



Empowering Christians to transform
their workplace and the nations

Starting A Christian Workplace Group

This practical workbook will help you to make an impact as a Christian in your organisation. It contains advice on how to set up a Christian Workplace Group and draws on the experience of the Transform Work Team and Christians who have successfully established Christian Groups in their workplace.

Challenge:

Start to connect with your Christian colleagues, an easy way to do this is by using WhatsApp or you could organise an initial in person or online meeting.

Date:**Time:****Place:**

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Salt and Light

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

(Matthew 15: 13-16)



1. HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

This booklet is designed to challenge and assist Christians in being a positive presence in their workplace, in particular by developing and establishing effective and vibrant Christian Workplace Groups (CWGs) that are able to make a real impact in their organisation.

Throughout the booklet, you will be asked to reflect on your particular situation and to identify what practical steps you might take to establish a CWG where you work. The booklet prompts you to complete a number of exercises relevant to establishing a CWG and asks you to record your responses. The exercises can be undertaken individually or perhaps with other Christians who share your desire to establish an effective Christian presence in your workplace.

Completing the boxes in the various sections will help you through the process of developing a formal business case, which you can then put to senior management in order to request formal recognition as a staff workplace group.



2. GETTING STARTED

2.1 *Why start a Christian Workplace Group?*

Which of the following is not mentioned in the Bible?

Midwife; civil servant; fashion designer; property developer; carer; musician; teacher; politician; church leader; carpenter?

Well of course, it is a trick question - all are mentioned.

Work is part of God's Kingdom, not an add-on. God does not have opening hours and is present in all situations – that includes the workplace! If then God has called us to the world of work, He also calls us to give Christian witness in our respective workplaces, living out the values of Christianity. There is no sacred/secular divide!

Question: What is God calling you to do where you work?

Transform Work (TW) believes that the most effective Christian workplace witness takes place through CWGs.



**Does God
work here?**

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Challenge: Is God calling you to set up or get involved in a CWG in your place of work? Pray right now and write down what you feel He is saying to you.

If the setting up of a CWG sounds a bit daunting, don't worry; you are not alone. CWGs are being established all over the UK and are a real help to Christians, other employees and the organisation. They come in all shapes and sizes. Some are small with just a few Christians meeting and praying; others are very large groups in national and international organisations, playing a major part in the policy development and day-to-day activities in those organisations. It doesn't matter that they are different. They are all part of God's Plan.

2.2 First Steps

Question: Do you know any other Christians in your workplace? Write down their names.

If you are on your own and feel God is calling you to start a CWG you can start by praying that God will put you in contact with other like-minded Christians.

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Then make sure you keep your eyes open! Look out for opportunities and make use of them when they are presented to you. If you haven't yet been able to get together with others, you can start by regularly praying for your organisation and for the needs you come across.

If your organisation allows the wearing of religious symbols, try wearing a fish or cross. You will be surprised how often this can prompt contact and discussion between Christians. If there are organisational restrictions around the wearing of religious symbols, get in touch with Transform Work and we will give you some tips on how to address this issue.

Let's assume that you have managed to make contact with some other Christians, even if it is only one or two, and there is a desire amongst you to meet and explore how you might support one another in the workplace.

- Start by coming together informally, perhaps for a coffee, probably initially outside the workplace.

- Try to share ideas about why you want to meet and what you would like to do as a group.

- As relationships develop you can think about how you might go about getting initial acceptance for your CWG from the organisation.

- Later you can consider how you can explore achieving formal recognition under the organisation's diversity or inclusion scheme, if it has one. The rest of this booklet describes some of the practical steps that you can take.

Challenge: Organise an initial meeting with a small group of Christians from your workplace.

Date:

Time:

Place:

Do get in touch with Transform Work at an early stage either by phone, e-mail, or our website. You will find people who will help and support you in getting a CWG off the ground in your workplace.

3. PREPARING THE GROUND

3.1 *Knowing Your Territory*

Before attempting to move forward and deciding what you might want to do as a group, it is important to understand your work environment. Find out if there are any faith initiatives already existing in your organisation.

Challenge: Document what you know exists in your workplace - you can use the following boxes to help you in this.

