

## **CGA/18/34 - Understanding and maximising the roles and contributions of NHS Chaplains across the UK**

The NHS in the UK employs an estimated 1500+ chaplains. Chaplains deliver specialist spiritual care to patients and staff across the NHS, offering support to those of all faith and none. Despite the number and cost of chaplains, their role and how they are best used is currently unclear. Registration with a national regulatory body is voluntary, and there is no overarching strategy underpinning their recruitment, education or professionalisation. We plan to submit an application for funding to NIHR to carry out a realist evaluation based on multiple case studies and surveys in all 4 UK countries to 1) Examine the ways in which health authorities and boards are currently using chaplains and 2) Learn the lessons and identify best practice to inform future chaplain training and roles. In order to optimise the design and feasibility of the study we need to do 3 things. Firstly, identify how we can locate chaplains and maximise their responses on a national survey; secondly, identify the best locations for the case studies and agree participation in the sites; thirdly, identify and meaningfully engage relevant service users in the study design. The current feasibility study will also provide useful standalone, original data for Scotland.