

MULTI-FAITH GROUP FOR HEALTHCARE CHAPLAINCY

BULLETIN 2 – September 2003

Chairman.

The Hon. Barnabas Leith
Secretary
National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the UK
Tel 020 7584 2566
barney.leith@bahai.org.uk

Chief Officer.

The Rev'd Edward J Lewis
HCC Church House
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3NZ
Tel 020 7898 1894
chief.officer@mfghc.com

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.

DoH Revised Policy Guidance

The listening exercise undertaken by the Department of Health was completed in mid-August. More than 300 comments were received most of them from people working in NHS Trusts. The main areas of comment were on the section about confidentiality (25%) and those on the overall framework and on volunteers (10% each).

A small group drawn mainly from MFGHC has been working with the Department of Health to revise the guidance in the light of these comments. The launch date for the new guidance is the Wednesday 5th November with a small launch event in London.

Caring for the Spirit: A strategy for the chaplaincy and spiritual healthcare workforce

The workforce strategy being prepared by South Yorkshire Workforce Development Confederation is to be published in conjunction with the new policy guidance on 5th November. The launch event will be joint between the Department of Health and South Yorkshire WDC.

Review of the DoH central allocation for NHS chaplaincy.

The Council considered a report from the Chief Officer about the future use of its central allocation for chaplaincy. The report covered the methodology proposed for this work; a list of priorities for MFGHC's

work programme; and principles on which the future allocation could be considered. The paper also included a worked example to illustrate the changes which would occur through the application of this method.

Concern was raised on behalf of Jewish chaplaincy that the basis on which the original allocation had been made was not being represented appropriately. There also were concerns about the way in which Trusts would deliver chaplaincy services if left to their own devices and also about the need correctly to recompense those who currently provided these services. In addition, it was noted that the expressed support for multi-faith work but did not automatically extend to providing additional or sufficient resources for its development.

Concern was raised on behalf of the Free Churches Chaplaincy which, whilst supporting the need to develop other faith group chaplaincies, did not consider that the best way was "to rob Peter to pay Paul". There was real concern that the current support would be lost in the complexity of the rearrangement proposed.

Concern was raised on behalf of the Muslim Chaplaincy which although largely omitted from the paper nevertheless had some levels of in place. However, the point was made that more support was needed for development of their chaplaincy capacity including training and back-up administration.

The need for more rather than re-allocated funding was supported. In discussion, there was sympathy with the view that the level playing field should be a levelling up rather than a levelling down. At the same time, it was not thought likely that the review of the central allocation would be stopped so change was likely.

An additional difficulty was engendered by the suggestion that, on the one hand, the allocation should be spread more fairly and, on the other hand, the allocation should be used to fund projects only (and not chaplaincy administration).

A meeting to discuss these alternatives had been convened and it was suggested that this occasion might also be an opportunity to raise the more general concerns voiced by members about the future central allocation. More time would be welcomed to resolve some of these concerns and efforts by many to achieve progress to date should not be lost for lack of consideration at this stage.

In conclusion, it was agreed that the first step should be to raise these issues through the meeting planned with the Department of Health. If no progress was made, the Council agreed to meet again in November to review this issue further.

MFGHC priorities for central funding

As part of the discussion about issues behind the review of central allocations, the Council has agreed a broad-brush approach to priorities which are set out below:

1. Support the development of a central office resource for healthcare chaplaincy which can handle enquiries about all world faiths from NHS organisations effectively
2. Provide advice to Trusts which are setting and reviewing “the standard and quality of service provided...by the chaplaincy team”
3. Lead the development of an educational strategy which enables all world faith groups to identify and deliver basic healthcare chaplaincy education in line with workforce development guidance.
4. Develop formal contact and training for those faith representatives who are designated to take part in the work of the Panel of Assessors on behalf of the world faith communities not currently represented.
5. Develop a training and recruitment strategy for world faith volunteers wishing to contribute within healthcare.
6. Review the framework for calculating sessions to take account of progress and developments
7. Review and update the current guidance on design of worship (and other chaplaincy) spaces to highlight best practice and to establish clearer guidelines for NHS organisations.

8. Determine the need for educational support to NHS staff who need to meet the cultural requirements of patients appropriate to the need, background and tradition of patients and staff
9. Support the continuation of the current training programmes to be taken forward by training providers in academic centres across the UK.

Work permits for overseas chaplains

This issue had been raised by a NHS Trust, which had not been able to appoint a chaplain from overseas because of the current regulations. These were complex and it was agreed to raise this issue with the Immigration Section to see whether guidance could be developed to facilitate chaplaincy.

The DoH agreed list of religions

Council agreed to seek clarification of the list of religions currently used by the Department of Health which it was thought had not been updated recently.

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:

Revd Edward Lewis
Chief Officer, MFGHC
Room 366, Church House,
Westminster
London SW1P 3NZ

Tel: 020 7898 1892

E-mail: chief.officer@mfghc.com

Content of the next Bulletin

The next Bulletin will be published after the Council's meeting in February 2004.

E.J.L. 29th September 2003