

2025 Chaplaincy Impact Survey: Questionnaire to Chaplains

Summary of responses *With some selected illustrative quotes from responses.*

Basic stats.

- 17 responses, including 3 former chaplains
- The length of time as a chaplain ranges from a few months to 13 years
- The average length of time as a chaplain is around 7 years
- On average chaplains give between 3 and 4 hours/month to visiting.
- No stats on the demographics of those who responded were collected. It is estimated that if they had been asked the demographic would have been:
 - 65% female/35% male; 53% 65 yrs +, 94% 45 yrs +

1. What was it that interested you in this form of ministry in the first place?

- a. **Part of Mission and outreach of the Church, ecumenically, in the economy, work and community and to those at work – an important context in society today, which God cares about.** *(mentioned by 53% of respondents)*
 - *Opportunity to connect workplace & church.*
 - *A strong sense that Christians need to be involved in the workplace and not simply retreat into church.*
 - *I firmly believe that the gospel is to be incarnated in all aspects of society and enjoy the chance to interact with people where they are.*
- b. **My own experience of connecting my faith and work** (12% of respondents)
 - *My interest in faith and business.*
 - *My personal working history in the industrial sector at a senior management level.*
- c. **Compassionate, befriending, caring in action – faith applied in a very practical way** (35% of respondents)
 - *I was attracted to retail chaplaincy because it was about showing God's love and concern for people, it was ministry that didn't require very much preparation and was close to where I worked and I was able to go in my lunch hour.*
 - *Chaplaincy allows me to bring compassion and support directly into the daily lives of workers, impacting them where they spend so much of their time and energy. I find this to be a deeply rewarding way to see my faith applied in practical, everyday situations.*
 - *I can act as a "critical friend" to an organisation, engaging with issues of justice, fairness, and ethical business practices.*
- d. **Through an introduction by other chaplains** (24% of respondents)
 - *An article in the local paper about Industrial Chaplaincy.*
 - *I attended a chaplaincy information day and felt a calling while I was there.*
 - *Following volunteering to help out with the Christmas hospitality, I felt I had a desire and skills to offer a listening ear, provide emotional and spiritual support, and help people navigate personal and professional challenges.*

2. What is it about workplace chaplaincy that you find most rewarding/enjoyable? Give examples if you can.

- a. Getting to know people and build relationships** (47% of respondents)
 - *Building bridges & strengthening relationships. It was good to work from a relationship of indifference to one of engagement.*
 - *Interacting with people, building relationships and providing an understanding ear.*
 - *Hearing people's stories and knowing they seem to find a listening ear helpful.*
- b. Making a personal connection** (24% of respondents)
 - *being greeted like a friend;*
 - *A smile when people see you, and the very occasional deeper discussion*
- c. The privilege of people sharing their experience** (24% of respondents)
 - *the privilege of them [workers] sharing their joys, and challenges both in their working and personal lives;*
 - *being asked to pray for certain situations.*
- d. Understanding better people's experience of work** (12% of respondents)
 - *Getting a better understanding of business conditions in our local area.*
- e. Being able to provide Christian care, support, prayer and hope** (41% of respondents)
 - *Just letting them know the churches care about them*
 - *I enjoy listening and speaking to people about matters that concern them and hope to make a difference to how they see the situations they face.*
 - *I am motivated by a spiritual calling to serve and I pray that I can bring a sense of hope, peace and dignity to the workplace. This doesn't mean proselytising, but rather by demonstrating care and compassion in a practical way.*
 - *[I feel] especially privileged when they [workers] seek me out to pray for them at times of adversity.*
- f. Being a Christian presence, and putting my faith into action** (24% of respondents)
 - *The challenge of meeting strangers as a Christian and being on my own.*
 - *The reception, the mixed responses, ranging from very engaged to polite but clearly disinterested. The rewards are very simple, yet compelling because the connection that can be made feels like being connected to God being at work in the world himself.*
 - *I find chaplaincy a deeply rewarding way to see my faith applied in practical, every day situations.*
- g. Seeing God at work in the world**
 - *The opportunity to see God at work in people's lives, especially those who would not call themselves Christian. For example, conversations that move from the polite [to] people asking, what are in effect, theological questions.*

