



# **MitE Chaplaincy Volunteer Chaplain's Handbook**

**MitE Chaplaincy**  
Liverpool Parish Church  
Old Churchyard  
Chapel Street  
Liverpool  
L2 8TZ

0743 6361376  
info@mite.org.uk  
www.mite.org.uk

## **In this Volunteer chaplain Handbook you will find:**

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## Welcome to MitE – a note from Laura Hutcheon, Executive Director

Thank you for volunteering to give up your time and welcome to MitE!

MitE has volunteers involved at every level of the organisation from our volunteer chaplains all the way up to the trustees. The time you spend volunteering with MitE helps us to do a better job of serving businesses, retail sectors, voluntary communities and faith groups around the region from Liverpool to St Helens and Warrington. I hope that you are excited to get started and that your experience of volunteering with MitE is a positive one.

Volunteering is a two-way process and MitE has responsibilities to the volunteer chaplain as well. What we expect from you will be agreed between you and the Regional Volunteer Co-ordinator or Lead Chaplain at a local level, but this Handbook lays out the basics for all volunteer chaplains.

I hope that you view this handbook not as a formality or as a list of information, but rather as a tool to help you to get the most out of your time with us. It contains more detail about MitE as an organisation and some practical bits that you'll need to know. It is by no means an exhaustive piece of work and I'm sure you'll still have plenty of questions to ask as you get involved in your new role. This information is provided as a good starting point.

Please do feel free to speak to me, Emily (the Administrator) or the Volunteer Coordinator/Lead Chaplain about any questions or issues that might crop up as part of your role – we are all happy to help, and no question is too trivial.

Thank you, once again, for choosing to volunteer with MitE.

*“Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless.”*  
~ Sherry Anderson

# Laura Hutcheon

info@mite.org.uk

## Getting Started

When you start at Mission in the Economy (MitE) you will have an introduction and induction. As part of your induction the Volunteer Coordinator or Lead Chaplain will talk you through what your volunteer chaplain role is.

As a volunteer chaplain at MitE you are a representative of the organisation. It is important that you read and understand our policies and procedures. These cover things from safeguarding to confidentiality, equal opportunities and health and safety. Some of these policies are covered briefly in this handbook but a full copy of our Policies and Procedures is available from the Volunteer Coordinator or Lead Chaplain.

During your time as a volunteer chaplain at MitE we are here to help. Although you have a named supervisor you can also contact the Executive Director if you need to speak to someone else.

### What does Mission in the Economy do?

MitE provides chaplaincy services to retail, business and faith groups. What this looks like in practice varies from area to area, but in general the role of our chaplains is to listen, care for and support the people that we work with and to enable them to flourish where they are.

MitE is an ecumenical Christian charity and our work is rooted in Christian principles, but we care about and work with people of all faiths and those with none. We see our role as being a supportive and encouraging intentional Christian presence in the communities that we work with rather than proselytising or evangelising.

### Where does MitE work?

MitE's main office is located in Liverpool Parish Church in Liverpool.

The chaplains are spread out over Liverpool, Warrington and St Helens in a variety of different roles:

#### Liverpool:

- Liverpool city centre
- YMCA Together
- Liverpool John Lennon Airport
- Merseyside Police
- St Johns Market

#### St Helens:

- St Helens Town Centre
- St Helens YMCA

### **Warrington:**

- Birchwood Business Park
- Warrington Market

## **Volunteer Chaplains' Code of Conduct**

Mission in the Economy (MitE) helps workplaces to be learning places of faithful values and of good character. MitE sees faith as an integral part of what it is to be human.

Chaplains with MitE recognise that each individual has dignity and worth, and their spirituality is an essential part of their health and wholeness; the spiritual care of people is part of the total care offered within organisation; inclusivity and diversity are foundational values in pastoral services offered to people, and are valued through the structures of MitE's recruitment, support and care for chaplains.

Chaplains are present in an organisation for people of all faiths and all Christian denominations, and those of no faith; they may assist Christians and other faith members in the workplace wanting to live out their faith.

Chaplaincy is a 'self-emptying' generosity: Chaplains need to ensure that they set up structures for themselves for emotional and spiritual replenishment.

