

## Launch of the National Trans Police Association

**The National Trans Police Association (NTPA) was formally launched at NPIA, Bramshill, on 17th March. The event was attended by the National President, Derek Barnett, and the NEC's LGB & T Reserved Place Member, Tim Jackson.**

The primary purpose of the NTPA, which covers England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, is to provide support to serving and retired police officers, police staff and special constables with any gender identity issues. These include trans men, trans women, people who identify as transgender, androgyne or intersex; as well as cross-dressers. In addition to having an internal focus, the NTPA is willing to support police officers and police staff in dealing with people who have either a gender identity or gender variance issue, regardless of whether that person is a colleague, a family member, or a member of the public involved in a police matter. In terms of its external focus, the NTPA aims to help foster better relations between the Police Service and the Trans Community as a whole.

For many years, 'Trans' issues have been largely overlooked by policing, although The Gender Recognition Act of 2004 encouraged a greater degree of focus. For many years, Trans has been 'bolted on' to LGB, and the Police Service has been no exception in this regard. Whilst this was in some ways understandable - there have been strong links between the Trans and LGB communities since the Stonewall Riots of the late 1960s when Trans people came out to support LGB people against oppression by the police - Trans primary issue is one of gender, not of sexual orientation. The two are most definitely not the same, although Trans people may also identify as Lesbian Gay or Bi-sexual.

As lead for what was then the ACPO LGBT working group, Mike Cunningham, who at the time was DCC of Lancashire, had lengthy discussions with members of the various groups and took the decision to split his working group into two; one to focus on LGB and the other to focus on Trans issues. This decision was announced at a meeting of Trans police officers and staff organised by Mike which was held

at Bramshill in October 2007. The decision was warmly welcomed by those who attended.

In January of the following year, a Positive Action Leadership Course for Trans police officers and staff was held at Bramshill. During the course, the students decided to form a staff support association for Trans people within policing. This led to the formation of the NTPA and the current committee was elected in November 2008. The committee was tasked with driving the NTPA forward.

During 2009, members of the NTPA worked hard to raise its profile and travelled the UK visiting various police forces, police training sites and Trans community groups. They also took part in the Brighton, Scotia and Manchester Pride events, Sparkle 2009, as well as participating in a recruitment event with Strathclyde Police. An event entitled 'Trans Inclusive Policing', which was organised by the Northern Constabulary at Aviemore, involved both members of the NTPA and the Scottish Transgender Alliance. This presented an excellent opportunity to identify what the Trans community would like to see from policing over the next few years, as well as providing members of the NTPA a forum to present their own views on what it is like to be a Trans person working within policing.

The journey from inception to the point of formal launch has not necessarily been an easy one for the NTPA and the event at Bramshill in March proved something of a celebration. It was very well attended by members of the NTPA, as well as by many people who have assisted its development. Mike Cunningham attended in person and addressed the group, as did Steve Dann (ACC, Hampshire). Steve has taken over responsibility for the LGB and T portfolios from Mike, who relinquished the role of becoming Chief Constable of Staffordshire in September 2009.

Steve Otter, Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall and ACPO lead for Equality, Diversity and Human Rights, was not able to be there in person, but did deliver a pre-recorded message of support via video. Everett Henry and Ian Saunders from the NPIA, who have supported the NTPA during its



National Trans Police Association

development over the last few years, were both present and participated in the event. There were a number of speakers from both the NTPA and the wider Trans community. These proved to be both interesting and informative and, on occasions, quite moving.

Tim Jackson said of the launch: 'This is a really significant occasion in policing. Trans is where LGB was around 15 to 20 years ago and it is great to see such progress being made. The NTPA will help us to look after our staff better and to provide improved policing to vulnerable groups within our communities.'

In addition to attending the launch, the PSAEW supported the event through sponsoring the development and production of the Programme. This was very much appreciated by the NTPA. Both Derek and Tim were surprised, and somewhat flattered, when their attendance at the event was announced from the podium and thanks were offered for the support provided by the Association.

Derek managed to spend some time talking with Stephenie Robinson, the NTPA's Chair, and he intends to meet with her in the near future to discuss opportunities for our two organisations to work together.

He said: 'I am pleased to welcome the NTPA in to the family of policing organisations. The NTPA has already begun to establish itself by the work it has done and will no doubt continue to thrive and demonstrate the need for having a Diversity Staff Support Association for Trans issues within the police service. Our Association is committed to supporting their work, and I look forward to working in partnership with the NTPA for the benefit of all staff within the service and the communities we serve.'