Does your organisation have a multi-faith prayer room?

If there is one, who uses it, how often and is it available to you?

Is there a multi-faith forum in the organisation?

If you don't know, you may want to check with your personnel department. If there is, find out who oversees its operation.

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Does your organisation have an appointed chaplain?

If there is one, engage him/her in your discussions. Remember, not all chaplains are members of the Christian faith. Write down his/her contact details.

Does your organisation have an equality or diversity framework?

If it does, find out how it functions and consider how a CWG might fit into that framework. Remember this may well help you in establishing a CWG.

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Does your organisation have any staff support networks?

If it does, find out which networks exist and list the opportunities for having a Christian group as an additional network.

Most organisations support a range of staff groups within their diversity framework. This usually includes groups for black and minority ethnic people; people with disabilities; women; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.

There is no reason why there shouldn't also be a formally recognised staff group for Christians. If your organisation does not have staff support networks, do not let that put you off. There is no reason why you cannot be the first. Do contact Transform Work whose team will be able to help you address this issue.

Challenge: Share the information gathered above with the other Christians you work with. Make notes about what you should do next, then get together and pray about it.

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3.2 Building the Team

It is important, right from the beginning, to try to work together as a team. Once the CWG becomes established, there will be many things to do and it is important to share the tasks around. Be positive and encourage people to play their part.

Remember that Christians come from many different church backgrounds, denominations and traditions. Make sure that people in the group do not feel excluded because of differences in styles of worship. Be as inclusive as possible.

Prayer is important so, if you can, set up a group of people who will regularly pray for the organisation and the issues you face.

Who will lead the group where you work, and who will form the leadership team?

The group will require leadership from the outset. Establish a small leadership team who can share the work of planning and developing the group.

3.3 Understanding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

If you are going to establish an effective CWG in the workplace, you will have to work with other staff network groups and operate within the organisation's equality and diversity or inclusion framework. It is therefore important from the outset that all group members understand the implications of this framework for both personal and group Christian witness.



The Transform Work Team believes that the principles of equality and diversity should be supported by both managers and staff in all workplaces, whilst recognising that at times there may be points of tension which require discussion and exploration within the CWG.

All equality, diversity and inclusion frameworks, principles, policies and procedures of any organisation are first and foremost governed by the Equality Act 2010. The Act offers protection to people with nine listed 'protected characteristics': age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Equality and Diversity are overlapping principles, but they are not the same.

Equality - There is a variety of definitions for equality, with slightly different interpretations. **The Equality and Human Rights Commission** definition of equality is as follows: *1"Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents, and believing that no one should have poorer life chances because of where, what or whom they were born, what they believe, or whether they have a disability. Equality recognises that historically, certain groups of people with particular characteristics e.g. race, disability, sex and sexuality, have experienced discrimination."

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Equality in the workplace is fundamentally about fairness, ensuring that all employees have equality of opportunity to maximise their talents and do not experience discrimination in any way. This does not mean that all people should be treated in the same way; rather it ensures that individual differences and needs do not disadvantage them in any work-related situation.

Diversity in the workplace is concerned with recognising that all people are unique and that difference between employees is something to be celebrated. The ability of employees to express individual aspects of their personalities at work is likely to bring more resources to the workplace, produce greater job satisfaction for individuals, and promote a more productive and inclusive workplace environment. In many cases, this will result in members of the general public receiving improved services from the organisation.

No Diversity without Equality. An effective equalities structure within the organisation is a pre-requisite to having an effective diversity framework. It is important therefore that CWG members understand how their group will function within both frameworks. This will need some discussion as a group to ensure all members understand the importance of acting appropriately within the organisational framework.

Inclusion in the Workplace. Some organisations use the term 'inclusion' in their diversity policies. *2 **The Equalities and Human Rights Commission** defines an inclusive workplace as 'one where the human rights principles of fairness, respect, equality, dignity and autonomy are promoted and are part of the organisation's everyday goals and behaviour.'

