

Fire bosses want GSA blaze images

AN APPEAL has been launched for images of the blaze which ripped through Glasgow School of Art's Mackintosh building. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service made a plea for video footage and pictures which can be analysed by investigators. Assistant chief officer David McGown said: "There has been a high volume of images and

video already published and you might think your material is no different, but let us take a look. We will cast an expert eye over it – and it could prove crucial to our investigation." It is feared the landmark building is at risk of absolute sudden collapse, after flames gutted it on June 15.



INFERNO The School of Art

Crash woman now stable

A WOMAN of 54 who suffered serious head injuries in a two-car smash in Lanarkshire on Thursday is in a stable condition in hospital.

Cops check drink-drivers

CHECKS on motorists suspected of being under the influence of drink or drugs are being stepped up by police in Scotland as part of a summer crackdown.

NURSE WHO HAS No one should try to help

Jess ensures suspects get mental health assessments to avoid tragedy behind bars

BY HEATHER GREENAWAY reporters@dailyrecord.co.uk

AFTER changing the face of criminal justice nursing by ensuring the safety of vulnerable people in custody, Jess Davidson is being hailed as a modern day Florence Nightingale.

The 50-year-old is the senior forensic charge nurse based at St Leonard's police station in Edinburgh, which has revolutionised the safety of those who find themselves in the cells.

The project she set up there after the death in custody of a 28-year-old mum of two proved so successful that similar teams have been introduced in other parts of the country.

In the past, people in need would have to wait for an on-call doctor for treatment but now there are teams of criminal justice nurses on hand to tend to prisoners 24/7.

These teams evaluate exactly why detainees are being violent, if they pose a threat to themselves and if they need immediate medical care either on site or in a hospital.

This branch of nursing was never thought about before Jess came along and often vulnerable and mentally unfit people were dragged through the courts without being offered help.

Thanks to Jess and her team, victims of sex trafficking, sex crimes and abuse who find themselves on the wrong side of the law get the support they need when they need it.

Jess, who last month became the first criminal justice nurse to be made a fellow of the Royal College of Nursing, said: "Most of the people we care for have mental health issues.

"They are rough sleepers, drug users and heavy drinkers at risk of harm, and failed asylum seekers.

"There's a lot of suicidal behaviour and it's our job to keep everyone who comes in safe.

"This is a new area of nursing and everyone who works in this team is compassionate, resilient and bright - that's why we are making a difference.

"The project was set up following a fatal accident inquiry which catalogued a series of failures in the care of Amanda Smith, who suffered a fatal heart attack at St Leonard's in 2008. No one should die in custody."

She added: "The project was so

REVOLUTIONISED CARE IN THE CELLS die in custody. That's why we're those who've hit rock bottom



HERE TO HELP Jess keeps a close eye on the behaviour of those in her care. Pic: David McNie



TEAMWORK Jess talks to a colleague. Right, in a cell at St Leonard's



successful in St Leonard's, the service has been rolled out across the south-east of Scotland, including in the Borders and parts of Fife.

"I would love to see similar initiatives set up all over the country as I see it as a vital and invaluable service."

Jess and her nurses also provide training for police on how to handle situations with ill people effectively, while building crucial links between police and health services.

She said: "Many of the people we deal with are in dire need of help.

"Ending up in custody may have a positive outcome for some as we can point them in the direction of the health services they need, be it a drug programme or even help with housing. Many have problems which are fixable.

"There's always a reason people hit rock bottom and end up in police custody and you have to be aware of that.

"It could be a woman who is being abused by her husband and has cracked or someone who has been trafficked from abroad and has nowhere to turn.

"A cell is the loneliest place to be for anyone but for someone with mental health issues it can be extremely distressing and might push them over the edge, so you have to take states of mind into account."

She added: "Don't get me wrong. I'm well aware people aren't angels.

"I'm neither a bleeding heart nor a pushover but if we can get on top of someone's problems while they are in custody, it could stop them offending again.

"We often see things and changes in how people behave before it has filtered down to other frontline

services. These people don't always start at A&E but come through the police first."

Jess and her team are often on the frontline of emerging trends, such as the rise in so-called legal highs.

She said: "NPS, or new psychoactive substances, are one of the big challenges we now face.

"When a prisoner comes in high on a drug we have to work out what it is as fast as we can. The influx of legal highs has made our job even more difficult as it takes time to work out what we are dealing with."

Wimbledon-born Jess, who is mum to Cecily, 26, and stepmum to Jamie, 20, Kirsty, 18 and Cara, 10, moved to Scotland 18 years ago after swapping a career in publishing for nursing.

She said: "I started my nursing training in 1994. I was a mature student. Until then I had worked in the cut-throat, soul-destroying world of publishing.

"I enjoyed success but it didn't make me feel happy. One night I was watching a TV advert about mental health. There was someone trying to talk a vulnerable person out from under a table and I thought, 'That's what I want to do'."

"I worked in acute adult medicine, A&E and intensive care before becoming one of the first nurses recruited to NHS 24."

Jess, who is married to business manager Mark, added: "I worked with the Willow Foundation - a partnership between NHS Lothian, City of Edinburgh Council and Sacro - to address the social, health and welfare needs of women in the criminal justice system.

"From there, I ended up where I am today.

"I love my job and find it fascinating. I'm proud that my branch of nursing is one people now aspire to enter."

“If we can get on top of someone's problems, it could stop them from reoffending”

JESS ON HER JOB



CAREER PATH Jess graduates and, above, picking up her Queen's Nurse award at Buckingham Palace

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