

## CCA Volunteer Awards

This year the Community Chaplaincy Association (CCA) launched a new volunteer award scheme. Congratulations are due to everyone who received awards at the national volunteer recognition event held in London on 1st December. It was lovely to hear something about each volunteer's experiences and what they have contributed to Community Chaplaincy.

Special congratulations to our volunteers Malcolm and Beverley Knightley, who joined Peninsula Initiative Community Chaplaincy as volunteer mentors in 2013 and have worked tirelessly over the last three years to mentor and support many clients within Plymouth and the surrounding area.

Malcolm and Beverley work very much as a team. They have given of their time and care well beyond the call of duty and lives have certainly been transformed through their support and care. We really appreciate all they have done and are delighted that they have been able to receive this award.

It goes without saying that we are so immensely grateful to all our volunteers, without whose hard work and dedication it would not be possible for Peninsula Initiative to support the many people that it does. Thank you so much!



Malcolm and Beverley (right) with Matthew Devlin, Chair of CCA, and Cathy Jerrard

## Peninsula Initiative has new surroundings!

Peninsula Initiative Community Chaplaincy has recently moved its office base to a new location: Exeter CoLab, at Wat Tyler House.

This newly-redeveloped 'wellbeing hub' brings together a host of specialist providers to offer a unique range of opportunities for people looking to rebuild their lives after periods of homelessness, re-offending, drug/alcohol abuse or long term unemployment.

This is an exciting move for us and is already proving to be hugely beneficial in helping us to work in closer partnership with others.

Please make a note of our new address and contact details.



**NEW ADDRESS**

Peninsula Initiative Community Chaplaincy

CoLab Exeter, Wat Tyler House, King William Street, Exeter EX4 6PD

Tel: 01392 284285

Web: <http://www.swcc-pi.org>

Email: [enquiries@swcc-pi.org](mailto:enquiries@swcc-pi.org)



# The Role of Community Chaplaincy in Supporting Desistance from Crime

... is the title of a piece of research commissioned by the Community Chaplaincy Association (CCA) from the Centre for Community, Gender and Social Justice (CCGSJ) at the Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge. Two community chaplaincy projects, from the North and the Midlands are at the centre of the project, however PICC is also contributing elements of its own recent research carried out by Catherine Matlock and Jan Keliher (see June 2016 edition) in the area of working with women, to the Cambridge work.

The second interim report from Cambridge (just completed), talks about the first round of interviews with clients, and offers interesting evidence about the client understanding of the nature and purpose of community chaplaincy. Interviewees universally talked about community chaplaincy as a source of help. For some people, the contact with community chaplaincy is motivated largely by a specific need. For example, one client, Karl\* had declined the first offer to refer him to the community chaplaincy, but he followed up the link himself when he found himself threatened with homelessness. Managing debts, claiming benefits and obtaining identification documents were also on the list of practical problems being dealt with by community chaplaincy. Interviewees talked about offers of help such as the loan of a bicycle for going to appointments and the link to other agencies that provide clothes and food. As well as the practical help on offer, interviewees also spoke warmly of the manner in which it was provided. The approach taken by community chaplaincy was perceived as taking time, showing concern and demonstrating care. Interviewees spoke of *'genuine interest'* and *'patience'*.

The data also suggests that, for many clients, community chaplaincy is about more than the provision of practical help. Interviewees are also talking about the importance of emotional support. While practical concerns dominated in the first round of interviews, some interviewees were also talking about the value of human contact and the opportunity of a break, over a cup of coffee, from life in hostels or poor shared accommodation. One explained that he welcomed working with a mentor as he was looking for some support, encouragement and company. Another knows he can talk to his community chaplain and appreciated receiving phone calls checking how he is doing.

Interviewees who believed that a faith-based service could be a better service argued on the basis that religious people would be motivated to do good, *'have a good heart'* and be caring. The relational dimension of community chaplaincy is crucial. Clients speak warmly of the personal qualities of staff and volunteers. For example, one described his community chaplain as *'polite, intelligent and he's understanding [...] He doesn't look down his nose. He's a genuinely nice man [...] There was trust straightaway'*. Ideas such as being easy to speak to, being genuine, showing real interest and demonstrating care and concern recur through the interviews.

In addition to viewing their interactions with community chaplains positively, clients feel that staff and volunteers are aware of the obstacles and hurdles faced by people coming out of prison. They appreciate the time taken to help them with the detail of applications, referrals and appointments that are an unavoidable aspect of resuming life in the community. Karl\* regretted that he had not engaged with the community chaplaincy as soon as he left prison, whilst Craig\* summed up community chaplaincy as *'on your terms, about your choices, what you want to do'*.

## Family News

- In August, our wonderful Administrator, Sarah Hetherington, left us in order to study for a Masters Degree. She made a brilliant contribution to PICC during the (almost) two years that she was with us and is very much missed. We send our very best wishes to Sarah and her new husband, Ben, for the future.

## On the Agenda

- The prisons are experiencing many challenges. While the prison population continues to grow, the money and resources available to manage that population growth is simply not there. There are problems of prison suicides, unrest and rising violence behind bars.
- Each person that PICC supports faces a mountain of challenges as they return from custody to life in the community. In this edition we think particularly of the fact that most have to face a great deal of stigma and rejection. May they find it possible to put the past behind them, experience acceptance and welcome in society, and truly make a fresh start.



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## Dates for your Diary

### Volunteer Mentor Training Next 2-day course - Spring 2017

Day 1 is designed as a 'taster' day with a mixture of input and activity. Day 2 focuses more on developing the skills and knowledge to help volunteers be effective and enjoy their role as mentors.

If you want any more information on anything in this newsletter or have any comments please do get in touch

We'd love to hear from you!



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