

Neighbourhood Chaplains (NC) Frequently Asked Questions

Version 13/07/18



Who are Counties?

Counties is a national Christian charity. Since 1899 Counties has existed to make Jesus known. Today Counties fulfils its mission through supporting evangelists, providing resources and training and equipping churches to "Make Jesus Known." If you've not heard of Counties before and would like to know more about us, see countiesuk.org

Why Neighbourhood Chaplains?

Recent research shows that millions of people in our communities experience loneliness, isolation, and despair. Local churches provide huge amounts of support and volunteer time through projects like Christians Against Poverty, coffee mornings, lunch clubs, parent and toddler groups, and many more. But many lonely people remain unknown. Neighbourhood Chaplains helps to meet this need through training and equipping local churches to have confidence and resources to love their neighbourhoods through word and action, doing this safely and responsibly.

How do Neighbourhood Chaplains connect with their community?

After training, those recognised as 'Lead Chaplains' will begin to visit homes in their area; connecting lonely and lost people with the practical love of Jesus demonstrated through listening, befriending, and helping. Some churches will immediately be able to connect neighbours with an existing network of resources. Others will act as 'signposts,' introducing people to other help that is available locally, and to the NC Helping Hands and Befriending teams.

So, what is a 'Lead Chaplain (Initial Contact), Befriender, or Helping Hands?'

These names describe three roles that can be fulfilled by Neighbourhood Chaplains Team members.

'Lead Chaplains' will knock on doors, and begin to build a presence in the street and area.

'Befrienders' will make visits once a connection is established, they are available to build a relationship with one or two people, as a trusted friend, listener, and visitor.

'Helping Hands' These will be people with practical skills. It may be a team from your church(es) who help do a bit of gardening, or decorating, or offer other practical help as the needs of those visited become known.

Who is the 'Local Organiser.'

One of the Lead Chaplains will act as Local Organiser (LO). They will be the contact person, recognised by Counties, and the local church(es). The LO may be the Team Leader for the local NC team, or may be a gifted administrator who will act as the LO and supervise volunteers for the local team. Each local church that runs the NC scheme should identify and recognise their LO, and let Counties office know. This will form the basis of our administration and communication.

Who should attend the training day?

Everyone who will play a part in the launch of your NC project. Including the Initial Contact, Helping Hands, and Befriender roles, and the Local Organiser. If your church leader is not in the team, they may also like to attend. Those who may join the Prayer Team would also benefit from the training, as they will get a sense for the wider vision for NC, and how their role fits into it. To book a training day please contact Counties.

The Application Pack doesn't mention the Prayer Team?

The training day will give some ideas on how to encourage the local church(es) to establish a prayer base to support and underpin the work of the NC team. We depend on God for all we do. Please see our website for our statement of faith www.countiesuk.org/about-us/values-statement-of-faith . NC has a confidentiality policy to cover prayer events, which is discussed during training.

Is Neighbourhood Chaplains just old fashioned 'door-to-door' work by a new name?

No. First Contacts will introduce themselves as the local Neighbourhood Chaplain. Rather than give out tracts, or invite people to church, their first question will be 'Is there any way in which we can help you?'

So, is it just another form of church 'social work?'

No. We believe that sharing the love of Jesus is done through BOTH word and action. The NC training day will help us to understand how the Great commission of Jesus ('Go and make disciples'), AND the command to 'Love your neighbour as yourself,' are essential if we are to truly see our nation transformed through the Gospel of Jesus. NC provides a way in which local churches can show love in action. The training day will also train and equip team members to be able to 'give the reason for the hope that you have' (1 Peter 3:15).

What is the bespoke literature?

It includes a fantastic range of NC branded greetings cards, including 'Welcome to your new home,' 'Happy Easter,' as well as seasonal themes. Each with a printed greeting, and a place to add your own local details. Also order 'Jesus' books, tracts and contact cards at no extra cost, once your church membership is set up.

What is the uniform like and do we have to pay for it?

Polo shirts and fleeces with the NC logo are ordered via Counties office. Yes, this is purchased by your team. It is good quality and Counties will be purchasing in large quantities making it cheaper than ordering just what your church will need locally.

I want to know more before I sign up for a training day!

Please call the Counties office on 01373 823013 or email office@countiesuk.org to arrange a chat. Depending on availability we may be able to send one of our trainers to meet you if this helps your church decide, or you can come along to a regional information event. We can also send you more details about what the training day includes. To book a free information event for your area please contact Counties office.

When I send the booking form, what happens next?

Make sure that you have the support of your church leaders before sending the form. Tell your church about the training day and begin to recruit your team. Encourage as many people as possible to come, as it will inspire and inform your church, as well as equip your team. The £299 covers your training day cost for up to 20 people (we recommend you should bring at least a minimum of 3). Before the training day there will be an opportunity to give us more details and further discuss how the scheme operates.

When do we start paying?

Your church or group of churches will pay for the training day, our office will invoice you. Then, three months after the training day your first monthly contribution will start. You will need to set up a Standing Order with your bank. It takes around three months to launch your team before you start paying. Monthly costs vary according to the size of church, see brochure for details. A group of two or more churches working together pays £20 per month each.

What if my church can't pay?

Small churches are encouraged to partner together with other churches in their area to raise funding and strong volunteer teams.

Anything else we can help with?

We are thrilled that you are considering joining Neighbourhood Chaplains. We genuinely believe that this project can transform the engagement of the local church in the community. Don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any further questions, we're here to help.

www.neighbourhoodchaplains.co.uk