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the Heart of the Good News. In a patriarchal society, Jesus treated women with respect. He mixed with the poor, the marginalised, those considered to be outcasts, people with disabilities, those with dreaded skin diseases, mental health problems, possessed by evil spirits, of different nationalities and from different traditions, and those living by a different moral code. Jesus did not reject or seek to avoid any of these people. Jesus met all who came to him with love and respect no matter what they had done. He might not always have approved of their behaviour or some or their lifestyles, but his starting point was love and respect. Principles of equality and diversity are firmly rooted in the Kingdom of God.

3.4 Staff Networks are therefore important to:

- **Employers**, because if employees are able to bring all their attributes to work in a welcoming and enabling environment, then factors such as employee productivity, commitment and attendance are likely to improve.
- **One another**, because additional confidence for employees to be themselves and to express their personal attributes is likely to release their full potential, increasing personal growth and job satisfaction.
- **Other Staff Networks** who are able to provide additional personal support mechanisms.
- **The organisation as a whole**, because as well as making better use of creative resources of existing staff, sound diversity frameworks can be used in attracting new employees to the organisation.
- **The community**, because a diverse workforce will be more representative of the community in which it exists and particularly in service industries, it is likely to be able to offer better and more appropriate services.
- **God's Kingdom**, because diversity is at the very heart of the gospel message.

It is important that Christians understand that they have a legitimate role in the workplace and, in the tradition of Jesus, have as a starting point love and friendship for one another and for all work colleagues.

*1 Equality and Human Rights Commission: Private and Public Sector Guidance – Understanding Equality. 2015

*2 Equality and Human Rights Commission Guidance – An Employees Guide Creating an inclusive workplace. 2010

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Challenge: Document how a CWG would operate within the organisation's diversity framework.



4. MOVING FORWARD

4.1 *Building the Group's Foundations*

As you establish the group, it is important to build a business case, initially to achieve organisational acceptance so that you can meet regularly and make use of facilities for your group, for instance use of rooms and notice boards, and then formal recognition and integration within the organisation's diversity framework.

Formal recognition and integration can bring significant benefits to the group and to the organisation. As already indicated, employers are increasingly of the view that if people are able to bring to work all their personal attributes, along with their skills, then the workplace will be enriched. As a result and as a response to legislation, employers are increasingly encouraging the setting up of staff networks to promote diversity in the workplace. This ought to include faith groups and in particular for us, CWGs.

It is important that prior to approaching senior managers a strong business case is prepared, to explain exactly what you are asking of managers, and the reasons why they should agree formal recognition of the group. To do this will require a coherent understanding of:

- What the group will do
- What benefits the group will bring to the organisation
- What the group's attitude is to other diversity groups
- How the group will work with other network groups
- What the group would like from the organisation

Each of these questions is further explored in the following sections.

Challenge: Create a business case for setting up a CWG - you can use the following boxes to help you in this.

a. Write down the name of the CWG:

Decide what name you are going to give to your group. Keep it simple and make sure that the name is acceptable to the organisation and that it is inclusive to all Christians. It should capture the spirit of what the group is trying to do. If you need some ideas, have a look on the Transform Work website at some of the names CWGs have given to themselves.

b. What are the aims and objectives of the group?

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Decide what you want to do as a group and, in particular, develop clear aims and objectives. It is useful to think about what you want to achieve and what steps are needed to get there. Whilst these may change as the group develops, it is important at the outset to identify what your key aims are. This is helpful when seeking the support of managers and in telling other colleagues what this group is all about. You will need to work out these objectives according to your situation, but there are perhaps three rules of thumb to follow:

- Don't have too many objectives (Maximum of 3-5)
- Keep them simple
- Near the top of the list have an objective which states the commitment of the group to support the organisation

For example, the group aims and objectives might include the following:

- serve the organisation faithfully
- share the Christian faith with others
- provide an opportunity for colleagues to learn about the Christian faith
- encourage Christians to be themselves at work

Several examples of aims and objectives drawn up by different groups are given in section 8 of this booklet.

c) How will the group operate?

Where and how often will the group meet?

The frequency and location of group meetings

What activities will the group undertake?

(both during and outside meetings)

How will the group advertise its activities?

You will need to communicate with your team, so even at this very early stage make sure you ask for permission to use the organisation's communication systems, for example e-mail and intranet, the room booking system.

