

Executive Summary

Having never previously measured the impact of workplace chaplaincy, Faith at Work in Worcestershire (FWW) set out to do just this, asking three groups for feedback – chaplains, their congregations and people in the workplace they visited. Using a standard set of questions for each group has provided comparable data, which has proved encouraging, illuminating and thought provoking. It has provided valuable learning and underpins the plans we have over coming years to be more effective in mission in the economy and workplaces of the County.

In summary, some of the key findings have included:

Those at work:

- Overwhelmingly welcome and value chaplaincy seeing it as a supportive, caring presence of the church interested in them and their work, providing someone with whom to share their problems.
- Find having someone not part of their organisation, to listen, in confidence, a useful thing.
- See the chaplain as a friend and confidante.

Chaplains:

- See chaplaincy as a means of putting their faith into action – showing the love of God in the care and concern they can offer.
- Find their faith challenged and strengthened by being a chaplain.
- As they engage with people, find God already active in people's lives.
- Are sometimes frustrated at not being able to share their faith more explicitly, but realise that their calling is to be present with people, offering care - and God will do the rest.

Congregations, who are partners with FWW:

- See chaplaincy as helping them be more ecumenical and outward looking, and not just concerned for themselves as the church.
- See being in partnership with FWW as potentially helping their members relate their faith more effectively to their work and lives, and connect with the world more meaningfully in their worship.
- Realise they could support their chaplains more actively than they do.

From this we have learnt many lessons, including:

1. That we should celebrate the positive impact has on workers, chaplains and their churches. Workplace chaplaincy is an example of the Gospel making a difference and we should tell the story more effectively and encourage all to explore the spiritual side of this encounter, for example in being more confident in offering and undertaking prayer for those at work.
2. Whilst this involves better and more varied means of communication of what we do, we also need to improve our communication of why we do chaplaincy in the first place.
3. We should develop how we support and train chaplains on a continuing basis and not just when they begin chaplaincy.
4. There is great potential in developing the partnerships we have with businesses and organisations, including providing training to staff, asking their help to fund and shape our work, and expanding chaplaincy to sectors we currently have little contact with, such as manufacturing.
5. We need to work harder with congregations to find and better support new volunteers for chaplaincy. The Survey suggests a number of approaches, including stressing the positive impact of chaplaincy on helping chaplains be disciples of Jesus, refocusing the mission of a church in its community and equipping people to connect their faith and their own work.
6. We need to be more explicit in asking for financial support of our work by congregations and their members, as well as the businesses and organisations we have formed partnerships with.