tampered with, please contact the utility supplier immediately to make the equipment safe.

Take Five!

‘Take Five’ is a new behaviour change campaign that aims to help tackle financial fraud in the UK.

Launched in September by Financial Fraud Action UK, it hopes to engage and educate everyone on how best to protect themselves against financial fraud.

The Adult Protection Unit, Police Scotland and Trading Standards are working together to identify opportunities to promote the ‘Take Five’ message in East Ayrshire.

What is a power of attorney?

Having a power of attorney lets you plan what you want another person to do for you in the future, should you become incapable of making decisions about your own affairs.

It is a written document which includes a certificate signed either by a solicitor who is registered to practice law in Scotland or by a UK medical doctor.

The Office of the Public Guardian has 10 tips for people considering appointing an attorney:

http://www.publicguardian-scotland.gov.uk

www.mypowerofattorney.org.uk

Your path to better health and wellbeing

Poor mental health is something that affects us all at some point in our lives, and many of us have different coping strategies/techniques that we use without even realising it.

Your Path to Better Health and Wellbeing has been developed to encourage individuals to make positive lifestyle changes, such as healthy eating and exercise, which have an important role to play in maintaining good mental health. The programme also gives useful hints and tips on coping with stress and anxiety and improving self-esteem.

The 12 week programme is designed to be worked through on a self-led basis with additional support from the Lifestyle Development, Older Adults and Wellbeing team. Additional support will take the form of four scheduled appointments on the CHIP Van where you will be able to chat with the team and receive relevant advice and information. There will also be the opportunity to receive regular health checks throughout and beyond the duration of the programme, as well as ongoing information on diet and lifestyle changes.

CONTACT

If you are interested in self referring to the programme or would like some more information then please contact Faye Forsyth on 01563 576398.

Take Five!

Now available on the CHIP Van

Are you interested in receiving some additional advice and support on changing your diet, losing a bit of weight, or increasing your physical activity levels?

Then this may be for you!

As part of our new Weigh to Go programme on the CHIP Van, you will receive:

- Regular health checks which will include; BMI; Body Fat; Weight and Blood Pressure
- At least three 30 minute appointments on the CHIP Van with a friendly and knowledgeable consultant who will discuss your goals and guide you through the programme
- Food and physical activity diaries which will help you keep track of what you eat and what you do and enable our staff to make recommendations on your diet and exercise to help you achieve your goals
- Knowledge of healthy eating, physical activity and health behaviour change techniques, such as goal setting and problem solving that will be delivered in a fun and friendly way.
- Access to physical activity options including walks and exercise classes
- If you are interested in self referring to the programme or would like some more information then please contact Faye Forsyth on 01563 576398

If you are aged 16 or over and have a body mass index (BMI) of between 25 and 28 then you are eligible for this programme. If you do not know your BMI then don't worry we will check this for you at your first appointment.

PROTECTING PEOPLE in East Ayrshire
Stand by for change as partners sign pledge

“We’ll never be bystanders” - that was the clear message from East Ayrshire’s Health and Social Care Partnership, as senior representatives of all the partner organisations proved when they signed Stonewall’s No Bystanders pledge.

They signed the pledge as part of a national campaign to tackle homophobic bullying and abuse: “I will never be a bystander to bullying and teasing language. If I hear it, I will call it out and if I can, I will stop it. By adding my name I promise to stand up for fairness, kindness and never be a bystander.”

To find out more and sign the pledge, go to www.nobystanders.org.uk

Discussing self-neglect

Self-neglect was the subject of this year’s Annual Conference held by the three Ayrshire Adult Protection Committees.

Hosted by East Ayrshire, the conference focused on the fact that self-neglect is a type of harm that is recognised within adult support and protection law, but is often misunderstood and therefore under reported.

Self-neglect can happen to an adult of any age when someone is unable, for a number of reasons, to take care of their physical and mental health or needs.

Over 100 delegates from across the three council areas covering the Adult Protection Committees and partner agencies came together to hear from keynote speaker Professor Suzy Braye. Her presentation was about drawing on research to help partners understand and respond to self-neglect.

For those who were unable to attend the conference, a video podcast will be available to each of the three Adult Protection Committees featuring Professor Braye.
Provost’s new charity approach

Provost Jim Todd is taking a fresh, new approach to his charity work this year and rather than choosing just one charity to support, he has decided to focus on raising awareness of the problems of social isolation and to support those working to help those most in need.

