



# CHAPLAINCY EVERYWHERE SESSION SEVEN

## WHAT? WHEN? WHERE?

### JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND OTHER ESSENTIALS

A professional approach and thorough planning are essential steps on the journey towards forming a chaplaincy team. This session leads you through the process of creating a framework that will support, enable and establish a new chaplaincy ministry that can last.

# Welcome

A professional approach and thorough planning are essential steps on the journey towards forming a chaplaincy team. From approaching an organisation to forming a chaplaincy ministry that will continue to grow and establish itself over the years ahead, there is a lot to consider. This session should be thought of as a guide that will help you to think about how to set up the work in a robust and thorough way.

How you apply this material is up to your group and largely depends on your circumstances. However, spending time working through these important aspects should be a priority; it is wise to prepare yourself thoroughly before you begin your work as chaplains. Not every section of the materials provided will be applicable nor right for your circumstances, but they will hopefully get you thinking about what is necessary to support the work and the various topics and resources covered here will point you in the right direction.

## Opening prayer



GROUP PRAYER

*Take a few moments to focus upon God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. You might find it helpful to light a candle or play some music. At an appropriate time, say together the words of the following prayer.*

You are the God who gives the spiritual gift of administration.

You are the God who pays attention to the details.

You are the God who builds things to last.

So be with us now as we consider holy things.

Guide us in our deliberations and our conversations.

Knowing that these important preparations can protect the ministry of chaplaincy.

We ask that you will bless our efforts now.

That your will be done as your Kingdom reaches to the ends of the earth.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## A starter for ten

The Chaplaincy Development Project aims to promote the very best examples of chaplaincy. What you will find here are highlights from many conversations about how to approach chaplaincy and develop chaplaincy teams. One of our project values is to be open in the way we share material with others. The open source software movement gives away its source code with the intention that others will localise the content. This is what we want to do in this session.

Each piece of paperwork is available as a word document on our website [www.opensourcechaplaincy.org.uk](http://www.opensourcechaplaincy.org.uk) so that you can download it and customise it to suit your own needs. Therefore, these examples should be viewed as a starting point, not as the finished article!

There are likely to be things that we haven't yet included that should be included. In the spirit of the open source movement, if you have an insight to share, then send it to us and we will endeavour to include it in future editions of the Chaplaincy Everywhere Course, or on the [www.opensourcechaplaincy.org.uk](http://www.opensourcechaplaincy.org.uk) website.

You will find a variety of job descriptions, safeguarding resources, person specifications, application forms and many other resources that can form the basis of your own customised materials. All of the forms and topics are included here for a very important reason. It is best that you think about them before you begin and certainly before their absence causes problems.

## Negotiating access

In the previous session, we ended by thinking about how you might begin to answer the question any organisation will ask, why do we need a chaplain?

It is an important question to consider before you continue. The negotiating access sheet is a prep sheet for conversations with the host organisation. You will find it useful to work through this sheet and have it handy as you make a phone call or draft an email or letter to an organisation. What happens at the beginning is likely to have the biggest impact upon the shape of the chaplaincy in the years to come. It is worth spending some time getting this right in the first instance. Review the previous sessions as you go through this exercise. Some of the headings and points in the

conclusions may help you describe what you are offering as a chaplain or chaplaincy team.

## Recruitment: what are you looking for in a chaplain?

Forming a team is one thing, making sure the right people are part of that team is another thing entirely. Very often, we associate the word voluntary with an approach to recruitment that often accepts anyone who turns up. This should certainly not be the case. A voluntary team needs to be carefully chosen and supported in the most professional way. From the advert to the application form, from gathering references to conducting an interview — even if it is a conversation over a coffee — getting the right people on board is a crucial step in the process of forming a team that will last and work to share and fulfil the vision.

A rigorous application process might seem like overkill. On the other hand, a process that helps potential lay chaplains to consider their calling and take time to fill out an application form will aid the discernment process.

Without being overly dramatic, there are two things to bear in mind. Firstly, many people want to feel significant and may feel that being a part of the latest initiative will validate them as a person. You need to protect the work from people who want to be involved for the wrong reasons. The recruitment stage is your boundary.

