

CENTRE FOR
CHAPLAINCY
WITH CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE

Core Standards of
Christian Chaplaincy
with Children & Young People

Second Edition, September 2022

These revised standards have been written by CCCYP following three years of use in the field of chaplaincy by organisations and individual working as chaplains with children and young people. They now include a new section on theological foundations which has resulted from a process of consultation with a range of practitioners and theologians. It is our hope that this new edition of the working standards will form the basis for a continued consistent and professional approach to chaplaincy without in any way diminishing its vocational basis. We along with our consulting partners, commend them once again to all those engaged in work with children and young people.

This booklet can be downloaded from:

<https://paediatric-chaplaincy-network.org/documents/chaplaincy-standards/>
<https://bwc.nhs.uk/spiritual-care-activities-and-resources>

Core Standards for Christian Chaplaincy with Children and Young People

Second edition, published September 2022.

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INTRODUCTION: CHAPLAINCY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

These working standards offer a basis for establishing and evaluating chaplaincy with children and young people in a variety of contexts. Over the past three years they have been used by a number of individuals and organisations in schools, colleges, hospitals, and other settings. This document has been revised to reflect the feedback and experience of these users.

There are a variety of different types of chaplain with children and young people. Broadly speaking there are:

- Managing chaplains
- Employed chaplains
- Honorary chaplains
- Chaplaincy volunteers

There may need to be differentiated elements of the standards to reflect this. There is not necessarily any agreed level of training or prescribed training which suggests that someone may be called a chaplain although some have recommendations or expectations, which are made clear by the relevant oversight body. There has been a significant growth in training available over recent years including context specific qualifications and more generic chaplaincy options. These range from post-graduate to level 3 and non-accredited routes.



Titles for chaplains

There are a wide variety of titles given to chaplaincy roles. These include:

- Chaplain
- Pastoral assistant
- Placement chaplain
- Volunteer chaplain
- Chaplaincy volunteer
- Chaplaincy youth worker
- Assistant chaplain
- Chaplaincy manager
- Senior/co-ordinating/lead chaplain
- Youth worker
- Schools worker
- Outreach worker
- Head of spiritual care
- College/school pastor
- Hospitaler
- Honorary chaplain

SECTION ONE: THEOLOGICAL CONCEPTS UNDERPINNING THE WORKING STANDARDS FOR CHRISTIAN CHAPLAINCY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Introduction

We have formulated five propositions which we believe offer a theological underpinning to Christian Chaplaincy with Children and Young People. Here we articulate them and connect them to the core standards which have been revised in the light of feedback. We hope this will be a starting point for further theological reflection. We have

introduced theology into the standards booklet for two reasons. Firstly, for those utilising chaplains in their institutions to understand how theology shapes what chaplains do and to offer a coherent framework for this. Secondly, for individual chaplains: to offer them a theological framework to understand and explain their role.



Proposition 1 – Chaplains start with a perspective of seeing each person as made in the image of God (Standard 2)

Underpinning our standards for chaplaincy with children and young people is the concept of imago Dei, that we are all made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). This image is universal: it has not been lost as a result of sin or the fall, it is integral to who humans are. It is about our being, not our doing. As such each person is of equal value and worth and should be treated with respect and dignity.

This core belief is significant in the pastoral ministry of a chaplain who begins from a place of seeing each person they serve as beloved by God and seeking to engender a sense of affirmation, acceptance and belonging.

