

A major new report, launching today, has concluded that university chaplains have a significant impact on individual students.

*Chaplains on Campus: Understanding Chaplaincy in UK Universities* is a new study conducted by academics from Coventry, Durham and Canterbury Christ Church Universities. It found that chaplains and university managers agreed that pastoral and religious work were the primary aims of chaplains, and that they typically focussed on exploring faith, providing pastoral support, and building community in their day to day activities.

When asked what difference they had noted in the last twelve months, three-quarters of the chaplains surveyed reported an impact on individual students and two-thirds reported changes in atmosphere or sense of community.

Students and staff echoed these findings. A student reported that: chaplaincy “has been central to my university experience” and the Deputy Director of Student Services at one university said that: “Chaplaincy makes a significance difference to...individual students’ experience and lives – particularly students who may be vulnerable, or be looking for some support.’

Responding to the publication of this major research project, the Bishop of Winchester, Tim Dakin, the lead bishop for Further and Higher Education in the Church of England, said:

“This ground-breaking research provides churches and other religious bodies with a hugely important resource for supporting chaplains and chaplaincy in their ministry. Chaplains are on the frontier of our engagement with young people and with universities as leading social institutions.”

One of the report’s co-authors, Dr Kristin Aune, Professor of Sociology of Religion at Coventry University, said:

“Our research has found that chaplains are doing a great job supporting students pastorally and responding to an increasingly multi-faith environment. What is letting them down though, is how under-resourced they are, so one of our 15 recommendations is that universities increase their funding for chaplaincy to continue this vital service.”

Chaplains on Campus is based on multiple interviews and in-depth institutional studies, involving over 400 university chaplains, managers and religion or belief organisations, and nearly 200 students. The Report describes the ministry of presence, pastoral care, prophetic engagement and exploring faith.

[Read the full report here.](#)