National studies show that loneliness is a real problem across the UK. Over half of all people aged 75 and over live alone, with two fifths of those stating that television is their main source of company. Loneliness isn’t the preserve of the old, however, and research also shows that young people are just as likely to feel alone and friendless.

The Provost said: “Through my involvement with the previous charities I have worked with including the Samaritans, and as Armed Forces Champion, I’ve become increasingly aware of the problems faced by many people who are isolated by health, age and various other circumstances. Our Vibrant Communities Teams are working hard to address these issues and there are also a number of excellent charities dealing with specific problems faced by individuals, including veterans, older people and those with physical and psychological issues. For this reason I’ve decided to focus on raising awareness of social isolation and to work with council services and other organisations to find out who really needs our help within our communities.”

As part of this approach, the Provost is urging people to volunteer to become ‘befrienders’ across East Ayrshire. Through the East Ayrshire Befriending Service, volunteers are already giving up a few hours a week to provide companionship to those who suffer the effects of loneliness, but the service needs more help to reach many others who are not yet experiencing the benefits of befriending.

The Provost met up with Marion Richmond (94) from Stewarton to hear about her experience of receiving visits from a befriender. Mrs Richmond was the first person to be matched with a befriender under the scheme which began in February 2015 and she feels that she has greatly benefitted from receiving visits from her befriender Jean. She says that “having company makes an awful difference to her” and enjoys seeing Jean every week.

Mrs Richmond has previously enjoyed attending monthly afternoon teas held at Dumfries House for befrienders and befriendees, but her health sadly now prevents this from happening. As well as the afternoon teas, the Befriending Service holds a volunteer evening where everyone gets the chance to come along and meet others, making them feel as if they are part of the befriending group. There’s also a ‘Full of Life’ event, a ‘Chipmas’ party and loads of events held in supported accommodation across East Ayrshire including lunch clubs, Golden Olympics, talent competitions and even ‘Come Dine With Me’ events.

The Provost said: “By becoming a befriender, you can help someone like Marion to increase their involvement in their community, as well as build their confidence and self-esteem, and its benefits can be beyond measure. It really could make a huge difference to their life, and to yours too.”

To find out more about being a befriender, or how to support your local befriending service, contact 01563 576354 or email vibrantcommunities@east-ayrshire.gov.uk
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

16 days of action

This year’s 16 days of action were packed full of awareness raising events including a march, a gift appeal, a three-legged walk and the creation of a daisy field of white flowers by primary school children.

The international campaign, which runs from 25 November to 10 December each year, aims to eliminate gender violence. Established in 1991, it raises awareness of the reality of domestic violence and pushes for positive change to increase women’s and men’s safety.

In 2015-16 there were 58,104 recorded incidents of domestic abuse in Scotland, and 79% of incidents involved a female victim and male perpetrator.

Domestic violence typically increases over the festive season. If you need to speak to someone, you can call the National Domestic Violence Helpline on 0808 2000 247 or email helpline@womensaid.org.uk

A special helpline is also available for men. Abused Men in Scotland (AMIS) is a national organisation supporting men over 16 who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse, regardless of sexual orientation, gender inequality, disability or ethnic origin. Call 0808 800 0024 or email contact@amis.org.uk

16 days of action continues to grow every year with more and more people getting involved and speaking out about gender-based violence. Thanks go to everyone who has helped to raise awareness of this important issue throughout the campaign.
**Party safe**

If you’re going for a festive night out, be ‘aware’ and follow these simple rules:

1. Plan your Christmas night out – charge your mobile, remember to take it with you and think about how you’ll get home.
2. Book a taxi from a reputable company or arrange for a family member or friend to pick you up.
3. If drinking alcohol, be sensible about how much you consume; a drunk person is a far easier target for a criminal.
4. Don’t leave drinks unattended.
5. Don’t use drugs or New Psychoactive Substances, sometimes misleadingly called ‘legal highs’. Legal doesn’t mean safe – they can contain toxic and harmful chemicals.
6. Stick with friends – don’t leave nights out on your own or with strangers.
7. Take care of each other and make sure you all get home safely.
8. Stay safe on your journey home - never take isolated short cuts. Keep to busy areas and on public transport, sit where there are lots of other people. If you’re using a taxi, make sure it’s licensed.
9. Drivers should be mindful that partygoers, particularly those under the influence of alcohol, can step out/stagger onto the road without warning. Slow down when in crowded areas.