Secondly, it only takes one incident with one member of the chaplaincy team to compromise months, even years of hard work. It only takes one negative article to appear in the local newspaper to undo excellent work. Getting the right people, with the right character and motives, who will work within a clear set of guidelines will protect the chaplaincy work in the years ahead. Do not shortcut this process.

## The ongoing nature of recruitment!

Growing a team is an essential part of the work. Not only that, but once you have recruited the first few people, you will need to continue to recruit people. There are three important things to remember as you recruit a team and continue the search for people.

Firstly, you need to spread your net far and wide and you need to be very clear about what you are looking for. It is important that people know what it is you are asking them to do and it is worth forwarding a catchy and concise advert to every church in the area. A lay chaplaincy team is a ministry that can unite churches.

Secondly, many people who would be ideal for the role of chaplain probably won't put themselves forward. This is where key leaders in the life of the church locally need to be part of the recruiting team. Be on the lookout for people who fit the person specification well. You will no doubt think of people who might be very well suited to a particular chaplaincy team or situation, so approach them. The most effective recruitment happens when you make an approach to a person and ask them to consider being part of a team. Encouragement by a third party is often the thing that helps people think of themselves as a potential team member. It is essential that a volunteer is not pressured into applying though. Recruiting volunteers is always an open invitation and saying no is always an option!

Thirdly, it is important to be realistic about voluntary work. Life circumstances can change very quickly and a team of ten can soon shrink to five or six over the course of a year. It is therefore essential to understand that recruitment is an ongoing activity when it comes to volunteers. Keep looking for people who could join the team. Be sympathetic to team members who might need a break for a while or need to concentrate on something else. Keep a list of those people who mentioned that it wasn't the right time two years ago. Keep a list of those who were declined two years ago because you didn't feel it was the right time, their time might be now!

One practical thing you can establish is to run the Chaplaincy Everywhere Course twice a year. Once during Lent and another during the Autumn term. The course can function as a way of keeping chaplaincy in the mind of local Christians as well as provide a steady stream of volunteers, either to replace those who have moved on to other things or in order to grow the team. After all, a town chaplaincy team with 20 volunteers could have a significant impact in an area!

## Job description

Well written job descriptions are essential for anyone engaged in ongoing work. To know what to do and what not to do establishes important boundaries that allows people to not only thrive but also protects them from a lack of focus.

The best job descriptions focus a person's time and energy well but also give room for someone to bring their best and own unique enthusiasm and gifts to the work. In that way, a great job description allows room and flexibility for the people involved in the job to grow themselves and to develop the role. Chaplaincy lends itself to this. The right person will not only own the role but also protect the work and take it in exciting new directions.

So spend time writing a great job description! Feel free to use our templates as a starting point, but feel free to reword, take out and add things as well as seek God's perspective on what the role is and might become over time.

## Person specification

Every situation calls for something different. Chaplaincy responds to circumstances. However, there are traits and attributes which apply to chaplaincy as a general discipline. Some people are very well suited to chaplaincy. Others might be better suited to being a part of a support group. Others still should be encouraged to pursue alternative work. The person specification provides a general picture of what is required.

## Pastoral reference

A chaplain who represents Christ and the local/national Church should be in good relationship with the local Christian community. A pastoral reference should be submitted. Along with CRB forms and other checks, a reference from one of your leaders should be seen as not only a precaution but also a symbol of the local church taking responsibility for the chaplaincy that happens in the local area. The pastoral references should be from the local church leadership, elder, pastor etc.

## Application form

Good processes and procedures help to shape a professional chaplaincy ministry. Application forms are an opportunity to gather important information that helps with administration, such as home address, contact details and next of kin in case of emergencies. A good application form also provides an opportunity to ask questions such as 'why do you feel God is calling you to be involved in the ministry of chaplaincy?' and other helpful questions.

Questions such as these help those gathering a team to discern whether the applicant has the right perspective and motivation for applying, but also helps those applying to carefully consider why they want to be involved in chaplaincy. Soul searching at this point will prevent awkward and difficult conversations further down the line.

