

## Background Papers for the 2022 Annual Meetings

### Motion 1 FROM TWELVE FULL MEMBERS

#### The NHS

The proposers are aware that decisions about health service reorganisation occur at the devolved level. This motion, however, seeks to critique the drivers of change at the level of the state, hence the reference solely to “HM Government”.

Definitions: ‘Privatisation’ sometimes causes confusion in the on-going debate about the NHS. It can mean:

1. State-funded, (from taxation) universal healthcare is **abandoned** and the responsibility returned to the individual to fund their families’ healthcare.
2. ‘Free at point of use’ healthcare (like our NHS), but with non-state fully commercial or charitable businesses, ever more significantly involved.

**At this stage of public policy, it is the second of these that is at issue in this motion.** The proposers contend that HM Government has no true mandate to privatise the NHS by stealth, the service being understood as a public resource, intended to give a good standard of care for all. Yet huge amount of public funding are being diverted into the internal market, private providers, PFI debts, multinational accounting firms and corporate consultants. The Health and Care Bill could undermine access to care and universal standards by locking in privatisation, dividing the NHS into Integrated Care Systems that operate to privilege private sector interests in a way not seen before. The Bill would give ministers scope to migrate towards a US-style system - a poor performer in terms of value for money, yet generating vast profits for the private sector. Rules around tendering should not be weakened; the public have a right to expect governance by those whose fiduciary duty is to patients rather than shareholders.

**NHS Care by Private ‘Providers’:** Repeated NHS and social care reorganisations have enabled non-NHS organisations to enter the NHS ‘market’. Many will be familiar with the ideological arguments pressed upon us over decades. Here are some powerful arguments against ever-increasing private sector involvement:

- ‘Risk-shedding’ high-cost services (such as Intensive Therapy Units) and ‘cherry-picking’ profitable services (e.g. elective surgery)
- Potential reduction of employee salaries and conditions
- ‘Squeezing’ of services still publicly provided – A&E (c.f. NHS dentistry)
- Loss of £ billions of tax-payers’ money into global capital markets

- Inequality generally rises in economies that pursue privatisation - leading to poorer health outcomes (1)
- Loss of idealism embodied in the idea of the NHS

Note: In 2021 an estimate from the London School of Economics was that about 18% of NHS spend in England was taken by non-NHS organisations (about £20 billion pa) (2) NB: not including GP services- these are 'private contractors' but are tightly regulated within the NHS, and mostly work wholly for the NHS, although new Alternative Provider Medical Services GP contracts are enabling companies, rather than individual GPs to take over practices.

If the motion is approved, the EC is requested to explore suitable communication with HM Government to express the view of the Annual Meeting.

### References

(1) The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone. Richard Wilkinson & Kate Pickett: Penguin Books 2010

(2) <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/nhs-spending-on-the-independent-sector/>  
New Health & Care Bill: <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/health-and-care-bill-key-questions>

Timeline of NHS reforms: <https://www.yournhsneedsyou.com/timeline/>

Privatisation in NHS: <https://www.patients4nhs.org.uk/private-companies-involvement-in-the-nhs/>

Critique of NHS bill: <https://publicmatters.org.uk/2021/05/26/nhs-bill-2021-examining-forthcoming-proposals-for-integrated-care/>

By the Revd Jo James and the Revd Matthew Smith (drawing substantially on material from Dr Rob Oulton)

## Motion 2 FROM THE FOY SOCIETY

### Trans Gender Rights

#### Gender identity

To be transgender is to know that your gender is different from the gender you were assigned at birth. To be cisgender is to know that your gender is the same as the gender you were assigned at birth.

The motion does not seek to introduce any new rights for transgender people. It also does not seek to remove any rights from cisgender people, either men or women.

Instead, this motion seeks to re-affirm the General Assembly's commitment to transgender rights in the face of ongoing "trans panic" media campaigns which closely resemble "gay panic" episodes from former decades: e.g. <https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2018/12/07/anti-trans-group-bathroom-predator-myth/>, "Our side concocted the 'bathroom safety' male predator argument as a way to avoid an uncomfortable battle over LGBT ideology".

