

# MULTI-FAITH GROUP FOR HEALTHCARE CHAPLAINCY

## BULLETIN 4 – February 2004

### **Chairman.**

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### **Welcome**

Welcome to the Bulletin of the Multi-Faith Group for Healthcare Chaplaincy (MFGHC). This Bulletin is distributed every four months to inform colleagues about the work being undertaken by the Council and its Committees.

### **Review of Department of Health central allocation of funding for NHS chaplaincy**

The Council met with Mr John James who is to undertake a project commissioned by the Department of Health to review the use of the central allocation for chaplaincy. He expected to complete this work by 18<sup>th</sup> June and would hope to discuss the issues involved widely within the chaplaincy world.

Barney Leith explained that the Multi-Faith Group hoped that the smaller faith communities and those without a history of supplying services nationally would be supported by the Department of Health in establishing the administration of their service on a sound footing. This was work being undertaken on behalf of the whole NHS and it was considered appropriate that the NHS centrally should fund it. This view which was widely shared within the Council.

Mr James acknowledged these concerns which he expected to explore in more detail on an individual basis. He recognised that small emergent groups often were helped considerably by some initial pump-priming. He also recognised that this might be best value at national level. Mr James indicated that he hoped be able to discuss his initial findings at the Council meeting in May.

### **MFGHC website**

The Chief Officer reported a number of complements about the MFGHC website run on the Council's behalf. The Council supported this view and offered its thanks to the Webmaster for his work on their behalf.

### **Quantifying the need for spiritual healthcare**

The Standards Committee had identified the need for greater clarity about the measures of spiritual need than were implicit in the current use of beds or staff numbers. New treatment modalities and different environments for care meant that additional measures for spiritual healthcare were needed. The Council agreed with this view but was mindful of the workload involved in this study and conscious of the need to husband resources particularly in the short term. The Chief Officer would make proposals for this work in due course.

### **Marshalling resources for world faith chaplaincies and multi-faith chaplaincy**

The Council has agreed to trawl chaplaincies and other bodies for resources which would support world faith chaplains in their developing role and established chaplains in ensuring a multi-faith emphasis to their work where appropriate.

### **Awayday to prepare draft standards for healthcare chaplaincy**

The Standards Committee was holding a study day at the end of March to prepare advice for NHS bodies about standards for healthcare chaplaincy. These draft standards would need to be considered by Council prior to consultation with NHS bodies.

### **Mental health and local religious leaders – research study**

Gerard Leavey explained the background to the study he was proposing and clarified aspects of the written statement which had been circulated with the agenda papers. There was widespread support for the study and offers of help from all communities. The study was thought to be both necessary and worthwhile and the Council looked forward to hearing of the results. In the meantime, it was agreed that a letter of support from the Chair would be available when necessary.

### **Launch events for *Caring for the Spirit***

The Chair reported that he had agreed to contribute to joint events with South Yorkshire WDC to launch the workforce strategy to NHS Trust Chairs. Five events were planned across the country and alternate members might be asked to assist if there were diary clashes.

### **Membership of MFGHC by the College of Health Care Chaplains**

Barney Leith reported on his meeting with Revd Robert Mitchell, Acting President of the College of Health Care Chaplains. This had been a cordial meeting which had discussed the ambition of the College to be the professional body for healthcare chaplains and therefore to manage professional registration, entry standards and training. The Chair had indicated that the Multi-Faith Group saw itself as the umbrella body for chaplaincy bodies and willing to discuss these issues further with the College as necessary.

Barney Leith had also attended the “keep in touch” meeting convened by the Chief Nursing Officer with the MFGHC, the South Yorkshire WDC and the College. At this meeting, a similar discussion had taken place and the College had been challenged both about the realism of its aspirations and also about its relationship with other chaplaincy bodies. The need for partnership working in all areas of spiritual healthcare had been emphasised and the meeting had concluded with the initiative for further discussion resting with the College.

There was discussion of the College’s position and concern about the narrowness of approach being exhibited. Alternative ways of seeking support for the Group’s work should be explored with a further discussion planned for the May meeting. Whilst always willing to seek solutions, the Council was disappointed at the current state of affairs.

### **IT project in support of chaplaincy DPA/ consent issues**

Lesley Hilton reported that the Department of Health had agreed a project between the IT and PPI Branches which would seek to assist the flow of information for chaplaincy services. In particular, it was hoped that the project would moderate some of the difficulties identified in obtaining patient’s explicit consent to the sharing of information with chaplaincies.

The project had commenced with the appointment of a Project Manager, Steve Hudson who was based in the Information and Systems Group at Quarry House. He was undertaking a scoping study during February and, subject to a satisfactory report, the project would proceed with the appointment of consultants in March and expected completion in 6-9 months thereafter.

### **NHS Chaplaincy: Meeting the religious and spiritual needs of patients and staff**

The Council congratulated Lesley Hilton and her team on the support and energy they had brought to preparing and launching the new policy guidance drafted by the JNMFWP.

### **Bishop Tom Williams to lead Roman Catholic chaplaincies**

The Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference has appointed the Rt. Revd Tom Williams, an Auxiliary Bishop in the Archdiocese of Liverpool as lead Bishop for healthcare chaplaincy. Bishop Williams has “hands on” experience as a part time hospital chaplain in Liverpool.

### **Implementation Plan for *Caring for the Spirit***

The implementation plan for the workforce strategy was under consideration by SYWDC in draft form and covered all those actions intended to achieve progress towards the objective point in 2007. Regular reports of progress would be circulated

### **Dates of next meetings**

The Council agreed to meet again on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2004, Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2004 and Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2005

### **Communicating the work of the MFGHC**

The MFGHC has established a website ([www.mfghc.com](http://www.mfghc.com)) where its work will be highlighted. It intends to publish an e-bulletin about its progress every four months. For routine communication, Edward Lewis can be contacted at the address given above.