



CONSTITUTION

Northern Ireland Healthcare Chaplains' Association

1. Name:

The Association shall be known as The Northern Ireland Healthcare Chaplains' Association (NIHCA).

2. Mission and Values Statement:

The NIHCA shall exist to promote and develop the personal, vocational and professional well-being of healthcare chaplains, supporting them in exercising a professionally competent and ethical ministry, and to promote public confidence in healthcare chaplaincy.

Recognising the inherent dignity and worth of the human person, the Association shall seek to ensure that faith, religion and spirituality are recognised as essential dimensions of each person. The Association shall desire to see and be committed to working towards a healthcare system where these needs are met with equality, inclusivity and justice.

3. Aims and functions of the Association:

- 3.1 To support healthcare chaplains in the exercise of their ministry.
- 3.2 To encourage continued professional and vocational development through the promotion and provision of appropriate training, dissemination of resources and supporting research in the field of health care chaplaincy.
- 3.3 To encourage reflective practice through the provision of opportunities for sharing, increasing knowledge, and theological and pastoral reflection.
- 3.4 To be a representative and consultative body for chaplains.
- 3.5 To establish and promote good working relationships with other organisations concerned with healthcare.
- 3.6 To regularly communicate and consult with chaplains, church and faith communities, DHSSPSNI and other national and international organisations.

4. Membership:

- 4.1 Membership of the Association shall be open to all chaplains (salaried or voluntary) working in healthcare settings in Northern Ireland.
- 4.2a Associate membership of the Association may be granted to former or retired chaplains who have been Members of the Association, in recognition of their service. Associate Members shall have no voting rights.
- 4.2b Affiliate membership of the association may be granted to others who have an interest in working with chaplains and engaging with training in spiritual, religious and pastoral care. Their annual membership fee shall be double that of salaried chaplains. Affiliate members are eligible to attend training days and the AGM but are not eligible to apply for NIHCA grants or have voting rights.
- 4.2c Provisional membership of the association may be granted to those who wish to explore healthcare chaplaincy as a possible vocation and profession. Their annual membership will be double that of salaried chaplains. Provisional members are eligible to attend training days and the AGM and may be considered for NIHCA grants on a year to year, and individual by individual basis. Provisional members have no voting rights.
- 4.3 The Executive Council shall have the right to determine, after consultation with Members, categories and conditions of membership.

- 4.4 The Executive Council shall have the right to approve or reject applications for membership.
- 4.5 All Members of the Association shall abide by the Code of Conduct of the Association.
- 4.6 The Executive Council shall have the right to terminate membership provided that the Member concerned shall have the right to be heard by the Executive Council before a final decision is made; at such a meeting the Member concerned may also nominate another Member or other person to speak on their behalf.

5. Association Officers and Executive Council:

- 5.1 The officers of the Association shall be: A President, five Vice-Presidents, Director of Training, Secretary and a Treasurer.
- 5.2 The President shall be elected by the AGM on the recommendation of the Executive Council following an interview based on experience and skills for the role. Normal term of office shall be two years which can be extended by one additional year (subject to approval of the AGM) if circumstances demand. The President shall normally come from within the Executive Council; however, if circumstances require it, a member may be elected, providing - a) They have a minimum of five years' active membership of the NIHCA, and b) They have evidence of regular attendance at NIHCA training.
- 5.3 The Vice-Presidents shall be representative of the Catholic Church, Church of Ireland, Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church in Ireland and Others. They are appointed by their respective ecclesiastical authority, except the Others Vice-President who shall be nominated and elected by member chaplains from that collective group at the AGM. Vice-Presidents shall hold office for a period of two years. They may be re-appointed / re-elected for one further term of office by the same process.
- 5.4 The Treasurer and Secretary shall be elected at the AGM, on the recommendation of the Executive Council following an interview based on experience and skills for the role, for a Term of office of three years. These officers may be re-elected for one further term of office at the AGM.
- 5.5 The Association shall be serviced by a Director of Training who shall be elected at the AGM, on the recommendation of the Executive Council following an interview based on experience and skills for the role. The period of service shall be three years, which may be extended one further term of office, at the AGM. For practical purposes the Executive Council shall be deemed to be the employing body.
- 5.6 A webmaster may be appointed by the Executive Council to oversee and coordinate the website and social media.
- 5.7 Remuneration shall be given to the President, Secretary, Treasurer, Director of Training and Webmaster, at a rate agreed between the Executive Council and the DHSSPSNI.
- 5.8 In addition to the officers and Director of Training, the Executive Council shall consist of other members such that the total number of Executive Council members shall be no more than 18.
- 5.9 Each member of the Executive Council must be clear on their roles and responsibilities.
- 5.10 All members of the Council shall be actively engaged in chaplaincy.
- 5.11 The membership of the Council shall be such that the various denominations are fairly represented. At least two members shall represent the four denominations named above (5.3), usually one nominated by the competent ecclesiastical authority and one nominated

