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NEWS

City-based Embrace's new initiative to help youngsters who suffer from serious crime

Children's charity launches national toy bank appeal



Charity chief executive Anne Campbell with some of the toys for the toy bank

A Peterborough-based charity that supports children whose lives have been torn apart by serious crime is appealing to families to donate any new, unwanted or duplicate toys they received for Christmas for families who are struggling this year.

Embrace Child Victims of Crime (Embrace CVOC) will be launching a new national toy bank to help families whose children have been affected by serious crimes such as domestic abuse, physical or sexual abuse, neglect or homicide.

The toy bank, which will go live once there has been a bulk donation of toys, will work in the similar way to a food bank where nominated families referred to the charity will be able to go on-line and allow their children to choose a

toy or game for free.

The charity is reaching out to families in Peterborough and surrounding areas to ask them if they would donate any new, unopened toys, that are unwanted or duplicates, to help other families in need.

Anne Campbell, chief executive of Embrace CVOC, said: "Many families are overwhelmed by the sheer volume of toys their children receive from Santa at Christmas and sometimes, although gifts are gratefully received, the child may already have something similar or not be interested in a particular toy.

"Sadly, the children we work with often have very few toys to play with, particularly those who have had to leave their homes because of the crimes that have happened to them.

"Now we are in lockdown

again, when many people are reaching out to help others, we are asking if any families have unwanted, unopened, new toys, games or books that they would be willing to donate to please send them to our head office for our new toy bank venture.

"Once up and running, children who have been referred to us, who have often suffered unimaginable trauma, will be able to choose a toy themselves and donors will know they are giving to a child who really appreciates their generosity."

Gifts can be sent to Embrace Child Victims of Crime, Copse Court, Thorpe Wood, Peterborough, PE3 6SF. If you have any questions about donating toys or Embrace CVOC you can email info@embracecvoc.org.uk or call 0345 60 999 60.

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Dear Santa success

The Peterborough Telegraph teamed up with Peterborough-based charity Embrace Child Victims of Crime (Embrace CVOC) to support its Dear Santa 2020 campaign to provide gifts of choice for children who have suffered through serious crime.

People in Peterborough and across the UK dug deep in their pockets to purchase over £12,000 worth of presents for vulnerable children.

Local businesses and corporate sponsors also contributed almost £8,000 to the appeal meaning the charity reached its £20,000 target and has been able to provide presents for 1,115 children.



All of those gifts were available to buy through Embrace CVOC's website and then the charity arranged for them to be wrapped and sent to the children who wished for them.

Charity facts

Embrace CVOC is the only charity in the UK which works solely with children who have been harmed by serious crime. Since its launch in 1993 it has helped thousands of children across the UK who have suffered violent, physical or sexual abuse or neglect or who have lost a close family member to homicide. It operates in all part of the UK, the Channel Islands and Isle of Man, and delivers a range of support including access to therapy, practical support and emotional support for children and their families. To find out more about Embrace CVOC visit www.embracecvoc.org.uk.



Roads

Work to start on bridge safety

Works to prevent trespass at Crescent Bridge in Peterborough are due to begin next month.

Network Rail has been given the go-ahead by the city council to extend and replace the existing mesh parapet with steel panels and extend it across the full length of the city centre bridge.

Explaining why the new measures are needed, Network Rail previously said: "Unfortunately, instances of trespass, vandalism and suicide have become more prevalent on the bridge over the last several years which can be attributed to several factors.

"The design of the bridge is such that its low parapet height and exposed metallic structure make it easy for the public to climb up onto the bridge and its arches.

"Given that the bridge crosses a very busy electrified railway these occurrences pose a great threat to safety and the resultant delays are hugely disruptive for pedestrians, road and rail users.

"Whilst Network Rail has already attempted to prevent unauthorised access to the bridge by installing mesh parapet extensions at each

abutment, this has proved insufficient. As a result, further steps must be taken to prevent any possible instances of trespass at Crescent Bridge."

Cambridgeshire police has said it is "fully supportive" of the plans which would "support community safety and reduce vulnerability to crime".

Network Rail has now confirmed that the work is planned to begin at the end of February and will be completed in mid-March.

A spokesperson said: "To allow the work to take place safely there will be some full footpath closures."

Housing

Affordable flats plan approved

Plans for 12 affordable apartments to be built close to a care home in Peterborough have been approved.

Housing association Accent Housing has been granted planning permission from the city council to build two blocks of flats, one of which would front The Pavilions in Alma Road, Millfield.

There will be 24 parking spaces at the site, with vehicles accessing the development via Alma Road.

A planning statement submitted to the council stated that the site was originally "to be used for a medical centre".



Artist impressions of the plans

But it added: "There is an urgent need to provide new affordable housing in Peterborough which is currently not being met. In this context, the ability to deliver 12 high quality affordable homes in a sustainable location is in the public interest.

"The proposal comprises an attractive development

which responds positively to the character of the local area and adjacent developments, will protect the residential amenity of neighbouring occupants and will provide a high standard of accommodation for future residents of the scheme."

The council said there were no objections to the plans.

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