



## BULLETIN 17 – March 2009

### **Chair**

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### **Chief Officer.**

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### **Welcome**

Welcome to Bulletin 17 from the Multi-Faith Group for Healthcare Chaplaincy. In this edition, is information from the Council meeting held in February 2009.

### **Election of Honorary Officers for the period 2009-10**

The following officers have been elected for the period 2009-10:

Chairman – Mr Manhar Mehta  
Vice-Chairman – Mr Chowdhury Mueen Uddin  
Co-Chair, Education Committee– Revd Debbie Hodge, HM Shafique Rahman  
Co-Chair, Standards Committee – Mr Ron Maddox

A vacancy exists for Co-Chair, Standards Committee and the Executive Committee will seek to co-opt a member into this office.

### **Visit by the Chief Nursing Officer for England**

Dame Christine Beasley was guest at a small reception to mark the election of Honorary Officers. She paid tribute to the work of the Council and wished the Officers well in their new tasks. The Chairman replied with thanks to CNO for all her support for the Group's work.

### **The APG Enquiry about healthcare chaplaincy**

The APG was planning to have two sessions for oral evidence towards mid-April (subsequently indicated as later in the year). The sessions are expected to focus on quality, organisation and delivery of services, and regulation.

The Chairman of APG has indicated his preference to ensure that all submissions should be available via the APG website.

### **Links to Ministers and Officials in England over health policy issues**

Mr Barry Mussenden is the Branch Head responsible for chaplaincy policy at the Department of Health. He accounts to Mr Surinder Sharma, National Director for Equality and Human Rights who in turn accounts to Mr Hugh Taylor, DH Permanent Secretary.

Mr Mussenden regretted that the reorganisation of management within DH had taken so long and that Ms Claire Taylor had still to designate someone to deal with workforce issues for chaplaincy. He indicated that he expected 2009 to be a "normal" year when familiar systems and processes were reinstated, as would be the interface with officials.

It is hoped that a meeting with Mr Sharma, the National Director might be arranged in due course.

### **UK Board for Health Care Chaplaincy**

Representatives of the UK Board for Health Care Chaplaincy have met with representatives of the Churches' Committee for Hospital Chaplaincy. A letter about this meeting has been sent to chaplains by the Churches' Committee Chairman.

Members received a briefing paper prepared for the above discussions which set out the contribution made by other stakeholders such as MFGHC to the development of healthcare chaplaincy since 2001. This will be available on the website.

## **The engagement of chaplains in public institutions**

Council discussed how best this initiative could be supported, particularly as there is considerable concern that the work undertaken by chaplaincy bodies in healthcare including that of the MFGHC had been ignored and “the wheel of recruitment and selection” re-invented. It was agreed to receive a report at the next (May) meeting before deciding on further action.

## **Consent systems in chaplaincy-spiritual care**

This work divided between the list of religions due to be published as an Information Standard in due course and the work on informed consent. Susan Hollins was to lecture on this work in Chichester on 11<sup>th</sup> March and the content of her talk would be used to inform others. The talk would be available for websites at the beginning of April.

## **Authorisation processes within Faith Communities**

The Council endorsed proposals for authorising bodies in the Faith Communities as follows:  
Bahá'í – National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United Kingdom  
Buddhist – The Buddhist Healthcare Chaplaincy Group  
Christian (Anglican) – Church of England Diocese Bishops  
Christian (Free Churches) – Free Churches Group  
Christian (Roman Catholic) – Roman Catholic Diocesan Bishops  
Hindu – National Council of Hindu Temples (UK)  
Jain – The National Council of Vanik Associations (UK)  
Jewish – The Jewish Visitation Committee  
Muslim – The Muslim Council of Britain  
Sikh – The Sikh Healthcare Chaplaincy Group

Plans would be made to publicise these arrangements and for discussions within England about the arrangements.

## **Religion or Belief: A practical guide for the NHS**

The Council noted this publication and the concerns about aspects of its content including those about the apparent limitation of the number

of world religions to six against the flow of policy in recent years which had included also the Bahá'í, Jain and Zoroastrian Faiths.

Barry Mussenden was keen to get a revised edition in circulation and available on the website. A co-ordinated response would be prepared on behalf of the MFGHC.

## **Nurse suspended for offering to pray**

The Council agreed that contact should be made with the Department of Health to ensure that a spiritual needs assessment was undertaken for all patients.

## **Reports in February 2009**

Brief reports were received of the training courses for Bahá'í chaplains in Liverpool in November 2008; Jain chaplains, London, March 2009; Sikh chaplaincy day, April 2009; and Muslim chaplains, May and August 2008, and January 2009.

## **Equal Opportunities Policy**

The Council approved the policy endorsed by the Executive Committee.

## **Presentation of the Authorisation and Regulation Project**

The Administrator gave a presentation of the project which had been submitted to DH for funding under the section 64 regulations. The presentation slides had been circulated to Members.

## **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.

*EJL March 2009*