

# Making Religious Diversity work for your Trust: Patients, Workforce and Public



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## **The Policy Context**

The Department of Health included religion *10 steps to your SES: a guide to developing a single equality scheme* (2007) in anticipation of new duties on religion. This should help NHS organisations in meeting the commitments in *Standards for Better Health*.

*Equality and Human Rights in the NHS: A Guide for NHS Boards* (2006) stated that “ Both the core and developmental standards in the *Standards for Better Health* framework provide NHS organisations with an opportunity to measure their own performance in relation to equality and human rights, identifying areas of both good practice and potential shortcomings.”

But NHS agencies are often confused about how they apply this to religion, and fear of offending people may mean they are anxious about how to proceed.

An as yet unpublished small sample survey of NHS organizations found that managers in the organizations surveyed found religion the most difficult topic to address, largely for fear of offending members of their team or patients. Yet there is evidence that encouraging and understanding the needs of all religions within the workplace can provide real benefits<sup>1</sup>.

## **The Business Case – Religion in British Life**

Addressing religious diversity effectively is important for NHS organizations. Over 76% of the UK population claimed a religious affiliation, whether active or not (7.7% of respondents chose not to answer) 71.6% identified as Christian, 2.7% as Muslim, 1% as Hindu, 0.6% as Sikh, 0.5% as Jewish, 0.3% as Buddhist and 0.3% as Other. 15.5% had no religion. The relative concentrations will vary from area to area (e.g. Muslim, Hindu and Sikh in some parts of Yorkshire and London as well as West Midlands; Jewish populations have long traditions of prominence

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<sup>1</sup> Krichnakumar, S and Neck, C.P. (2002) The “what”, “why” and “how” of spirituality in the workplace *Journal of Managerial Psychology* (17) 153 – 164. See also Giacalone, Robert A and Jurkiewicz, Carole L. (Eds) (2002) *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*. New York. M.E. Sharpe

in some parts of the North East, Manchester and London and Catholic populations have a high representation in Liverpool, parts of London and the Midlands.) 8% of the UK population, on average, is Catholic, according to the Census.

Religion is still an integral part of life for many people in the UK, and there is a growing trend in business to see it as an important aspect of customer and organizational strategy.

The evidence was enough, according to *Personnel Today* (24 April 2006) for Tesco to issue religious toolkits to their staff detailing the daily habits including eating habits of the religions in the UK. Similarly the Metropolitan Police ran a successful "Can you be" campaign targeted at faiths which improved recruitment and retention from faith communities.

Only 55% of public sector organisations had a policy covering religion, according to research in *Labour Market Outlook* (February 2007) while a survey of 73 organisations for *Employment Review* (January 2007) found almost all employers providing diversity training - even those doing it largely to avoid employment tribunals - had extended it to cover all six strands, including religion.

### **Addressing Religious Diversity Simply**

Addressing religious diversity can be straightforward. There are some basic principles:

#### **1. Ensure you acknowledge and point to the workforce research evidence on religion to underpin your strategy**

- There is a growing evidence base that open understanding and valuing of religious diversity in the workplace produced better results for the organisation, the team, the individual and patients<sup>2,3,4,5,6</sup>
- There are specific health benefits of recognising diversity, and health risks in not recognising it<sup>7</sup>. Making religion a topic people cannot be open about can damage the organisation and its people.

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<sup>2</sup> Pitts (2003) *Research on Diversity, Representation and Organisational Performance*. National Public Management Conference, Georgetown.

<sup>3</sup> Brown, William A. (2005) Exploring the association between board and organizational performance in nonprofit organizations. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership* 15(3)

<sup>4</sup> Erhardt, Niclas L. (2003) Board of Director Diversity and Firm Financial Performance. *Corporate Governance* 11(2)

<sup>5</sup> R. A. Guzzo, E. Salas, and Associates. *Team Effectiveness and Decision Making in Organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995.

<sup>6</sup> Giacalone, Robert A and Jurkiewicz, Carole L. (Eds) (2002) *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*. New York. M.E. Sharpe

<sup>7</sup> Sagrestano, L M (2004) *The Health Implications of Workplace Diversity in Stooockdale, MS and Crosby, F J (Eds) The Psychology and Management of Workplace Diversity*. Oxford: Blackwell.

