

Endorsement Guidelines

(Free Churches Prison Chaplains)

Section 1.3 of PSI 05-2016 states

1.3 All pre-appointment checks and security clearances must be in place before a Chaplain can commence work. All Chaplains must also have the endorsement of the relevant Faith Adviser prior to appointment. Some Chaplains may also need written permission (e.g. Licence) from their faith leader as a condition of appointment. All new Chaplains must be provided with a copy of the Chaplaincy Induction pack, available on the Chaplaincy intranet site.

Prior to appointment of any chaplain from a free churches background, the Faith Advisor must ensure that the candidate meets the relevant criteria.

All Free Church Chaplains will have demonstrated consistently to a range of people their academic, pastoral and practical abilities to meet the qualifications and competencies required to fulfil this very specialised field of ministry. The following criteria apply to all free churches chaplains, whether appointed by the Prison Service or a Private Sector provider.

Endorsement Criteria

Paid Chaplains (Sessional and Contracted, Non-ordained and ordained¹)

All Free Church chaplains are trained faith practitioners in their own communities. They are accountable to, and accredited by an eligible denomination² as listed on the Free Churches Group website. They will either:

- a) Be a minister (lay or ordained) of a Free Church denomination which is a member of the Free Churches Group, or
- b) Be a minister (lay or ordained) of a Free Church denomination which is listed by the Free Churches Faith Advisor as an 'Additional Denomination'.

Denominations listed as an "Additional Denomination" will satisfy all of the following:

- have a distinctive Free Church theology;
- be national members of either Churches Together in England or Cytun;
- have formally requested inclusion on the 'Additional Denomination' list;
- have agreed to abide by the "Joint Working Protocol for Prison Chaplains" established between the Free Churches Group, Churches together in England and Cytun.

Ordained Chaplains (including ordained deacons) will have completed a formal professional formation process appropriate to their denomination which satisfies that denomination of their ability to effectively practice and fulfil the skills and competencies required of an ordained minister. Where an ordained chaplain is appointed within the first two years of their ordination then the

¹ For 'Ordained', read 'ordained or denominational equivalent' throughout

² For 'Denomination', read 'denomination / church grouping' throughout

denomination will be required to demonstrate to the Free Churches Faith Advisor the additional support to be given during this crucial stage of ministry development.

Non-ordained³ Chaplains will have completed a level of study in a theological or biblical discipline which enables them to be recognised by their denomination as a non-ordained minister.

Formal endorsement of the candidate's denominational accreditation will be required from the Free Churches Faith Advisor to HMPPS .

Church leaders at a regional or national level, i.e. Moderators, Chairs, Regional Ministers etc. will be asked to provide written confirmation to the Faith Advisor attesting to the credentials, qualifications and accountability of each candidate (This evidence will be required before appointment and thereafter periodically according to HMPPS vetting policy)

Volunteer Chaplains

Be a minister of a free church local to the establishment. Volunteer free church chaplains are trained faith practitioners in their own communities.

All Volunteer Chaplains will have demonstrated consistently to a range of people (academic / pastoral / practical) that they have the effective pastoral, communication and relational skills required to practice in this very specialised field of ministry.

Volunteer Chaplains (in training).

In some cases a volunteer chaplain may be appointed in order to obtain the necessary experience and training to inform appropriate ministerial formation in the specialist area of prison chaplaincy

Formal endorsement from the candidate's own denomination will be required via the Free Churches Faith Advisor. Senior church leaders to whom the volunteer chaplain would be actively accountable will be asked to provide written confirmation attesting to the credentials, training plan and accountability of each candidate sponsored by their denomination (This evidence will be required before appointment and thereafter periodically according to HMPPS vetting policy and will be required whenever a volunteer chaplain seeks to take up a paid chaplaincy role).

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Requirement

In order to maintain endorsement by the Free Churches Faith Advisor all chaplains will be required to demonstrate regular ongoing reflection or training contributing towards their professional development as ministers. This will be recorded and assessed on an annual basis by the Free Churches Faith Advisor.

An appropriate level of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for a prison chaplain endorsed by the FCG would approximate to 50% of the average weekly hours in a 12 month period (ie. If working 20 Hrs per week, 10 Hours of CPD would be expected annually), down to a minimum of 4 Hrs per year. Chaplains should be able to demonstrate how their CPD has contributed to their spiritual development as required by the HMPPS Job Descriptions. It is expected that CPD can come from a variety of sources such as HMPPS training / FCG or denominational training / published reflections / academic study.

³ For 'Non-ordained', read also 'lay' or denominational equivalent throughout

Transfer of Accreditation amongst Free Church Denominations

It is recognised that within Free Church practice, ministers will from time to time move from one denomination to another, and seek to be recognised by their new denomination as being a minister of that denomination. All such cases must be referred to the Free Churches Faith Advisor before the transfer takes place. The Free Churches Faith Advisor will seek to ensure that

- both denominations have formally agreed to the move before it takes place. This will be evidenced in writing by Church leaders at a regional or national level from each denomination.
- there is no disciplinary process involving the chaplain seeking transfer. This will be evidenced in writing by the prison establishment(s) where the chaplain is serving or by the chaplain's original denomination.

Where there is a disciplinary process, or no prior agreement has been made between denominations then the Free Churches Faith Advisor may remove Faith Endorsement either for a set time period or indefinitely. The chaplain concerned, HMPPS and the denominations involved will be informed formally of this with the reasoning being given.

Formal Qualifications Requirement

Band 5 Ordained.

Ordained Chaplains (including ordained deacons) will have completed a formal ministerial formation process appropriate to their denomination which satisfies that denomination of their ability to effectively practice and fulfil the skills and competencies required of an ordained minister. Where an ordained chaplain is appointed within the first two years of their ordination then the denomination will be required to demonstrate to the Free Churches Faith Advisor the additional support to be given during this crucial stage of ministry development. They will have successfully attained a formal recognised qualification in theology or religious study generally representing at least 3 years of study, normally to UK undergraduate Diploma standard.

Band 5 Non-Ordained

Free Church Chaplains (non-ordained) are trained Faith practitioners in their own communities. They have demonstrated consistently to a range of people (academic / pastoral / practical) that they have effective communication and relational skills in order to have achieved this level of accreditation. They will have successfully attained a formal recognised qualification in theology or religious study generally representing at least three years of Part Time study, normally to UK University undergraduate Diploma standard.

Band 7 – Managing Chaplain

Must be suitably qualified and have a formal recognised qualification in theology or religious study, generally at least to UK University undergraduate Diploma standard and be experienced such that the job holder will have received formal endorsements (where relevant) from the Free Churches Faith Advisor.