

## **ESFRS Chaplaincy Network.**

From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 ESFRS began to develop a new Chaplaincy network, across parts of the Service and further announcements will be communicated to staff and Chaplaincy as the final arrangements for the network are put into place.

### **Current arrangements:**

Chaplains have been appointed to cover three local areas:

Eastbourne Fire Station area including ESFRS Service HQ.  
Brighton & Hove City area covering Hove, Preston Circus and Roedean Fire Stations.  
Bexhill, Battle, Hastings Bohemia Road and The Ridge Fire Stations.

Information via posters has been made available in all of these locations with photos of the Chaplains, advising that current arrangements for any initial contact should be made through Borough Commanders/Departmental Heads.

The Chaplaincy arrangements have four main aims:

- a) To provide a network of confidential care and support to all who work in the Service and to establish local contacts with local fire stations or offices.
- b) To offer/provide additional support during particular difficult traumatic circumstances following injury or loss of life to members of the public or Fire & Rescue service staff following operational incidents. This will be carried out so as to complement existing support services (e.g. occupational health, counselling and managerial support).
- c) To be part of our Chaplaincy network as carers to the organisation as a whole, bearing in mind the presumed 'independent status' of a Chaplain.
- d) To provide structured support of a more formal nature, for example by arranging special services of thanksgiving or attending memorials, being present at official openings and dedications.

### **Our guidance for Chaplains**

- All Chaplain's contact visits should be pre-arranged via the Borough Commander and Station Manager or Departmental Heads at ESFRS so as to ensure that the visit does not clash with other work plans or diary events, such as station visits by other organisations; watch training sessions, off station activities, key meetings etc.
- For emergency visits, these will be co-ordinated through Borough Commanders/Departmental Heads as other equally sensitive support activities may also be taking place depending upon the circumstances involved.
- Chaplaincy work is also about meeting the needs of Fire & Rescue Service staff as and when required and at the invitation of an individual. The Chaplaincy roles recognise these are not opportunities to evangelise. Individuals are entitled to approach their Chaplain to seek information about the Christian faith. In such cases, Chaplains are welcome to meet up with the enquirer to share their faith.

Chaplaincy visits are not formal counselling opportunities. Any request for counselling following operational incidents should be conducted in such a way to complement existing provision and services (critical incident debriefing, employee assistance programme). A home visit may be appropriate in certain circumstances.

It is not expected that Chaplains will attend operational incidents for the health and safety reasons of all parties. However, Chaplains may attend training sessions on fire stations provided this is pre-arranged with the relevant Station Manager.

### **Looking forward:**

ESFRS is dedicated to embedding fair treatment and dignity into our working environment and we value the contribution diversity brings to both the Service and the community.

It has been recognised, in developing this piece of work, the need for staff access to a multi-faith contact as part of a total care package for staff. ESFRS have been engaging with Faith & Fire and acquired contact details for a multi-faith contact as well as two Buddhist Chaplains <http://www.faithandfire.co.uk/>

Work is currently taking place to introduce an internal web page of the current service chaplaincy contacts as well as the Faith & Fire multi-faith contact and Buddhist Chaplains, including photographs and direct contact details.

This will not be public and will only be able to be viewed by internal ESFRS staff should they require the service.

Departmental Heads and Borough Commanders will still be encouraged to maintain contact with the service chaplains and continue with existing arrangements such as inviting Chaplains to any events or occasions that may serve to develop the chaplaincy or facilitating contact at the request of an individual if required.

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