("Biological sex" is sometimes used in an attempt to argue against recognising gender identities. However it is not at all clear what counts as "biological sex". Chromosomal phenotype, hormonal environment during foetal development, physical anatomy at birth, and hormone response during puberty are all potential candidates, but "sex" as defined by any one of these items can and does differ from "sex" defined by any other of them. And as well as disagreeing with each other, each of these biological items forms a genuine spectrum with many people falling in intermediate areas within the spectrum.)

#### Transgender rights are human rights

International and national law has recognised gender identity as a civil right, including in the UK. The right to change sex has existed since the Gender Reassignment Act 2004. In addition, gender reassignment status, and a person's sex / gender are both protected characteristics in the UK under the Equalities Act 2010. In UK law, gender and sex are synonyms and single-sex rights are the same as single-gender rights.

Under current UK law, a transgender man is a man and a transgender woman is a woman for all legal purposes. Nearly all public services and government identification, apart from an updated birth certificate, are already available on a simple self-declaration. The NHS will also update medical records on this basis:

(<http://gmmmg.nhs.uk/docs/guidance/RCPsych-CR181-Good-practice-guidelines-for-the-assessment-and-treatment-of%20adults-with-gender-dysphoria.pdf>)

“Once patients formally change their names and style of address, all GP, gender identity clinic, hospital and NHS records should be amended to reflect this change... A simple statement of intent will suffice.”

The motion affirms that to have one’s true gender identity recognised and protected by the state is a civil right, and that people must be able to assert that right without oppressive and harmful barriers.

### The self-declaration model

Unlike most public records, a birth certificate can only be updated by obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate (“GRC”) from a Gender Recognition Panel. Part of the process of obtaining this is to live as your true gender in public for a **minimum** of two years.

The UK government has said: **“In too many cases the current system prevents them from acquiring legal recognition of who they are, denying them the dignity and respect that comes with it. It often leaves trans people in the difficult situation of living in one gender, and holding Government-issued forms of identification, credit cards, driving licence and all other documents in that gender, but a birth certificate and legal status in another”.** ([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/721725/GRA-Consultation-document.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721725/GRA-Consultation-document.pdf), emphasis added).

The self-declaration model means that the application for a GRC includes a statutory declaration by the applicant that they are updating their gender. A statutory declaration is a signed and witnessed statement, and making a false statutory declaration is an act of perjury. (A false declaration may also be prosecuted as fraud if it is made to obtain any advantage.) The Gender Recognition Panel no longer has any decision making role.

The law in Ireland changed to this simple model for a Gender Recognition Certificate more than five years ago

([https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/birth\\_family\\_relationships/changing\\_to\\_your\\_preferred\\_gender.html](https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/birth_family_relationships/changing_to_your_preferred_gender.html)). Other countries already using a self-declaration model include Denmark and Malta.

If this model was brought into law in the UK or by devolved governments in the UK, there would be no change to the existing self-declaration process for most government identification (including a passport) and for medical records, because all these records are already updated on request. But obtaining a birth certificate that also shows a person’s true gender would be cheaper, simpler, and shorter.

In the UK, the Equalities Act 2010 allows single sex spaces or the provision of single sex services where it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim to provide the service. This right would not change under the self-declaration model.

#### Request to the Chief Officer

Finally, the Chief Officer is requested to lobby for the self-declaration model during government consultations and on other suitable occasions.

As a liberal religious body, the General Assembly should provide a distinctive religious point of view that promotes freedom of conscience. The motion asserts that the right to an honest and personal expression of gender identity is indivisible from freedom of conscience and from freedom of religion.

The authors hope that the motion will also inspire our congregations and the General Assembly's youth and religious education programme to continue to celebrate transgender individuals, support transgender rights, and explore diverse gender identities, but the motion does not commit to any specific budget or actions.

#### Conclusion

Having noted that gender identity is a civil right, the authors repeat our conviction that to speak the truth about ones' own self is a deeply spiritual act of conscience, and one that deserves to be celebrated.

No-one owes a duty to share what can be very private matters. It is always a personal choice how and when, and to what audience. But when people on this journey do find power to speak their deeply considered truth, it is an astonishing privilege to hear and witness.

**Motion 3 FROM EAST MIDLAND UNITARIANS**

**Branding**

East Midland Unitarians comprises 8 Unitarian places of worship plus one active house fellowship. We have a strong and proactive district association meeting four times a year.

