



Chaplaincy / Spiritual Care Services

Information for patients

When we, or those close to us, come into hospital for whatever reason, it is often a time of major life change and challenge. Hospitals are wonderful places of hope and healing, but they are also places where difficult decisions have to be made, different kinds of losses have to be faced, and treatments themselves are often painful, lengthy, and debilitating. Someone once said that everyone wants our hospitals to be there, but no-one really wants to have to use them!

It is at times like these that we often ask questions that at other times we do not really think about. Questions about big issues such as:

- Why is this happening to me or my family?
- What is the purpose of pain and suffering?
- Why do bad things happen to good people?
- What have I done to deserve this?
- Is there a God and if so, why is God allowing this to happen?
- Is there any hope?

For this reason, East Kent Hospitals provide a chaplaincy service to help patients, relatives, carers, and staff work through these and other issues and to provide spiritual, pastoral, and bereavement support to those going through times of suffering, uncertainty, and loss. Chaplains are also there to help celebrate new life, health, and healing.

Do you have to be religious to call for the help of a Chaplain?

Chaplains are there for everyone, whether religious or not. They are non-judgmental and will be much more concerned about offering support and a 'listening ear' than with what you may or may not believe.

They are also able to provide specialised support for those who practice a religious faith, whether Christian or other. Hospital Chaplains recognise that while most people would not call themselves 'religious', many do have a faith of some kind. They are available to support, to listen, to pray, to be a 'shoulder to cry on', to chat over a coffee, as well as to provide ways to celebrate good news and new life. They will treat everything said to them in the strictest confidence.

What kind of things do Hospital Chaplains do?

People who have a religious faith have a right to be able to practice their faith while in hospital and Chaplains help in any way they can to make this happen.

- They can pray with and for patients and their relatives / carers.
- They can read the Bible and other Sacred Texts.
- They can provide sacramental care in the form of Holy Communion, Blessing, Anointing, and Baptism.
- They can also contact the leaders of other local faith communities when asked.

Hospital Chaplains can also conduct funeral and memorial services for those who sadly die or lose loved ones in hospital. They are skilled in providing other rituals to mark major life events when asked to do so, such as the birth of a baby, the blessing of a marriage, or thanksgiving for recovery from illness or accident.

How can I get in touch with a Hospital Chaplain?

Our Chaplains may be contacted through a member of staff or by calling one of the contact numbers in this leaflet. They can arrange to meet with you at the bedside, in one of their offices, or in one of the Chapels / Prayer Rooms of our hospitals. In an emergency they can be called out during the night or at weekends.

Can anyone use the Chapels / Prayer Rooms in the hospitals?

There are Chapels / Prayer Rooms in all our hospitals which are open for everyone to use for a bit of peace and quiet or to reflect and pray, regardless of religious belief or lack of it. They are clearly signposted and easily accessible.

In some of our hospitals there are also special rooms set aside for use by those belonging to religions other than Christian.

Are services held in the Hospital Chapels?

There are regular services held in all our Chapels and everyone is welcome – patients, relatives / carers, and staff. We may even be able to offer trained helpers to accompany patients to and from the Chapel for these. However, services are not always held on a Sunday, so if you would like more details about the days and times, please contact one of the Chaplains through the contact numbers given in this leaflet.

And finally...

Remember that Hospital Chaplains are there for everyone. You do not have to be in any way 'religious' to ask to see a Chaplain. Most of us at one time or another have to face searching questions and make difficult decisions, and at times like these it is good to know that there is someone to listen, to support, to encourage, or to question. We want to be there for you, so please do not hesitate to call us if you think we can be of help.

Contact telephone numbers

- Chaplaincy, **Kent and Canterbury Hospital**, Canterbury
Telephone: 01227 864095
- Chaplaincy, **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital**, Margate
Telephone: 01843 234273
- Chaplaincy, **William Harvey Hospital**, Ashford
Telephone: 01233 633331 extension 723-8014
- Head of Chaplaincy Services for East Kent Hospitals
Telephone: 01843 234287
Mobile: 07717 540972

In an emergency or out of hours, telephone 01233 633331 and ask for the operator, then ask to be put through to the Duty Chaplain.

For more information, please go to the Chaplaincy service page (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/services/chaplaincy/>) of the Trust web site.

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 783145 (tel://+441227783145), or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net (ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)

Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals website (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/information-for-patients/patient-information/>).

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