



Annual Report 2020-21

The [West Midlands Churches' Further Education Council](#) exists to:

- [Support colleges](#) in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students and the training and resourcing of staff in matters of faith and spirituality
- [Support churches](#) in valuing further education and lifelong learning as part of their wider involvement in education, and providing resources and training to partner colleges in their work.

The Council is composed of representatives from across different Christian churches represented in the West Midlands region, including individuals with years of experience working within the FE and lifelong learning sectors (see p. 5). Though rooted in the Christian tradition, the Council takes an open and positive approach to working with people of any faith and none.

The Council initiates projects, organises training and networking events, and networks chaplains and other FE staff in the West Midlands region. It can also assist in brokering partnerships between colleges, churches and other faith communities.

West Midlands Churches' FE Council was founded in 1987 and is currently the only regionally-based, ecumenically-owned organisation which supports Christian engagement in the further education sector and offering support to colleges.

Read more on our website: www.wmcfec.org.uk

The Year in Brief

New West Midlands FE Chaplaincy Ambassador



The West Midlands is currently unique amongst the regions of the UK in having a paid Further Education chaplaincy development post. April 2021 saw the appointment of Nigel Roberts to this post, succeeding Phil Metalf. Nigel is a very experienced education chaplain and as a tutor for CYM also specialises in learning and training around chaplaincy and educational issues.

The initial three year, three day per week phase of the project was completed in December 2020. Over this period, ten new chaplaincy arrangements were brokered in colleges

around the region, exceeding the original project expectations. In 2021, further funding was secured to extend the role for a further three years, on a one day per week basis. The extension to the role is particularly welcome given the negative impact on chaplaincy from the Covid-19 pandemic. Although some chaplaincies have continued to thrive, other chaplains have struggled to gain access to their colleges. A key task for the next three years will be seeking to regenerate chaplaincies established over the first three years of the project, and to strengthen chaplaincy teams through further training, support and accountability structures – including three new sub-regional FE chaplaincy groups. Despite the pandemic there also remain a number of colleges actively interested in establishing chaplaincy, and Nigel will seek to work with these over the coming years.

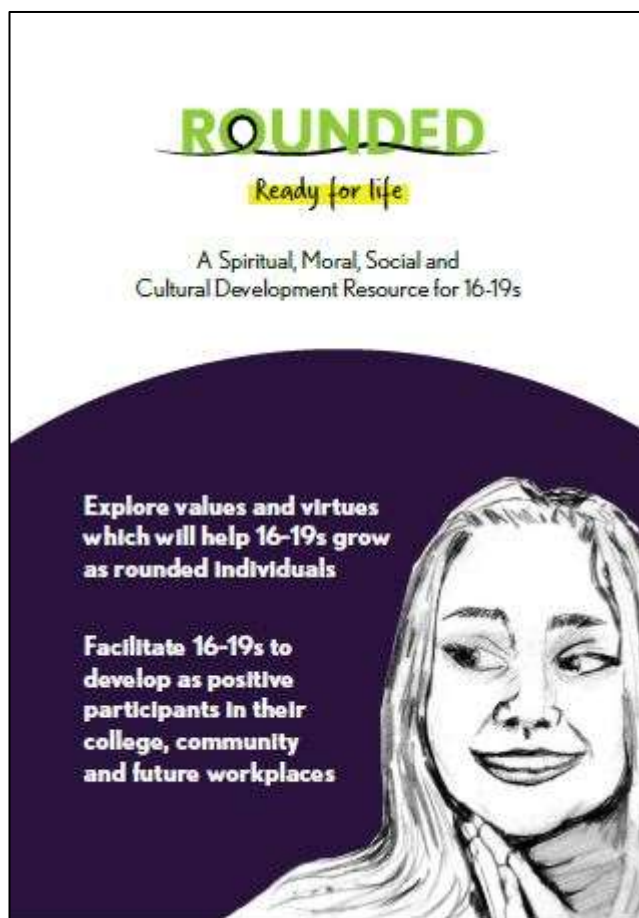
The role has been jointly funded by four local denominational bodies - the Anglican dioceses of Coventry and Lichfield, the Heart of England Baptist Association, and the West Midlands Synod on the United Reformed Church – and by St Peter’s Saltley Trust. West Midlands Churches’ Further Education Council played a significant role in assisting sponsor denominations in scoping the post, and members of WM Churches’ FE Council form part of the advisory group for the Ambassador’s work. West Midlands Churches’ FE Council would like to express continued thanks to funders for their commitment to developing chaplaincy in further education through this project.

ROUNDED: Ready for Life (SMSC Resources for 16-19s in Further Education)

This resource aims to provide quality resources for colleges to encourage the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of their students. Many colleges recognise this as important, but many teaching staff also say they lack the resources and confidence to do this well. ROUNDED aims to be a suite of themed resources around different topics with clear relevance to SMSC, focused around a central, interactive element, with a menu of supporting activities and material. Resource writer Simeon Whiting has developed six themed sessions of the resource, on the following topics:

- Being Thankful
- Being Fair and Just
- Being Merciful and Forgiving
- Being Hopeful and Visionary
- Caring for Others, Animals and the Environment
- Cultivating Identity, Inclusion and Belonging

ROUNDED was launched via two open-invitation webinars on 16 and 17 March 2021, and can be downloaded free via: <http://wmcfec.org.uk/rounded-ready-for-life/>



WMC FEC is grateful to the following funders of this project for their support: the Jerusalem Trust (via Dare2Engage), the St Christopher's Educational Trust, Westhill Endowment, St Peter's Saltley Trust and the Friends Hall Farm Street Trust.

