

Petition in support of an NHS-funded chaplaincy service

1. There is strong support for NHS-funded hospital chaplaincy services among Wales' faith communities

In November 2011 I asked the members of the Interfaith Council of Wales whether or not they supported an NHS-funded hospital chaplaincy service. This was in preparation for a Cross Party Group on Faith meeting on the importance of spiritual care

All those who responded to my email were in support of an NHS-funded chaplaincy service, including the following faith communities:

- a. Jewish
- b. Muslim
- c. Buddhist
- d. Hindu
- e. Sikh

....and the following Christian denominations / networks:

- a. Quakers
- b. Methodists
- c. Church in Wales
- d. Annibynwyr
- e. Salvation Army
- f. Congregational Federation
- g. Evangelical Alliance

I didn't receive a response from the Catholic Church or the Baha'is. The majority of members of the Interfaith Council of Wales were therefore in support of an NHS-funded hospital chaplaincy service.

2. Chaplaincy services have the support of the First Minister

Hospital chaplaincy was discussed in the Faith Communities Forum meeting of 24 October 2012, in which the First Minister spoke in positive terms of chaplaincy services (see extract from the official minutes below, especially point g.)

Chaplaincy

- a. The First Minister gave an update on the implementation of the Welsh Government Standards, Capabilities and Competence Framework for Spiritual Caregivers and progress against these Standards.

- b. The Spiritual Care Standards promotes partnership working between the Health Board and Trusts with the communities that they serve. This ensures that spiritual care is accessible in all NHS care settings. NHS organisations' individual action plans are routinely monitored.
- c. Welsh Government officials are working closely with NHS, Welsh Language Board and Welsh Language Commission to ensure the Standards comply with the Welsh Language measure.
- d. A number of excellent initiatives have already been adopted. These include all Health Boards/Trusts having identified individuals who are responsible for co-ordinating the implementation of the Standards. Some specific examples include Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board who held a Spiritual Awareness Conference in May and Cwm Taff Health Board who have introduced a 'bank' of chaplains to provide cover throughout the year.
- e. Barry Morgan said that there was a basic misunderstanding of the chaplaincy service. They offer support to those who want it at people's hour of need. Saleem Kidwai supported this view and confirmed that Imams are present in multi-faith chaplaincies to offer support where needed.
- f. The Chief Nursing Officer for Wales wrote to NHS organisations in April 2012 and will be writing again in November 2012 requesting an update on progress against each of the Standards.
- g. The First Minister referred to an incident in Cardiff on 19 October where a number of adults and children were admitted to the University Hospital Wales in the afternoon, with injuries caused by a roadside accident. The hospital chaplaincy service was immediately on hand to offer support to both the victims and victims' families.

3. There is a lack of transparency over the link between the Charitable Chaplaincy Campaign and the National Secular Society

The supporting information of the CCC petition, for example, includes the following sentence:

*The charitable chaplaincy campaign **comprises an informal network of citizen** who are concerned that every million pounds of public money allocated to the NHS in Wales should be used to promote public health and to treat those who need medical attention.*

What is not stated is the link between this campaign and the National Secular Society (NSS), whose strapline is “challenging religious privilege” and whose stated aims in campaigning for a secular state include (see [here](#)):

- a) Neither the state, nor any emanation of the state, expresses religious beliefs or preferences.
- b) The state does not engage in, fund or promote religious activities or practices.

Page 13 of their 2011 Annual Report (see [here](#)) refers to Alan Rogers and the Charitable Chaplaincy Campaign, saying the following:

*Our campaign to have hospital chaplaincy services funded by charity continues. Led by NSS member Alan Rogers, **secularists in Wales have been collecting data** on the cost of hospital chaplains.*

The link between this campaign and the National Secular Society can be further seen on the NSS website [here](#), where Alan Rogers talks about his work for the Charitable Chaplaincy Campaign in Wales.

Part of the rationale behind the CCC is its claim that citizens are concerned about public funding going to chaplaincy services. If, however, significant number of these citizens identify with a movement that is ideologically opposed to chaplaincy services being publicly funded in the first place (i.e. the NSS), then this claim must be scrutinised.

4. If chaplaincy services were to be funded by faith groups, it would lead to inequalities in service provision, with areas with an abundance of faith communities faring better than areas that do not.
5. Wynne Roberts will refer to the Standards for Spiritual Care Services in the NHS in Wales 2010 and I will also refer to a powerpoint produced by Steve Jamieson from the Royal College of Nursing, who leads on spiritual care in the RCN. Among his findings are the following:
 - a. 80.4% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement I believe spirituality does not apply to atheists or agnostics (slide 28).
 - b. 96.5% said yes to “Whilst practising, have you ever encountered a patient(s) with spiritual needs? (slide 29)
 - c. 41.4% said they encountered patients with spiritual needs daily (slide 32)
6. My point in the petition *to extend the benefits of chaplaincy services to other care settings, including primary and social care settings* was simply that care homes and GP surgeries may be suitable places to extend spiritual care provision and chaplaincy services.