You Matter

“You matter” is then an integral part of what the chaplain communicates to those they work with as people made in God’s image. Mark 5:21-42 is the story of Jesus raising the daughter of Jairus from the dead and as we reflect

on the actions of Jesus, we can deduce an approach to chaplaincy. The opening sentence of the story tells us that Jesus on arriving in the area is met by a large crowd. However, before Jesus can address the crowd, he is approached by Jairus, who begs him for help for a young girl, his daughter. Under the customs of the day and the logic of effective mission turning your back on the many for the sake of the one is not a great idea, but Jesus does just that. It is in that moment that he states, implicitly, that Jairus matters to him, as an individual. That his daughter matters. They are important, more important than speaking to a vast crowd. This is the theology of “you matter”. It is a statement of Kingdom values Jesus makes time and time again – for example in the story of the lost sheep (Luke 15:3-7). In it, Jesus asks the rhetorical question “Which one of you wouldn’t leave the 99 to go and look for the one?” Many of his hearers would have questioned that. Why leave the 99 at risk of predators to search for one that is probably dead anyway? It is

hopeless. Yet the one matters. The one always matters. In Acts 8:26-40, we see Philip, led by God, getting alongside the Ethiopian Official and responding to his questions, taking all the time that was needed. Chaplaincy is a ministry of you matter.

Proposition 2 - Chaplains are sharing in the mission of God (Standard 3)

Mission is first and foremost God’s mission in which the church and its members choose to join. Thus, a chaplain is there to identify where God is already at work and looks to co-operate with God’s work. Thus, the mission of God invites us to go lightly into the world; to seek to join in the mission of God and through this we experience challenges to our faith, our discipleship, our very selves. This is the space into which chaplaincy often steps. Chaplaincy means real encounters with real people, who may be all over the place in their spiritual and emotional lives. It means trusting that God can do things without our help, and that it’s worth showing up

just to help others speak the hopes and pains of their own hearts in a way might enable God’s grace to enter in.

What is the mission?

This is a key question insofar as it can form the basis for the practice of a chaplain and also for the image of Jesus conveyed by the chaplain. Depending on our context, we may be guided by particular passages of Scripture. Thus, a chaplain in education may take as their guiding passages Luke 4:16-21 and Matthew 28:18-20, where Jesus announces his mission by reading from Isaiah, and what is known as the great commission, the last words of Jesus recorded in Matthew’s gospel. From these two passages the mission of God can be understood as:

- Good news for the hearer – needs met – hearts lifted – hope instilled
- Freedom – from guilt, shame, hurt, prejudice, fear
- Insight – truth, encouragement, inspiration
- Hospitality – unconditional acceptance, welcome, safety, an open hand not a pointing finger.
- Invitation – to meet with God, encounter the sacred, consider Jesus.

All of this occurs in the context of participating in the building of the

Kingdom of God. What is the mission will have a contextual response.

Proposition 3 - Chaplains’ core offer is a ministry of presence (Standard 4)

Chaplaincy is about being physically present in places and with people as a sign of God’s presence in that place and with those people. Often the ministry of a Chaplain is to be a listening presence. Listening to individuals and more generally understanding the context, the groups of people present and operation of the place or organisation where the Chaplaincy is located. This presence of the Chaplain who waits and listens with no agenda serves as a reminder to each person there that someone cares, someone is interested, someone is willing to spend time, seemingly unproductive time, in a place where they are not in control, just being there for them.

Sometimes through the deep listening of being present, a Chaplain is able to ask, directly or indirectly, the deeper question “Where are you?” Where are you in the pain, the grief, the turmoil, the disappointment, the joy, the success, the happiness of this moment? Where is the person created in the image of God, that beloved child? Sometimes the listening presence of the Chaplain echoes the “Where are you?” heart-cry of the Father waiting for the prodigal child to return (Luke 15:11-32), or the shepherd



searching for the lost sheep (Luke 15:3-7). There is a healing power of a non-judgmental listening presence of a chaplain who is comfortable in who they are and their role and can be comfortable in the being as well as the doing.

The incarnation

Fundamental to the ministry of presence is the idea of incarnation, God becoming human in Jesus. John 1:14 presents the idea of incarnation as God “moving into the neighbourhood” (The Message version). It is an active and intentional movement into the place or community where people are. Literally, the term incarnation is about Jesus becoming flesh. Through this God demonstrated a concern for the material, embodied world of human existence.

