

# West Midlands Further Education Chaplaincy Ambassador

## Background

### The Post in Brief

The aim of this post is to provide **strategic support and development for the churches' work with colleges of further education** within the West Midlands region, particularly through **the development of new forms of chaplaincy**. The key aims of this post are to:

- Widen and advance the churches' engagement with the further education sector and its students
- Strengthen regional collaboration between the churches in their work with FE
- Grow the confidence and skills of those working within FE colleges (chaplains and other members of staff) to make good provision for faith and the spiritual development of students

The post builds upon a three year FE Chaplaincy development project undertaken between January 2018 and December 2020, designed to increase and strengthen the number of chaplaincies set up in partnership between FE/Sixth Form Colleges, and local churches, which has seen a number of new chaplaincies come into being. The objective now is to:

- Consolidate and strengthen those new chaplaincies;
- Continue to provide training and support to existing FE chaplains;
- Help to establish new chaplaincies in a number of colleges currently interested to develop it.

The post is supported by a consortium of churches and Christian organisations working in the West Midlands region: the Anglican dioceses of Coventry and Lichfield, the Heart of England Baptist Association, the West Midlands Synod of the United Reformed Church, the West Midlands Churches' Further Education Council and St Peter's Saltley Trust.

### The Context

- The Further Education sector consists of colleges providing education & training to 16-19s after school and before work or university. The FE sector is also increasingly involved in the education of 14-16s and many colleges also offer degree level courses. The sector includes general FE colleges and Sixth Form Colleges, but not school sixth forms (which are counted as part of the schools sector). General FE colleges educate more 16-19s than school sixth forms, and a disproportionate number of young people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities, and from non-academic backgrounds. In the communities in which they are situated, FE colleges are major local employers.
- Staff in Further Education colleges are highly dedicated to giving their students the best possible chance in life, often going the extra mile for students from challenging backgrounds. However, the sector is also currently under huge stress in the face of historic under-resourcing and funding cuts of up to a third in college budgets in the last decade.
- Historically, many colleges have had a 'secular' ethos, but this is changing as more colleges recognise the importance of faith to their students, and their duties with regard to equality of religion and belief. Many colleges know that they need to make some provision for faith/spiritual development, but most (though not all) are unsure how to do this, or are stretched to capacity. There is a clear opportunity to provide expert support here, in the form of chaplaincy and other advice and resources, where senior management is sympathetic to such input.

- There are currently approximately 40 FE and Sixth Form colleges in the West Midlands region<sup>1</sup> (although a recent trend towards college mergers means the total number of separate institutions changes almost year by year). Currently just over half offer some form of faith-related provision. Amongst these, the extent of provision varies markedly from college to college (at one end of the spectrum, some colleges will hold a Christmas carol service and little else; at the other extreme the best-resourced college in the region has a paid multi-faith chaplaincy team).
- Around a half of colleges in the region have form of chaplaincy or regular visit from a member of a local faith community (this is most often a part-time voluntary arrangement, provided by local Christian ministers or church members. Only two of the region's FE/Sixth Form chaplains are paid by the college). These figures have seen a slight upward trend in recent years, with several colleges proactively making contact for advice on setting up chaplaincy. The 2018-20 FE Chaplaincy Ambassador assisted in the development of chaplaincy in 8 colleges, with a further 2 ready to start. A further 9 colleges have expressed interest in developing chaplaincy. There is a clear need to respond to this interest and to continue to strengthen existing chaplaincies, which can often be quite fragile arrangements despite the commitment of the people involved.
- There are several faith-based organisations operating nationally to support faith and spiritual development amongst 16-19s although most of these currently lack the resources to maintain a strong regional infrastructure. However, the West Midlands region is currently unique in having an active, well-connected ecumenical organisation to support and develop work in this area – the West Midlands Churches' Further Education Council ([www.wmcfec.org.uk](http://www.wmcfec.org.uk)).
- From the perspective of the Christian churches work with further education colleges and 14-19s is often a 'missing link' between churches' work with schools and with universities, and with children and young people in their local communities. Chaplaincy in Further Education is often much more than the provision of a listening ear: work in FE offers opportunities to invest in the spiritual development of young people and their skills for life, and assist education institutions in their religious literacy and provision for faith. Depending on their skills and initiative, chaplains are may be involved in running lunchtime events, advising senior management on faith matters, contributing to teaching and learning or staff training, building links with community organisations or contributing to student welfare. This is skilled work which needs an investment of support and expertise.
- The work undertaken by Phil Metcalf as regional FE Chaplaincy Ambassador (and the results of previous chaplaincy development projects in the Diocese of Worcester and in the West Yorkshire region) suggest that investing in an FE chaplaincy development can strengthen existing faith/chaplaincy arrangements and lead to the development of new ones, if the right relationships between colleges, local churches and (where relevant) other faith communities can be brokered.
- There is a particular need to help consolidate, strengthen and in some cases re-activate chaplaincy provision in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, some chaplains have been able to support their colleges in valuable and creative ways; others have struggled to gain access to college, staff or students; some have simply been swamped by other commitments. There is vital work to do here.

