

# Spirit in mind

## SPIRIT IN MIND - STRATEGY

### Background

Spirit in Mind is a project which will enable the Trust to develop partnerships with locally based faith and humanist organisations. It will enhance the range and diversity of support available to people who use our services and by promoting a deeper understanding of the role of spirituality in healthcare it will also contribute to the wider service transformation agenda within the organisation.

An emerging research based consensus about the nature and scope of spirituality in healthcare is reflected in a recent study shortly to be published:

*“Spiritually competent practice involves compassionate engagement with the whole person as a unique human being, in ways which will provide them with a sense of meaning and purpose, where appropriate connecting or re-connecting with a community where they experience, a sense of wellbeing, addressing suffering and developing coping strategies to improve their quality of life. This includes the practitioner accepting a person’s beliefs and values, whether they are religious in foundation or not and practising with cultural competency”.*

*Wattis, J; Curran, S; Roberts, M.<sup>1</sup>*

Research undertaken within SWYPT and subsequently published in the *Journal of Advanced Nursing*<sup>2</sup> involved service users and carers being interviewed about their understanding of spirituality and their expectations in relation to spiritual care.

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<sup>1</sup> Spiritually Competent Practice (Pub. Late 2016) (Taylor & Francis)( (Based on original research in Occupational Therapy by Janice Jones, University of Huddersfield



From these discussions three central themes were identified:

- A. Spirituality' involves a personal search for meaning in life and also for values, principles and beliefs to live by. In times of illness or adversity there may be an intensity of inner conflict and distress associated with this process. This searching may find expression in either religious or humanist categories of thought.
- B. Spirituality is concerned with a need for genuineness, truth and honesty in personal relationships and more widely with a concern for social justice. This finds expression in such terms as respect, authenticity, integrity, fairness, understanding, kindness and compassion.
- C. Spirituality has to do with qualities that promote human flourishing: hope, purpose in life, energy for living, sense of inner peace, emotional resilience and well-being.

The Spirit in Mind project recognises and seeks to draw upon the possibilities opened up by working with locally based faith and humanist organisations (“spiritual partners”) to significantly enhance the diversity and quality of support available to users of our services. This is in line with recent government initiatives encouraging local government authorities to work in dialogue and partnership with the volunteering, community and faith sectors to achieve better their service delivery and social action goals.<sup>3</sup> This may include funding and commissioning, participation in governing bodies, committees and strategic partnerships.

The NHS five year forward view ‘Re-developing Sustainability and Transformation Plans to 2020/21’, NHS England Feb. 2016, identifies six underpinning principles for developing a new model of partnership with people and communities.

It states: “The five year forward view of tackling the health, care and finance gaps are only achievable by fundamentally changing the NHS’s relationship with people and communities.

The six underpinning principles are:

1. Care and support is person-centred: personalised, coordinated and empowering
2. Services are created in partnership with citizens and communities
3. Focus is on equality and narrowing inequalities
4. Carers are identified, supported and involved
5. Voluntary, community and social enterprise and housing sectors are involved as key partners and enablers
6. Volunteering and social action are recognised as key enablers.

The five year forward view reflects an emerging consensus more generally in healthcare which recognises that meeting the health needs of future populations will only be

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<sup>2</sup> The Concept of Spiritual Care in Mental Health Nursing, Greasley, P. et al. Jan. 33, 629-637, Mar. 2001

<sup>3</sup> Localism Act 2001

achievable by the development of a comprehensive effective and well-integrated system of health promotion and preventative care. A 'social healthcare' strategy pursues health education and health policies simultaneously. The aim of health education will be to make people understand how their behaviour and their environment effect their health and to teach them how to cope with stress in their daily lives. *"This in turn will require many new skills in disciplines not associated with medicine and is likely to be intellectually richer, more stimulating and more challenging than a medical practice that adheres exclusively to the biomedical model... solutions require a radical shift in our perceptions, our thinking and our values. We are now at the beginning of such a fundamental change of worldview in science and society – a change in paradigm as radical as the Copernican revolution".*

*Capra, F. & Luisi, P. The Systems View of Life. CUP 2014*

The Spirit in Mind project will support and add a further dimension to the work already being implemented in the Trust through the Creative Minds Strategy. Building on the success of that model, Spirit in Mind will enable the Trust to significantly extend its partnership working and community outreach and involvement.

### **Faith Groups and Community Action**

Faith groups and organisations are integral to UK society and are at work in every community. A majority of the population identify as having some kind of religious faith, spiritual beliefs or link to a religious tradition. Nationally faith organisations have in excess of 11,000 accredited leaders who can coordinate their communities and have an infrastructure of plant, buildings and networks (communications, logistics, volunteers and paid staff) with a unique mix of competencies which include skills in providing support to people in times of crisis. Most have strong local connections, a pronounced service ethos and an integral commitment to social justice. Faith based organisations have delivered services to vulnerable people for decades and have been in the forefront of responses to contemporary social problems such as debt, homelessness, poverty and refugees.

The Spirit in Mind project recognises that faith communities have a strong local presence, a deep understanding of local needs and social priorities and a strong motivation to support the wellbeing of their members and the wider community.

In addition, faith groups and other spiritual organisations offer:

- A strong and well established volunteering ethos;
- Ongoing involvement with social and community wellbeing agendas;
- Physical resources often in central locations;
- Direct channels into deprived neighbourhoods and hard to reach populations;
- Good sources of local intelligence and knowledge;
- A proven record of delivery of services (in some cases over centuries);
- A diversity of membership which crosses social and economic divides;
- Strong national and international affiliations;
- A good record of 'sticking around' over time.

