

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

STATEMENT OF COMMON STANDARDS FOR HEALTHCARE CHAPLAINS

The purpose of this document is to state what the [regulatory body] considers to be the standards expected of those who work as healthcare chaplains in [England]. The statement is set out in three parts:

I – Common standards for healthcare chaplains

II – Code of practice for healthcare chaplains

III – procedures for assessing fitness to practice of healthcare chaplains.

The ***common standards for healthcare chaplains*** set out the requirements for qualification and continued registration with the [regulatory body].

The ***code of practice for healthcare chaplains*** gives expression to the basic values and standards of those working as chaplains; guides decision making and professional behaviour; provides a mechanism for professional accountability; and informs the public as to what they should expect from chaplains and chaplaincy volunteers.

The ***procedures for assessing fitness to practice of healthcare chaplains*** explain how the [Regulatory body] handles complaints about Registrants. These procedures are those agreed with the chaplaincy authorising bodies and assume their full involvement in managing fitness to practice.

As part of its regulatory function, the [regulatory body] maintains a register of those who are healthcare chaplains. The register is in three parts: first, for those who work as healthcare chaplains whether on a remunerated or on a voluntary basis [chaplain]; second, for those who are healthcare chaplaincy volunteers [chaplaincy volunteer]; and, third, for those who are training to be chaplains/ chaplaincy volunteers (chaplaincy students). In this way, the [regulatory body] can include in its work chaplains and those in training to be chaplains, and also chaplaincy volunteers who are significant in number but whose contribution to spiritual healthcare is not always represented fully.

Guidance in this document has been obtained from a number of sources listed in the annex. Individual contributions have not been specified but particular thanks are due to the Voluntary Registration Council, the Spiritual Care Collaborative, and the College of Health Care Chaplains.

February 2010

SECTION I – Common standards for healthcare chaplains

Qualification for joining the register of healthcare chaplains

The candidate for registration must:

- Qual1 Provide documentation¹ of current endorsement or of good standing in accordance with the requirements of his/ her own faith tradition
- Qual2 Be current in the payment of the registration fee(s)²
- Qual3 Have undertaken and completed an appropriate period of study in accordance with requirements agreed by the [regulatory body]³
- Qual4 Provide evidence of a commitment to continuing learning and development.

Outcomes in relation to the NHS in context

The candidate for registration as a healthcare chaplain will demonstrate the ability to:

- NHS1** Practice the core skills required of all NHS staff;
- NHS2** Explain the history and origins of the modern healthcare system in the UK;
- NHS3** Debate the value set which underpins the NHS and the work of its staff.

The candidate for registration as a chaplaincy volunteer will demonstrate abilities in relation to outcomes NHS1

¹ This documentation is likely to be a statement from the authorising body of the applicant's faith community. For the Christian communities, these bodies are local but for the other world faiths, these bodies are nationally based.

² It is envisaged that the regulatory body will fund its activities through income from registrants and other sources. The regulatory body will not be large but will need to employ some staff and pay for other common services including IT and office services. One scenario envisages costs of, say, £50K covered by fees from, say, 10,000 registrants. This optimistic scenario needs to be moderated by reduced number who join the register and income/ donations from faith or health-based organizations.

³ The educational requirements for healthcare chaplains are under discussion by the Education Committee of MFGHC which will report their conclusions to Council in 2011. Until that advice is received and agreed, it is envisaged that healthcare chaplains should have undertaken studies equivalent to degree level courses in theology or an appropriate related subject and chaplaincy volunteers should have undertaken a Trust-level induction course within the chaplaincy department/ service.

Outcomes in relation to spiritual and pastoral care

The candidate for registration as a healthcare chaplain will demonstrate the ability to:

- SPC1** Promote health and well-being in spiritual and pastoral care, and prevent adverse effects.
- SPC2** Understand and respect the contribution made to health and wellbeing by each of the nine major world faiths.
- SPC3** Assess, plan and deliver care to meet religious and spiritual needs.
- SPC4** Evaluate the affect of care on the patient's health and well-being and the patient's experience.
- SPC5** Contribute to the health and well-being of the healthcare organisation.

The candidate for registration as a chaplaincy volunteer will demonstrate abilities in relation to outcomes SPC1 and SPC2

Outcomes in relation to practicing chaplaincy as a healthcare professional

The candidate for registration as a healthcare chaplain will demonstrate the ability to:

- HCP1** Maintain a spiritual life and journey in accord with the faith community's precepts.
- HCP2** Maintain their place in a secular service with confidence.
- HCP3** Participate in continuing professional development⁴.
- HCP4** Account appropriately to faith and professional communities.
- HCP5** Contribute to the development of evidence-based practice.
- HCP6** Maintain explicit and audited standards.