The Road to Emmaus

The story of the journey to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-17) has long been seen as a metaphor for chaplains walking besides people in trouble and being an almost invisible Jesus in those moments. Jesus does not say much, for a large part of the story he listens, gains understanding, comforts just by being with the people on the road, before beginning to offer some wisdom. What is particularly interesting about the story is how the revelation of who Jesus is comes as a result of the hospitality offered by those accompanied and in their own home. The story talks

about Jesus on the home ground of those he ministers to, about him being as much an acceptor of hospitality as a giver of it. In this story we see how presence can lead to deeper understanding of God as well as comfort. The presence is transformative of those with whom time is spent.

Proposition 4 - A chaplain seeks to evoke hope (Standards 1 & 6)

Jesus in accompanying, in stating “you matter”, creates hope in the hearts of those he is with. Not a hope that everything will turn out well. But a hope that is based on knowledge that there is more to life than what we are going through; that there is a God, who is with us here and now. Hope is a trust in God for our futures. With children and young people, we explore their hopes for themselves and their world. We encourage, as appropriate, a hope that is reflected in the nature of God and the culture of the Kingdom of God. God is faithful and worthy of our trust; God

loves us, the heart of God is always for us. It is evidence that our eternal future is secure. It is a hope of now and not yet.

Hope as an anchor

Our Christian hope is more than desired wishes, “I hope it doesn’t rain”, “I hope I get a good mark for this work”. Our hope is based on God’s constant goodness, even when we are going through what seem like challenging times. In chaplaincy with children and young people, our hope is realistic, appropriate. It is not based on everything working out how we want; not being bullied, getting better, not dying. It is a hope that God will be with us in the midst of our struggles. An anchor is a very traditional image of hope, found carved on the walls of early Christian catacombs in Rome. The anchor is a Christian symbol for hope and steadfastness. The source for this symbol is Hebrews 6:19, “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast” Hope is the gift Jesus

leaves with those he meets whether that’s a leper on the road (Matthew 8:1-4), a widow at a funeral (Luke 7:11-17) or a thief on a cross with just hours to live (Luke 23:42-3). Jesus carries hope to places where all hope is lost and to those the world considers without hope. A chaplain is the inheritor and carrier of that hope and is to pass it on to those they serve.

Proposition 5 - Chaplaincy and the chaplain is a gift given by God (Standard 5)

There is something significant in the idea that chaplaincy or the chaplain is a gift given by God. In John 3:16 we read that God loved the world so much that he gave his son. Love led to the gift, and the gift that was given was Jesus in the form of a human.

In Ephesians 4:11, Paul talks about the gifts given to the church: the prophets, the apostles, the evangelists, the pastors and the teachers. This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list, but it

is important. The gifts are not talents or skills or supernatural ability, they are people. Included in Paul's list is the pastor. The person with responsibility for discipling, journeying alongside and caring pastorally for people is a gift to the church. A chaplain is similarly a gift to the institution or context in which they minister. The very presence of a chaplain in a context is a physical pointer to the existence of a loving and caring God. A gift is always a gift from someone. The implications of a being a gift are worth reflection in exploring chaplaincy:

A gift is chosen

When a gift is bought it is bought with a specific person in mind. Thought is given to the one who is to receive it and what would be the best thing for them. A chaplain who is a gift has been chosen for who they are but also chosen to fit the context. That is an encouragement and a responsibility. In the suffering servant narrative in Isaiah (starting in Ch 49) we see a chosen minister – a minister given, and we can draw comfort and challenge from that narrative.

A gift is given for two purposes

Generally speaking, a gift may be given for two reasons. One is to meet a need. A person has just moved into a new house and needs things for their kitchen. So, a new toaster makes a perfect gift because it's what is needed. But sometimes gifts

are given for the sole reason of blessing the recipient. Given because the gift will bring joy, will make their lives better, because the person is loved. Chaplains are often given to meet needs – pastoral support, mentoring, mental health issues, spiritual development, and teaching. But a chaplain can be a blessing also. The institution becomes a better, more hopeful, and joyous place because they are present.