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How will the group communicate with the organisation?

(both within itself and to the wider organisation as well as the reporting mechanism with managers and HR to keep them updated on what the group is doing)

Whom will you encourage to participate in the group's activities?

E.g. Christians, non-Christians, those simply wanting to find out more about Jesus

d. What benefits will the group bring to the organisation?

It is important to be clear about what benefits the CWG can bring to the organisation. It is a question senior managers and HR are likely to ask you so be prepared. In particular, make sure that the benefits you have identified are not too inward looking.

How will the CWG benefit the organisation?

A CWG can bring many potential benefits to the organisation. Check back now to section 3.4 and see if you have included the benefits mentioned here.

e. What is the group's attitude to other staff network groups?

It is important that members of the CWG show a positive attitude towards other diversity groups, whether they exist formally or not. Other diversity groups have just as much reason to request recognition as the Christian group. Remember one negative comment by a single member of your group concerning the beliefs or lifestyles and choices of others, can do an enormous amount of damage to the CWG as a whole and, more significantly, to people's views of the Christian faith.

What is the group's attitude to other staff network groups?

f. How will the CWG work with other staff network groups?

Potential tensions with other staff network groups can be avoided by identifying opportunities to work with them. From time to time, the CWG may wish to consider putting on joint events with other diversity groups. Such joint projects can be useful in developing and cementing good working relationships and could include:

- Multi-faith events looking at topics such as 'How does my faith influence my work'? This provides an opportunity for the Christian faith to be shared with other faith groups.
- Joint working groups could develop materials on how teams can work together when there is a diverse range of beliefs and attitudes within a team.

How will the CWG work with other staff network groups?

g. What does the group want from the organisation?

This will vary from group to group, but suggestions include:

- A time and place to meet
- Opportunities to meet occasionally with Senior Managers/HR
- Channels and opportunities to contribute to the organisation
- Resources, e.g. photocopying, materials
- Agreement for newsletters, posters and other communication channels such as e-mail and an intranet page
- Agreement for celebrating Christian events e.g. Christmas, Easter
- Funding, where possible
- Agreed time for the leader to spend on leadership activities

What does the group want from the organisation?

Challenge: Discuss the information written down in this section with your team. Now pray about it and ask God what you should do.

4.2 Presenting the Case for Formal Recognition

The business case may be delivered to managers orally, at a meeting, perhaps after a short presentation, or written down in a structured fashion. Discuss this with the appropriate manager/HR contact at an early stage to help you shape your approach. Remember Transform Work can support you throughout this process!

Dealing with Objections

An initial approach to managers to establish a CWG, may well elicit a response along these lines:

'Aren't staff networks for those groups which sometimes experience discrimination? Christians aren't discriminated against, are they?'

It is therefore important to make sure that basic groundwork has been undertaken before putting this request forward. It is often helpful to start informal discussions with managers about the possibilities of formal recognition. This will ensure that they are aware of the potential request at an early stage, thus enabling any concerns to be talked through openly. It may be beneficial to invite a sympathetic senior manager to attend a meeting of your group and to seek advice on what concerns or issues managers may raise. The 'hearts and minds' approach often pays dividends!

Another issue that some groups might encounter is the question from management:

'Why should we support a single faith group? Wouldn't it be better to have a multi-faith group or forum?'

There is no standard response as to whether a CWG should or should not participate in a multi-faith forum. Any such proposal requires careful thought and prayer. There are however, a number of factors that groups should consider in determining their response. These include the following:

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- Does the multi-faith forum allow individual faith groups to effectively represent their specific views, or does it inadvertently reduce the individual identities of the respective faith groups?
- There should be no reason why an organisation cannot support more than one faith group.
- Different faiths may wish to support their believers in different ways. In particular, there are some aspects of faith that can only be addressed with like-minded believers.
- In the main, people of different faiths are happy to work alongside one another. This working relationship may take place inside or outside a multi-faith forum. It is something that the respective faith groups will have to discuss together. However, if a multi-faith forum exists within the organisation, CWGs should do their best to engage with this positively. Whenever possible though, Transform Work recommends that CWGs should seek to exist as a uniquely Christian group. Whatever issues you may encounter, the TW team will do its best to help you.



