

Accredited Registers Impact Assessment

Accredited Register: UK Board of Healthcare Chaplaincy (UKBHC)

Type of Review: Full Assessment

Period under review: 2023-2024

Date Approved for Panel: 22 November 2023.

Introduction

Before we make a decision about accreditation, we undertake an impact assessment to understand likely effects on different groups, and the wider health system. We begin to gather the information required for the impact assessment when a Register first applies for accreditation. We consider any changes to impacts when we renew accreditation, and when taking other decisions that affect accreditation status such as imposing Conditions or suspension.

A key part of the impact assessment is consideration of equalities. The Equality Act 2010 imposes a legal duty, the Public Sector Equality Duty on all public bodies to consider the equality impact of its policies and decision making. The duty is known as the Equality Duty and it requires a public authority, in the discharge of its function to consider the following three aspects which form the basis of the duty:

- Consider the impact and eliminate unlawful (direct or indirect) discrimination and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people with protected characteristics and those who do not share these characteristics
- Foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and those who do not share these characteristics.

This means that public bodies must consider equality impact on individuals protected under the Equality Act 2010 in carrying out their work. The Authority, therefore, needs to be always mindful of the public duty when carrying out its oversight role which includes the approving of registers. It needs to have 'due regard' to the needs to balance the three aspects which make up the Equality Duty when achieving its goals.

The Equality Impact Assessment is an important tool/mechanism for demonstrating 'due regard' through the consideration of evidence and analysis, actual and potential to identify positive and/or adverse impacts. The key groups we need to consider when making our decisions are, sex, age, ethnicity, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, and maternity.

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Impacts

Equalities impacts - summary.

- The UKBHC registers healthcare chaplains. 'Chaplains come from many different traditions and faiths but are united by their compassionate concern to support those who are challenged by illness and injury whether they are patients or their carers' as provided on the UKBHC's [website](#). Healthcare chaplains are recognised as part of a healthcare team as per the chaplaincy guidelines produced by NHS England, Scotland, and Wales available on the UKBHC website.
- At the time of assessment, we were not sure if the UKBHC collects information on the ethnicity or diversity status of registrants. Application processes do not require practitioners to provide data on protected characteristics or other information that may help identify impacts on registrants. The Authority's new Standard Nine: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion may direct the UKBHC to start collecting registrant information to assess such impacts if no specific mechanism is in place.
- Accreditation should help to advance equalities, by recognising the UKBHC's work to encourage diversity in the profession itself and to progress understanding of how groups with protected characteristics are affected by their work.
- Chaplaincy has a significant impact on the spiritual and religious domains, the way these relate to health and wellbeing, and how they can enable people to cope with the challenges and transitions that accompany illness, injury, and suffering. It is noted that Chaplains is beneficial for older populations, supporting those with long term health conditions and going through baby loss.
- Healthcare chaplains form part of a multi-disciplinary team responsible for the spiritual care of the patient, their family, and friends. The chaplain's role also includes supporting staff.

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- We noted that chaplains' work brings them into contact with children and vulnerable adults who may be experiencing particularly distressing situations. We issued Condition to develop a safeguarding policy, to address this.
- During the assessment, the UKBHC told us that it is looking into whether it should accept applications from people with no faith. We have issued a Condition, to require the UKBHC to update us when it has come to a decision.

Impacts on groups with protected characteristics

Age

Type of impact (positive/neutral/negative)	Group(s) affected	Description	Actions required	Date identified
Positive	Older people	<p>Research shows that individuals can be supported to age healthily which reduces the likelihood of multiple chronic illnesses, leading to an improved quality of life¹.</p> <p>Two studies focussed on those who work with older people and older people themselves in terms of their spiritual needs and the implications of this for healthcare chaplaincy. The article suggested that healthcare chaplains have an opportunity to develop support interventions based on</p>		November 2023

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4918092/>.

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		<p>researched need, for both older people and staff who work with older people².</p> <p>Effect of Chaplaincy Visits in an Elder Care Setting is analysed and suggested more research³.</p>		
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Disability

Type of impact (positive/neutral/negative)	Group(s) affected	Description	Actions required	Date identified
Positive	Supporting those with long term health conditions	The UKBHC provided evidence published by the Health Foundation about a project aimed at increasing the 'social inclusion of people with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), improve their wellbeing, increase their confidence in self-managing their condition and reduce hospital admissions.' The project involved an interdisciplinary team, including chaplains who provided a listening service and was part of the holistic support offered to patient ⁴ .		November 2023

Gender reassignment

Type of impact (positive/neutral/negative)	Group(s) affected	Description	Actions required	Date identified

² Mowat, Harriet. "Gerontological chaplaincy: the spiritual needs of older people and staff who work with them." Health and Social Care Chaplaincy (2013): 27-31.