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**Alcohol and fire**

Every year the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service attends a large number of alcohol related fires. Most of these fires start because people are cooking or smoking whilst under the influence of drink.

A person who has been drinking is less likely to be aware if a fire takes hold, particularly if they do not have working smoke alarms. People under the influence of alcohol are also more likely to feel disorientated if fire breaks out, making it more difficult for them to escape. Don’t fuel fire with alcohol - it only takes one act of carelessness when smoking or cooking to result in someone losing their home, their possessions or, ultimately, their life.

For more information on Alcohol and Drugs support: liam.wells@east-ayrshire.gov.uk
Christmas fire safety

Christmas is a special time for celebration and shouldn’t end in tragedy because of the extra hazards that are around at this time of year. So when you’re decking the halls, make sure you follow Scottish Fire and Rescue’s simple advice and stay safe.

Adaptors

Whether it’s fairy lights or new electronic toys, most of us will be plugging in more than usual at this time of year.

Many of us use extension leads in our homes all the time, using four-way bar adaptors to increase the number of appliances we can plug into a wall socket.

But although there is space to plug in four appliances, this doesn’t mean it’s always safe to do so. Different electrical appliances use different amounts of power. To avoid the risk of overheating and possibly fire, you should never plug appliances into an extension lead that together use more than 13 amps or 3000 watts of energy.

Fairy lights

• Unplug fairy lights or other electrical Christmas decorations when you leave the house or go to bed.
• Check fairy lights are in good working order and replace any bulbs that have blown.
• Bulbs can get very hot, so don’t let them touch materials that can scorch or burn easily, such as paper or fabrics.
• Make sure the fuse in the plug is the correct rating.
• If you need to plug more than one appliance into an electrical socket, use a multi-socket adaptor which is fitted with a fuse and has surge protection.

Decorations

• Decorations made of light tissue paper or cardboard burn easily.
• Don’t attach them to lights or heaters.
• Don’t put them immediately above or around the fireplace.
• Keep them away from candles.

Christmas trees

Special fire safety precautions need to be taken when keeping a live tree in the house. A burning tree can rapidly fill a room with fire and deadly gases.

• Don’t place your tree close to a heat source, including a fireplace, heat vent or candles. The heat will dry out the tree, causing it to be more easily ignited by heat, flame or sparks.
• Be careful not to drop or flick cigarette ashes near a tree.
• Do not put your live tree up too early or leave it up for longer than two weeks.
• Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.

Other potential hazards

• Extinguish all candles before you go to bed. Never leave a burning candle in a bedroom and always put candles on a heat resistant surface/holders.
• Check your electric blanket, plug and flex regularly for damage. If you’re in any doubt, don’t use the blanket.

For more fire safety tips, visit: http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/your-safety/festive-safety.aspx
Online safety

Think before you post photos of your Christmas night out online! What may seem funny in private could embarrass or humiliate someone in public. If in doubt, don’t click! Remember, what goes online stays online.

When shopping online, make sure your web browser and internet security is up to date. Check the website payment page is secure and look for the padlock in the address line before you enter any card details.

If you’re buying your child a mobile or tablet for Christmas, think about how you can keep them safe online.

And if you’ll be away from home over Christmas or even just out and about, be careful about what you say on social networking sites – don’t let thieves know your house will be empty.
New chairs in place

Three new Independent Chairs have been appointed in East Ayrshire to help keep vulnerable people safe.

Alex Davidson, Kate Thomson and Neil Kerr will lead and co-ordinate the Multi Agency and Partnership committees in the areas of Adult Protection, Child Protection and the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership.

Alex Davidson, who will chair the Adult Protection Committee, has wide experience after a career in Social Care Services and was previously Head of Adult Services at South Lanarkshire Council. He has also worked at a national level with the Joint Improvement Team for ten years, working on integrated practice and Reshaping Care for Older People, and has most recently worked as an Associate in Healthcare Improvement Scotland. For eight years Alex was also Independent Chair on Perth and Kinross Adult Support and Protection Committee, and had six years in the same role in West Lothian. Alex is also Chair of PAMIS, a national charity promoting an inclusive society for people with complex and profound learning and physical disabilities.

