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Guidance

Implementing the Prevent duty in higher education (HE): chaplains

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1. Overview

Chaplains have a variety of roles and skills relevant to building good relations on campus. They are familiar with handling issues relating to religion, bring knowledge of one or more faiths, and have contacts with individuals who can be called upon for advice on a range of faith-related issues.

With their dual commitment to their faith tradition and the higher education provider, chaplains seek the good of the university and the development of positive expressions of faith within it. Part of that is working to build relationships both within the provider and between the provider and the wider community. Typically, they have contact with all faith groups on campus and local interfaith networks.

Chaplains have an ongoing role of listening, educating, and bringing people together for dialogue, socialising, worship and learning. They can also be called upon for advice on religious issues, including what contributes to good relations between religions and between those who do not hold such a faith, and on specific matters which arise on campus.

2. The variety of roles

The relationship that providers have with their chaplaincies vary widely. The faith of the chaplain, the funding of chaplains, facilities such as prayer rooms, the management arrangements and so on. Higher education providers should give due regard to the processes of recruitment by considering measures such as DBS checks and consulting with appropriate faith groups.

3. Prevent compliance

What all higher education providers share is a requirement by the [Prevent duty guidance](#) that their students are provided with sufficient pastoral and chaplaincy support. As part of this requirement, institutions are required to have clear and widely available policies on the use of prayer rooms and other faith-related facilities: such policies should include arrangement for managing these facilities such as through an oversight committee, and for dealing with issues that may arise through use of those facilities.

Chaplains' responsibilities vary widely in relation to Prevent. Some have a key role in implementing the duty, some may be part of Prevent steering / working groups, whereas some may occupy neither of these roles. Higher education providers and chaplains must find a solution that respects the independence of the role of chaplain, whilst also ensuring a coherent approach to protecting students from extremism.

Chaplains are also well-placed through their ongoing relationships with students to identify and discuss changes in behaviour or outlook and provide advice and support where necessary. Higher education providers may therefore wish to consider whether chaplains are appropriate staff to be trained in an understanding of factors that make people support terrorist ideologies or engage in terrorist-related activity, so they can be helped to recognise vulnerability and what action to take in these instances as recommended in the Prevent guidance.

4. Resources

There are a number of resources available to support higher education providers and chaplains in good campus relations. The following links may be especially helpful for advice around inter-faith relations:

- [NUS Good Campus Relations](#)
- [ECU guidance - Promoting good relations on campus: a guide for higher and further education](#)
- [UUK guidance - Promoting good campus relations: dealing with hate crimes and intolerance](#)

There are also a number of membership organisations that may be relevant to chaplains as an opportunity to network with peers. Some of such organisations may also discuss developments in Prevent and counter-extremism legislation with their members:

- [The Church of England](#)
- [Conference of Catholic Chaplains in Higher Education](#)
- [University Jewish Chaplaincy](#)
- [Association of Muslim Chaplains in Education](#)
- Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly Chaplaincy Team (email address: chaplaincy@bahai.co.uk)
- The Buddhist Society Chaplaincy (email address: info@thebuddhistsociety.org)

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