

MULTI-FAITH GROUP FOR HEALTHCARE CHAPLAINCY

25th February 2009

Present:

Mr Manhar Mehta (in the chair)	
Imam Yunus Dudhwala	Mr Roger Green
Revd Debbie Hodge	Dr Peter Hulme
Hon Barney Leith	Revd Edward Lewis
Mr Ron Maddox	Mr Keith Munnings
Mr Baldev Singh Mawi	Mr Chowdhury Mueen-Uddin
Mr Kishor Ruparelia	Rabbi Meir Salasnik
Pandit Madhu Shastri	Revd Mark Stobert

In attendance: Mr Tim Battle
Mr Chris Charlton, Department of Health for minute 8/09
Mr Barry Mussenden, Department of Health for minute 6/09 and 11/09

1/09 Election of Honorary Officers for the period 2009-10

The Chief Officer reported that the following officers had 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

It was noted that a vacancy existed for Co-Chair, Standards Committee and the Executive Committee would seek to co-opt a member into this office.

The successful candidates were congratulated on their election and Mr Mehta took the chair.

2/09 Welcome and Introductions

Imam Yunus Dudhwala and the Revd Mark Stobert were welcomed to their first meeting as representatives of the College of Health Care Chaplains. Mr Charlton and Mr Mussenden were welcomed to the meeting.

3/09 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Kobad Avari, Ervad Rustam Bhedwar, Revd Nigel Goodfellow, Mr Simon Goulden, Revd Stig Graham,

Revd Derek Johnston, Mr Sital Singh Maan, Revd Fr Paul Mason, Mr Jayman Mehta, Revd David Mitchell, HM Shafique Rahman, Mrs Deborah Wheeler and Rt. Revd Tom Williams

4/09 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th September 2008 were agreed.

5/09 The APG Enquiry about healthcare chaplaincy (ref min 38/08)

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

It was also noted that the Chairman of APG had indicated his preference to ensure that all submissions should be available via the APG website.

6/09 Links to Ministers and Officials in England over health policy issues (ref min 40/08)

Mr Barry Mussenden explained that he was the Branch Head responsible for chaplaincy policy. He accounted to Mr Surinder Sharma, National Director for Equality and Human Rights who in turn accounted to Mr Hugh Taylor, DH Permanent Secretary. He apologised 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.

Mr Mussenden indicated that he expected 2009 to be a “normal” year when familiar systems and processes were reinstated, as would be the interface with officials. He indicated that he would handle both the comment process on religion and belief and the administration of the central allocation for hospital chaplaincy.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Mussenden’s comments and looked forward to working with him and the wider Department. It was hoped that a meeting with Mr Sharma, the National Director might be arranged in due course.

7/09 UK Board for Health Care Chaplaincy (ref min 42/08)

The Administrator reported that, arising from the last meeting, letters had been sent to the Presidents of AHPCC and CHCC. The President of AHPCC had replied but no AHPCC members were present for the discussion. Imam Yunus suggested that the President CHCC might not have received the letter.

Despite the lack of response to enquiries by MFGHC, it was reported that

representatives of the UK Board for Health Care Chaplaincy had met with representatives of the Churches' Committee for Hospital Chaplaincy which had written to them separately. Edward Lewis and Debbie Hodge reported on discussions which were to be continued in April and members noted the letter sent by the Churches' Committee to healthcare chaplains.

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. It was noted that more detail could be provided if necessary.

8/09 The engagement of chaplains in public institutions (ref min 45/08)

Council discussed how best this initiative could be supported. There was 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.

Both Imam Yunus and Edward Lewis had attended meetings with Department of Health representatives to discuss the work being undertaken by Faithmatters consultancy. Other members had also been involved and the point was made that this work conflicted with other initiatives on inter-faith matters. Mr Charlton acknowledged that these discussions had not yet made sufficient progress and the Department was still seeking to moderate the approach originally stated in the "prevent agenda".

It was agreed to receive a report at the next (May) meeting before deciding on further action.

9/09 Consent systems in chaplaincy-spiritual care (ref min 46/08)

It was reported that 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 11th 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.

10/09 Authorisation processes within Faith Communities

The Council received a report from the Chief Officer on progress towards developing authorisation processes within Faith communities. It was agreed that these were progressing satisfactorily in all Faith communities and that further discussion was necessary with the Zoroastrian community.

It was agreed to endorse 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 Dioceses
Christian (Free Churches) – Free Churches Steering Group within Churches Together in England
Christian (Roman Catholic) – Roman Catholic Dioceses
Hindu – National Council of Hindu Temples
Jain – The National Council of Vanik Associations (UK)
Jewish – The Jewish Visitation Committee
Muslim – The Muslim Council of Great Britain
Sikh – The Sikh Healthcare Chaplaincy Group

Tim Battle would make plans to publicise these arrangements and for discussions within England about the arrangements. He would also initiate further discussions with the Zoroastrian Faith community.

11/09 Religion or Belief: A practical guide for the NHS

The Council noted this publication and the concerns about aspects of its content. In particular, there were concerns about the apparent limitation of the number of world religions to 6 against the flow of policy in recent years which included also the Bahá'í, Jain and Zoroastrian Faiths.

Barry Mussenden indicated that the guide had not been prepared by his team and he and his Director were both keen to get a revised edition in circulation and available on the website. He indicated that the document was unlikely to be withdrawn despite the criticisms of members but he regretted the difficulties caused by the appearance of incompleteness in the current version.

Members were asked to send comment to Tim Battle who would co-ordinate a response on behalf of the MFGHC.

12/09 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.

13/09 Report of the Chair/ Vice Chair/ Chief Officer – 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.

14/09 Equal Opportunities Policy

The Council approved the policy endorsed by the Executive Committee.

15/09 Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting should be held on Thursday 21st May 2009 in London.

16/09 Reception for Honorary Officers

The Council held a reception to mark the election of Honorary Officers at which the Chief Nursing Officer was present. Dame Christine welcomed the new officers and congratulated the Council on its work for healthcare chaplaincy.

17/09 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.

EJL/TB 160309