

## LATEST HEADLINES

### **Bradford leads way with counselling at magistrates courts**

Bradford is blazing a trail by offering a multi-faith counselling service to people using magistrates courts.

The Multi-Faith Chaplaincy will allow people going to court to confidentially discuss issues about the judicial system which trouble them.



Lord Kamlesh Patel

It is hoped defendants and their families, witnesses, court staff, probation staff, and even lawyers and magistrates will use the Bradford Court Chaplaincy Service (BCCS), described by former Bradford Bench Chairman Mary Carroll as an “innovative and challenging project.”

She said: “For many, coming to court is a distressing experience. We aim to provide a sensitive and confidential service which will give an opportunity to discuss any issues.

“Among other things, this project will play a major role in linking offenders and their families to appropriate support, thus reducing crime.”

Although there are chaplaincies in other courts, Bradford will have the first multi-faith one.

Volunteers from different faith backgrounds have formed an independent registered charitable company to provide the service, initially at Bradford Magistrates Court.

It will offer services to those accused of committing crime, those affected by crime and the criminal justice process, and those who deal with distressing and difficult cases on a daily basis.

The charity, through private grants and donations, will employ two part-time chaplains, a Christian and a Muslim, to recruit, train and supervise 24 volunteers of all faiths.

Mrs Carroll, chairman of the trustees, said: “There isn’t one elsewhere, so we are leading the way and we hope it will be a forerunner for others to follow.”

The charity’s president, Lord Kamlesh Patel, said: “I believe this is an invaluable, innovative and much-needed service in Bradford. I am immensely proud to be associated with this service and look forward to sharing Bradford’s experiences with other parts of the country.”

The service is now up and running and Barry Barton & Latif Mir (the Chaps) can be found loitering with intent on the concourse daily.