⁴ Proposals for continuing professional development are to be considered by the Education and Standards Committees together in [date]. They are likely to build on the NHS strategy published in [date] and be based on demonstrating an updating of existing skills and knowledge and the acquisition of new skills and knowledge provided they benefit patient care.

The candidate for registration as a chaplaincy volunteer will demonstrate abilities in relation to outcomes HCP1, HCP2, and HCP3.

Outcomes in relation to management appreciation

The candidate for registration as a healthcare chaplain will demonstrate the ability to:

MA1 Appreciate the need for management skills in professional practice.

MA2 Deploy necessary managerial skills in delivering care.

MA3 Understand annual and strategic planning and decision-making.

MA4 Understand the nature of political influences in the NHS.

Requirements for the maintenance of registration

In order to maintain status as a registrant, the applicant must:

Main1 Participate in an appraisal review every year

Main2 Document [number] hours⁵ of annual continuing professional development

Main3 Provide documentation every fifth year of current endorsement or of good standing in accordance with the requirements of his/her own faith tradition

Main4 Be current in the payment of the [regulatory body]'s annual fees/ charges

Main5 Adhere to the code of practice for healthcare chaplains

⁵ This number will vary between chaplains, chaplaincy volunteers and chaplaincy students, and will take account of the need for annual mandatory training.

SECTION II - Code of practice for healthcare chaplains

Introduction

Chaplains are grounded in communities of faith and informed by professional education and training. In their work, chaplains are called to nurture the health of mind, body and spirit of those they serve, and to be responsible for their personal and professional conduct.

Those who receive care from chaplains can expect them to affirm the dignity and value of each individual; respect the right of each faith group to hold to its values and traditions; advocate for professional accountability that protects the public and advances the profession; and respect the cultural, ethnic, gender, racial, sexual-orientation, and religious diversity of other professionals and those served and strive to eliminate discrimination.

The chaplains' approach to the various aspects of their work is set out in more detail below:

Relationships with patients and service users

Chaplains understand patients and service users to include patients, family members, students or staff to whom they provide spiritual care. In relationships with patients and service users, chaplains uphold the following standards of professional practice. Chaplains:

- 1.1 Speak and act in ways that affirm the dignity and value of every individual.
- 1.2 Provide care that is intended to promote the best interest of the patient and service user and to foster strength, integrity and healing.
- 1.3 Demonstrate respect for the cultural and religious values of those they serve and refrain from imposing their own values and beliefs on those served.
- 1.4 Are mindful of the imbalance of power in the professional/patient and service user relationship and refrain from exploitation of that imbalance.
- 1.5 Maintain relationships with patient and service users on a professional basis only.

- 1.6 Avoid or correct any conflicts of interest or appearance of conflicting interest(s), if necessary by ensuring referral of the patient to another chaplain.
- 1.7 Refrain from any form of sexual misconduct, sexual harassment or sexual assault in relationships with patient and service users.
- 1.8 Refrain from any form of harassment, coercion, intimidation or otherwise abusive words or actions in relationships with patient and service users.
- 1.9 Safeguard the confidentiality of patient and service users when using materials for educational purposes or written publication.
- 1.10 Respect the confidentiality of information entrusted to them by patient and service users when communicating with family members or significant others except when disclosure is required for necessary treatment, granted by patient and service user permission, for the safety of any person or when required by law⁶.
- 1.11 Understand the limits of their individual expertise and make referrals to other professionals when appropriate.
- 1.12 Ensure that their dress, appearance and personal hygiene is appropriate to the setting in which they work.

Relationships with students and others whom they teach

Chaplains respect the integrity of students and those they teach, using the power they have as supervisors/educators in responsible ways. Chaplains:

- 2.1 Maintain a healthy educational environment free of coercion or intimidation.
- 2.2 Maintain clear boundaries in the areas of self-disclosure, intimacy and sexuality.
- 2.3 Provide clear expectations regarding responsibilities, work schedules, fees and payments.
- 2.4 Provide adequate, timely and constructive feedback to students.

⁶ It is [understood/ accepted] that some chaplains will regard confidentiality as absolute if disclosure is made in confession.

- 2.5 Maintain a healthy respect for the personal growth of students and provide appropriate professional referrals.
- 2.6 Maintain appropriate confidentiality regarding all information and knowledge gained in the course of supervision.

