

## **A Welcome for the New NHS Chaplaincy Guidelines**

From the The Network for Pastoral, Spiritual and Religious Care (The Network)

2 August 2023

The Network very warmly welcomes NHS England's publication of the new *NHS Chaplaincy - Guidelines for NHS managers on pastoral, spiritual and religious care*. We work to promote equality, diversity, and high-quality person-centred care, and so we are particularly pleased to see the overarching principle of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Our 2020 report, *Fit for the Twenty-First Century? The state of inclusion for acute NHS chaplaincy, pastoral, spiritual, and religious care services in England*<sup>1</sup> concluded that much work was needed for pastoral, spiritual, and religious care services to be made more inclusive. We have been monitoring the recruitment of Healthcare Chaplains / Spiritual Carers / Pastoral Carers and have noted many examples where recruitment has been restricted without an equality impact assessment having been conducted. We are pleased that NHS England have added clear guidance on recruitment, and look forward to working with NHS England, NHS Employers and Trusts, to ensure these Guidelines are implemented.

We have been encouraged by developments to ensure services meet the needs of all potential service users. We will support NHS England and individual Trusts to assess the needs of their local communities and develop their services to ensure these needs are met, particularly for minority communities.

We were pleased to see encouragement in the guidance for services to continue to develop good communication with the wider public and staff. The Network will continue to provide support to those who are seeking to develop their Chaplaincy / Spiritual Care services and highlight best practice in how to communicate the breadth of inclusive services offered.

Network members are delighted that a greater diversity of voices was included in the NHS England steering group that informed these Guidelines. We hope that their publication and implementation will help to promote high quality Pastoral, Spiritual and Religious care and continue the conversation about the importance of diversity and inclusion to keeping care relevant and impactful for all patients, families, carers and staff.

The Network is producing an Audit Tool to accompany the 2023 NHS Chaplaincy Guidelines, which will be available on our [website](#) very shortly.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://network-health.org.uk/index.php/pages/inclusion-and-equality-in-nhs-chaplaincy-services-report>