by Association Members belonging to the denomination. Members of other denominations and faith communities may also be elected to the council.

- 5.12 The Executive Council shall have the power to fill vacancies that may arise during the year.
- 5.13 The Executive Council shall invite the DHSSPS to send an officer as a member of the Council in a consultant capacity (with no voting rights.)
- 5.14 A member of the Executive Council shall cease to be a member:
- upon giving the Secretary of the Association written notice of resignation;
 - upon failing to attend three consecutive meetings of the Executive Council without satisfactory reason or apology;
 - upon withdrawal of nomination by the nominating denomination;
 - upon ceasing to be engaged in chaplaincy ministry.
- 5.15 The Executive Council shall meet at such times as the Council may determine but, in any case, it shall meet at least twice annually.
- 5.16 Five voting members of the Executive Council shall form a quorum.
- 5.17 The President or, in his/her absence one of the other office holders, shall chair meetings of the Executive Council.
- 5.18 The Executive Council shall have the power to make such rules as may be necessary for the conduct of the Association provided that these rules do not conflict with anything contained in this Constitution.
- 5.19 The Executive Council shall be responsible for all approaches made on behalf of the association to the DHSSPSNI and other authorities and organisations.
- 5.20 The Executive Council may establish working groups to examine particular issues. Membership of these groups may include persons who are not Members of the Association, except that the number of non-Members shall not exceed Members. Such groups shall report directly to the Executive Council.
- 5.21 All officers, elected and co-opted members are accountable to the Executive Council and the membership through the AGM.

6. Meetings of the Association:

- 6.1 The Annual General Meeting (AGM) shall normally be held in the month of May with the date and place to be fixed by the Executive Council. Members shall be notified 42 days in advance of this meeting. This notification shall include any invitation to nominate Members for election to offices and membership of the Executive Council.
- 6.2 The agenda of the AGM shall be determined by the Executive Council but shall include the election of office-bearers and the presentation of the annual report. Any Member wishing to introduce business at the AGM must give notice in writing to the secretary no later than 14 days before the notified date of meeting.
- 6.3 To facilitate application and interviews, nominations for election to office of the Executive Council shall be delivered in writing to the secretary or designated officer no later than 60 days before the notified date of the AGM. For other members of the Executive Council 14 days' notice is required.
- 6.4 20 Members shall form a quorum at any meeting of the Association.
- 6.5 The Council may call other general meetings as and when desirable.

- 6.6 An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) may be called when requested in writing by ten members of the Association. The request must be given to the Secretary 28 days before the proposed date of such a meeting and must include a reasoned statement of the reason for calling the meeting. 14 days' notice of such a meeting must be given to Members.
- 6.7 At all meetings of the Association, the Executive Council and any other sub-groups or representative groups, a proper record of the proceedings shall be kept and office-bearers, upon resignation, shall hand over to the Association such Minute Books and other records as may be in their possession.
- 6.8 At all meetings of the Association, voting, where it is required, shall be by simple majority. In the event of an equality of votes the President (or the person deputising for him/her) shall have a second or casting vote.

7. Association Finances:

- 7.1 The Treasurer shall have primary responsibility for the good stewardship of the Association's financial resources.
- 7.2 The Associations' accounting year shall run from 1st April to 31st March.

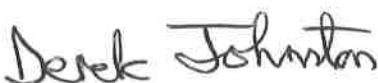
8. Amendment of the Constitution:

- 8.1 The Constitution may only be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the Members present at the AGM.
- 8.2 Notice of such proposed amendments shall be sent to the Secretary 28 days before the date of said meeting.
- 8.3 Notice of proposed amendments shall be given to all Members of the Association at least 21 days before the date of said meeting.