## **2. Ensure your Policy addresses religion in the workplace in a way which values it as well as protects you from discrimination claims**

- This does not mean you ignore religion or make your organisation somewhere people cannot talk about it. This would contravene principle 1, and would arguably not reduce the risk to you. (For example, a Muslim or Sikh or Catholic member of staff who felt they could not be open about their faith at all could argue their employment rights were being contravened.)
- Equally, undertaking race and religion together for convenience can be risky. It means that you may focus thinking on faiths associated with specific ethnicities, rather than on **all** religions. So you may miss issues like people from the Baha'i faith, team members who are white British Muslims, Black African Jewish communities, or the overseas nurses working in the NHS from parts of India which are predominantly Catholic.
- This applies to **all** faiths. Almost all faiths have sacred times (e.g. Eid, Hanukah, Lent.) For Catholics Lent, Easter and Holydays through the year are all important dimensions of living their faith.
- Managers and teams within organisations are often confused by religious diversity, especially in an age when our literacy about other peoples' faiths is reducing<sup>8</sup>. Providing training and using communications mechanisms can help.
- Encourage teams and individuals to include religions within clinical governance and within team CPD and education. There are examples of frameworks for this available<sup>9</sup>.
- Many staff who have active religious faiths are motivated and sustained by their faith, especially in their work. This is the case among many Catholic healthcare workers. They often see their role as a specific vocation to healthcare. This does **not** mean they use their work to convert others. It **does** mean their faith is an added motivation for them to be conscientious, professional and effective in their work. By doing their NHS job to the very best of their ability they are living out their vocation.
- Ensure training is available and provided.
- Ensure staff know their religious needs are catered for. Sometimes Catholic staff undergoing bereavement, break up or other problems may value access to a priest or Catholic chaplain.
- Be very clear about what you mean by religion and spirituality. Vagueness in these terms is not diversity. Each faith may mean something very different by spirituality. For a specifically Catholic understanding of spirituality go to <http://www.catholic-ew.org.uk/cn/07/070508b.htm>

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<sup>8</sup> Krichnakumar, S and Neck, C.P. (2002) The "what", "why" and "how" of spirituality in the workplace *Journal of Managerial Psychology* (17) 153 - 164

<sup>9</sup> McManus, J (2006) *Spirituality and Health: Applied Leadership*. Nursing Management; Oct 2006; 13, 6; pp 24-27.

### **3. Run a “Doing business with Religion” Seminar or another seminar like it**

- This seminar is currently being developed by Paul Woolley and colleagues at Theos, a think tank ([www.theosthinktank.co.uk](http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk))
- The seminar is being developed and piloted on behalf of a consortium of 6 PCTs and Provider Trusts (2 Acute, one mental Health) in East London
- The seminar encourages people to understand faith from the perspectives of people of faith as well as people of not faith. People are invited to engage with the sacred scriptures of the key world faiths in short workshops to help gain an understanding of the importance different faiths attach to things like worship, daily routines, wearing symbols, etc.

4. Learn from what other NHS organisations have done successfully and apply the schemes

For the Organisation	For the Workforce	For Patient Trusts	For the Public
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure religion becomes an integral part of your diversity strategy</li> <li>• Appoint a NED with responsibility for religious equality, who understands religious diversity</li> <li>• Run a “religious diversity for real” day – to help you get to grips with the Single Equality Scheme. This has already been run in some NHS organisations. Contact <a href="mailto:jim.mcmanus@nhs.net">jim.mcmanus@nhs.net</a> for programmes</li> <li>• Get the champions from this group to go through with the NED the 20 questions in</li> <li>• Include religion in your policy and guidelines</li> <li>• Use your staff newsletter to run a series aimed at giving staff basic religious literacy for their patient populations</li> <li>• Profile a staff member of each faith in the newsletter, asking them specifically to write about how their faith is important to helping them work effectively in the NHS</li> <li>• Get a copy of the forthcoming toolkit for Catholic Chaplains on</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring religion as part of HR processes and feed it into the Single PCT Equality Scheme</li> <li>• Provide a multi-faith calendar</li> <li>• Monitor staff faith and encourage multi-faith calendars</li> <li>• One PCT gets staff to right about the meaning of major festivals and circulate this round all staff</li> <li>• Where you have many nurses from overseas (e.g. Filipino nurses or from parts of India) help make explicit links with their local faith community. This can reduce isolation, increase retention and help staff cope with the stresses and mental health challenges of a very new culture. One NHS Trust did this with Filipino Nurses and found the incidence of sickness absence among them dropped significantly.</li> <li>• Allow people the use of unobtrusive religious symbols (on desks, uniforms etc)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Provider Trusts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write collection of religion into your patient monitoring in a way which encourages better access to spiritual care. This will avoid claims that you are discriminating</li> <li>• Place posters and leaflets about religious support</li> <li>• Keep a stock of holy books on wards and in units</li> <li>• Follow the principles in <i>NHS Chaplaincy</i></li> <li>• Encourage service teams to include faith as part of their clinical governance</li> <li>• Apply the principles in <i>Caring for the Catholic Patient</i> in your Trust</li> <li>• Issue ward and unit staff with copies of <i>Meeting the Pastoral Needs of Catholic Patients</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waltham Forest PCT runs a “faith preachers” scheme which has people from faith communities trained as health trainers, within their own traditions</li> <li>• Run events with faith communities (one CVD day in a mosque in East London identified 9 women with undiagnosed Type 2 Diabetes) Another event with a Catholic Church gleaned 35 smoking quitters</li> <li>• Work with the local faith forum to create some guidelines on working with faith communities</li> <li>• Encourage faith communities to come to the PPI forum</li> </ul>