The new Chair of the Child Protection Committee is Kate Thomson, who has recently retired from the police service after 33 years. During her service she worked with a number of multi-agency partnerships at front line, supervisory and also senior management levels. These include the Child Protection Committee, Alcohol and Drugs Partnership, Adult Protection Committee and Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women Partnership, all of which operated within Dumfries and Galloway.

She was also the Chair of the South West of Scotland Strategic Oversight Group to Manage Sex Offenders between 2010 and 2012.

For the last two years, as an Assistant Chief Constable, Kate had strategic responsibility for the delivery of policing across nine local authorities in the East of Scotland. She was also a key member of the national multi-agency Outcomes, Evidence and Performance Board whose main function is to support local authority strategic partnerships to improve the co-ordination and delivery of shared services to communities.

The Alcohol and Drugs Partnership's new Independent Chair is Neil Kerr. Neil is a local man who retired from Police Scotland in April 2016 after completing 30 years of service, mainly serving the communities of Ayrshire. He carried out a wide range of duties at every rank from Constable to Superintendent including uniform operations, CID, plain clothes, Community Safety, Divisional Training, Community Policing Inspector, Area Commander and latterly as Superintendent for Support and Service Delivery in the Ayrshire Division.

Throughout Neil's police service, he saw at first hand the devastation that the use of alcohol and drugs can cause to individuals, families and communities. He also witnessed the tremendous courage and determination of people who have recovered from dependence on alcohol and drugs and go on to lead healthy and rewarding lives.

Each chair will represent their committee, promote effective partnership working and make sure that improvements are taking place and that these are measured.
The BUZZ

Christmas can be a time when we overindulge. There are so many temptations around including mince pies, Christmas cake, chocolates, chipolatas and glasses of fizz! So when Christmas is over, it’ll be the ideal time to start your New Year resolution of a healthier, more active lifestyle.

The Buzz is an activity guide to the events run by our Vibrant Communities team in East Ayrshire which you can view here:
https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/CommunityLifeAndLeisure/TheBuzz.aspx

There are activities for children and families, young people, sport and diversion, sports clubs and facilities, community health, keeping active, information and learning and delivering change for communities.

For more information contact Vibrant Communities on 01563 576354 or email vibrantcommunities@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

And to help keep you safe over the festive season, here are a few of our top tips:

When you are out shopping
1. Stay alert and be aware of what’s going on around you.
2. Keep valuables in inside pockets of clothing or bags.
3. Only carry the cash and cards that you need. Always shield the PIN pad when entering your PIN.
4. Avoid going back to your car to leave your shopping part-way through your trip. If you have to keep presents in the car, make sure they are out of view in the boot, the car is locked, and keep the receipts with you.
5. Don’t overburden yourself with bags/packages. Be extra careful with purses and wallets. Always carry a handbag close to your body and not dangling by the straps. Put a wallet in an inside coat or front trouser pocket, likewise with your phone and keys.
6. Shopping with children? Make sure they learn to go to a store attendant or security guard if you get separated.
7. Never leave your bag unattended on your trolley whilst shopping and don’t leave it in your vehicle when returning your trolley.

At home
1. Don’t leave Christmas presents under the tree if they are visible through a window or door.
2. Make sure that your home is secure before going out.
3. Check the I.D. cards of any workmen, Council employees etc who come to your door. Genuine callers will always be happy to give you a number to call to check their identity.
4. When discarding boxes from expensive gifts, do not leave them in plain view.
If you have any suggestions for articles that could feature in the next edition of the Protecting People newsletter, please email caroline.gordon@east-ayrshire.gov.uk.

If you are worried about someone’s safety or need advice, call:

**Police Scotland**
**Telephone** 101 (or 999 in an emergency)

**Social Services (Kilmarnock)**
The Johnnie Walker Bond, 15 Strand Street, Kilmarnock KA1 1HU
**Telephone** 01563 554200
**Email** social.work@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

**Social Services (Cumnock)**
Rothesay House, Greenholm Road, Cumnock KA18 1LH
**Telephone** 01290 427720
**Email** social.work@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

**Emergency Out of Hours Social Work Service**
**Telephone** 0800 328 7758

**Note:** The Emergency Out of Hours Social Work Service is available after 5pm until 9am, Monday to Friday and throughout the weekend, including public holidays. You will be put through to the Ayrshire Social Work Out of Hours Response Service. A qualified Social Worker will assess the circumstances referred.