Hospitals axed, wages cut, frontline staff dispensed with – but Chaplains are sitting pretty

Posted: Sat, 15th Sep 2012 by Terry Sanderson

Several alarming headlines over the past few weeks have indicated that hospitals up and down the country are about to close and that those that stay open will have savage staff culls and wage cuts.

- *Telegraph: Plans to close hospitals "dangerous and flawed"*
- *Enfield Independent: Protests at plans to close Chase Farm hospital's A & E*
- *Blackpool Gazette: Stage set for battle over axed Blackpool hospital*
- *Daily Mirror: A&E departments to be axed across West London*
- *Guardian: Acute hospital care on brink of collapse, say doctors*

But look at the jobs being advertised within the NSS for clergypeople of various kinds. In the *Church Times* classified advertising we discover that Lincoln County Hospital is advertising for a chaplain in the salary range £25,528 – £34,189, plus on-call premium (they also want an on-call chaplain at £25 a session).

And then there is:

- Mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust wants a Head of Chaplaincy Services who will be able to "lead worship" and will be on Grade 7 (£30,460 – £40,157)
- Wirral University Teaching Hospital is offering £25,528 – £34,189 pa for a chaplain
- Pennine Acute Hospital Trust has £21,176 – £27,625 pro rata to spend on an assistant chaplain and also £21,176 – £27,625 on an "entry level" chaplain.
- In the University Hospitals of Leicester a Sikh Chaplain is being sought for £25,528 – £34,189.
- In Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, they've got £25,528 – £34,189 per annum to spend on a chaplain.
- Merseycare NHS Trust wants a Christian chaplain for £25,528 – £34,189 pa
- Oxford Universities Hospitals are also after a chaplains for £25,528 – £34,189 pa
- Northampton General Hospital are offering £29,464 – £34,189 pa for a chaplain.

As our precious health services are falling one after another in the face of the recession, the Church must be very happy that the NHS is prepared to pick up the substantial wage bill for the clerics it should be paying for itself.

Terry Sanderson

Terry Sanderson was the former president of the National Secular Society. The views expressed in our blogs are those of the author and may not necessarily represent the views of the NSS.

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