Economy & Place Directorate
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Dear Parent/Carer

As the darker nights approach, in particular around the half term, Halloween and 5th of November with fireworks and bonfires, we need to ensure our communities area a safe place to be for everyone.

To do this, we're asking you as Parents/Carers in your local area to support us.

We recognise for some children and young people there are immense pressures in behaviours viewed as fun, however some of these behaviours carry risks which can lead to difficult and sometimes dangerous situations with fireworks and unregulated bonfires.

Aside from the obvious serious risk of harm and injury to individuals, we need to ensure everyone feels safe in our communities and are made aware of the dangers of unregulated fires.

We urge Parents/Carers to talk to their children regarding large gatherings and the associated risks around unregulated bonfires and fireworks, working collaborating with us in ensuring our communities and estates are a safe place for everyone to enjoy fireworks safely.

To help you and your children stay safe, Northumbria Police have some advice for you:

- If you're celebrating the festivities, consider attending an organised event rather than hosting your own. They're safer, more enjoyable, and help reduce risk in your community.
- Be mindful. This season can be distressing for pets, older residents, and vulnerable individuals. Please celebrate responsibility and be respectful of your neighbours.
- Planning to use fireworks? Know the rules:
  - You must be 18 or over to buy 'adult' fireworks.
  - It's illegal to set off fireworks, or host bonfires, in public spaces when they have not been approved as part of an official event.
  - It's illegal to set off fireworks during night hours (11pm–7am), except on certain dates like Bonfire Night (until midnight). You can check your local council's website for full guidance.

- Let's keep it safe for everyone. Sadly, we know that some people use these occasions for reckless or criminal behaviour. If you see something concerning, report it.
- You can report non-emergency crime to Northumbria Police online by sending a DM on social media, or by using the live chat or 'report' form function on the Force's website.

If you are a Parent/Carer and are worried about an unlit bonfire on council land, please contact Sunderland City Council online at www.sunderland.gov.uk/illegal-unlit-bonfire or by scanning the QR code below. Alternatively, you can call 0191 520 5550.

To report any concerns about items accumulating, such as rubbish or furniture, or bonfires being built on Gentoo land, please contact Gentoo on 0191 525 5000.

For lit bonfires and incidents that need an emergency response, please call 999.

We really appreciate your help in keeping your neighbourhood safe and enjoyable for everyone this bonfire period.

Thank you for your support.

Community Safety Team
Sunderland City Council
Northumbria Police