



Annual Report 2021-22

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 ecumenical organisation supporting Christian engagement in the further education sector and support to colleges.



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The Year in Brief

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, jointly funded by four local denominational bodies (the Anglican dioceses of Coventry and Lichfield, the Heart of England Baptist Association and the WM Synod of the URC) and by St Peter's Saltley Trust. The WM FE Chaplaincy Ambassador is Nigel Roberts, an experienced education chaplain and tutor in chaplaincy and educational issues for iCYM. WM Churches' FE Council are represented on the project advisory group and work in partnership with Nigel.

This year the work has focused on helping chaplaincies and colleges recover from the impact of the pandemic. Whilst some (particularly paid) chaplaincies have continued to flourish and done important work with their colleges, other chaplains continue to struggle to gain access to their colleges, or had dropped their commitments. This year however there has been early growth in new initiatives at Worcester Sixth Form College, Kidderminster College, Stafford College and a new ecumenical chaplaincy is planned for City of Wolverhampton College in the autumn.

Nigel has also focused on equipping chaplains to grow the portfolio of skills a chaplain can bring to their college, offering 9 training sessions on topics including wellbeing, faith discussions with students, mentoring skills and (in partnership with the Archdiocese of Birmingham's secondary schools chaplaincy adviser Beccy Roseman) mental health first aid. Further sessions are planned in 2022-23. Nigel has also been supporting a growing staff Christian group at Halesowen College, and this model holds out some promise for networking Christian staff in other colleges. A further focus for work this year has been the creation of FE Sunday (see below).

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.



Further Education Sunday was created by FE Chaplaincy Ambassador Nigel Roberts and WM Churches' FE Council as focus for churches to begin to pray for and learn more about their local Further Education College. In the process it seeks to raise the profile of the FE sector amongst the churches and offering them a challenge and encouragement to engage and serve their local college.

FE Sunday was held for the first time on 15 May 2022 and will become an annual event. A suite of resources including videos, prayer cards, worship materials and interviews with college staff can be found on WMC FEC's website at: <https://wmcfec.org.uk/further-education-sunday/> FE Sunday has been publicised through several denominational communications channels and via social media.

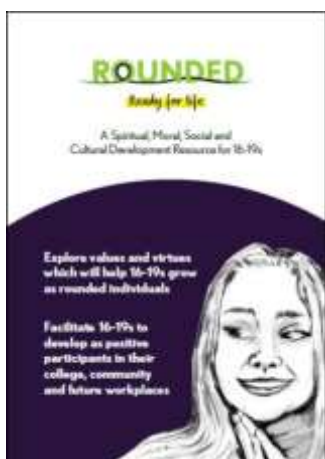
Responding to the Covid-19 Crisis

With many challenges now facing the Further Education sector and its staff and students, the Council has continued to develop several 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. The first stage of this has been to offer Mental Health First Aid training to any FE chaplains and associated workers in the WM region. Several chaplains took part in the course at a discounted rate. Thanks are due to Nigel Roberts for organising in, and to Beccy Roseman and colleagues for delivering the training.
- 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? Work has begun to create a short guide to churches and colleges seeking to work in partnership in this area. We are currently seeking case studies of projects where churches and colleges have offered work placement opportunities together – this will really help to bring the guide alive and offer some practical examples of what might be possible.
- 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

Resources commissioned/produced by WMC FEC are 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 Jonah (2016)



SMSC Development in FE

Report based on conversations
with WM Colleges (2011)



WMCFEC'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?



Reflecting on Chaplaincy

Written and produced by FE Chaplaincy Ambassador Nigel Roberts, this series of videos are designed to encourage and inspire chaplains and associated visitors to colleges. They can also be found on WMCFEC's YouTube channel.

Plans for 2022-23

In 2022-23 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:
 - Further Education Sunday
 - Spirituality, mental health/wellbeing
 - Developing case studies, opportunities and guidance for church-based work placement and volunteering opportunities for college students
- Developing new projects, particularly concerning... [insert]
- 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 WMCFEC 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 2021-22 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, Learning and Development Officer with the Methodist Church in the West Midlands region.	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
(*) Lynne Hayes-James (Hon. Treasurer)	Adminstrator and Clerk to Trustees, St Peter's Saltley Trust	Co-opted member
Simon Hill	Diocesan Youth Officer	Anglican Diocese of Worcester
(*) Rt Revd Anne Hollinghurst	Bishop of Aston and a former HE chaplain	Anglican Diocese of Birmingham
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
(*) Revd Naomi Nixon	CEO of Student Christian Movement, and a former FE college chaplain	Student Christian Movement
(*) Nigel Roberts	West Midlands FE Chaplaincy Ambassador, tutor at the Institute for Children, Youth and Mission, and Schools Adviser to Youth For Christ	Co-opted
Beccy Roseman	Secondary Schools Chaplaincy Adviser	Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham
Jill Saunders	Partner at Wentworth Education Associates	Anglican Diocese of Birmingham

At the end of May 2022 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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