3. What is it about workplace chaplaincy that you find least rewarding/enjoyable? Give examples if you can.

- a. Practical challenges of being a chaplain** (82% of respondents)
 - *The fear of rejection [by those I go to visit] - which never materialised in my experience.*

- *In retail, there is a sense of constantly having to start fresh with a significant number of people. Whilst interesting this is more challenging than developing relationships.*
- *Sometimes, although not very often, because I only go monthly, people I have spoken with [over] some time have suddenly left and I haven't had a chance to say goodbye*
- *Regular turnover of staff meaning relationships are lost.*

b. Not knowing how to respond when workers share their challenges, or don't want to engage.
(18% of respondents)

- *[Engaging workers as they] share the circumstances that impact their sustainability which are out of their control - increases in premises rentals or even premises sales to new landlords; occasions of theft and vandalism.*

c. Challenges connected to the church (12% of respondents)

- *It [chaplaincy] is a little disconnected to "church", I wish there was some more oomph for it within congregations.*

4. What do you particularly value about being part of a team, and meeting regularly?

a. Mutual support (59% of respondents)

- *Mutual support and encouragement; sharing difficulties & disappointments; learning from each other's experiences.*
- *The mental stimulation from sharing visit experiences.*
- *The opportunity to share stories and experiences, praying together, accountability - need to turn up because others are there!*

b. Prayer connections (18% of respondents)

- *I enjoy meeting with others and praying before we go out to do chaplaincy and again when we finish we meet up and listen to each other and pray for the situations we have become aware of.*

c. Overcoming isolation and maintaining enthusiasm (29% of respondents)

- *Chaplaincy can feel lonely, it is essential to be part of a team.*
- *Hearing how others are fed by being engaged in chaplaincy and getting a different perspective on what we encounter.*
- *One of the things I particularly value is the shared understanding and mutual support we offer each other. Workplace chaplaincy can sometimes feel quite solitary, Meeting with other chaplains in the team allows us to share experiences, discuss challenges, and celebrate successes with people who truly "get it." I think this creates a vital support network where we can feel understood and less isolated. It's invaluable to have a safe space to debrief difficult situations or simply bounce ideas off someone who understands the unique nuances of this ministry.*

5. What could those meetings [of chaplains] include to make them even more useful? (59% of respondents)

- *Pastoral support from the clergy*
- *It might be an interesting exercise to deep dive into a specific challenging or particularly impactful case. This could involve an ethical dilemma, a complex pastoral care situation, or a difficult interaction with management. The team can then offer insights, explore alternative approaches, and provide constructive feedback. This would allow for deeper learning and could help chaplains develop stronger problem-solving skills and ethical reasoning.*

6. In the light of the training you have had, what additional training would be helpful? (76% of respondents)

- *More practice at furthering conversations that could lead to sharing of faith.*
- *Understanding the security issues faced by retailers and what they can expect from security or police.*
- *Laws affecting shop workers such as zero hour contracts.*
- *It would be interesting to learn how people view us, so that we can then look at ways in which we might be able to improve on some of the ways we approach our visits.*

7. What difference do you hope your chaplaincy makes to those workers and workplaces you visit? Give examples if you can.

Workers feel supported, listened to in a confidential, non-judgemental way, about concerns at work and home; and prayed for.

- *Hope that the workers feel supported & a genuine interest taken in them - their personal situations as well as the workplace.*
- *I believe the workers value knowing they are regularly prayed for and having shared any difficulties other people are understanding of them and compassionate. This then enhances how much they can support each other in the workplace*
- *I think they are pleased that we have time to make for them and to listen*
- *That 'the church' has a 'face' and is interested in the world of work.*
- *Hopefully it gives people the opportunity to have a chat during a stressful day, to feel valued and that someone is there to talk to in confidence and pray for them if needed*
- *I have been able to offer prayer to a few individuals who have always responded positively to this offer. I hope people feel listened to and refreshed after a visit*

8. In what way do you feel your ministry as a chaplain is understood, valued and supported by those in your church?

a. Positive connections include: (24% of respondents)

- *People in church regularly ask about how it's going which is lovely*
- *Only occasionally have I put an article in the church magazine, there are a few supporters of this ministry in my church who ask me from time to time how things are going*

b. Neutral comments include: (18% of respondents)