<p>toolkit for Catholic Chaplains on the Single Equality Scheme, to help you address diversity as part of your SES. This can be obtained from <a href="mailto:Liz.Taite@cbcew.org.uk">Liz.Taite@cbcew.org.uk</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve a worship policy which allows people to worship. Most of these policies encourage managers to allow time, so long as it is made up afterwards.</li> </ul>	<p><b>PCTs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write religious diversity into your SLAs and contracts</li> <li>• Ensure understanding and working with faith is part of clinical governance for staff and that appropriate training is provided</li> <li>• Work with faith communities as part of your LAA, Community Development and Public Health Programme – especially on CVD prevention</li> <li>• Another PCT provides rooms for lunchtime prayer groups once a week or month</li> <li>• Have a faiths open day when faith leaders can come and see the work of the PCT and get involved</li> </ul>	
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## **5. Benchmark your agency against others**

- Form a benchmarking group with other NHS organisations to benchmark all your equality work against it. Or ask an independent agency to peer review all the plans in your group.

Specifically for Catholic Patients and Staff you may find the website [www.catholicsinhealthcare.org.uk](http://www.catholicsinhealthcare.org.uk) useful. Here you can download copies of *Caring for the Catholic Patient* and *Meeting the Pastoral Needs of Catholic Patients.*, as well as forthcoming publications on spirituality

## **Suggested Reading and Resources**

These were checked at the time of writing.

**McManus, J (2001) *Friends or Strangers? Engaging Faith Communities in Community Safety*. London: Nacro. Available at <http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/partnerships34.pdf>** although written for community safety, this guide has some key principles for health workers.

### **The Faith Communities' Consultative Council**

Department for Communities and Local Government  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London  
SW1E 5DU  
t 020 7944 4400  
f 020 7944 4101  
[www.communities.gsi.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gsi.gov.uk)

### **The Inter Faith Network for the UK**

The Network produces a range of useful publications which can be downloaded from its website including ***The Local Inter Faith Guide*** which is published by the Network, in association with DCLG.

8A Lower Grosvenor Place  
London  
SW1W 0EN  
t 020 7931 7766  
f 020 7931 7722  
[www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)

### **Faith based Regeneration Network**

Faith Based Regeneration Network  
Suite J2 / 4th Floor, Charles House  
375 Kensington High Street  
London  
W14 8QH  
t 020 7471 6792  
[admin@fbrn.org.uk](mailto:admin@fbrn.org.uk)

### **BBC Religion Page**

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/>

### **BBC Multi Faith Calendar**

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/tools/calendar/>



**FaithWorks UK (Christian, largely Evangelical)**

An organisation designed to help faith based agencies get involved in social renewal, and help public sector agencies give them a level playing field.

[www.faithworkscampaign.org](http://www.faithworkscampaign.org)

[www.rebuild.org.uk](http://www.rebuild.org.uk)

**Emergency Planning and Major Incident Resources**

**Church of England Diocese of Bath and Wells Major Incident Plan**

[http://www.bathwells.anglican.org/leadershipdigest/pages/major\\_incident.php](http://www.bathwells.anglican.org/leadershipdigest/pages/major_incident.php)

**Responding to Major Incidents: A note of reflection for the Church.**

Produced by Jim McManus for the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales in response to the London Bombings. Obtainable from [jim.mcmanus@bdpct.nhs.uk](mailto:jim.mcmanus@bdpct.nhs.uk) or

[liz.taite@cbcew.org.uk](mailto:liz.taite@cbcew.org.uk)

**Surrey Churches Major Incident Plan**

<http://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/html/major%20incident%20plan%202002.pdf>

**Charities Disaster Recovery Network**

[http://www.charitylogistics.org/cdrn/category\\_index.php?id=6](http://www.charitylogistics.org/cdrn/category_index.php?id=6)

*Can help charities and voluntary groups plan for recovery from disasters and major incidents affecting their business*

**The Needs of Faith Communities in Major Emergencies (2005)** Home Office and Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

[http://www.ukresilience.info/upload/assets/www.ukresilience.info/faith\\_communities.pdf](http://www.ukresilience.info/upload/assets/www.ukresilience.info/faith_communities.pdf)