

JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WITH ETHNIC MINORITY
ORGANISATIONS
7 MARCH 2018

(Time Not Specified - Time Not Specified)

PRESENT Councillor Edith Macauley (in the Chair),
Councillor Fidelis Gadzama and Councillor Jerome Neil

Councillor Charlie Chirico, Mr Shiekh, Mr Rahman, Mr Nawaz

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 1)

None.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies were received from Mrs Shah, Mrs Neale, Mr Savage, Rev Copeland, Mr Hall, Mr Islam, Councillor Simpson, and Councillor Latif

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

The minutes were agreed.

4 MATTERS ARISING (Agenda Item 4)

None.

5 ST RAPHAEL'S HOSPICE - GAIL LINEHAN, DIRECTOR OF CARE
SERVICES AND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT (Agenda Item 5)

Ms Linehan gave an overview of St Raphael's Hospice. The Hospice opened in April 1987 and has 14 rooms. It provides support to clients for symptom control and end of life care.

St Raphaels offers a relaxed environment and is focused on individual needs. It provides a service to the diverse communities of Sutton and Merton, but for various reasons some groups are not accessing the hospice.

She is keen to support the use of the hospice for the community. It prepares people for end of life and supports the wellbeing of those left behind. The service is free at the point of access and is open to all faiths and none.

Ms Linehan's aim is to promote the benefit of a peaceful space that is well resourced with staff that have time to spend with patients. Psychological support is available for patients and their families. Family bereavement care is also offered.

Care is also provided in the home by the At Home Team. The hospice is not dependant upon medication but also uses alternative therapies.

There is a café that is open to the public. Ms Linehan stressed that the hospice is not a gloomy environment.

Annually 350 people are cared for in the hospice and several hundred at home. Annually £4.5 million is raised through donations and fundraising.

Questions/comments

How is the hospice reaching out to other communities?

Ms Linehan responded that the hospice is not good at using posters or advertising its services and wants to get better at publicity. Booklets and leaflets are left in GP surgeries and St Helier Hospital. Ms Linehan said that she wants to do outreach work to the BAME and Faith and Belief communities.

Is there a charge for services?

Ms Linehan confirmed that the service is free after referral and carers are also able to access free counselling and bereavement services.

Is there an average length of life left before a referral is made?

Usually patients are referred who have approximately 12 months life left but the hospice is now getting late referrals for patients only have a few weeks to live.

6 FOSTERING RECRUITMENT - ROSIE BRADLEY (Agenda Item 6)

Steve Butcher, Social Worker and Rosie Bradley, Recruitment and Publicity Officer gave an overview of the fostering service. They informed the meeting that the service wants to raise awareness and encourage the recruitment of foster carers from varied backgrounds.

Most of Merton's foster carers are from the Mitcham area. The children in care reflect the diversity of the borough and the service wants to have diverse carers. To be a good foster carer the following qualities are required:

1. Having an affinity with young people
2. Being non judgemental

3. Having patience
4. The ability to nurture

Approximately 125 children are in care usually because of an issue with their parents. Fostering is the last resort.

Potential foster carers receive three and a half days training, are assessed by a social worker and are interviewed by a fostering panel.

There are currently 60 carers and some of them were born abroad which has given them insight to care for refugees. There is a Foster Carer Association that provides support and arranges functions for foster carers.

Carers are matched up with children of their choice. There is a shortage of carers who look after teenagers and siblings. Carers receive £507 per week per child. Training is ongoing through the year.

Questions/comments

Private Equity Organisations fund fostering agencies. If the council can not match a child to a carer, agencies may be used.

How do you match carers to children and what happens when there is a problem?

A social worker assessment is made to look at strengths and weaknesses and then recommendations are given to the fostering panel. Foster carers can express an age preference and where possible matches are also made on ethnic grounds. Placement breakdowns do not happen often.

It was commented that the paperwork is very onerous and can be off putting. It was suggested that a different way was needed to attract carers.

The fostering recruitment staff stressed that accountability is important and daily records are kept in addition to reporting significant events.

7 CRIME UPDATE - INSPECTOR DAY (Agenda Item 7)

Inspector Day reported that there has been a 3% increase in crime in Merton. Hate crime has reduced but there has been an increase in Transgender hate crime.

Inspector Day gave an overview of the policing changes. Wandsworth, Richmond, Kingston and Merton Police Command Units will merge. Merton will have a dedicated Community Safety service and a Command Unit. The custody facility will be in Wandsworth and Kingston.

There will be the same number of officers and one Superintendent for the Command Unit.

Questions/Comments

Concern was expressed by JCC representatives who felt that Merton must be losing Police Officers and Merton will lose out as the other areas will focus on their boroughs.

Inspector Day reassured the representatives that there will be no change to the quality of service for Hate Crime as the command unit will be based in the borough. Neighbourhood teams will still be in Merton and Partnership working will continue.

Also Mitcham's response rate should improve now that it is the only police station in the borough.

What is being done to tackle the crime increase?

Inspector Day informed the meeting that various measures have been put in place. Motor vehicle crime is linked to moped theft. There has been some success in catching moped thieves. There is a black market linked to goods stolen using mopeds and it will take some time to tackle.

Inspector Day added that a lot of work is being done to prevent burglaries, such as advising home owners to use alarms and improved door and window locks.

How do statistics inform the planning of services?

Inspector Day confirmed that intelligence is used and local Police also follow directives and undertake reactive and preventative measures.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Item)

None.