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<sup>1</sup> Here defined as encompassing Birmingham and the Black Country, Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Stoke on Trent, Coventry and Warwickshire, and Worcestershire.

## Job Description

The key aims of this post are to:

- Widen and advance the churches' engagement with the further education sector and its students
- Strengthen regional collaboration between the churches in their work with FE
- Grow the confidence and skills of those working within FE colleges (chaplains and other members of staff) to make good provision for faith and the spiritual development of students

The focus of the post is on the development of *Christian* chaplaincy and faith-related support to Further Education colleges. However, it will be essential to appreciate and work with the multi-faith context of college life. In many places this will involve liaising with other faith communities to help develop multi-faith chaplaincy teams.

### Main Responsibilities

1. To provide advice and support on Further Education chaplaincy and matters relating to faith in college, in order to strengthen part-time voluntary FE chaplaincies where they exist. Here, priorities include:
  - a. Growing larger and more sustainable chaplaincy teams where chaplaincy is currently reliance on 1-2 committed individuals offering their services on a very part-time, voluntary basis
  - b. Helping colleges and churches identify sustainable models for the development of paid chaplaincy provision in more colleges
2. To act as a broker/adviser to colleges and local churches to establish new FE chaplaincies and positive, appropriate partnership arrangements where these do not currently exist, focusing on:
  - a. Areas of clear need/opportunity – for example, where a college requests help in establishing new chaplaincy arrangements;
  - b. Planting from areas of existing strength in church and/or chaplaincy – for example, where a strong chaplaincy in one college could help support developments in another college OR where local churches with a track record of working with young people express an interest in engaging with a nearby college
3. To organise and facilitate training and networking meetings for new and existing FE chaplains in the region (in partnership with WM Churches' FE Council and other experts in the field). In particular, there is a need to assist three recently-created sub-regional FE chaplains groups in developing a regular and sustainable pattern of meeting. (Currently these groups have either met only once or have yet to hold their first meeting).
4. Generating vision and vocation within the region's churches for FE chaplaincy of all kinds (full and part time, professional and voluntary) and for creative Christian engagement with the Further Education sector as a sphere of ministry and service. (A set of short FE chaplaincy films, developed by WM Churches' FE Council in 2019, constitutes one helpful resource here – see: [Our New FE Chaplaincy Films Launched! – WMCFEC](#)).
5. To advise and signpost colleges regarding provision for religious observance, curriculum provision for spiritual and moral development, learning and teaching about faith, religion and belief, including faith-based enrichment activities, and faith-based pastoral care (liaising with support services in colleges).

6. To maintain and develop a network of key contacts within further education colleges in the region, particularly with those whose with interest in/responsibility for religion and belief matters and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
7. To work with the WM Churches' FE Council to provide a clear single point of contact and strategic coordination for the churches' work with the further education sector in the region. To liaise with other chaplaincy networks to ensure a two-way flow of learning and best practice.

This post does *not* involve responsibility for the direct line management of chaplaincy teams, which will usually be undertaken by a college and/or group of local congregations. Nor, emphatically, is this a 'roving chaplain' type post (such as occurs in some universities, where one individual provides part-time chaplaincy to a number of institutions).

