

## **CARING FOR THE SPIRIT NEWSLETTER 1**

*Caring for the Spirit* is the development strategy for the chaplaincy and spiritual healthcare workforce published in November 2003. The strategy proposes action to modernise spiritual healthcare practise, education and research in response to user requirements. The implementation plan reported here is designed to achieve improvement progressively until 2010.

### **Welcome**

Welcome to the first newsletter about the implementation of *Caring for the Spirit*. You will find information in this issue about the launch events for the strategy, the project team, spiritual healthcare development units, the communications programme and progress with a range of other milestones.

### **Strategy Launch Events**

SYWDC is leading five launch events around the country during May/ June aimed at Chairs and NEDs of all NHS Trusts. These events are intended to ensure that there is Board-level commitment to implementation and associated change.

The events are being shared with the Multi-Faith Group for

Healthcare Chaplaincy in order to demonstrate the importance of the new policy guidance and emphasis on multi-faith chaplaincy.

### **The Strategy Project Team**

The project team is led by Barbara Walsh, Chief Executive of South Yorkshire WDC and includes Martin Kerry, Max Shepherd, John Palin, Paul Waters, Glenn Martin, Denise Friend, Mary Hardie and Tim Battle.

The chaplains on the team are probably well known and Tim Battle has worked within the chaplaincy world for some time. Denise Friend is the PPI lead for South Yorkshire WDC and has played a major part in ensuring that the strategy was grounded in patient and user opinions. Mary Hardie is the South Yorkshire Communications lead

and replaces Lexie Street on the team, Lexie having gone to pastures new.

The project team will continue to provide oversight of the project's progress and to advise on issues and documents as they emerge. The current members will be joined in the autumn by the lead chaplains appointed to the SHDUs. Arrangements for these appointments are set out below.

### **Funding the implementation plan**

WDCs have agreed to fund the strategy using a levy system which will enable *Caring for the Spirit* to be implemented evenly across the country. Small annual sums from each are managed by SYWDC to fund the programme in its totality.

**“There *IS* a strategy!  
Hurrah!...”**

That approbation was made at the recent Trent Branch meeting of the College of Health Care Chaplains, when members discussed “*Caring for the Spirit*”. Although there is no space here for a complete summary of all that was said, the members highlighted what they felt to be the most important points. So, without comment, here is what they said...

There was a concern about recruitment. It was felt the title and image of “Trainee” would not appeal to (sometimes senior) faith leaders entering NHS work for the first time. We need somehow to recognise and value their years of work and experience prior to coming to the NHS.

Evidence-based practice is not yet generally within the sub-culture of healthcare chaplaincy. Some of our work is felt to be “unquantifiable” and this raises questions with regard to what we do about that. Also, evidence-based practice

is “labour intensive” and time availability will be an issue. Additionally, whilst evidence-based practice underpins the application of models of care, the rapid turn-round of patients in some areas does not offer good opportunities for, say, the process model to work. So chaplains will need training. What, for example, does one record?

The Strategy recognises the importance of Performance Management. But Performance Management was felt by members to be a difficult thing to do. Who would carry it out? If it is to be chaplains then, again, specific training will need to be given.

Multi-faith working was generally viewed positively. There was, however, some anxiety that a non-Christian may come to be appointed to a senior position out of political correctness and expediency rather than on merit. Members also asked about people with no expressed religious

faith — Humanists, say. What if they should wish to offer themselves as spiritual care givers?

Finally, members were pleased about the proposed Spiritual Healthcare Development Units. However, it was felt the job descriptions for the staff appointed to SHDUs should encourage those chaplains to continue with some clinical work, to minimise the danger of “losing touch”.

A summary of what I heard from the chaplains has already been fed back to the Strategy Project Team, where it has helped us in our thinking. I hope this article will encourage more debate about these important issues. Why not discuss the Strategy locally where you are? — and let us know what you think.

The Revd Max  
Shepherd, March 2004

If you wish to have a copy of all of the chaplains' comments from the meeting mentioned above, please email [max.shepherd@leicspar.t.nhs.uk](mailto:max.shepherd@leicspar.t.nhs.uk)

### **Milestones and other progress**

The progress report to the project team in March included the following main points:

- The guidance notes on models of practice; the proposed minimum data set; clinical pastoral education; and the use of frameworks for continuing professional development are to be commissioned in April.
- Arrangements for the development of a framework for spiritual healthcare education are in hand for September.
- The project plan for developing National Occupational Standards for spiritual healthcare is in preparation.
- The survey of diversity within the spiritual healthcare workforce is planned for early 2005.

- Barbara Walsh is chairing the review of the work of the National Panel of Assessors. The consultation report is expected to be issued in June.

### **Communicating the implementation**

SYWDC will continue to support the strategy with an underpinning communications programme.

The newsletter is new and will be circulated to chaplaincy contacts quarterly in the first year and then every few months. The papers used as background to the project or developed as part of it will continue to be available on the SYWDC website.

The list of publications is as follows:

- National survey of chaplaincy-spiritual healthcare issues 2002/03, February 2003
- Caring for the Spirit: A strategy for the chaplaincy and spiritual healthcare workforce, November 2003

- Associated foundation study, June 2003

- Guidance Note 1 – Spiritual Healthcare Development Units

If you have any comments about the newsletter or aspects of the strategy implementation, please let either Mary Hardie (Mary.Hardie@sysha.nhs.uk) or Tim Battle ([tim.battle@wdconfed.nhs.uk](mailto:tim.battle@wdconfed.nhs.uk)) know

### **Spiritual Healthcare Development Units**

Attached to this newsletter is an explanatory note about SHDUs. It explains what their function and location. The arrangements for appointing to the post of lead chaplains are in hand and advertisements will appear in the Health Service Journal in May.

If you would like to comment on these papers, please do so to [tim.battle@wdconfed.nhs.uk](mailto:tim.battle@wdconfed.nhs.uk)