MitE Volunteer Chaplains should:

- Be punctual, polite and courteous at all times
- Attend relevant training / induction sessions as required
- Be non-judgemental and non-discriminatory; respectful of individual background / tradition; not causing unnecessary offence.
- Be first and foremost listeners, allowing speakers to think for themselves and find their own answers, as possible: Chaplains are not acting as counsellors but can give cautious, appropriate suggestions.
- Be able to explain their own faith motivations and beliefs in appropriate language, when asked about them.
- Be responsible and professional, as far as possible; eg in keeping appointments, being reliable and in the language used when speaking to chaplaincy users, hosts and other members of the MitE team.
- Recognise that all of us, at times, fall short of the ideals of our own values / traditions; thus respecting mistakes.
- Show loyalty to the host organisation: not betraying sensitive information outside of the business
- Communicate clearly and respond professionally to requests, and use advertising opportunities to promote the services of chaplaincy.
- Be adaptable and imaginative, as far as possible, in fitting chaplaincy to the structures and changes in the organisation. Sensitive to work patterns and not disrupting work unnecessarily, nor breaking local rules.

- Maintain confidentiality - even from your own faith group, or organisational management, if needed – and with respect to the confidentiality rules of the organisation **with the exception of allegations of abuse or serious potential harm** which must be passed on.
- Be prayerful and reflective: discerning where God is at work in a situation; seeking to learn about the host organisation; and taking the necessary time to know themselves and feed their own spiritual life.
- Connect with a local church or faith community and use their experience to feed the life and faith of that community.
- Maintain and celebrate integrity; being particularly supportive of those who are vulnerable and powerless; being willing, if necessary, to witness to the causes of significant problems.
- Be understanding of other faith traditions, festivals etc and respecting their convictions. **Chaplains should not attempt to recruit or convince someone to another way of faith or thinking.**
- Observe Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Data Protection regulations, and take care of their own and others' safety; e.g. taking lone-working precautions (as necessary) and avoiding situations where they may have allegations made against them
- Take part in chaplaincy team meetings and de-briefing with colleagues, as appropriate, being supportive of colleagues; reporting serious incidents to their host organisation supervisor and/or the MitE Executive Director and/or Volunteer Coordinator/Lead Chaplain.
- Manage conflicting relationships when belonging to more than one organisation. Chaplains should not misuse power, or their position: eg for personal gain, nor for exploiting emotional or financial relationships. They should not accept any gift or money outside of what is agreed in their contract / service level agreement even as a favour. If this is unavoidable, all such actions should be reported to the Volunteer Coordinator/Lead Chaplain, the Executive Director, the Administrator or a Trustee.

## MitE's Key Policies

MitE has a full Policies and Procedures file which can be found in the MitE Office or, on request, from the Volunteer Coordinator or Lead Chaplain. This can also be accessed through the MitE website 'Chaplains Area' <https://mite.org.uk/chaplains>. This can be referred to for greater detail on all the aspects listed below.

As a volunteer chaplain you should be aware of the following:

- a) Equal Opportunities – MitE is committed to actively oppose any discrimination on the basis of gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, disability, age, marital status, sexual orientation or religious affirmation.
- b) Safeguarding – this is **everyone's** responsibility. At MitE we aim to create a safe environment, have a rigorous recruitment procedure, provide support for staff and volunteer chaplains and recognise abuse.
- c) Health & Safety – it is your responsibility to keep yourself safe, keep others safe and to report any issues or concerns to the Volunteer Coordinator or Lead Chaplain.
- d) Confidentiality – information should not be divulged to a third party without the consent of the informant, care should be taken not to discuss confidential information in places where this can be overheard, and all written confidential information should be securely stored. Confidentiality means information clearly intended for one purpose should not be used for another.
- e) Complaints – Your first point of contact is the Volunteer Coordinator, but if this is inappropriate the Executive Director or Chair of Trustees should be contacted if there are any complaints raised about a member of staff or a volunteer chaplain of MitE.
- f) Volunteer Policy - this covers the expectations of MitE and the responsibilities that MitE has to the volunteer chaplain.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **I'm currently receiving benefits, will volunteering affect this and should I let the Job Centre know?**

If you are out of work at the moment and receiving Job Seekers Allowance or Incapacity Benefit this doesn't affect your volunteering at all. You can do as much volunteering and as many hours as you want as long as you are still actively looking for a job (JSA/UC) and can go for an interview and start a paid job at short notice.

There has been some confusion in the past over benefits, particularly Incapacity Benefit as it used to be that you could only do a certain number of hours (16). This has changed and you can do as much volunteering as you want.

It is good practice to inform the JobCentre that you are volunteering. Sometimes advisors aren't aware of this and can give you contradictory evidence. If this is so you can always ask us to help you speak to them or give you written evidence that this is so.

