



West of Scotland
Branch

Public Services Group Report

Thursday 28th October 2021

by **Kenny Brown**

A significant challenge for those working in health and safety across the public sector is how to address the issue of violence and aggression without restricting the very access public services require to support and deliver to our people.

The recent tragedy where a Member of Parliament in the UK, Sir David Amess, was killed whilst meeting his constituents is just one example. Unfortunately, there are no simple solutions to stop or restrict this. Access services are seen as remote, and out of touch, when they work closely with clients, customers, service users and others so the risk is incidents like this will, and do occur.

In October we hosted a Webinar entitled Violence and Aggression an Organisational Approach. A recording of the session and the answers to some questions received at the session can be found at [IOSH Webinar recordings | IOSH](#). We were really pleased with how the session went with over 280 individual attendees spanning across 15 different countries.

This is a theme that the Public services Parent Group will continue to return to over the next 12 months as we agreed at the last Public Service Committee meeting, held in October, that this would continue to be our priority area for the next 12 months.

A range of Emergency and voluntary services staff attended the 4 yearly relicensing exercise at Glasgow Airport last week which involved over 60 people simulating the survivor/evacuee process and the friends and family reception centre with reconciliation using the Police Casualty Bureau process. A virtual press conference was held involving the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Police Scotland, Airport Management, Falk Fire and Rescue Service, and the Airline involved. Media students from Clyde College acted as the media and did not hold back on their questions to the panel. The CAA were pleased with the results which demonstrated that the plan was robust and there is an ability to work together in a crisis.

The recent house explosion in Ayr is still under investigation and again this was an opportunity for the emergency services to work together with Scottish Gas Networks. Some preliminary findings will be announced shortly. A member of my own team from Police Scotland Health and Safety Unit was in attendance to give safety advice at the scene as forensic excavations and demolition takes place. As an aside, that team member, a member of the IOSH West of Scotland Branch, is a former senior Fire Officer from Scottish Fire and Rescue Service who coincidentally was present at the Larkhall Gas Explosion.

The preparations for COP26 continues and will no doubt be the dominant topic of the news over the next few weeks. The event deserves to be a success given the effort and planning which has gone into it however this will be the largest event of its type in the UK and will no doubt challenge all the public services in Scotland and not just those directly involved.