

Freedom of Information Request: Our Reference CTHB_201_18

You asked:

In the Disclosure Log (response CTHB_38_18) there is an important statement, namely :-

They (chaplains) are all from within the Christian faith although our remit under the Standards for Spiritual Care 2010 is that we support patients regardless of whether a person belongs to any faith or belief group.

This statement is ambiguous in that it can mean:

EITHER

1) *The Board has used NHS Wales budget to provide spiritual support only for Christians , but required funds from external sources to provide "spiritual" support for those with non-Christian religious beliefs and those who are non-religious.*

OR

2) *No requests have been made for "spiritual" support by patients who have non-Christian religious beliefs or are non-religious.*

OR

3) *The Christian chaplains are believed to be adequate to provide "spiritual" support for those with non-Christian religious beliefs and those who are non-religious.*

If 1) then I would require for my survey an estimate of the cost of such support which has been provided by non-Christian religious bodies or other charitable trusts*.

If 2) I need no further information - although I find it difficult to believe that the need for "spiritual" care does not exist in any patients who are not Christian.

If 3) then the question arises as to what evidence does the UHB have for the quite remarkable claim that Christian chaplains can provide "spiritual" support for non-Christians and the non-religious?

* This poses two questions:

If there has been no cost for this support of non-Christian patients one has to ask why, if non-Christians can deliver this service for the UHB without

cost to the NHS Wales budget, how can the financial burden for Christian religious care be justified?

If only Christians receive "spiritual" care at public expense - is this not discriminatory?

Can the Board resolve this ambiguity and/or supply answers to the questions I pose?

Our response:

I can confirm that Cwm Taf University Health Board do not appoint chaplains on the basis of religion. Chaplains are appointed by the health board to work using the Spiritual Care Standards NHS Wales (2010) (http://www.ukbhc.org.uk/sites/default/files/standards_for_spiritual_care_services_in_the_nhs_in_wales_2010.pdf) which is a Welsh Government document that determines the provision of Spiritual Care in NHS Wales.

Cwm Taf University Health Board works in line with the standards and the definition of a Chaplain / Spiritual Care Giver (page 2):

'A person who is appointed and recognised as part of the specialist spiritual care team within a health care setting. His or her job is to seek out and respond to those who are expressing spiritual and religious need by providing the appropriate care, or facilitating that care, through contacting, with the patient's permission, an appropriate faith/belief group representative'.