

**GWENT POLICE AUTHORITY**  
**Equality and Human Resources**

**Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> December 2008

**Item No:** 4a

**Heading:** Member and Officer Report

**Report Author:** Chief Executive

---

**SUMMARY**

To receive details of visits made/meetings attended by Members/Officers and any actions arising from those visits/meetings.

---

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

That the Committee notes the visits made / meetings attended and the action taken / to be taken.

---

**1. BACKGROUND**

The following reports relevant to the Equality and Human Resources Committee have been received

**1.1 Miss C Hawkins Equality and Human Rights Commission ‘Who Do You See? Living Together in Wales’ Seminar. Also attended by Mrs M Chapman**

In December 2007, the newly formed EHRC began researching changing attitudes towards discrimination, equality, human rights, and living together in Wales. This seminar marked the release of the findings which showed that overall, Wales was “at ease with itself”. However, some pockets of significant prejudice were also uncovered, especially in negative attitudes towards people with mental health conditions, Gypsy Travellers, and transgender people.

The day was punctuated with round table discussions facilitated by voluntary members of the EHRC for Wales, and featured presentations on transgender issues, Gypsy/Traveller issues, and domestic abuse issues. There was also a panel discussion entitled “the future of mental health service in Wales”.

The seminar was useful in providing information on attitudes towards equality and discrimination, as well as providing ‘food for thought’ and valuable first-hand perspectives during the three presentations. Further information on the research and overall results of the survey was available from [www.equalityhumanrights.com/wales](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/wales).

## **1.2 Miss C Hawkins 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2008 C Division Diversity Training: Disability and Hard to Reach Groups**

Overseen by PS132 Kevin Childs, this, and the later event on 24<sup>th</sup> October, formed part of a new, week-long diversity training scheme organised by C Division. Attendance was mainly by PCSO's and PC's engaged in community work.

The morning session began by covering issues such as disability and the law (specifically the Disability Equality Duty, and what that means to police officers), and barriers to engagement with the disabled community. Within this were opportunities for group involvement and questions, mainly related to issues and situations experienced by officers while on duty. An interesting and informative segment on mental health, presented by members of Hafal, followed. A Wales-wide organisation, Hafal works to empower people suffering with severe mental illness to achieve a better quality of life, fulfil their ambitions for recovery, fight discrimination, and enjoy equal access to health and social care, housing, income, education, and employment. Moreover, it is run by the people it supports, and ultimately enables them to manage their own recovery.

The afternoon commenced with a session facilitated by members of Newport People First; here, personal experiences of hate crime and issues when reporting incidents to the police were relayed, as well as the outcomes of this involvement (both positive and negative). This was of great value to the officers present, as it raised an awareness of particular difficulties faced by this group within the general community, as well as highlighting particular incidents of treatment by the Justice system. The day rounded off with group work involving participants with varying disabilities. I was assigned to the hard of hearing group which provided a very worthwhile opportunity to engage with members of this hard to reach community, as well as informing them a little about the role of the Police Authority.

This was an excellent training opportunity which I would recommend to anyone who engages with members of hard to reach groups; it raised some very topical and valid issues, as well as providing me with a better understanding of perceptions of disability, issues surrounding legislation, and increasing my knowledge base in this area.

## **1.3 Miss C Hawkins 'Hidden 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2008 Crimes and Honour-Based Violence' Seminar. Also attended by Mr N Taylor and Ms G Reddington**

This was a very well-timed event, not only due to the recently raised profile of forced marriage, but the impending legislative changes (due November 2008) which will introduce a 'duty of care' on public sector agencies for the victims of forced marriage – which in reality is a form of domestic abuse.

The seminar aimed to create an understanding of forced marriage, the use of violence to reinforce 'honour', the impact upon victims and how this can lead to 'honour killings'. Participants were also encouraged to consider the issues

and latest legal developments around tackling forced marriage, and 'hidden cultural crimes' such as Female Genital Mutilation.

Facilitated by an individual who, herself had been a victim of a forced marriage and domestic abuse, the main focus of the morning's presentation was on gender related issues and exploring the disparity between cultural and religious values; however, there was great discussion about this individual's own upbringing and experiences based on the cultural values of her community, as well as investigation of the issues surrounding gender within the wider South Asian Muslim community, and some of the discrimination she has faced as a result of prejudices within that community against western cultural values and norms.

The afternoon session commenced with raising awareness and understanding of the practice of FGM as a hidden cultural crime, and closed with a workshop focusing on two case studies to encourage good practice and positive action for victims of cultural and hidden crimes.