Gifts can be laid aside or even rejected

A person who is given a gift can't be forced to use it. Gifts are unconditional. In Isaiah 49:4 the servant talks about feeling as if they have done nothing, made no headway and yet are prepared to leave it with God. Isaiah 53:3 talks of the servant being despised and rejected. Being given doesn't necessarily mean being accepted. There is much to think on here in terms of assessing call and vocation. Being rejected or underused doesn't necessarily mean the person in the role has got it wrong and can help a chaplain understand their more challenging days.

Scripture is full of the imagery of giving. We talk about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Jesus gives of himself; he gives his life. Jesus gives us his peace. The application of this thinking to ministry is an important facet of our theology of chaplaincy.





SECTION TWO: VALUES UNDERPINNING THE WORKING STANDARDS

Christian Chaplaincy services with children and young people (0-25) are shaped by the following values:

1. Participation

As far as is possible and appropriate, children and young people are invited to participate in and contribute to the development of chaplaincy services.

2. Equal Opportunities

Following the example of Christ in the gospels all are welcome to participate in and approach any of the services offered by a chaplain.

3. Unconditional Care

Following the example of Christ in the gospels the chaplain's offer of pastoral, spiritual and religious care to children and young people is unconditional and without judgment, being based on the belief that all are acceptable and loved by God our creator.

4. Collaborative and multi-disciplinary

Particularly in institutional settings chaplains are committed to working with

adaptability, flexibility and accountability to stakeholders and encourage the engagement and training of volunteers as appropriate.

5. Context Focused

Chaplains will seek to be integrated and embedded into institutions as appropriate, bringing value where possible and being aware of broader political context whilst never losing sight of their position as a minister of the Christian faith.

6. Mission Focused

Following the great commission as expressed by Jesus in Matthew's gospel a chaplain fulfils their role as part of that

great commission; being good news to the institution. In that sense a chaplain is both evangelistic and missional in ways that are appropriate to the values of the host institution and in the light of their policies and practices

7. Inclusive

Mindful of the multi cultural context of the world in which they work a chaplain must remain true to their missional calling but at the same time be able to operate collaboratively with people of other faiths. Traditionally this has best been expressed through a commitment to love demonstrated in action and hospitality.

SECTION THREE: PURPOSE



Context: Where we are

Operating in the liminal space (Context – Where we are): Chaplains are incarnational. They have moved into the neighbourhood as God moved into the world and as such:

- Chaplains are a part of an institution (school, hospital, YOI) but not constrained by it, being aware of the privilege and boundaries of presence. The space is a place of encounter where God can choose to be revealed through the meeting.
- Collaborating with a wide variety of stake-holders yet remaining distinctively Christian, true to their mission calling to be Christ's body in that place.
- Engaging with CYP through individual encounters or accompanying them for the journey following the example of Christ on the Emmaus road.

Who we are

Chaplains are first and foremost representative and disciples of Jesus and that is the foundation of their identity. Therefore in order to maintain this identity they must:

- Be secure in their own faith and relationship with God
- Seek to model the character and example of Jesus in all they do
- Become the translator between religious and statutory worlds
- Seek to represent Christ's body: the church
- Be a spiritual, pastoral, cultural and moral resource
- Be a prophetic voice to the community
- Be a prophetic voice to the institution
- Be a prophetic presence for the individual

Role: What we do

Creating sacred spaces - chaplains are the visible representatives of Christ's body the church and as such need to ensure that the church and all it offers is both visible and accessible to those who need it, for whatever purpose. They can do this by giving space and opportunity for:

- Personal and corporate reflection, worship and refreshing the soul.
- Holistic personal transformation to be realised as appropriate (discipleship/mentoring opportunities).
- Contributing to the Common Good – fund raising, awareness raising, collective remembrance.