³ [\[PDF\] Religion, spirituality, and acute care hospitalization and long-term care use by older patients. | Semantic Scholar](#)

⁴ <https://www.health.org.uk/improvement-projects/promoting-a-positive-life-experience-for-copd-patients>

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Marriage and civil partnership

Type of impact (positive/neutral/negative)	Group(s) affected	Description	Actions required	Date identified

Pregnancy and maternity

Type of impact (positive/neutral/negative)	Group(s) affected	Description	Actions required	Date identified
Positive	Pregnant individuals and their families	<p>Supporting those going through baby loss</p> <p>A report by health talk looking at the care provided to parents who had experience of antenatal screening and ending pregnancy found that 'Almost everyone had been offered the chance to see the hospital chaplain whether for a talk, to bless the baby or to arrange a funeral for them and all these services were greatly valued. Many women found that hospital chaplains were able to comfort them because they were used to 'taking on other's sadness' without trying to 'fix everything'. Women remarked on how easily and naturally chaplains acted with the baby - several picked the baby up to bless him/her (see 'Saying goodbye to the baby'.)⁵ and that "One couple described their different ways of coping, and the support of the hospital chaplain in performing a naming ceremony. Several people commented on the support hospital chaplains offered, regardless of the couple's own</p>		November 2023

⁵ <https://healthtalk.org/ending-pregnancy-fetal-abnormality/treatment-care-and-communication>

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		religious views. ⁶ This demonstrates the value that those experiencing baby loss of having access to healthcare chaplaincy.		
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Race

Type of impact (positive/neutral/negative)	Group(s) affected	Description	Actions required	Date identified
Positive	Minority community	The Board's work to make sure that all members of diverse communities have access to high quality spiritual care should have a positive impact on some distinct minority communities. The provision of good spiritual and pastoral care will improve wellbeing for individuals and their communities.		November 2023

Religion or belief

Type of impact (positive/neutral/negative)	Group(s) affected	Description	Actions required	Date identified

⁶ <https://healthtalk.org/antenatal-screening/feelings-and-reflections-afterwards>

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Neutral	religion and spirituality	<p>The UKBHC describes itself as a multi-faith and belief organisation.</p> <p>There is a growing body of evidence that indicates that a focus on religion and spirituality, broadly defined, can have a positive impact on the ways in which patients perceive and experience illness including end of life issues, and can be beneficial in terms of mental and physical health.⁷</p> <p>A paper written by Snowden et al in 2018 found 'as in previous research, being able to talk about what is on your mind was more important than being listened to, having your faith valued or being understood.' The paper found that 'The more times people saw the chaplain, the better the outcome. People who described themselves as spiritual or religious did better than those who were not.'⁸</p> <p>UKBHC are aware that some religious/belief groups may not have highly developed infrastructures of training and education as others. The Board is working with other partners to make sure that all who want to pursue a career in chaplaincy are not disadvantaged through lack of access to training and education.</p>	We set the following Condition of Accreditation:	November 2023
			The UKBHC must clarify the basis for its position on whether or not membership of an organised religious or faith group is a requirement of registration. This must be completed within six months.	

⁷ [Microsoft Word - 2011-01-24 - FINAL - approved orig from Judith 24 jan.doc \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

⁸ https://researchonline.nd.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1859&context=med_article

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Sex

Type of impact (positive/neutral/negative)	Group(s) affected	Description	Actions required	Date identified

Sexual orientation

Type of impact (positive/neutral/negative)	Group(s) affected	Description	Actions required	Date identified

Cost and market impacts – summary

- Individuals do not bear the costs of Chaplain service. Chaplains are an integral part of healthcare teams and provide a service to patients, their carers and families.
- Accreditation is not anticipated to have associated costs for employers and so should not have a negative market impact.

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Social and environmental impacts – summary

- The NHS careers [website](#) states that ‘chaplains offer pastoral and spiritual care to all patients and their carers, friends and family as well as NHS staff.’ Chaplains also have a role in supporting staff. UKBHC highlighted that ‘as part of the hospital or unit’s provision of support for staff and volunteers, the health care chaplain offers personal and professional support.’
- The UKBHC informed that working closely with those who represent minority groups to put in place education and training that is accessible and appropriate to gain registration whilst maintaining professional standards. This will be an on-going dialogue as the diversity of communities increases and develops.
- As informed by the UKBHC that ‘We have recently made developments and additions to the Board membership which we hope will support our ambition to foster good relations between those who share “relevant protected characteristics”, and those who do not. We have also begun to recruit ‘**Ambassadors**’ for UKBHC at local level, although this role will need significant development.’
- It appears that the UKBHC does not undertake any specific work to support environmental/ sustainability.

Decision

The Panel noted the actions above and considered the Conditions and Recommendations highlighted as part of the assessment. The Panel agreed with these actions.