- *Reports provided when requested. Never received any questions*
- *Generalised benevolence rather than active interest and support*

c. Negative experiences - (59% of respondents)

- *I'm not sure how many at church are aware of the workplace chaplaincy service*
- *Sadly, I feel it is generally viewed as a fringe activity that people are aware of and pray for when prompted but don't really connect with and see the value for their community at large.*
- *I'm not convinced that the general congregation understand, value or support my ministry as a chaplain. It is something that takes place outside of church so is 'just something that is done'.*

9. By the end of 2025 FWW will be an entirely volunteer led and delivered piece of ministry. Leaving aside the need for more volunteers, in your opinion what three things need to be given particular priority.

a. Within churches and churches together groups (41% of respondents)

- *Churches to embrace workplace chaplaincy as being genuine mission.*
- *Churches Together to be encouraged to support WPC, to take a real interest in it, & promote it.*
- *Local chaplaincy teams to meet together regularly, preferably facilitated by a team leader.*
- *Strengthened support from our own church communities*
- *more awareness made in our churches and not just from those who are chaplains*
- *more prayer support for chaplains when they are out working.*
- *I would want to see chaplaincy championed in churches, during sermons, engaging with guest speakers and stories of the amazing work that goes on to inspire others.*

b. For those in FWW to do (87% of respondents)

- *Approaching additional businesses*
- *Training new workplace chaplains, and team leaders*
- *Providing supervision for chaplains*
- *A central co-ordinator*
- *Prayer!*
- *Ensuring we have some dedicated leadership time somehow. There must be someone who has the work of FWW as a primary focus.*
- *Communication with local churches needs to be strengthened*
- *Finding ways to involve people who are not chaplains in supporting the work*
- *Making sure FWW is financially viable for the future*
- *Robust training schedule.*
- *Strategic relationship building,*
- *Effective volunteer management*

10. Use of the Prayer Guide (multiple choice with follow up comments)

a. I use the guide regularly in my own prayer time (29% of respondents)

- *The specific prayer pointers are very helpful.*
- *I use the prayer guide daily myself and am pleased when Intercessions in church make reference to it*
- *I don't very often lead the intercessions at my church but include FWW when I do!*

b. I read through the Guide, when I receive it, but don't really use it specifically to help me pray. (35% of respondents)

c. I use it when I lead intercessions in my church, or have heard it referred to when others lead. (18% of respondents)

- *I use the prayer guide daily myself and am pleased when Intercessions in church make reference to it*
- *I don't very often lead the intercessions at my church but include FWW when I do!*

d. I don't read or use the guide. (35% of respondents)

11. What have been the benefits of workplace chaplaincy to you and your church?

a. Personal benefits (41% of respondents)

- *Given me more confidence personally and in sharing my Christian faith.*
- *It gave me a real insight into the challenges of working in the retail industry in particular on a personal level. Made me more aware of others and their pressures.*
- *Its offered a ministry which I enjoy*

b. Benefits to churches - both positive and negative (65% of respondents)

- *It has strengthened the collaboration of Churches Together throughout the years as well as only focussing on special occasions or events.*
- *I think that they just like to know someone's doing it*
- *I'm not sure how it benefitted the church, but maybe that's down to me ...*
- *The church like [that] some work is done in the community, but [do] not feel involved or wanting to know more.*
- *Ensuring we don't simply become inward looking.*

12. Are there other things that FWW could do to further develop its partnership with your church? (53% of respondents)

- *FWW speakers in Sunday services and to address church leaders, e.g. at Churches Together meeting.*
- *Look for even more opportunities to share and advertise the importance of FWW to our wider communities within our congregations.*
- *Folk are already stretched in so many directions there seems limited capacity for them/us to engage with more... this seems negative but is a reality...*
- *If I had some interesting stories or facts and figures I could put forward articles for the church magazine, which would provide PR for FWW and for the work I do.*
- *I don't know how we overcome the "it's what they (ie me) do on our behalf" syndrome, rather than we are all in this together. Perhaps getting others to do little things e.g. members of the congregation deliver the Christmas cards rather than me!*
- *On a very basic level could FWW produce a really attractive prayer card that each member of the congregation could have.*
- *Perhaps have a chaplaincy Sunday where the benefits of chaplaincy are highlighted and folk are encouraged to see if this is what God is calling them to do.*