5. KEEPING GOING AND DEVELOPING

5.1 *Running your Christian Workplace Group*

By this stage, you should be familiar with the key issues surrounding the setting up of your CWG. Now is the time to pull these together and ensure that the development of your group has momentum and direction. Every workplace situation is different, but there are a number of common strands, some mentioned earlier in this booklet, which you should now consider in more detail:

Frequency. How often will you meet as a group? Most groups tend to meet weekly or fortnightly, but this is entirely for you to decide. However, make sure that you put them in the diary and stick to them. Even if attendance is low, keep going.

Venue and Time. Hopefully you will have identified a regular venue with your managers. Be aware of its location, for example decide whether singing and music is appropriate to that venue. Make sure the time of meetings is acceptable to most people. It is important to comply with workplace rules so, above all, ensure that the meetings finish on time and that people are not late back to work. You might like to book the room for half an hour before your meeting is planned to start and half an hour after it is planned to finish, to avoid potential pressure on room usage.

Agenda. Make sure that you have a clear outline of what you are going to do in the meetings. It could be prayer, Bible study, discussion or you might have a speaker. Ensure you make the best use of the time. Plan ahead as far as you are able. You can find a number of suggestions for activities on Transform Work website.

Leadership. It is important to identify a small number of people to take responsibility for leading the CWG forward. Decide how the leadership of your group will operate. This ensures that the success of the group is not dependent on one or two people and will assist the longevity and vibrancy of the group. It is important that the leadership team is committed to developing the group and living out their lives as committed Christians. Remember enthusiasm, maturity and skills are not always synonymous, so try to give people roles suitable to their skills.

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Give them small tasks first to see how they manage before you appoint people to a major role.

Supporting Members. The CWG should be a place where members can be strengthened and encouraged. Try to make time to come together to share individual concerns or issues. Pray for each other's needs. You may like to establish a prayer team that can pray for individuals and the organisation as a whole.

Awareness Raising Events. Awareness raising events are a useful way to spread the Good News in the workplace in a gentle way. Other CWGs have held special events such as:

- Easter events – serving hot cross buns; giving out Easter eggs; accompanied by a display recounting the Easter events.
- Carol services – sending out advent calendars.
- Christian Awareness weeks – holding a series of events for a week, telling others about the Christian story.

Check out the Transform Work website for more details. Also, let us know what you are doing and when so we can tell others via our website and newsletter and we can pray for these events.

5.2 Good Communication

Good communication is vital for the well-being and development of any CWG. If this is maintained, then many pitfalls and problems can be avoided. Six areas need to be highlighted.

Within the Group.

Make sure that you know what each other is doing. If there appears to be disagreement or confusion within the CWG, then this will seriously affect the credibility of the group with managers and other work colleagues. As a leadership team, have regular meetings and review what you are doing and plan for the future.

With Managers. It is important to engage with managers, to have their support for what you are doing. When you have decided what you want to do and what you want to ask from managers, then set up a meeting, probably with someone from the personnel department. Make sure, as you move forward, that you have regular meetings with a manager to report on progress of the group. Periodically, perhaps annually, present a brief review of what the group has done and what it has achieved.

Work Colleagues. It is important to let other work colleagues know what you are doing and invite them to be involved. There are a number of ways to do this, depending upon the facilities available within your workplace: production of newsletters; good use of notice boards advertising meetings; use of the organisation's intranet; posters; word of mouth; open days; e-mail; articles on popular work web-sites. Remember to make sure that managers have agreed your use of these facilities.

Other Workplace Staff Networks. It is most important that CWGs see themselves as part of the overall diversity framework and act in a corporate way. Talk to other diversity groups and whenever possible work together. This strengthens diversity groups as a whole and helps to bring a positive influence into the workplace. Identify both common ground and areas of potential differences with other networks. Where there are differences, seek to find a resolution. When common ground cannot be found, accept that there are differences. Establish a regular timetable of meetings.

With Transform Work. Remember Transform Work is there to help you. We can give you advice based on the experiences of many CWGs that are already well established. It is also possible for a member of our team to come and visit you and advise you on how to move forward. When things are moving forward, stay in touch so that we can continue to pray for you and learn from your experience.

