

Scottish Government submission of 12 January 2023

PE1995/A: Improve support for victims of spiking

Thank you for your email of 16 December, in which you requested a written response from the Scottish Government to the issues raised in petition PE1995.

The Petitioner, Catherine Anne Mckay, has called on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to develop a multi- agency approach to investigating spiking incidents to ensure victims are given access to appropriate testing and incidents are investigated robustly.

We understand from the Petitioner that there are concerns at how a case involving a family member was handled and that they feel let down by the Justice system.

It would clearly not be appropriate to comment on the details of any specific case, but it is important that we take account of and respond to any concerns that are raised. I can advise that Police Scotland takes all reports of spiking seriously and thoroughly investigates all reports. A comprehensive Investigative Strategy has been developed and circulated to provide guidance and direction to staff responding to and investigating incidents of spiking. A Detective Superintendent has national investigative oversight and Senior Investigating Officers (SIOs) have been appointed within each policing division to lead on all spiking related investigations locally. Every report of spiking is investigated. Police Scotland's focus is on identifying people who carry out an assault in this way, investigating fully, gathering evidence, and working with COPFS to bring the perpetrator to justice. They also work with partners to ensure people who do report to them are fully supported.

On the specific point about a multi-agency approach, I can advise that for some time the Scottish Government has taken a proactive approach to address concerns about the incidence of reported spiking in Scotland.

Throughout 2022 several round-table meetings have taken place to help steer the joint Scottish Government and public sector response to the act of spiking. The round-tables brought together partners from across the justices system including policing, victims organisations and

prosecution in addition to representatives from higher and further education, community safety and night time economy. These meetings have been designed to discuss the range of initiatives and information available on spiking and to reassure the public that there is an ongoing co-ordinated response, as outlined by the Petitioner, to the dangers of spiking, in whatever form it might take. A key example of that work was the significant efforts undertaken to raise awareness and heighten vigilance in the run-up to the return to university and college campuses.

In addition, and prior to the festive period, we published information on the safer.scot website, inform and support the public around the subject of spiking. These can be accessed at [What to do - Immediate steps - Safer Scotland](#) and will be updated on a regular basis.

I hope that the information set out in this letter is helpful to the Committee.