Outputs & Outcomes: What happens

Facilitating the opportunities for children and young people Chaplains reflect the desire of Jesus that we come to live life in all its fullness and as such work towards maximising the opportunities for personal growth in a variety of ways including:

- Taking an asset based approach to engaging with children and young people
- Meeting the spiritual and/or religious needs of children and young people whenever possible
- Developing resilience, building self-esteem, confidence and offering opportunities for empowerment recognising the valuable contributions each individual can make to their community when given the opportunity and means.
- Deepening and enhancing their humanity through a wider exploration of the human condition.
- Exploring faith and the meaning of life in response to questions and curricula.
- The creation of opportunities for young people to find their voice and for that voice to be given an opportunity to be heard.
- The provision of opportunities where God can be encountered in the everyday.
- Working with individuals from faith traditions not their own.
- Assisting in meaning making in the lives of those they meet.

SECTION FOUR:

CORE STANDARDS FOR CHRISTIAN CHAPLAINS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

1. The chaplain will be seen as a person of God with a commitment to prayer, worship, fellowship and personal study, engaging in theological and professional reflection, and appropriate training as a means of ensuring development in their role. (Theological Proposition 4)

1.1. They will be a committed Christian disciple, in good standing with their church/denomination. Their vocation to work with children and young people will be recognised by their Christian leaders and this will be indicated by their being commissioned to the role.

1.2. For ordained chaplains this will include holding a licence or equivalent. For any chaplains not employed by their institution or for those undertaking the role in a

voluntary capacity there should be a church or properly constituted organization who recognizes their call and offers support, training and supervision for that role as appropriate to their role and level of responsibility.

2. The chaplain will embody the life and mission of Jesus Christ through the unconditional giving of love and care to all those children and young people met during the course of their duties and by the promotion of Christian Ethos and values as appropriate, Christian services, rituals and practices as necessary and Christian Education where applicable. (Theological Proposition 1)

2.1. The chaplain will at all times show in their lives that they are a servant

of God and model a life-style that reflects the person and character of Christ

2.2. The chaplain will, as appropriate, in partnership with the management of the institution, be able to support the creation of a vision and ethos statement; monitor and evaluate its impact and effectiveness and advise on ways that this statement could be embodied in practice in all aspects of the institutions work and in the lives of staff and young people.

2.3. The chaplain will contribute to the organisation of corporate or collective acts of worship, including special services, as required by law and the institution, drawing upon the expertise of trusted partners, staff, children and young people and their families as appropriate.

2.4. Where relevant to the context, the chaplain will be able to demonstrate appropriate support for those who hold or are developing a Christian faith within the institution, either in the context of a group or one to one with appropriate supervision.

2.5. The chaplain will demonstrate their Christian values and ethos through their own conduct and presence. They will be observed as a person who works in such a way as to be a model of fairness.

2.6. The chaplain will understand the unique nature of their position with regards to relationships with children and young people and work in ways that ensure that they conduct their operations with integrity, dignity and within safeguarding guidelines.





3. The chaplain will work within the institution's policies and practices with an emphasis on safeguarding and in compliance with the policies and practices of the commissioning body. The chaplain will seek to conduct their ministry in a way that is beyond reproach. (Theological Proposition 2)

- 3.1. The chaplain and their team will engage in regular training in all areas considered necessary for safe practice such as safeguarding, Prevent. They will support the institution in ways that enable it to meet its objectives with regard to the well being and care of children and young people.
- 3.2. The chaplain will seek to recognise and articulate all signs of abuse, in both staff and young people and will demonstrate a willingness and ability to signpost children and

young people to necessary and appropriate services as part of their pastoral care.

- 3.3. The chaplain will always engage in best practice, including the setting of appropriate boundaries, when working with young people to safeguard their own and others welfare and well-being.

