



THE ALL NEW E-BULLETIN

Welcome to the first edition of the GPA's new E-Bulletin. Recognising the fact that the membership should be updated as to the work of the National Executive Committee on a regular basis, it was felt that the new E-Bulletin was best placed to achieve this.

Over and Out was a very professional publication; however it took a considerable amount of time to publish and this meant that much of the news was old news. In the current financial climate the NEC was finding it increasingly difficult to find sponsorship; at costs in excess of £3,000 per edition, this meant that only one edition a year could be provided.

The E-Bulletin is designed to be informative, inexpensive and easy to distribute; it is the intention that it will be published every 2 months, with regular updates as to the core business of the NEC and how it is progressing towards the GPA's strategic aims and objectives. Circulation will be via E-Mail and Force Co-ordinators will be asked to ensure that members without E Mail addresses are forwarded hard copies.

The content of these E-Bulletins will provide a short précis and identify where further information can be obtained on any given subject. The membership is invited to submit current force initiatives for publication, in order that examples of best practice can be circulated nationwide.

If you would like to contribute to the next E-Bulletin, or have a question about the work of the GPA then please e-mail ebulletin@gpa.police.uk

FLYING THE FLAG

The NEC has undertaken an initiative, to seek the agreement of all Forces to fly the Rainbow Flag on specific days. This was agreed following rising interest from a number of Force Co-ordinators and members.

David Lyle has written to all Chief Officers asking them to show their support to both their LGBT staff and the wider community by flying the Rainbow Flag on a nominated day - eg, IDAHO or LGBT History Month.



To date, 39 forces have responded; 14 have shown their support and have agreed to 'fly the flag', whilst 20 have stated their intention not to do so. The remaining 5 forces have taken other significant and innovative steps demonstrating their support for the LGBT communities.

The GPA would like to congratulate those Chief Officers who support this initiative, for showing positive leadership and recognising the strategic benefits to their Force by openly displaying their support to their LGBT staff and local communities. The E-Bulletin will contain updates on this subject as the initiative continues. If you require additional information on this subject please E-Mail ebulletin@gpa.police.uk

DATA AUDIT

The NEC is about to undertake a data audit to ensure the accuracy of the membership data. Currently, 35% of E-Mails are being bounced and the NEC needs to ensure that it has a reliable method of communication.

In the coming months members will be asked to confirm their personal details. The NEC would ask for members' cooperation in this so that it can ensure that all members can be updated and receive GPA communications.

CARDIFF SOCIAL

On Saturday 28th February 2009 over a 100 members of the GPA travelled from across the UK to a social event held at 'Pulse' in Cardiff. The event was a great success and those members in attendance clearly enjoyed themselves.

The NEC would like to thank the management at 'Pulse' who hosted the event and also acknowledge the efforts of the welsh co-ordinators, without whom, the event would not have taken place.

WEB SITE

In light of the review of all Diversity Staff Associations, a cloud has been hanging over the financial future of the GPA. Although the designs of the website had been completed, it has not been possible to guarantee the required level of funding.

The GPA has now received a commitment from the Home Office to fund the website and we hoping to make this a priority for 2009. The e-bulletin will contain updates as this matter progresses.

EDINBURGH PRIDE

It has been determined that this year the GPA would support the Pride festivities in Edinburgh. This will be the last Pride event that the GPA will participate in. This decision has been taken in recognition that the GPA has achieved their objectives of raising the profile of LGB officers. Considering the objections that were voiced when this initiative was launched, 57 Chief Constables gave their permission for officers and staff to march in Uniform at last years Brighton Pride. In view of this overwhelming success the GPA will now focus on supporting forces attending their own local Pride Events.

Pride Scotia will take place on **Saturday 27th June 2009** and only those members who have pre registered will be able to march with the GPA contingent.

As happens with each year, we have an increase in the demand from those wishing to march and clearly a limit has to be agreed. If you would like to join your colleagues from around the country, at what is always a truly inspiring day out, please either fax back or email the registration form to us by no later than **Saturday 13th June 2009**.

As in previous years, representatives from ACPO; the Police Federation and the Superintendents Association have supported the GPA and we look forward to marching with them again at Pride Scotia. David Lyle, the Scottish Coordinator and his team are arranging a pre-Pride social event and discounted accommodation.

Those members wishing to attend can download the application form from the website, alternatively please email events@gpa.police.uk for further details. Completed registration forms should be forwarded to events@gpa.police.uk or faxed to 07092 700600.

HOME OFFICE REVIEW

Eighteen months ago, the Home Office announced its intention to conduct a 'best value' review of all the Diversity Staff Associations (DSAs) to examine the contribution they make to the police diversity agenda.

The preparation of submissions and records of work has been a hugely time consuming activity for the NEC in response to this review. A draft report was submitted to the Equality and Diversity Strategy Board (EDSB) at the Home Office in March.

Fourteen draft recommendations were initially presented to stakeholders. The GPA has submitted formal representations in connection with two of the key issues.

Firstly, the draft report recommends that all the DSA are stripped of their direct funding streams and that a new diversity team representing all six strands is created under the control of NPIA. Existing DSA funding would be diverted to fund this new 'hub'. The absence of direct funding would be a disaster for the GPA and could cause us to shut up shop completely.

Secondly, there is a recommendation that the DSAs should no longer be administered through the Home Office but should come under the control of the NPIA. There are obvious problems with this model, not least of which is the issue of impartiality and independence for the DSAs. NPIA operates very much like a police force and has its own share of homophobia/equality related issues that the GPA has to deal with.

At a recent meeting between the GPA Chair, Paul Cahill and the Police Minister, Vernon Coaker, assurances were given that the recommendations would not be implemented without a full impact assessment. Mr Coaker listened attentively to the GPAs concerns and agreed that in the short term, it would not be sensible to alter the structures or funding arrangements. The GPA has submitted its annual grant-in-aid

application to the Home Office and this has been approved for the next 12-month period. Although there was initially some suggestion that our funding would likely be cut for 2009/10, resulting in the loss of our office facilities, this has also been resolved to our satisfaction.

The GPA would particularly like to thank the Police Federation for their efforts to challenge some of the more outrageous recommendations and publicly acknowledge the value that DSAs bring to the work of the statutory staff associations.

STRATEGIC/POLICY ROUNDUP

The ACPO policy on Expressions of Faith in the Workplace has now been circulated to all Forces. This policy clarifies the key principles and guidance in order to help people working within the Police Service to understand and deal with the issues. This policy is of great importance to the GPA, as the NEC recognises the level of faith-based homophobia that currently exists.

The GPA has been working intensely with the ACPO LGB Portfolio to issue a new policy relating to Public Sex Environments (PSE's). This policy has now been agreed and no longer focuses on PSE's as purely a 'gay' related issue. The policy is intended to help the police service to develop effective, multi-agency partnerships and operational tactics to deal with problems associated with Public Sex Environments, whilst demonstrating its efforts to treat and respect all people equally and fairly. Both policies are progressing through ACPOS, after the necessary legal adjustments.

The NEC is currently working on other strategic objectives; including full and inclusive sexual orientation monitoring, The National Blood Service and the manual of guidance. Updates on these objectives will be contained in future E-Bulletins.

If you require any further information please E-Mail: ebulletin@gpa.police.uk