With Churches. CWGs are not meant to be churches and it is important to maintain links with local churches. Our experience is that the presence of a CWG does bring people along the path to faith, so it is important that if colleagues are seeking to know the Lord Jesus, we are able to put them in touch with a local church.

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5.3 Christian Workplace Group Stages of Development

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CWGs can be at several stages of development and knowing what stage your particular group is at can help in the process of planning the future of your CWG. The table below will help you assess your current position

| | STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS |
|------------------------------------|--|
| INITIAL CONTACT | A number of Christians have made contact with one another within the workplace. <u>There is a desire amongst these Christians to meet together</u> and explore how they might support one another. |
| EARLY FORMATION | <u>A group has formed but managers have not yet been approached.</u> Occasional meetings between Christians have taken place, sometimes outside of the workplace. Initial discussions have considered how a CWG might be formed and what it might do. |
| ORGANISATIONAL ACCEPTANCE | <u>Managers are involved</u> and have accepted that there are a number of Christians within the organisation who would like to meet regularly as a group and have agreed to this. This involves making office accommodation available for Christians to meet and usually access to a range of facilities such as notice boards, e-mail, photocopying facilities. |
| FORMAL RECOGNITION AND INTEGRATION | <u>Senior managers have accepted</u> that the CWG can be a positive influence within the organisation. Consequently, <u>the group is now recognised as part of the organisation's diversity framework</u> and involved in regular meetings with senior managers and other staff network groups. |
| ORGANISATIONAL CELEBRATION | Senior managers see the contribution that the CWG makes as a positive opportunity to develop the organisation internally and are prepared to use it as <u>an example of good practice</u> with external bodies. |

6. ENGAGING WITH GOD

From the outset and through the development of your CWG, the most important thing you can do is to seek God's view on the pace that He wants you to move at, but do not be afraid to be bold! When Jesus came walking on the water to the disciples in the boat (Matthew 14:22-33), some were cowering in the bottom of the boat whilst Peter enthusiastically leapt out.

As Peter moved towards Jesus, he began to sink as his faith wavered, but of course, Jesus put out His hand, rescued him, and held him above the waves. Do not give up. God rewards the persistent and will not let you down.

Challenge: Make the setting up and running of a CWG a key priority for prayer. Place it on the prayer list with other Christians, at your local church and with Transform Work. Write down what you want God to do.

It is a fundamental principle for all Christian workplace groups to rely on God for his strength and guidance. Without engaging consistently with God, your CWG will sink too! Pray, trust and listen to God and grab hold of His outstretched hand.

7. WHAT ELSE?

When times get tough at work, it's often easy to feel that running a CWG is an uphill task! However, like Elijah, it is likely God has 'reserved' many other Christians who can help and support you. Here are some things you can do to get support for your CWG:

Get your local church involved

It is quite common for churches to promote and have prayer teams dedicated to community outreach activities, so why not get your workplace ministry recognised as an area of outreach as well. The more your church fellowship knows about your CWG the better they will be able to pray and support you and other Christians in the workplace.

Register your CWG with Transform Work

Transform Work's whole focus is on the setting up and support of CWGs in achieving formal recognition and integration in the workplace, moving towards organisational celebration. You can get help direct from us in setting up and getting the group formally recognised. Once set up, register it with us where we can then pray for you and keep in contact. A list of CWGs that are connected with us can be found on our website along with contact details of their leaders and a range of good news stories from around the UK. From time to time, we bring these leaders together to share ideas and to pray for the work in which they are engaged.

Consider affiliating to an appropriate Christian professional or sector group

If you are in a workplace that predominantly involves a single profession (e.g. teachers, pharmacy), then you may want to consider affiliating your group to a Christian Professional or Sector Group – CPSG for short. CPSGs are run by people who desire to see Godly principles at work in their profession or sector. They are the kind of people who are not prepared to live their faith just on a Sunday, but who want to make Jesus known in their profession. They also consider Christian perspectives on issues that arise within their professions or sectors.

