



STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD 1 October 2013

Force Chaplaincy

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To provide an update on the work of the Force Chaplaincy service

BACKGROUND

2. The force's multi faith chaplaincy offers a service that is available to any individual or group regardless of faith or religious tradition. It provides a team of people who are committed to working together to offer pastoral and spiritual care and support to those who work within West Midlands Police and to their families. Although it is embedded within the organisational structures of the force, it also has independence and is able to provide support to colleagues in a confidential setting.
3. Management and the delivery of the service is overseen by Revd John Butcher who undertakes this role on a part-time basis. Since his appointment Rev Butcher has worked with Commanders and HR Managers to identify suitable candidates to be local voluntary chaplains. Wherever possible volunteers whose faith communities are based within LPU boundaries have been engaged. This process has resulted in the appointment of 40 further voluntary chaplains across the Force area, covering all LPUs and most of the departments.
4. All Voluntary Chaplains undergo an interview with the Force Chaplain, Commander and HR/Personnel Manager. Following successful interview and vetting (non-police personnel status) their appointments are ratified by the Force Faith and Chaplaincy Liaison Committee.
5. Voluntary Chaplains undergo a 2-day training course provided by the National Association of Chaplains to the Police (NACP). They also undertake the relevant WMP e-learning courses in order to access force systems.

FORCE CHAPLAINCY SUPPORT AND ACTIVITIES

6. Voluntary Chaplains undertake a wide variety of activities in support of the Force, in addition to their work in local communities. Examples of activities include the following:
 - Leading and advising on a number of services such as funerals, remembrance services, weddings and child blessings.
 - Attending and supporting award evenings, training events, enrolment evenings as well as social events held at numerous locations around the West Midlands.
 - Engaging with and supporting officers and staff following critical incidents. A number of colleagues have shown appreciation that they have been able to 'download' their experiences which on occasions can be particularly challenging..
 - Support to staff concerned about job security as a result of recent workforce reduction programme.
 - Providing reassurance to members of the public after being faced with a death or accident. In partnership with the officers concerned they have been able to offer a listening ear to members of the public who have had to deal with unforeseen circumstances.
 - Support and counsel to staff and officers who have had to deal with bereavement following the death of a colleague or family member.
7. In addition Voluntary Chaplains are able to support Commanders in developing links within local communities and to support local Policing delivery.
8. All the above chaplains as part of the Chaplaincy Team are available to give support to the WMP staff and at the same time provide a wealth of expertise in advising on multi-faith, multi-cultural matters both internally and externally. This means that the development of the network of voluntary chaplains and faith advisers has increased the force's connectedness with the faith communities of the West Midlands and brings opportunities for increased partnership working and integration.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MULTI FAITH TEAM

9. The Voluntary Chaplains team comprises of volunteers from a number of faiths, including the Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Sikh, Hindu and Buddhist faiths. As well as increasing the number of Chaplain's over the past year there has also been an additional number of Faith Advisor's that have been added to the team.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10. The Force Chaplaincy Service is provided at a minimum cost to the Force. Chaplains are employed on a voluntary basis, with a small financial commitment to the Force resulting from mileage and subsistence and some equipment costs. The Force Chaplain is employed by the Force on a part-time basis

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11. Any Legal implications resulting from this report are embodied within the Equality Act (2010) and Human Rights Act (1998)

RECOMMENDATIONS

12. The Board is asked to note this report

David Wilkin
Director of Resources