

MULTI-FAITH GROUP FOR HEALTHCARE CHAPLAINCY

24th September 2009

Present: Mr Manhar Mehta (In the chair)
Revd Nigel Goodfellow
Mr Harmit Singh Mangat
Mr Jayman Mehta
Mr Chowdhury Mueen-Uddin
Ms Sue Soloway
Mrs Deborah Wheeler

Mr Roger Green
Revd Fr Paul Mason
Mr Keith Munnings
Rabbi Meir Salasnik
Revd Mark Stobert

In attendance: Mr Tim Battle
Revd Michael Kavanagh

Ms Michelle Crerar

34/09 Welcome to new members and visitors

The Chairman welcomed Mr Harmit Singh Mangat to his first meeting as an alternate for Mr Sital Singh Maan. The Chairman also welcomed The Revd Michael Kavanagh and Ms Michelle Crerar from the National Offender Management Service who were visiting for the discussion about faith-community endorsement.

35/09 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Kobad Avari, Revd Jennifer Bell, Ervad Rustam Bhedwar, Imam Yunus Dudwhala Revd Stig Graham, Revd Debbie Hodge, Mr Peter Hulme, Hon Barney Leith, Revd Edward Lewis, Mr Sital Singh Maan, Mr Ron Maddox, Mr Baldev Singh Mawi, Revd David Mitchell, HM Shafique Rahman, Mr Kishor Ruparelia, Pandit Madhu Shastri and Rt. Revd Tom Williams.

The Council sent its best wishes to Edward Lewis for a speedy return to good health.

36/09 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st May 2009 were agreed, subject to correcting the spelling of Ms Soloway's name.

37/09 Central allocation for hospital chaplaincy 2009-10 (ref min 22/09)

Several members reported receipt of grants from the central allocation but were unclear as to their period of application. Tim Battle was continuing to seek clarity from the Department of Health.

The Vice Chairman reported his concern that the central allocation was being ended and also that the link person at the Department of Health was to be changed again. Tim Battle agreed to raise this issue with the Chief Nursing Officer.

38/09 UK Board for Healthcare Chaplaincy (UKBHC) (ref min 23/09)

It was noted that the meeting between representatives of the Council and of UKBHC was planned for Tuesday 20th October at Church House.

In discussion of the agenda, it was agreed to support an approach based on fostering the development of multi-faith chaplaincy in a secular healthcare service; valuing comprehensive stake-holder involvement in healthcare chaplaincy; and encouraging support for partnership and collaborative working. The Chairman noted that the two bodies seemed to be working in parallel and he hoped that some convergence of this effort would be possible over time.

This approach was agreed.

39/09 Engagement of chaplains in public institutions (ref min 24/09)

Tim Battle reported that Edward Lewis had been asked to comment on the revised version of the Department of Health's statement of the healthcare contribution to this security programme. This draft was a clearer statement with good logic and no attempt to implicate chaplains in the causes of terror. There was only one reference to faith groups and he had asked for this to be clarified/ removed.

40/09 Recruitment agencies supplying healthcare chaplains (ref min 25/09)

Tim Battle reported that he had not been able to track down the agency which was allegedly supplying chaplains to the NHS. He had placed a request with the STR Agency but had had no response. Mrs Wheeler agreed to make enquiries via the nursing agency network and would report further in due course.

41/09 Religion or Belief: A practical guide for the NHS (ref min 26/09)

Tim Battle reported that a final version of these comments had been submitted to the Department of Health and Mr Mussenden has indicated that he would respond after discussion with his National Director in September.

42/09 Relations between chaplaincy bodies in membership of MFGHC (ref min 31/09)

The Chairman reported that his initiative to assist with the resolution of these differences was being held in abeyance whilst other approaches were considered by one of the chaplaincy bodies concerned.

43/09 Comments by the National Secular Society (ref min 32/09)

Tim Battle reported that the draft statement was under preparation and would be circulated for comment in due course.

He also drew attention to a House of Commons written answer by the Minister of Health that “there are no current plans to revise this publication (the 2003 guidance on chaplaincy)” which had been suggested needed to be revised to reflect the needs of the secular community.

44/09 The Prime Minister’s Commission on the future of Nursing and Midwifery

The Council agreed that it should submit evidence to this Commission supporting the nurse and midwife role in the assessment, referral, review/monitoring and delivery of spiritual healthcare.

Tim Battle and Mrs Wheeler would draft a statement for agreement by colleagues during October.

45/09 A common understanding of the meaning of spirituality

Tim Battle reported that he had written for comments on a stated understanding of the meaning of spirituality to both Council members and other correspondents in July. He had received several helpful comments (and some others) and a revised version would be circulated in the Autumn.

46/09 Report of the Project Board for the Authorisation and Regulation project – September 2009

The Council received the September report of the Project Board for the Authorisation and Regulation project.

The Chairman reported on the meeting with Dr Geoff Harris, Chairman of NHS South Central, who had agreed to chair the Project’s Reference Group.

47/09 Healthcare Sunday

Tim Battle drew attention to the focus given by the Christian community to celebrating Healthcare Sunday during October (associated with their calendar date to honour the work of St Luke the physician). This occasion provided an opportunity to celebrate health and the NHS and healthcare chaplaincy together. It was sustained by the Churches together and had a website at www.healthcaresunday.org.uk/

It was agreed that this approach could be adopted in all communities and met the need for a regular celebratory event for healthcare chaplaincy.

It was noted also that the prison service had a similar arrangement in November for Prison Sunday.

48/09 Report of the Chair/ Vice-Chair – September 2009

Reports were received of the celebrations to mark 30 years of the National Council of Vanik Associations; the launch of the British Association for the study of spirituality; the Church of England's review of its national support for Anglican chaplains; the publication of the "care for the Sikh patient" booklet and leaflet; a request for information about multi-faith chaplaincy from the Government Communication Centre; a request for the Chair to address the meeting of the North West chaplaincy collaborative; and other engagements concerned with the Vice Chairs membership of the Expert Reference Group for patient dignity.

49/09 Report of the Honorary Treasurer – September 2009

Keith Munnings reported that the MFGHC bank balances were satisfactory. He noted that some DH grants had been received and that it was not clear for which period these were intended. He hoped to clarify this in due course.

50/09 Faith community endorsement

The Council welcomed The Revd Michael Kavanagh and ms Michelle Crerar of the National Offender Management Service for a discussion about how best to ensure that candidates for chaplaincy posts were endorsed by their faith community. NOMS cared for 84K prisoners in 144 prisons and the National Faith Advisers needed to ensure that their selected chaplains were appropriately endorsed.

In discussion, the system developed by MFGHC was discussed and its strengths and weaknesses highlighted. Even with measured progress and careful checking-back to the community itself, there were still difficulties in assuring every individual's contribution precisely. At the same time, the numbers of those who needed additional help or guidance was very small.

51/09 Date of next meeting

The Council agreed to meet again at 11am on Tuesday 19th January 2010 at Church House, Westminster.

Tim Battle indicated that the dates for May and September would be confirmed in the near future.

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