9. Dissolution of the Association:

- 9.1 The Association may be dissolved at any time by a resolution passed by not less than a two-thirds majority of those present and voting at a meeting of the Association of which at least 28 days' notice shall have been given to all Members of the Association.
- 9.2 Such resolution may give instructions for the disposal of any assets held by or in the name of the Association, provided that if any property remains after the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities, such property shall not be paid to or distributed among the Members of the Association, but shall be given or transferred to other organisations or institutions having aims similar to some or all the aims of the Association as the Association may determine. Such distribution shall not take place until three months after the date of the dissolution of the Association, and shall also be subject to the approval of DHSSPSNI.
- 9.3 It shall be the responsibility of the office holders at the time of dissolution to oversee the winding up of the affairs of the Association, including the disposal of assets, in accordance with the resolution of dissolution.

This Constitution was adopted at the 63rd AGM on 31st May 2023 thereby revoking all previous constitutions.



Rev Derek Johnston, President



Deaconess Heather McCracken, Secretary

APPENDIX One: Roles and responsibilities

1. President:

- a) Chairing Executive Council meetings
- b) Chairing general meetings of the Association
- c) Chairing/directing other gatherings of the Association
- d) Representing the Association to the DHSSPS NI
- e) Representing the Association to Healthcare Providers
- f) Representing the Association to the Churches/Church bodies
- g) Representing the Association on committees/bodies to which the NIHCA is formally affiliated
- h) Representing the Association at other meetings / gatherings
- i) Making urgent decisions on behalf of the Association Executive
- j) Making formal / informal visits to chaplaincy units
- k) The above roles may be shared with other Officers

2. Vice-Presidents:

- a) To support the President and deputise when necessary
- b) To be a link to their ecclesiastical authority or group of chaplains
- c) To ensure two-way communication on relevant matters

3. Director of Training:

- a) To coordinate the training programme of the NIHCA by drawing up an annual programme by the AGM each year. This should include two-day and one day courses, and any other training under the auspices of the NIHCA
- b) To arrange suitable venues, facilities, speakers, etc.
- c) To ensure NIHCA members receive adequate notice of any training courses
- d) To consult widely with members about areas/topics for training
- e) To maintain a register of attendance at training events
- f) To evaluate all training provided with a view to service development and improvement
- g) To arrange training/discussion input for the AGM
- h) To work with other appropriate training bodies/groups for the further benefit of chaplains and the promotion of mutual understanding
- i) To provide an annual report to the Executive and the AGM of all NIHCA training offered in each year
- j) To establish and administer, with the Secretary, a form of certification for chaplains who have undertaken NIHCA training
- k) To act as a trainer where required

4. Secretary:

- a) Preparation for Executive meetings – arranging venue, sending out adequate notice, preparation of minutes and agendas in advance of meetings, etc.
- b) Keeping up-to-date minutes of Executive meetings
- c) Sending out reports/responses
- d) Maintaining an up-to-date chaplaincy data-base
- e) With the Officers, ensure regular communication with the wider membership
- f) Develop relationships with member churches, DHSSPS NI, Health Trusts, chaplaincy bodies within and outside NI, other relevant parties/groups
- g) With the President respond on behalf of NIHCA to above

- h) Keep up to date with challenges and opportunities for chaplaincy in general
- i) Provide advice and support on policy matters where needed or requested

5. Treasurer:

The Treasurer shall have primary responsibility for the good stewardship of the Association's financial resources. His/her responsibilities shall include:

- a) the maintenance of bank accounts held in the Association's name
- b) the reception of all membership fees, donations and grants made to the Association
- c) the prompt payment of the Association's debts
- d) the payment of remuneration due to office bearers and employees
- e) the preparation of budgets and financial reports for the Executive Council and AGM
- f) the initiating of an independent annual audit of the Association's finances
- g) Arranging adequate insurance cover for the Executive Council in overseeing the work of NIHCA

6. Member nominated members:

- a) To be a link to their denominational chaplains or group of chaplains
- b) To ensure two-way communication on relevant matters

7. Webmaster:

- a) To keep website information up to date
- b) To raise awareness of NIHCA matters with Faith communities and more widely