



The Church of England
in Essex and East London
Diocese of Chelmsford

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Anglican Chaplaincy provision at NHS Nightingale Hospitals

A note to Diocesan and Area Bishops and others involved in chaplaincy provision.

Dear Bishop,

As the new Nightingale Hospitals for Covid-19 patients come on stream, we have had many requests for national guidance about chaplaincy provision at these hospitals.

Everyone is developing policy and practice as they go with these new developments, so we have produced the attached guidance note based on the experience of the dioceses closest to the first Nightingale Hospital at Newham in East London. Although there are likely to be minor differences in the approach taken by different NHS Trusts where Nightingale Hospitals are being established, we hope that by sharing the experience from Newham, we can help other areas to respond quickly and effectively.

Of course, not every diocese will host a Nightingale Hospital, but we wanted to share this material with all of you as it remains possible that the need for further beds may result in the rapid expansion of the Nightingale hospital network.

We hope that this is useful to you in framing your diocese's response and would be grateful if you could see that it reaches the people in your diocese who may be working to provide chaplaincy in this area of healthcare.

The Mission and Public Affairs team is preparing a similar note on chaplaincy at the new temporary morgues which we expect to circulate, also through episcopal networks, in the next day or two. The Bishop of St Albans also hopes to be in touch with details of a referral hotline that has been set up in his diocese for hospitals to seek pastoral care for bereaved families and which could be replicated elsewhere.

With thanks and every blessing,

+Sarah Mullally, Bishop of London

+Stephen Cottrell, Bishop of Chelmsford

+Peter Hill, Bishop of Barking

+Joanne Woolway Grenfell, Bishop of Stepney

Brendan McCarthy, National Adviser on Medical Ethics and Health and Social Care

Malcolm Brown, Director of Mission and Public Affairs, The Archbishops' Council





A number of calls have come from bishops and senior clergy in areas where the new Nightingale Hospitals are appearing or are planned, asking what provision may be possible for chaplaincy.

The first Nightingale Hospital was set up in Newham, East London, and the note which follows draws strongly on the experience there. The guidance has been checked and approved by the group leading the Church of England's national response to the Covid-19 crisis and is consistent with the best public health advice we have received.

The Nightingale Hospital in Newham

The new NHS Nightingale hospital facility in Newham, East London, has been built to care for patients suffering with Covid-19. This facility has capacity for between 4000 and 5000 beds. The hospital is situated within Chelmsford Diocese (Barking Area) and on the edge of London Diocese (Stepney Area).

The Board of Barts Health NHS Trust is hosting the new hospital, which means the Trust has formal legal responsibility for the operation and governance of the NHS Nightingale Hospital London, working closely with NHS London and the project team that is setting it up with help from NHS colleagues across the capital.

Consultation with the Barts Health NHS Trust was therefore crucial in establishing what chaplaincy provision could be undertaken.

Below are the protocols/guidelines established so far.

Access for chaplaincy

1. The need to maintain extremely strict discipline regarding contact with patients cannot be over emphasised. This means that direct personal contact between patients in ITU and all chaplains is not possible at the Nightingale Hospitals. This is true of other NHS Trusts, although protocols on non-ITU wards may differ. The Church of England supports this approach and, nationally and through the dioceses, should not seek exemptions as we try to model best practice on behalf of the whole community.
2. The experience in Newham suggests that much can be done remotely and in support of hospital staff without breaching rigorous distancing protocols.

Volunteers

1. Using the Good SAM scheme <https://www.bartshealth.nhs.uk/volunteers> the dioceses are referring volunteers who wish to offer general support to the Nightingale Hospital to support NHS staff practically. This may include food/ groceries/messaging and other such needful provision delivered to hotels and other centres where staff are embedded.
2. The dioceses are to encourage volunteers always to follow social distancing and personal hygiene rules as laid down by Government. Cross infection must be avoided, and volunteers must not go on to wards or near patients due the risk of cross infection.



Temporary chaplains

3. The dioceses are seconding a small number of diocesan clergy or licenced lay ministers to work within the Barts Health NHS Trust as volunteer NHS chaplains for short periods of weeks/months when additional capacity is needed among the existing chaplaincy team. This could be replicated elsewhere.
4. In the case of East London, these volunteer chaplains will be thoroughly checked by Barts Health NHS Trust occupational health advisers and trained in advance in appropriate infection control measures. Similar arrangements could be negotiated with the responsible NHS Trust elsewhere.
5. The temporary chaplains will provide pastoral care and support to staff inside the hospital and accommodation units.
6. They will work with the existing chaplaincy team to facilitate electronic communication between sick patients and relatives on the ward but distanced from patients (nurses will take iPads/phones to the bedside while chaplains facilitate on Zoom or similar).
7. They will not themselves minister to sick or dying patients at close hand (such duties will be performed by fully trained and qualified chaplains) and they must follow hospital protocols and take all reasonable precautions to ensure that they do not contribute to the spread of infection within, into, or out of the hospital setting.

Pastoral care

8. The dioceses are encouraging parish clergy to refer families with patients in the Nightingale facility to an administrator in Chelmsford Diocese or to a Deanery Coordinator in London Diocese, who will filter through to the NHS Chaplaincy team where appropriate. They are looking at an efficient system for setting up such channels of communication.
9. Local senior clergy, including Area Bishops, will be available to NHS chaplains (both existing and temporary) as a listening ear and will offer pastoral support to them throughout this time.

NHS Chaplains

Protocols for professionally trained and qualified NHS chaplains, *who are healthcare professionals* are of course a matter for NHS Trusts. At present we understand that there is a variance across Trusts on protocols relating both to access to Covid-19 ITU facilities and to ministry to the dying. It would be helpful to have a consistent approach nationally but that is not within our remit. Dioceses seeking to set up similar schemes to that in east London will need to work closely with the relevant NHS Trust and follow their guidelines if those should differ from the examples above

+ Stephen Cottrell

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