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Dear Director of Nursing

Appointments to chaplaincy posts – an update on best practice

As you will know, the Department of Health issued its most recent policy guidance on chaplaincy in 2003 in the form of guidance for managers and those involved in the provision of chaplaincy-spiritual care¹. This covered a range of topics including guidance about the appointment to chaplaincy posts which I am now writing to update.

At the time of its publication in late 2003, The Department and the NHS were implementing proposals for devolution of authority within the NHS contained within the framework set out in "Shifting the Balance". These proposals included the ending of the Department's administration of the National Panels of Assessors at senior health professional interviews.

Because of the relative newness of multi-faith chaplaincies, it was agreed between the Department and South Yorkshire Workforce Development Confederation, which had the lead for chaplaincy workforce strategy, that chaplaincy-spiritual care should be an exception to the ending of these support arrangements. Subsequently, South Yorkshire WDC undertook a review of the selection and role of national assessors for chaplaincy appointments. The review was submitted to the Department in 2005 and the new arrangements set out therein have operated since that time.

Because there have recently been some differences of understanding about these arrangements, I attach a short annex which restates and brings up to date the guidance on the appointment of chaplains. Please will you let me know if I can add anything to this note or help in any other way.

Yours sincerely

Edward J Lewis
Chief Officer

Distribution: Directors of Nursing and Directors of Human Resources,
NHS Trusts and SHAs in England

Copied for information: Chief Executive, NHS Wales

¹ NHS Chaplaincy: Meeting the religious and spiritual needs of patients and staff: Department of Health; 2003

Appointment to chaplaincy posts

Chaplaincy appointments are NHS Trust appointments. Human Resources Departments within Trusts advise on the appointment procedures for chaplains-spiritual care givers. An effective appointments panel would include a member of the National Panel of Assessors for chaplaincy appointments and a representative of the faith community concerned. These individuals will assist the Trust in making a chaplaincy appointment; they can also advise on issues such as job descriptions, advertisements, skill mix, etc. They should be contacted as soon as a vacancy is identified.

The National Panel of Assessors for chaplaincy appointments

The National Panel of Assessors for chaplaincy appointments is administered by the Chief Officer of the Multi-Faith Group for Healthcare Chaplaincy. In this way, the Panel is thus supported by representatives of the nine major world faiths² operating within the UK which, with representatives also of the main chaplaincy membership bodies, comprise the Multi-Faith Group.

Members of the National Panel of Assessors for chaplaincy appointments are recruited in accordance with the framework of competencies set out in the South Yorkshire WDC review. The National Panel includes Assessors drawn from the most of the world faiths

Members of the National Panel of Assessors advise on the professional suitability and competence of candidates. Assessors have experience in chaplaincy organisation and management and will be aware of the current policies and operational issues around chaplaincy services.

Requests for an Assessor should be sent to the co-ordinator of the National Panel at chaplaincy assessor@mfghc.com

Faith representatives for NHS appointments

Faith representatives ensure that the candidates hold the authority of the particular faith community and thus would be empowered to act as its representative within the healthcare setting.

Faith representatives have the following contact points:

² The nine world faiths include Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, and Zoroastrian

The Multi-Faith Group for Healthcare Chaplaincy

For **Anglican** appointments, contact the Bishop's Adviser on healthcare for the local diocese. A list of Bishop's Advisers is available at www.nhs-chaplaincy-spiritualcare.org.uk Look under sitemap/Bishops Advisers

For **Free Church** appointments contact the Revd Debbie Hodge, Free Churches Secretary for Healthcare Chaplaincy at debbie.hodge@cte.org.uk

For **Roman Catholic** appointments, a list of advisers is http://catholicchurch.org.uk/ccb/catholic_church/catholic_bishops_conference_of_england_and_wales/working_nationally/catholics_in_healthcare Scroll to Bishops Advisers at the bottom. Guidance can also be found in 'Caring for the Catholic patient – A guide to Catholic Chaplaincy for NHS Managers & Trusts' published by Catholic Truth Society. Copies are available to order and to download from the website. www.catholicchurch.org.uk

For **Jewish** appointments, contact the Jewish Visitation Committee via rabbi@jvisit.org.uk

For **other World Faith** appointments, contact the Multi-Faith Group for Healthcare Chaplaincy at faithassessor@mfghc.com

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