

'Safe Space' in Eastbourne for Christmas period

A range of safety initiatives will be in place in Eastbourne town centre over the Christmas period,

Funded by NHS East Sussex Downs & Weald, the East Sussex Safer Pubbing and Clubbing Group and the Department of Health, 'Safe Space' is designed to make the town centre a healthier and safer place. The projects aim to promote responsible drinking, reduce attendance at A&E and emergency ambulance call outs, and to ensure that people have a safe place to go if they get into trouble or need assistance and advice.

Operated by Central Sussex YMCA and the Red Cross, the mobile Safe Space unit will be located outside Debenhams and staff will offer a range of support to people seeking help, from alcohol advice to sexual health advice and basic first aid provision. The unit also offers practical advice, water, clean clothes, condoms, flat shoes and access to transport services.

Two mobile workers will also be out and about in town centre licensed premises encouraging people to drink and behave responsibly with healthy messages printed on large lollipop signs. The 'lollipop' workers will also carry water, condoms and sweets.

Inspector Rachel Barrow from the Eastbourne Police Neighbourhood Policing Team said: "The Safe Space will be situated in a central location and is intended to provide help and support and practical assistance to people who are ill, injured, separated from friends, too intoxicated to get home safely, or vulnerable and distressed. This type of initiative has worked well previously and I will be encouraging police officers and licensees to accompany people who will need support to the Safe Space where their needs can be assessed in a calm and safe environment."

Councillor Dan Purchase, Chair of Licensing Committee, Eastbourne Borough Council said: "The Safe Space Project will raise awareness, re-enforcing the promotion of safer socialising and the "get home safe" message for the festive period. The Council welcomes the opportunity to work closely with partner agencies to ensure that Eastbourne remains a safe place to live, visit and do business."

For further information from the PCT please contact Barbara Pratt, Health Improvement Partnerships Co-ordinator (Urban), NHS East Sussex Downs & Weald, NHS Hastings & Rother, Centenary House, The Avenue, Eastbourne, BN21 3XY, 01323 440022/07917 051348.