

# ENGLAND



**For many the highlight for Sports Chaplaincy UK in England last year was the annual conference, held for the second time at Bradford Life Church.**

Mark Fleming, SCUK National Director in Scotland joined us to deliver three excellent sessions on Mental Health Awareness. The mental and emotional wellbeing of athletes is an area the sports world is becoming much better at addressing and it is a privilege for us as chaplains to be able to support in such an important way. Perhaps the most significant life changing moment for a sports person is facing retirement so we were honoured to have Jamie Jones-Buchanan (England & GB Rugby League international) & Dan Leo (Rugby Union international for Samoa) speak about the highs and lows of their careers and how they were dealing with the spectre of retirement.



*(Matt interviewing Dan Leo and Jamie Jones-Buchanan)*

Antonio Hall continues to do a great job in Rugby League where all 12 Super

League Clubs have a chaplain including Toronto Wolfpack (Canada) and Catalans Dragons (based in Perpignan France). This year as well has seen the introduction of female chaplains to the women's game with chaplains being appointed to Castleford Tigers, St Helen's and the England Women's team. Antonio also had the opportunity to tour with the GB Lions to New Zealand & Papua New Guinea and whilst the results weren't good for the team it was great to offer chaplaincy at such a high level in the game and also meant he could meet up with chaplains from Sports Chaplaincy New Zealand. Tony Brown also leads the way in offering support to match officials in the game, a form of chaplaincy SCUK is keen to offer to those officiating in other sports.



*(Antonio Hall and Jamie Jones-Buchanan in Australia)*

As ever we are very grateful for the football authorities – the Premier League, the English Football League and the Professional Footballers' Association – who are still very supportive of chaplaincy and this year have helped fund a Mobile App for sports chaplains to use. This will benefit not just football chaplains but all our chaplains in different sports and across the home nations, improving our ability to communicate with chaplains and helping us collate the added value chaplaincy is making in the sports community.

SCUK continues to strengthen its presence in the horse racing industry under the guidance of Simon Bailey, our National Support Lead to Horse Racing based in Newmarket, the home of flat racing. A good working relationship with Racing Welfare and other organisations

help greatly in supporting and caring for racing's workforce. We have also recruited Nigel Johnson who is based in Durham and serves Sedgefield Racecourse, alongside helping locally in Middleham, as well as looking at further chaplaincy opportunities in South Wales.



*(Simon Bailey, National Support Lead to Horse Racing, being interviewed)*

Simon comments, "In all issues in life and with the focus on mental health over the last couple of years, it is a privilege to be playing a part in caring for people, which both SCUK and Racing Welfare have at heart."



*(Female Chaplaincy Leaders - Angy King, Heather Lewis, Carolyn Skinner, Pat Cooke-Rogers)*

With continuing strong development in chaplaincy in women's football, gym chaplaincy growing and more opportunities to appoint chaplains in men's & women's rugby league, rugby union and cricket, the prospects for the next twelve months in chaplaincy look very exciting.

**Matt Baker**  
National Director for England