This was a superb event which exceeded expectation and was hugely valuable in educating attendees on the issues at hand and addressing cultural misconceptions. The information gained as a result of this can be utilised in conjunction with that which Gwent Police has published, and attendance at further events on this issue would certainly be of benefit to any frontline offices or staff dealing with members of South Asian communities.

#### **1.4 Miss C Hawkins 24<sup>th</sup> October 2008 Training: BME Groups in our Community**

Following on from the Disability and Hard to Reach Groups day, this event was again overseen by PS132 Kevin Childs of C Division.

Facilitated by Dave Phillips of SEWREC (South East Wales Racial Equality Council), the event was mainly attended by PCSO's and PC's involved in community work.

Beginning with a scene-setting exercise, we received a brief overview of the Religion and Ethnicity Census 2001, and the British Red Cross Migrant Workers Wales analysis (January 2007). This was swiftly followed by a 'field-trip' to the Jamia Mosque on Commercial Road, Newport, where we were warmly welcomed by the Imam and provided with the opportunity to ask questions regarding the Muslim culture and the Islamic faith. The Mosque is one of the largest in the area and has been long awaited by the community; now near completion, it provides not only a well-needed place of worship for Islamic followers, but also acts as a place of retreat for non-worshippers. Our visit ended with a tour of the impressive building.

A working lunch was provided at Communities House, Maindee; here, we met with members of the Eastern European community who outlined their experiences of life in their native countries compared with life in Newport, any issues experienced regarding integration and racism, and any issues

experienced when they have required the services of the Police. Interestingly, the group we met with felt that the majority of racist behaviour they had witnessed actually originated from fellow former-Eastern Europeans towards the majority of other cultures. They felt that this was particularly evident around areas such as resistance to learning English, and reluctance to interact with other local inhabitants.

The day concluded back at Vantage Point with a group discussion around 'labels' and acceptable definitions of race.

Yet again, this was another excellent training event; unravelling some of the popular misconceptions surrounding Muslim culture and Islamic faith, it combined well with the seminar covering 'Hidden Crimes and Honour-Based Violence' to provide me with a fuller and more comprehensive understanding of cultural and religious issues in this area.

### **1.5 Mr D Bayliss 28<sup>th</sup> October 2008 All Wales LGBT Conference 2008**

I attended the first conference yesterday hosted by Gwent Police. The event was attended by one Chief Constable, three ACCs and several prominent members of police organisations from across the UK and the USA.

I would like to commend the GPGSN, Claire Devonshire and ACC Bill Horne for their management, organisation and leadership in hosting this conference. The presenters were of high quality, providing information, experiences and paths forward for the organisation as a whole, for individuals, for force officers and staff in Gwent and Wales.

The contributions from the three ACCs were impressive - giving views from three perspectives.

I hope that Mr Giannasi will support the formation of an All Wales Network. I also hope that the force pursues the issue of monitoring and publishing the numbers of LGBT officers and staff, in line with other forces across the UK. It was the only category missing from HR reporting. I know that this was planned for next year, perhaps it could be brought forward.

One comment made to the audience, that makes sense to me was "get it right inside the force, as this gives that image outside the force".

## **2. PROPOSAL FOR CONSIDERATION BY COMMITTEE/CURRENT POSITION**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the issues raised and any actions required to address those issues.

## **3. STAFFING/PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are none arising directly from the content of this report.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are none arising directly from the content of this report.

#### **5. CONSULTATION**

5.1 There has been no consultation on the content of this report.

#### **6. PROJECT ASSESSMENT FOR EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY MATTERS**

6.1 This project/proposal has been considered against the general duty to promote equality, as stipulated under the Police Authority's Equality Schemes, and has been assessed not to discriminate against any particular group.

#### **7. RISK ASSESSMENT**

7.1 Member reports which identify risks, will be reported to the appropriate Committee of the Authority.

#### **8. STAYING AHEAD (2011 REVIEW)**

8.1 We have considered the implications of the 2011 project in the production of this report and there are no issues we want to raise in this report at this particular time.

#### **9. CONCLUSION**

9.1 Member reports which identify follow up / further action, will be reported to the appropriate Committee of the Authority.

#### **10. CONTACT OFFICER**

10.1 Committee and Member Services Officer

#### **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 There are no background papers relating to this report.

#### **12. APPENDICES**

12.1 There are no appendices to this report.