There is abundant evidence locally, regionally and nationally of faith based community involvement in social action taking many different forms in response to particular local needs, eg:

- Debt counselling
- Community cafes
- Food banks
- Befriending services
- Meditation
- Bereavement support
- Mindfulness training
- Drop in centres
- Credit unions
- Anti-racism and refuge work
- Local neighbourhood improvement projects
- Work with the elderly
- Street Angels
- Homelessness projects
- Family support

The All party parliamentary group on faith and society chaired by Stephen Timms MP recently published a set of principles to guide joint working between local authorities and faith based organisations. Amongst the first signatories to a joint working covenant (2015) were Leeds City Council and Calderdale Council.

The covenant entails the following commitments:

Local Authorities commit to welcome the involvement of faith groups in the delivery of services and social action on an equal basis with other groups. In addition they commit to:

- Building relationship and trust with faith groups
- Adopting strategies for the engagement of faith communities in consultation exercises
- Encouraging faith groups to be involved in the re-shaping and design of services
- Establishing clear guidelines around funding
- Sharing training and learning opportunities between faith communities and the local authority

Faith based organisations commit to work actively with local authorities in the design and delivery of services to the public. In addition, they commit to:

- Seeking opportunities to bring people together to serve community, particularly its poorest and most isolated members
- Serving equally all local residents seeking to access the public services they offer, without proselytising, irrespective of their religion, gender, marital status, race, ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation, mental capacity, long term condition or disability
- Using resources provided for delivering a service wholly for that purpose and not for any other
- Ensuring excellence in child protection, health and safety, accountability and transparency
- Responding to consultations where appropriate
- Sharing training and learning opportunities between faith communities and the local authority

### **Agreed Principles**

The Spirit in Mind strategy will require prospective partner organisations to commit to a set of principles which are fully in accord with those developed by All Parliamentary Group on faith and society, so addressing reservations sometimes expressed at faith based social action in regard to proselytising. A recent report by the think tank Demos based a comprehensive review of previous research as well as 20 case studies of ‘faithful providers’ currently operating in the UK concluded:

“We found little evidence to confirm critics’ fears about faith group service providers: that their main motivation is proselytising, they are exclusivist and they discriminate. Rather faithful providers are highly motivated and effective, and often serve as permanent and persistent pillars of community action within local communities. Faith appears to be an

effective motivator for community service providers, akin to the notion of a public service ethos. Faithful providers are motivated by their desire to 'live their faith' and 'love thy neighbour' which often leads them to volunteer their time, work long hours for less pay and persevere over the challenges they encounter in working with the most vulnerable".<sup>4</sup>

### **Pilot Partnerships**

The initial stage of the roll out of Spirit in Mind (1-4 months) will see partnerships being developed between the Trust and between 6 and 10 pilot partner organisations. A presentation of the background and vision of Spirit in Mind was presented at a conference on spirituality in healthcare at Huddersfield University in July 2015. This resulted in many expressions of interest in the project and led to four community based exploratory workshops taking place in the Autumn of last year. Discussions with prospective pilot organisations have been taking place since the start of 2016. Initial pilots will be representative of both the cultural and religious diversity of the area served by the Trust.

A conference showcasing the initial stages of the project and highlighting recent developments in faith based social action is planned for late 2016.

Commensurate with an expansion in the number of partnerships it is envisaged that potential will arise for the creation of Spirit in Mind "Hubs" – locally based alliances of Spirit in Mind partners working together with the Trust to collaborate in shared responses to significant social and community issues in their areas.

### **Aims**

- To develop partnerships with locally based faith organisations and humanist organisations broadly in sympathy with holistic and spiritual approaches to community involvement in order to prioritise and through partnership working seek to provide effective responses.
- To incorporate a strong research element and create opportunities to debate the spiritual dimension to recovery and wellbeing in conference, seminar and training contexts
- To seek external sources of funding for projects which involve joint working and which may contribute to Government policy initiatives in relation to community cohesion: eg. Localism; Prevent

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<sup>4</sup> Faithful Providers, Jonathan Birdwell, Demos 2012 "Commissioning faith groups to provide services that can save money and strengthen a community"

- To address key target areas detailed in the NHS Five Year Forward View (2020/21) especially those relating to partnership, equality, involvement of carers, social enterprise and volunteering.
- Increase the range and diversity of support to people who use our services
- To support the key Trust objective of providing services close to where people live
- To involve service users, carers and staff in identifying, assessing and implementing good practice in spiritual care within SWYPT and beyond.
- To foster the development of “faith and health” forums”, local hubs bringing together faith organisations, humanist groups, healthcare providers and other stakeholders to identify local health and social care priorities.
- To contribute to the wider service transformation agenda within the organisation by championing innovative patterns of co-working and promoting a deeper understanding of the spiritual dimension to care and recovery.

### **Conclusion**

The Spirit in Mind project breaks new ground in partnership collaboration between the faith and statutory sectors and puts the Trust in a strong position of thought leadership in an area of increasing interest to policy makers. It lends strong support to the development of a focus on compassion in health and social care and provides a model of collaborative working which promotes community cohesion.

For service users and carers it offers increased levels and choice of ‘close to home’ sources of support and the opportunity to engage with innovative approaches to reducing stress and promoting health, recovery and well-being.