## Further Details

<b>Post:</b>	The post would be open to suitably experienced ordained and lay candidates in good standing with their denomination. We are open to ideas for creative and flexible working in conjunction with other employment or ministry.
<b>Term:</b>	This is a fixed term contract for 3 years, commencing as April/May 2021, or soon as possible thereafter.
<b>Working Hours:</b>	7.5 hours per week, normally during Monday to Friday. Weekly hours could be worked on one single day or across a number of days – some flexibility may be useful. Some occasional evening and weekend working may be required, for which time off in lieu will be given in consultation with the line manager.
<b>Annual Leave:</b>	57 hours (equivalent to a full-time paid holiday entitlement of 30 days plus bank holidays). The bulk of annual leave will need to be taken outside term time.
<b>Location:</b>	No fixed location; however, the project will involve travel to various college and other locations across the West Midlands region. Hot-desking from the offices of one of the stakeholder organisations supporting the post could be considered, if required.
<b>Salary:</b>	£7,815.60 for a 7.5 hours per week post (full-time equivalent salary would be £39,078). An annual cost of living increase based on RPI/CPIH is normally awarded at the discretion of the St Peter's Saltley Trustees.
<b>Pension:</b>	An employer's pension contribution equivalent to 10% of salary is offered if required.
<b>Expenses:</b>	An expenses budget of £500 per year is provided to cover travel and other reasonable expenses.
<b>Probationary period:</b>	Six months from commencement of employment.
<b>Management:</b>	The post-holder will report to a project steering group composed of representatives from stakeholder denominations and the West Midlands Churches' Further Education Council. The employing organisation is St Peter's Saltley Trust.
<b>Early Termination:</b>	The agreement may be terminated by either party by giving three months' notice in writing.

**In Case of Dispute:** The line manager would seek to resolve any dispute through meeting with the post-holder. In the case of a continued complaint the steering group would select three persons drawn from stakeholder bodies to meet as a complaints panel and to make recommendations.

**Other Requirements:** The post may be subject to a DBS Enhanced Disclosure check.

## Person Specification

We are seeking a suitably qualified and experienced individual (lay or ordained) who:

1. Is a committed Christian (Genuine Occupational Requirement) who is passionate about advancing the churches' engagement with Further Education (*essential*)
2. Is committed to the spiritual development of students/young people aged 14-19 and the positive contribution that Christian faith can make to this (*essential*)
3. Can demonstrate an ability to identify needs and/or opportunities for new forms of Christian engagement in society and develop/promote creative responses (*essential*)
4. Has good communication and networking skills to enable liaison with a wide range of stakeholders and the development of productive partnerships with and between them (*essential*)
5. Is committed to working ecumenically and with people of all faiths and none (*essential*)
6. Has transferable skills useful to the development of teams and training of others (*essential*)
7. Is able to work on their own initiative (*essential*)
8. Has good time management skills and is able to work flexibly, including evenings and weekends as required (*essential*)
9. Is able to use ICT and social media/online networking effectively (*essential*)
10. Has experience of working with the education sector at professional level, particularly within the further education sector (*desirable*)
11. Is an experienced chaplain, preferably within further education (*desirable*)
12. Has a good understanding of the challenges and opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development within teaching and learning, enrichment and college ethos (*desirable*)
13. Has experience of supporting and encouraging others to develop in their work (*desirable*)

## How to Apply

Please complete the accompanying application form and return it by **Friday 26 March 2021** to: Ms Lynne Hayes-James, St Peter's Saltley Trust, Grays Court, 3 Nursery Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 3JX. [bursar@saltleytrust.org.uk](mailto:bursar@saltleytrust.org.uk). A Curriculum Vitae is not an acceptable substitute.

If possible, please submit your application by email. Candidates called to interview will be asked to post a signed copy of their application to confirm the information provided is correct. Should a conditional offer of employment be made, the candidate concerned will be required to complete a Confidential Declaration Form regarding working with children and vulnerable adults.

Informal enquiries about the post can be made to Ian Jones ([director@saltleytrust.org.uk](mailto:director@saltleytrust.org.uk)).

Interviews will take place on Tuesday 13 April 2021, in the afternoon, via video conference.