### **If I volunteer as a chaplain at MitE for long enough will I get a job?**

Volunteering as a chaplain with MitE does not automatically lead to any paid employment. However if any paid jobs at MitE do come up you are very welcome to apply. Often the experience that you gain from your time as a volunteer chaplain here can put you above other candidates, but unfortunately we cannot guarantee you paid employment.

### **Can I get a reference from you?**

Yes, as a volunteer chaplain you can get a reference **if you have been with us for 6 months or longer** but please do let us know if we are going to expect one. When writing MitE down as a reference please use your Volunteer Coordinator or Lead Chaplain's name for the reference.

### **What happens if I don't get on with someone or things don't work out?**

If you feel that something isn't working out or your volunteering isn't meeting your expectations talk to your Volunteer Coordinator or Lead Chaplain and see if something can be changed. If you don't feel that you can talk to them, talk to the Executive Director.

### **Can I do more if I want to? And what happens if my role changes?**

If you ever want to try something different or want to extend your role, talk to your Volunteer Coordinator or Lead Chaplain to see if it is possible. Sometimes it is, but sometimes there may be other factors which mean that it's not. When you decide to volunteer chaplain at MitE you should stick within that role description. For example, if you come in as a volunteer chaplain in St Helens Town Centre you cannot suddenly switch to volunteering at Warrington Market after a few weeks. However, if you want to try a different role, speak to your Volunteer Coordinator / Lead Chaplain or the Executive Director.

### **What happens if I'm ill?**

Don't worry if you're ill, please just let your Volunteer Coordinator or Lead Chaplain know that you can't come in either by text, email or phone message.

### **What happens if I need to have some time off?**

As a volunteer chaplain it's not the case that if you agree to come in, for example, on a Thursday you have to come in every Thursday forever. If you need to miss some weeks because of exams, holidays or because of a change in your personal situation please let us know. The more advance warning that you give us the better it is. If you have any difficulties keeping to the time and days we originally agreed, please speak to your Volunteer Coordinator or Lead Chaplain.

### **Can I claim expenses?**

Where we ask volunteer chaplains to incur expenses in order to undertake work for MitE, volunteer chaplains will have the option to recover these costs. The process for claiming expenses is;



- a) Agreement of the activity to be undertaken with the Volunteer Coordinator or Lead Chaplain of the service you are volunteering for, and inform them that you intend to recover your costs *\*approval **must be sought prior to incurring any costs**. We cannot guarantee that costs incurred without prior approval will be recoverable\**
- b) Keep all receipts relating to the expenditure that you wish to claim for,
- c) Complete a claim form on your return from the related activity. MitE cannot pay the expenses incurred for travel to and from your home to the place of volunteering.
- d) If you have to attend mandatory training or meeting away from your usual place of volunteering, you will be able to claim travel expenses and please speak to the Volunteer Coordinator or Lead Chaplain.

**Please do not incur expenses without first agreeing them with the Volunteer Coordinator or Lead Chaplain.**

As we are a small charity working on a tight budget it is necessary to cap the maximum amount of expense that can be claimed. This is discretionary and should be discussed with the Volunteer Coordinator or Lead Chaplain, additional approval may be sought from the Executive Director.

***If there's anything else you want to know please don't be afraid to ask!***

## Useful Contact Information:

**Laura Hutcheon:** Executive Director

07526769375

[info@mite.org.uk](mailto:info@mite.org.uk)

[laura.hutcheon@mite.org.uk](mailto:laura.hutcheon@mite.org.uk)

Liverpool Parish Church, Old Churchyard, Chapel Street, Liverpool L2 8TZ

**Emily Hawkins:** MitE Administrator

0759 7793960

[emily@mite.org.uk](mailto:emily@mite.org.uk)

Liverpool Parish Church, Old Churchyard, Chapel Street, Liverpool L2 8TZ

**Clare North:** Regional Volunteer Co-ordinator (St Helens and Warrington)

07526 378529

[clare@mite.org.uk](mailto:clare@mite.org.uk)

**Michelle Wood:** Volunteer Coordinator (Liverpool)

07734 420137

[michelle@mite.org.uk](mailto:michelle@mite.org.uk)

**Tim Wade:** YMCA

07395 431738

[tim@mite.org.uk](mailto:tim@mite.org.uk)

**John McCarthy:** Merseyside Police

[police@mite.org.uk](mailto:police@mite.org.uk)

**Rev Dr Crispin Pailing:** Chair of MitE

07982 044818

[rector@livpc.org.uk](mailto:rector@livpc.org.uk)