Relationships with the Faith Community

Chaplains are accountable to their faith communities, one another and other people who share their faith. Chaplains:

- 3.1 Maintain good standing in their faith community.
- 3.2 Abide by the professional practice and other standards of the community, service provider and the institution in which they are employed.
- 3.3 Notify the employer, his or her professional organization and the faith community as appropriate if for any reason they are not free to practice or teach according to conscience.
- 3.4 Promote justice in relationships with others, in their institutions and in society.
- 3.5 Advocate for changes in their institutions that would sustain spiritual values and promote health and well-being.

Relationships with other professionals and their community

Chaplains are accountable to the public, employers and other professionals in all aspects of healthcare. Chaplains:

- 4.1 Represent accurately their professional qualifications and affiliations.
- 4.2 Exercise good stewardship of resources entrusted to their care and employ sound financial practices.
- 4.3 Respect the opinions, beliefs and professional endeavors of colleagues and other professionals.
- 4.4 Seek advice and counsel of other professionals whenever it is in the best interest of those being served and make referrals when appropriate.

- 4.5 Provide expertise and counsel to other health professionals in advocating for best practices in care.
- 4.6 Seek to establish collaborative relationships with other community and health professionals.
- 4.7 Provide other professionals with patient records where they are used that further the treatment of the patient and service users, obtaining consent when required.
- 4.8 Ensure that private conduct does not impair the ability to fulfill professional responsibilities or bring dishonour to the profession.
- 4.9 Clearly distinguish between statements made or actions taken as a private individual and those made as a member or representative of one of the cognate organizations.

Relationships with colleagues

Chaplains engage in collegial relationships with peers, other chaplains, and local clergy, recognizing that perspective and judgment are maintained through consultative interactions rather than through isolation. Chaplains:

- 5.1 Treat all consultations, whether personal or patient and service user-related, with the highest professional regard and confidentiality.
- 5.2 Maintain sensitivity and professional protocol of the employing institution and/or the certifying organization when receiving or initiating referrals.
- 5.3 Communicate sufficient information to other care team members while respecting the privacy of patient and service users.
- 5.4 Exercise due caution when communicating through the Internet or other electronic means.
- 5.5 Respect each other and support the integrity and well being of their colleagues.
- 5.6 Take collegial and responsible action when concerns about or direct knowledge of incompetence, impairment, misconduct or violations against this code arise.

- 5.7 Communicate sufficient information to other care team members while respecting the privacy of patient and service users.
- 5.8 Provide appropriate information to ensure an informed handover of continuing care to another practitioner.

Chaplains and Advertising

Chaplains engage in appropriate informational activities that educate the public about their professional qualifications and individual scopes of practice. Chaplains

- 6.1 Represent their competencies, education, training and experience relevant to their practice of pastoral care, education and counseling in an accurate manner.
- 6.2 Do not use any professional identification (business cards, letterhead, Internet or telephone directory, etc.) if it is false, misleading, fraudulent or deceptive.
- 6.3 List and claim as evidence only degrees and certifications that are earned from educational institutions and/or training programs recognized by the certifying organizations of Chaplains.
- 6.4 Ascertain that the qualifications of their employees, supervisees and students are represented in a manner that is not false, misleading, fraudulent or deceptive.
- 6.5 Represent themselves as providing specialized services only if they have the appropriate education, training or supervised experience.

Chaplains and Research

Chaplains engaging in research follow guidelines and applicable laws that strive to protect the dignity, privacy and well-being of all participants. Chaplains:

- 7.1 Engage only in research within the boundaries of their competence.
- 7.2 In research activities involving human participants, are aware of and ensure that the research question, design and implementation are in full compliance with ethical principles.
- 7.3 Adhere to informed consent, including a clear and understandable explanation of the procedures, a description of the risks and benefits, and the duration of the desired participation.

- 7.4 Inform all participants of the right to withdraw consent and to discontinue involvement at any time.
- 7.5 Engage in research while being sensitive to the cultural characteristics of participants.
- 7.6 Maintain the confidentiality of all research participants and inform participants of any limits of that confidentiality.
- 7.7 Use any information obtained through research for professional purposes only.
- 7.8 Exercise conscientiousness in attributing sources in their research and writing thereby avoiding plagiarism.
- 7.9 Report research data and findings accurately.

SECTION III - Procedures for assessing fitness to practice of healthcare chaplains

THIS SECTION IS NOT THE SUBJECT OF CONSULTATION AT PRESENT

ANNEX – Source documents used in preparation of this statement

- 1 Common standards documents published by the Spiritual Care Collaborative 2007-2009
- 2 Documents published by the Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence
- 3 Documents published by the Voluntary Registration Council
- 4 The code of conduct published by the College of Health Care Chaplains
- 5 MFGHC Specification for a programme of study in healthcare chaplaincy – November 2009