When the new chalice logo emerged, it became apparent at several district meetings that some representatives were perplexed and uneasy that the new image of our symbol had not received a proper consultation process with constituent Congregations and Fellowships which make up the General Assembly.

At the December 2021 Quarterly Meeting of East Midland Unitarians the unanimous view of the meeting was to submit the Notice of Motion to the April General Assembly Meetings for debate.

Members of East Midland Unitarians are united in their understanding that, in order to ensure confidence in denominational structures, an appropriate consultation should take place specifically to ascertain the view of the whole Unitarian Movement which makes up the General Assembly.

## Motion 4 FROM BRISTOL FRENCHAY

### We the Peoples Campaign

Global governance is failing people on issues such as the climate crisis, biodiversity loss, violent conflict, forced displacement, inequality, pandemic vaccination and ongoing discrimination. Tangible changes in the UN's functioning are urgently needed to realize the promise of the Preamble of the UN Charter which begins with the words, "We the Peoples of the United Nations".

The WeThePeoples campaign is a grass roots initiative to bring reforms to UN and global governance. It aims to rebalance decision-making over time from top-down 'establishment' (partisan political/corporate/national interests) driven to be more connected to real peoples' needs and concerns (inclusive, values-related and cross-generation based). This needs a culture shift that can be aided by structural changes.

People want their voices of pain and need to be heard and feel governments are mainly listening to voices of economic and corporate power. Unitarian and other belief/faith wisdoms have a valuable role to play in role-modelling the best values for us all with principles such as dignity, justice, equity, truth, meaning, compassion, conscience, peace, liberty for all. Meeting these for individuals and in community, listening to each other and being enriched by diversity will help bring greater joy to all from local to global communities, putting economics in its place as a facilitating factor.

The motion aims to enable the GA to actively support campaigns for more effective participatory global governance to reflect the input of all citizens globally by supporting a World Citizens Initiative, "We the Peoples Campaign"

#### The Campaign

[www.WeThePeoples.org](http://www.WeThePeoples.org) is receiving endorsement support from across the world by civic society organisations and individuals. At the UN's 75th anniversary, heads of state and government committed to making global governance more inclusive. The UN Secretary-General promised to promote a new model based on full, inclusive and equal participation in global institutions.

This campaign we wish to support has 3 complementary proposals to strengthen the inclusive and democratic character of UN decision-making and influence:

i) Setting the Agenda - The World Citizen Initiative enables global citizens to promote particular issues, papers or resolutions on key issues of global concern for further action at the highest political level. Any proposal that reaches a certain threshold of popular support

should be put on the agenda of the UN General Assembly or Security Council. More at:-  
[https://www.worldcitizensinitiative.org/files/unwci\\_study.pdf](https://www.worldcitizensinitiative.org/files/unwci_study.pdf)

ii) Bottom-up Democracy Setting up a UN Parliamentary Assembly that would allow for the inclusion of elected representatives in the agenda-setting and decision-making of the UN. It would act as a representative body and watchdog connecting the people with the UN and reflecting a broad diversity of viewpoints. More detailed descriptions on how this could work are proposed at:-

[https://www.democracywithoutborders.org/files/DWB\\_UNPA\\_Policy\\_Review.pdf](https://www.democracywithoutborders.org/files/DWB_UNPA_Policy_Review.pdf)

iii) Engaging the Citizen A new role of UN Civil Society Envoy would spur dialogue, conferences and connect with public and civil society organisations inclusively. This would promote citizen participation and voices in global issue debates from climate change to inequality and access to basic need resources. A recent report outlining the case for this initiative is at:-

<https://together1st.org/storage/Cde7cqLsDdv3WWRWhIAJCyN23UI6ikZyg3NEaYVL.pdf>

These new tools will help the UN and member states tackle global challenges with more legitimacy and effectiveness.

In conclusion, GA support for this motion will help champion spiritual and religious values in global UN decision-making, provide a clear message to the UK government on the importance of this and help citizens develop a greater say in global issues that is so sorely needed in a world that is too economically driven.

**Motion 5 FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Lancashire Collaborative Ministry (LCM)**

The Executive Committee request that the Lancashire Collaborative Ministry (LCM) be welcomed into Membership of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches as an Affiliated Society. The Executive Committee considers that the LCM meets the criteria set out in By-laws.