

The chaplain's ground rules

Chaplains are available to everybody and have respect for everybody, no matter what their religion or if they have no religious faith. They will not proselytise.

Chaplains guarantee to respect the confidential nature of everything that is said*. Chaplains will not intrude where unwanted and will not interrupt work inappropriately. They will respond in a timely manner to requests and invitations.

Chaplains work independently of workplace managers and contribute as colleagues within chaplaincy teams.

Chaplains are supported by their own faith congregation.

*Within the limits of the policy for the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

Could I be a workplace chaplain?

Perhaps you are asking yourself this question. It is unlikely that you will know the answer until you have had the opportunity to talk to people involved in this work, observe them at work and perhaps have a go yourself. If you think that God is calling you into this ministry, you may have:

- time and willingness to listen to others
- sensitivity to the pressures and concerns of people at work
- concern for the wellbeing of all, regardless of faith background

How can I find out more?

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CHURCHES & INDUSTRY GROUP BIRMINGHAM AND SOLIHULL

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What do chaplains in the workplace do?

Chaplains visit people in their place of work to offer friendship and support particularly in the context of their work. They are independent and will listen with unconditional and confidential respect. When appropriate they will direct people to further sources of support or guidance. If invited, they may specifically support networks of Christians at work.

Why chaplains in the workplace?

Work is a very important part of many peoples' lives. Apart from being a source of income, it is where relationships are formed and reformed, dreams are fulfilled and shattered, peoples' lives are shaped, and communities are moulded.

Work can be a very positive experience; and it can also be a source of stress and unhappiness. Workers are *people*, with lives full of all the everyday stories of joy and sorrow, hope and despair. Work is a place where faith and trust are forged.

Christian Faith has a missionary care with all people of their community. Chaplains in the workplace follow in a long tradition of faithful love for people outside the usual boundaries of the church community. Chaplains enrich their own church life by feeding their experiences back into it.

Who decides where chaplains work?

Chaplains are guests. They need permission to be active in the workplace. They need the agreement of the managers and, if they are to be effective, they need to be welcomed by the staff. They must remember that they are accepting the hospitality of both the managers and the staff, be clear about their intentions, and honour the emotional contract. There may also be a formal agreement which defines the pattern of the chaplaincy.

Chaplaincy is offered in a variety of places, including retail, manufacturing, transport and public sectors. Chaplains operate under the training and commissioning by CIGB; and, in most areas, within a local team. Chaplaincy relationships are set up by the team leader, who then monitors their progress and provides support and guidance to the chaplains in their work.

The chaplaincy location and time commitment for each new person is decided by mutual discernment based upon interest, availability and appropriateness.

Who are the chaplains?

They are people of faith who, because of their belief in a loving and caring God, give their time to share that trust and faith with others.

They are ordinary people, some lay, some ordained, who are trained specifically for this work. They give some time to visit others in their place of work regularly over a period of months or even years. Their commitment might be to a few hours a month or to a day a week: it depends on circumstances.

What are the qualities needed for chaplaincy?

Chaplains discover that, most of the time, they will come and visit without being sure of doing anything special; but that over time, people will come to recognise and trust them. It is a longer term ministry.

Chaplains need to have enough self-confidence to thrive without the constant reward of feedback; enough self-awareness to know where their own strength and hope comes from; and to be able to draw on this to share that strength with others. Chaplaincy usually starts with the other person's needs and agenda: but chaplains see where God is already at work in that life and find ways to gently point this out.