## CRB/Safeguarding

Local churches approach safeguarding in different ways. Having said that, undergoing Criminal Records Bureau checks and giving ongoing training in the area of child protection and particularly vulnerable adults is an essential part of a healthy church. Chaplains must submit themselves to local protocols as those who are likely to meet vulnerable people.

Equally, chaplaincy is conducted in public spaces and as those who will be clearly identified as chaplains, it is important to safeguard your own safety. The process of safeguarding yourself is as important as being safeguarded.

## Practical guidelines

Chaplaincy is a practical ministry and many lessons, tips and tricks have been learned over the years. A short practical set of guidelines have been compiled for your use and benefit. From personal safety to branding and social media, the sheet will form a useful resource as your chaplaincy team forms and takes shape.

## Chaplaincy agreement between circuit x and organisation y

In certain settings it may be appropriate to develop a chaplaincy agreement with a particular organisation. Verbal agreements are good, however, managers often change and having a formal written agreement can often protect chaplaincy as a negotiated presence.

## Circuit or church mission strategy

Many local churches are part of wider structures. Within the Methodist Church for instance a local church will be a part of a local circuit (group of geographically similar churches) who in turn will be a part of a district (a large geographical region). Many churches, circuits and districts will have their own mission strategies written down and available online and often in paper form too.

These documents are important declarations of intent and indicate where resources of time, energy, finance and prayer are allocated as Christian groups work out their stated aims and values.

The Chaplaincy Development Project has developed one sentence that can be used by local churches, circuits, districts, parishes, diocese, networks, churches together or similar groups in order to focus their thinking around lay chaplaincy.

*Local, congregation led chaplaincy is one of the most effective ways to collaborate in God's mission in the world; local people responding to local needs over time can change the church and the world! Discuss.*

## 'What makes a good chaplain?'

Chaplains need to be competent in a number of key areas. 'What makes a good chaplain' sets out the core skills of a chaplain and might provide a structure for ongoing training. These themes set out the skills, attitudes and understanding that a chaplain should seek to develop as they go about their work now and in the future.

## Ongoing training and development

Lifelong learning is an important aspect of Christian discipleship. You may want to encourage the chaplaincy team to gain experience and training in some of the following practical areas. These themes will certainly form the beginnings of a training skills pathway for chaplaincy.

A theology of visiting

Losses and grieving

Listening skills

Confidentiality

Bereavement

The grieving process

A bibliography is also available that begins to address some of these themes.

## What next?

### Chaplaincy visit

One of the worthwhile activities you may wish to organise is a trip to visit a local chaplain. You may know of someone who is a chaplain locally or in your region who would be willing to host you for an hour or two. They will be a great source of stories and wisdom. If you do not know of a local chaplain, then get in touch with Methodist Chaplaincies and we can put you in touch with someone from our national network of chaplains who will be willing to host you. If it is not appropriate for you to visit them, it is quite likely that they will be happy to come and visit you and share from their experience.

### Commissioning chaplains

A commissioning service is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the work of chaplaincy and to pray for the work. Consider an ecumenical commissioning service. There are some service resources that might help you to shape a service that features chaplaincy and including prayers, intercessions, stories and sermon themes as well as a commissioning liturgy.

## Conclusion

As you can see, there are many things to consider. Sadly, so many great ideas fail to make it past the administrative stage because a long list of things to do can seem intimidating to many. However, someone with the gift of administration will make short work of such details, enabling the work to develop well. We hope that what has been presented here has not intimidated you but enabled you. The online resources have hopefully helped you to make a positive step forward.



GROUP PRAYER

## Conclude with the Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name.  
Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever.  
**Amen.**



FACILITATOR TO READ

## Blessing

You are blessed to be a blessing.  
Therefore go into all the world to be good news.  
To bless a world in need of love, attention and care.

May your chaplaincy ministry grow and flourish.  
May others receive you into their community.  
May you be known for your love and good deeds.

So, may the Father's love fill you.  
May the Son's example inspire you.  
And may the Spirit's life empower you.

In the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.  
**Amen.**