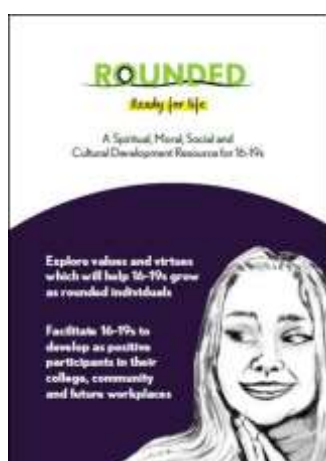
Responding to the Covid-19 Crisis

With many challenges now facing the Further Education sector and its staff and students, the Council has begun exploring scope for two new projects addressing the pressing needs of the day. These will focus upon:

- 1) Spirituality, mental health and wellbeing – focusing on what distinctive spiritual contribution the churches and chaplaincies can offer to the mental health needs of students and staff in colleges
- 2) Collaboration between churches and colleges to provide work experience/work placement opportunities for students. With youth unemployment rising, colleges are keen to ensure students gain real-world experience to give them a head start in the world of work. Churches and church community projects often need additional help to enable them to serve their communities. How might these two needs/opportunities be brought together? Initial conversations suggest some value in this area.
- 3) In these and other ways the Council is committed to supporting colleges in any way possible through the Covid recovery phase, including supporting the re-establishment of a fruitful chaplaincy presence in college, and helping chaplains grow the portfolio of ways in which they can make a positive contribution to the college – for example, in mental health and wellbeing, mentoring and spiritual/moral development.

Our Website, E-News and other Resources

A range of resources commissioned or produced by WMC FEC can be found at: <http://wmcfec.org.uk/resource-downloads/>



ROUNDED: Ready for Life

SMSC Development Resource for 16-19s in College (2021)



Plumbing the Depths

Reflective CPD resource for FE chaplains based on the Book of Jonah (2016)



SMSC Development in FE

Report based on conversations with WM Colleges (2011)

WMC FEC's Introduction to FE Chaplaincy Videos (2019) have been widely praised for providing a short, high-quality, accessible introduction to FE and the work that chaplains do with their colleges. The five, two-minute videos are:

1. Introduction to FE Chaplaincy
2. What is a Further Education College?
3. What is Further Education Chaplaincy?
4. What can FE Chaplaincy look like?
5. How can I get involved?

This year the second of these videos featured in a Learn Live online event organised by the Ladder for the Black Country, encouraging school pupils to consider their next steps into FE and HE!



You can watch the videos on WMC FEC's YouTube channel, here:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7pAqPa6zXjUnOruSHkxmec8LbfCRRXnL>



WMC FEC also produces an E-Bulletin (left) 3-4 times a year, featuring news of events and resources, a story from one of the region's FE colleges, and more. If your work in college touches on matters of religious literacy, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development or chaplaincy, we can keep you in touch with latest developments. Chaplains and church officers with an education portfolio will also find the E-Bulletin a useful way of keeping in touch with faith and FE matters in the WM region.

To subscribe, email: info@wmcfec.org.uk

Plans for 2021-22

In 2021-22 the Council will:

- Continue to support colleges and chaplains in the process of recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic
- Pursue its new project foci on:
 - Spirituality, mental health/wellbeing
 - Developing case studies, opportunities and guidance for church-based work placement and volunteering opportunities for college students
- Continue to support the work of the West Midlands FE Chaplaincy Ambassador and explore how new and existing chaplaincies might continue to be supported beyond the project term.
- Continue to publicise existing WMC FEC resources - including ROUNDED: Ready for Life, the *FE Chaplaincy Videos* and *Plumbing the Depths* – through the Council's e-news bulletin and other channels.
- Involve new people in the work of the Council, continuing to build good relationships with other organisations working with the further education sector and supporting churches' work in education.

People

In 2020-21 the following served as members of the Council:

(* = joining, + = retiring)

Name	Expertise	Representing
Revd Stephen Blyth	Chaplain at North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College	Co-opted member
Katy Broomfield	Head of Learner Services & Customer Experience, Burton and South Derbyshire College	Co-opted member
(*) Rosie Bryant	Experienced trainer and assessor in FE and business sectors, Wolverhampton Methodist Circuit Steward	Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury Methodist District
Pete Carrington	Director, Festive (FE and Sixth Form Initiative)	Festive
Rob Chivers	WM Development and SCM Connect (16-18s) worker	Student Christian Movement
Sue Davis	Former professional in Lifelong Learning sector for Aurelia Training Ltd and local authority providers	Co-opted member
Rt Revd Clive Gregory	Bishop of Wolverhampton and former HE chaplain	WM Church Leaders
(+) Andy Haynes	Consultant & former skills centre manager	Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury Methodist District
Simon Hill	Diocesan Youth Officer	Anglican Diocese of Worcester
Ian Jones (Hon. Sec.)	Director, St Peter's Saltley Trust	St Peter's Saltley Trust
(*) Richard Knott	Children's and Youth Development Officer, URC West Midlands Synod	WM Synod of the United Reformed Church
(+) Canon Phil Metcalf	WM FE Chaplaincy Ambassador (former FE chaplain & Diocesan Director of Education for Gloucester)	Co-opted member
(*) Beccy Roseman	Secondary Schools Chaplaincy Adviser	Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham
Jill Saunders	Partner at Wentworth Education Associates	Anglican Diocese of Birmingham
(+) Revd Stuart Scott	Training and Development Officer, URC WM Synod	West Midlands Synod of the United Reformed Church
(+) Hilary Topp	Independent facilitator & trainer, former national coordinator of SCM	Central England Quakers

At the end of May 2020 there were vacancies for representatives of: the Anglican Dioceses of Coventry and Hereford, the Birmingham Methodist District, Chester and Stoke Methodist District, the Heart of England Baptist Association, the Council of Black-Majority Churches, Central England Quakers, and up to two further co-opted members.

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