

MULTI-FAITH GROUP FOR HEALTHCARE CHAPLAINCY

3rd May 2007

Present: Mr Sital Singh Maan (in the chair)
Mr Simon Goulden Revd Debbie Hodge
Revd Edward Lewis Mr Manhar Mehta
Mr Keith Munnings Mr Chowdhury Mueen-Uddin
HM Shafique Rahman Rabbi Meir Salasnik
Revd Jayne Shepherd Mr Derek Thomson
Mrs Deborah Wheeler

14/07 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Kobad Avari, Ervad Rustam Bhedwar, Revd George Cobb, Mrs Linda Coulter, Revd Bob Evans, Mr Kishor Ruparelia, Revd Fr Paul Mason, Hon Barney Leith, Mr Baldev Singh Mawi, Mr Jayman Mehta, and Rt. Revd Tom Williams.

15/07 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th January 2007 were agreed.

16/07 The Caring for the Spirit NHS Project (ref min 6/07)

Derek Thomson reported that the NHS Yorkshire and the Humber had decided that the lead role on NHS chaplaincy did not “sit well within the SHA footprint”. As a result, officers had indicated that their responsibilities for chaplaincy would cease. In addition, the SHA secretariat had indicated that SHAs would not continue the Caring for the Spirit NHS Project beyond October 2007.

Derek Thomson indicated that he was leaving NHS employment at the end of June 2007 and Tim Battle would have responsibility for managing the remaining months of the Project.

The Council noted this news with regret and recorded their thanks to Derek Thomson for his graciousness and courtesy throughout his membership of MFGHC.

17/07 Central allocation for hospital chaplaincy 2006-07 (ref min 6/07)

Derek Thomson reported that, as part of the SHA's relinquishing of its involvement in chaplaincy, it would no longer administer the central allocation for hospital chaplaincy. It was likely that the 2007-08 allocations would be handled by the Department of Health. It was not clear what would happen thereafter as the allocation needed to be independently administered

Derek Thomson referred to the possibility that another NHS body might lead for chaplaincy issues and that that could include the central allocation. He was in discussion with DH Officials and would hope to report progress in due course. Until new arrangements were clarified, he confirmed that NHS Yorkshire and the Humber would continue to hold the lead on central allocation.

18/07 Informed consent for access to patient records by chaplains (ref min 6/07)

It was noted that one of the projects within the NHS chaplaincy portfolio of the SHA was the support to the project examining confidentiality and consent issues. Members were concerned that this project should not be lost in the SHA upheaval and Chowdhury Mueen-Uddin advocated for a change of approach by the Department of Health which would include chaplains within the community of health professionals with direct access. He was supported by Ron Maddox who pointed out that many chaplaincy interactions were not formally convened and that emphasis on patient requests only would reduce patient access.

After further discussion, it was agreed to ask the Standards Committee to consider meeting with Rev Susan Hollins who was leading on the DPA project to discuss these issues further.

19/07 Leadership issues for Chaplaincy Bodies (ref min 7/07)

Debbie Hodge reminded the Council that the MFGHC's Conference of Chaplaincy Bodies convened for May 2007 had been cancelled because the College of Health Care Chaplains had refused the invitation to attend. Rev Dr Chris Swift had indicated that, because the Conference had emerged as a proposal from the Mirfield Report with which the College did not agree, they considered that they could not attend.

Debbie Hodge indicated that the planning group, which she chaired, considered that the issue of a co-ordinated leadership for healthcare chaplaincy which was due to be considered at the May Conference was still important. She regretted that efforts to convene a day conference on leadership topics in June had been postponed. It was hoped to reconvene this later in the year.

An important aspect of these discussions would be the determination of ways in which the chaplaincy bodies could ensure the continuation of chaplaincy support with secular institutions such as the NHS. The view that chaplaincy had a right to be included with mainstream health care was being constantly challenged and would need concerted effort to sustain. A con-ordinated leadership approach to this issue was essential to avoid the secular view having sway.

Members agreed that this issue was important and also that other issues needed discussion and review as a step for progress from the MFGHC 2005 Conference. It was agreed that challenges and concerns should be sent to Debbie Hodge for collation and feedback in due course.

20/07 Celebrating healthcare chaplaincy through local annual events in October (ref min 9/07)

There was general support for this idea which had started within the Roman Catholic community. Mr Manhar Mehta agreed to lead a small working party to take this forward and asked for volunteers to help. He would convene a meeting in due course.

21/07 Membership of MFGHC by bodies which represent those of no particular faith/ religion (re min 10/07)

Following discussion at the January meeting, the Council agreed that these bodies should not have full membership of the Council.

22/07 Chair/ Vice Chair's Report – May 2007

The Chair reported that all Faith Communities had received notification about the ending of the Caring for the Spirit NHS Project from Derek Thomson. He asked that a copy of the final report should also be sent to the Faith Communities by Tim Battle. This was agreed.

The Vice Chair suggested that the Council should reiterate the need for support to the smaller Faith Communities by the NHS as their chaplaincy services were developed. It was agreed to include this within the leadership challenges for consideration in due course.

23/07 Chief Officer's report – May 2007

Edward Lewis reported satisfactory progress with the Council's business including the website and the authorisation processes.

24/07 Education Committee report – May 2007

Debbie Hodge reported that the Education Committee had discussed and endorsed a statement about the content and KSF levels for induction training for new healthcare chaplains and visitors. She was grateful to all the Faith Communities which had shared of their experience and expertise.

She also reported that the Co-Chairs were involved in a discussion between the Caring for the Spirit NHS Project and the University of Cardiff to finalise a curriculum for healthcare chaplaincy. A fuller report would be made to the next meeting.

Chowdhury Mueen-Uddin invited colleagues to join with the delegates and faculty in celebrating the first introductory course for aspiring Muslim chaplains being held at the London Muslim Centre in East London between 15-17 May

25/07 The European Network of Healthcare Chaplaincy

The Council welcomed Father Stavros Kofinas, Co-ordinator of the Network to the meeting. Fr Stavros addressed the meeting on the work of the European Network and answered questions from members.

26/07 Date of next meeting

It was agreed to meet again on Tuesday 11th September 2007 (Methodist Church House, London) and (subsequently) on Tuesday 15th January 2008 (Church House, Westminster).