4. The chaplain will be engaged in an holistic approach to pastoral, spiritual and religious care that encompasses the whole of the institution demonstrating unconditional positive regard to all within it. They will act as a critical friend to the institution, engaging in critical dialogue. (Theological Proposition 3)

- 4.1. This care involves both long term and transient members of the community and people at every level and role within the institution and is founded upon engaging in the building of purposeful relationships. This will be done through active listening,

mediation, education, appropriate interventions, crossing boundaries of belief and culture, having involvement in critical incident management, being proactive and reactive as the context requires while complying with appropriate confidentiality and safeguarding guidelines.

- 4.2. The chaplain will ensure and demonstrate that the services that they offer are accessible to all who wish to make use of them, irrespective of gender, ability, race or culture They will build networks across belief systems that would support individuals in times of need, which the chaplain is unable to meet.
- 4.3. Dependent upon the context and whilst still maintaining professional boundaries, the chaplain may continue to offer care beyond the institution for example by continuing to support prisoners upon their release.
- 4.4. The chaplain will engage in supervision and maintain records, in a form agreed with the institution. Any actions taken as a result of those meetings will be shown in the records.

- 4.5. The chaplain will seek to work as part of a team within the institution and engage in collaboration with other skilled adults who have a pastoral care role within the institution. Depending on their context and working within the limits of their experience and competence, they will know when to make timely and appropriate referrals.

5. The chaplain will promote spiritual development and facilitate the encounter with the transcendent for those within the institution as appropriate to context. (Theological Proposition 5)

- 5.1. Engaging in leading collective worship, facilitating ritual and the development of liturgy appropriate to the context in line with institutional policies and practices.
- 5.2. The chaplain will conduct acts of prayer and worship as appropriate to the institution and in line with statutory requirements, understanding the value and benefits of the same in terms of their contribution to the spiritual development of those associated with the institution. This may include celebrating significant life events such as marriage, baptism

or confirmation. The chaplain will be qualified appropriately in accordance with the requirements of their faith body. This will include loss, death and bereavement rituals, services and memorials.

- 5.3. The chaplain will be able to facilitate the exploration of the spiritual through a variety of activities taking account of best practice, the context and cultural demographic of the community. Where expected in the role the chaplain will be engaged in the creation of tools and strategies to measure and evaluate spiritual development of all those within the institution. The chaplain will seek to be aware of the impact of their own work on spiritual development.
- 5.4. The chaplain will work towards the creation, development and management of experiences for encounter or scared spaces, both physical and virtual, in which

children and young people will be enabled to engage with and reflect upon the transcendent.

6. The chaplain will be the champion of children and young people, ensuring, as far as is possible, they will be protected from harm and enabled to reach their full potential¹. They will work with children and young people as appropriate to their developmental journey. (Theological Proposition 4)

- 6.1. They will be available and accessible to all people as far as the institution allows either in playgrounds, chapels, corridors, classrooms, or any public spaces. In particular the chaplain will promote inclusion, equality and diversity enhancing the well-being of children and young people, engaging in non-discriminatory practice. The chaplain will seek to bring to all their relationships an attitude of grace and acceptance

- 6.2. Chaplains will be known for their inclusiveness and their willingness to engage in non judgemental relationships founded on a desire to value all people as God created and loved. Their primary calling to serve Christ will be worked out through the depth and richness of their relationships with those in their care.
- 6.3. Chaplains will seek to act as advocates for children and young people in their care seeking to ensure that they have a voice in their context.

¹ The house of Bishops document 'Promoting a Safe Church', defines Spiritual abuse as 'An attempt to 'force' religious values or ideas onto people, particularly those who may be vulnerable to such practices. Within faith communities harm can be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice; this can include the misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, or intrusive healing and deliverance ministries, which may result in vulnerable people experiencing physical, emotional or sexual harm.

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