

Full-time chaplain appointed to support staff and volunteers

Press release

A commitment to caring for those on the frontline has led to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency appointing its first ever full-time chaplain.



Tom Ebbens

Rev Tom Ebbens began his career in Her Majesty's Coastguard as a volunteer and has since worked in both operations centres handling distress calls and latterly on the coast as an officer overseeing volunteers.

He says he sees the role for all faiths and none, a companion to those who serve on the frontline and who might need some extra support from time to time.

Tom has now been given the full-time role of chaplain after a pilot project which allowed him to fulfil a multi-faith chaplaincy role while still in his full-time coastal role. As well as the full-time chaplain, he is also a self-supporting curate with the Church of England in Cornwall.

It is a recognition of the value that chaplaincy brings to an organisation which includes a frontline emergency service organisation and which is committed to the welfare and well-being of all those who serve and work for it.

Rev Tom Ebbens said:

I see a major part of this job as being a companion on whatever road someone is currently on, wherever it takes them. People have fears and concerns, worries and challenges and sometimes they need someone to walk with them in those dark moments, to listen, to share the hurt and support them through that difficult time.

People will often say things to a chaplain that they wouldn't say to anyone else and that has got to be held somewhere, respected and acknowledged. Chaplaincy is a great thing for that to provide that service.

Director of HM Coastguard Claire Hughes said:

This is a landmark appointment in terms of our service. Tom is going to bring another level of care alongside the welfare led support systems we already have in place such as Trauma Risk Management (TRiM).

He's already proved that the care of chaplaincy can reach all people across all parts of the MCA as well as those serving in HM Coastguard. People know they can talk to him in confidence about their concerns and problems and that he will provide the support they need.

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