

MULTI-FAITH GROUP FOR HEALTHCARE CHAPLAINCY

BULLETIN 1 – July 2003

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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.

Launch event for MFGHC

The MFGHC was launched formally at a small event in the Palace of Westminster on Wednesday 25th June 2003. The event was hosted by Peter Bottomley MP and the MFGHC was launched by Mrs Sarah Mullally, Chief Nursing Officer, Department of Health on behalf of the Minister of State (Health). Pictures of the event are carried on the MFGHC website at www.mfghc.com

History of the MFGHC

In October 1997, spokespersons and representatives of the Faith Communities held the first National Joint Consultation to reflect upon the provision of Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care within the National Health Service.

The consultation was held over a two-day period at Church House, Westminster and All Saints Pastoral Centre, London Colney. The Keynote speakers included The Rt. Hon Frank Dobson MP, the then Secretary of State for Health, The Baroness Flather JP DL, and Mr Alan Langlands, Chief Executive of the NHS. Some 90 people from all Faith Communities and Chaplaincy Bodies attended.

The outcome of the consultation was the formation of a joint national working party to prepare draft revised guidance to the NHS on spiritual care and

chaplaincy for agreement by Ministers. The draft new guidance was submitted to the Department of Health in 2002 and is due to be issued for discussion in mid-2003. On completion of this major task, the Faith Communities represented on the Working Party agreed that a permanent Body to support the further development of healthcare chaplaincy and spiritual healthcare would be useful and appropriate.

After discussion, the Multi-Faith Group for Healthcare Chaplaincy was formed in November 2002.

Purpose of the MFGHC

The object of the MFGHC is the advancement of multi-faith healthcare chaplaincy in England and Wales. The Group seeks to further this object by facilitating a common understanding and support for healthcare chaplaincy amongst Faith Groups, chaplaincy bodies and users; providing a means of consultation between the Faiths about healthcare chaplaincy; and working in co-operation with healthcare and chaplaincy organisations, bodies and authorities.

In particular, the MFGHC seeks to provide advice to the Department of Health about multi-faith healthcare chaplaincy on behalf of all Faith Groups; to enable those Faith Groups engaged in healthcare chaplaincy to formulate, agree and promulgate policy on healthcare chaplaincy in consultation with other chaplaincy bodies; and to promote the highest quality of healthcare chaplaincy through the development of agreed standards across all Faith Groups and within healthcare organisations.

Membership of the MFGHC

Full membership of the Multi-Faith Group shall be open to those Faith Groups in the United Kingdom which have agreed to participate as full members of the Multi-Faith Group, and also to chaplaincy bodies which are multi-faith in their purpose, membership, and governance. There are also categories of associate and observer membership.

Organisation of the MFGHC

The Multi-Faith Group comprises the members of the nominating bodies for those Faith Groups and Bodies with membership of the Multi-Faith Group.

The Multi-Faith Group undertakes the majority of its work through the Council and the council's sub-groups, currently for Education and for Standards. The Education Committee advises on issues concerned with the education and training of healthcare chaplains and the Standards Committee advises on issues concerned with the setting and maintaining of healthcare chaplaincy standards.

The Council is lead by a Chair (The Hon. Barney Leith), Vice-Chair (Currently vacant), Joint Chairs - Standards Committee (Revd Christine Pocock and HM Shafique Rahman) and Joint Chairs - Education Committee (Rabbi Martin van den Bergh and Mr Ron Maddox). Management and administrative support is provided by a Chief Officer (Revd Edward Lewis) who manages resources on the Council's behalf.

Financing the work of the MFGHC

The work of the Multi-Faith Group is maintained through grant aid from other bodies and, where possible, through contributions from the Member Faith Groups.

Communicating the work of the MFGHC

The MFGHC has established a website (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, the Chief Officer can be contacted as follows:

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Content of the next Bulletin

The next Bulletin will be published after the Council's meeting at the end of September. It will provide a "catch-up" for progress reporting to date.

Launch of DoH Listening exercise

The draft policy document to replace HSG (92) 2 (NHS Chaplaincy: meeting the religious and spiritual needs of patients and staff) was issued for a listening exercise on 25th June. It is accessible on www.doh.gov.uk/chaplain. Comments are requested by 26th August 2003.

A strategy for the chaplaincy and spiritual healthcare workforce

South Yorkshire WDC is due to publish its strategy for the spiritual healthcare workforce at the end of July 2003

EJL 8th July 2003