AHPCC President’s Report 2014 – 2015

There has been a lot happening in the world of health care chaplaincy during the past year. In my report I have outlined our AHPCC activities and also tried to give a sense of some of the wider developments. Please make the time to read the report itself and the documents attached, as this will give you a clearer picture of what is going on and enable you to play a full part in our discussions about the future direction of chaplaincy.

### 1. Executive news

The Executive has met three times in the past year, with two meetings in London and an overnight stay in Manchester. We will also be travelling to The Hayes Centre a day early to make final preparations for our Conference. I’m extremely grateful to the Executive for their hard work in this and previous years. At our forthcoming AGM, as well as electing a new President, there will be potentially three vacancies for Exec members, and I really would encourage you to consider this. The current pattern of meetings is as outlined above, and there are also opportunities to undertake extra projects or to represent the AHPCC on external bodies – though no-one will twist your arm to do this when you are new! Being on the Executive will involve you in work to support our organisation (e.g. helping to plan our annual Conference) and will also make you more aware of broader developments across health care chaplaincy.

Please contact any member of the current Exec if you wish to know more.

### 2. AHPCC finances: new projects

I reported last year that we had saved ourselves some money as an organisation by taking over administration of our membership lists and annual Conference when Hospice UK (formerly Help the Hospices) ceased to offer this service. We have been considering how best to use our funds to benefit the AHPCC and foster excellence in spiritual care, and will be bringing two proposals to the next AGM:

* to make available an annual grant of £250 to support an AHPCC member wishing to undertake a relevant research project.
* to engage someone to contact hospices and specialist palliative care units throughout the UK on our behalf as part of an information gathering exercise to map chaplaincy provision – both to identify “the gaps” and also to promote the AHPCC and the importance of spiritual care.

There will be further details at the AGM.

### 3. The Future of Chaplaincy

I hope many of you have been keeping up-to-date with national developments in chaplaincy through our website, under the heading “The Future of Chaplaincy”. It’s encouraging to be able to report some significant progress in the past year:

#### a) Publishing of new Chaplaincy Guidelines

In March a new set of NHS Chaplaincy Guidelines was published, replacing the Guidance of 2003. Particular thanks go to the Revd Chris Swift, head of Chaplaincy services in the Leeds Hospitals, for his work in heading up the project. You can download the Guidelines from our website, or direct from NHS England. A formal launch is planned for later in the year, and we will publicise the date as soon as it’s known.

Although some AHPCC members may work outside England and/or outside the NHS, this document will influence how healthcare chaplaincy as a profession is perceived, and is of direct relevance to us all. The Guidelines include a separate section on Specialist Palliative Care, which reference our own AHPCC Guidance. They also commit us to working with NHS England to produce an Annexe on Information Governance by February 2016, which will give us a chance to tackle some of the issues arising from the Data Protection Act.

#### b) Chaplaincy Leadership Forum (CLF)

The Chaplaincy Leadership Forum has met 3 times this year (I have attended on behalf of the AHPCC), and in between meetings the Executive (CLFE) has held monthly conference calls. There have been regular updates of the work of the CLF on our website, so I hope that members have felt fully informed.

The publication of the Guidelines has created an opportunity for further reflection on a vision for health care chaplaincy in the years ahead. Recently, members of the CLFE held a meeting to discuss possible priorities for the next few years. The result of that meeting was the discussion paper “Transformation of Chaplaincy” which, along with a covering letter, has been posted on our website. The paper and covering letter are also attached to this report. The four areas which we believe need to be prioritised are:

* Leadership Development
* Supportive Review
* Regulation & Authorisation (including Registration)
* Research

Rather than go into further detail here, I encourage you to read the discussion paper and the accompanying letter. I cannot stress too strongly that the intention of the paper is as its name suggests: to provide a basis for reflection and discussion throughout health care chaplaincy. Nothing has been decided; however, we really do want to hear your views. I hope that our Conference in May will mark the beginnings of a conversation through which AHPCC members can feed back to the CLF by the deadline date of 30 June, to help us to develop a shared vision across health care chaplaincy and also provide a focus for our discussions with NHS England and other health care providers.

#### c) The United Kingdom Board of Healthcare Chaplaincy (UKBHC)

The United Kingdom Board of Healthcare Chaplaincy (UKBHC) has met regularly through the past year and held its AGM in London last September. Progress continues to be made towards professional registration, and we are being assisted in the process by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA), the body which has to approve our application.

We are still looking for experienced AHPCC members who would consider joining the Professional Advisers’ Panel, to assist specifically with palliative care chaplaincy appointments. Please see me if you are interested in exploring this.

### 4. Links with other chaplaincy and external organisations

It is important to look beyond our own Association and to foster links with others working in chaplaincy and spiritual care. In the past year, we have continued our involvement with a variety of groups, including the following:

#### Healthcare Chaplaincy Faith and Belief Group (HCFBG).

We and the College of Health Care Chaplains (CHCC) have observer status on this group, and Richard Warhurst has taken over from Dawn Allan as our representative. Members of the HCFBG are also part of the Chaplaincy Leadership Forum.

#### European Network of Health Care Chaplains (ENHCC)

This, as the name suggests, is a grouping which enables us to keep in touch with developments in chaplaincy and spiritual care across Europe. At the heart of its activity is a bi-annual Consultation, held each time in a different European city. In May 2014 Margery Collin and I represented the AHPCC at the Consultation in Salzburg. It was fascinating to see the diverse ways in which chaplaincy functions in different parts of Europe, but also to appreciate the common challenges which we face. You will find a copy of the Consultation Statement on our website, and a report on the Consultation (in English, French and German!) in the journal *Health and Social Care Chaplaincy (Vol2.1: 2014).*

#### Leadership Alliance for the Care of Dying People (LACDP)

In June 2014 the LACDP published “One Chance to Get it Right”, establishing five priorities for Care of the Dying Person. Chaplaincy was represented on the LACDP by the Revd Meg Burton of CHCC. Meg and Debbie Hodge (HCFBG) are at present engaged in some research to examine whether these priorities are being implemented, and are asking chaplains to submit case studies/stories relating to end of life care. Please refer to Meg and Debbie’s letter on our website for details of how to get involved, and note that the deadline for submissions is 31 July.

Other initiatives during the past year have included: maintaining our links with **Hospice UK** (details of their forthcoming Conference in November will be on our website soon) and meeting with leaders of the **National Council for Palliative Care**, to explore how we may work more closely together. Also, along with Meg Burton (CHCC), I attended a briefing and Q & A at the House of Lords last October about Lord Falconer’s Assisted Dying Bill. There will no doubt be further developments on this issue in future.

As this is my final Report to the AHPCC before standing down at the AGM in May, I wish simply to record my thanks to you all for your support over the past three years. I believe that we are living through significant times for the future of chaplaincy within health care, and I see the publishing of the new Chaplaincy Guidelines and the steady progress towards registration as positive steps forward for chaplaincy as a profession. I hope, too, that the developing links between chaplains in the UK and abroad, along with the growing momentum behind initiatives in research, will help us in evidencing the importance of spiritual care and the work we do.

I am equally convinced that at the heart of our role lie things that cannot be quantified. We live with the unresolved questions, with the shared silences beyond words, and such things will always be resistant to measurement or definition. Therein, paradoxically, lies our usefulness. It’s a privilege to be engaged in this work, and to share it with generous and supportive colleagues. Thank you all.

#### Judy DaviesAHPCC President

#### April 2015