By joining a group, members are able to access:

- Advice and inspiration from other Christians on a range of topical issues you may face in your profession or sector of work.
- Guidance on influencing professional standards and ethics expected within organisations
- Confidential prayer support for personal problems relating to work
- Friendship with other Christians at conferences and events
- News that will encourage and assure that you are not alone

Our website also has an online database where you can search for Christian groups in your profession or sector.

8. Christian Workplace Group Extracts

The following extracts are representative of the CWGs that we come across in our work. Each was written by those involved with the group and were accurate at the time this booklet was written. We hope these will inspire you to join or start a group as well as give you ideas on what you can do.

8.1 BT Christian Network

The BT Christian Network is one of several different networks supported by BT. Our goal is to be a real benefit to both BT and its employees through positively contributing to workplace issues and supporting members where needed. We think having a positive approach is crucial to our role. There are three specific objectives which BTCN has adopted:

- Acting as a central reference point for Christian information in BT
- Providing a Christian perspective on business policy and strategies
- Supporting and encouraging Christians in BT

BT Christian Network has about 900 members worldwide. With people in about 15 countries (although most are based in UK), we have regular prayer cover from our members and about 10 different groups meeting regularly. This includes overseas in India and Hungary.

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We also have a young professionals group. BTCN is formally recognised by BT Inclusion scheme as a valid support group in the workplace. We meet regularly with HR to discuss issues, achievements and improvements.

Alpha workplace courses are sometimes run for employees interested in finding out more about the Christian faith (about 7 done so far).

Some of our key initiatives are listed below:

- Free Bibles (about 1,200 given away)
- Prayer requests for anyone who wants them
- Regular weekly thoughts sent out
- Bible in a year study/reading programme ran for several years
- Speakers via conference calls
- Summer camp run on a few occasions
- Open days

In conjunction with other BT groups and HR, we recently ran a 2 day open event for all BT staff via our corporate website. During this time, people could see information about Jesus, and also about the BT Christian Network, and they were able to ask questions, raise queries or place comments.

The group is organised via a leadership team that meets twice monthly; once a month, mainly for prayer, and once a month for planning. Local fellowships or interest groups support members on the ground. The chair meets with HR once a month. Our website is organised into a Social Media style so members can share news stories. We have an inspiration page where people can find more about Jesus and Christianity and a daily prayer for the day on this site. There is also a Facebook page available.

8.2 Sefton Council Christian Workplace Group

Purpose of Document

To set out a clear Business Case to support the formal recognition of a Christian Workplace Group within Sefton Council. The development of such a Group is consistent with the Council's commitment to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. It offers an additional dimension to this Strategy

Starting a Christian Workplace Group

–spiritual health and wellbeing –which would be of benefit to the organisation and its employees.

Vision Statement

Sefton Christian Workplace Group seeks to provide a sense of belonging for Christians and to raise awareness of the Christian faith within the workplace. It will encourage members to apply Christian principles to all aspects of their work, to promote a culture of respect for the organisation, and to value and support all work colleagues.

Aims and Objectives

The Christian Workplace Group aims to make a positive contribution to the working environment and the welfare of all employees.

It will do this by:

- providing an opportunity and environment for Christians to meet and support each other in the workplace
- providing a point of contact and offering prayerful support for individuals who may be experiencing personal difficulties at work or at home
- encouraging Christians to live out their Christian values consistent with the Council's values of honesty and integrity
- sharing the Christian faith with others, in particular those wishing to understand more about Christianity.

Benefits to Organisation

The Christian Workplace Group will have the following benefits: •Commitment to the organisation and its aims by those who are part of the group

- Pastoral support of individuals
- Support for colleagues to help them enhance their personal performance and be more effective in their job
- Contribute to upholding ethical standards within the organisation •External recognition of the organisation's positive diversity policy •Increased effectiveness in working with other diversity networks.

Aspirations

Formal recognition of a CWG within Sefton Council.

Starting a Christian Workplace Group

- Use of a formal meeting space on a regular basis, e.g. for lunchtime and/or breakfast meetings
- Opportunity to publicise meetings and events through posters, newsletters, email and through the Council's intranet service
- Organise and publicise one-off events (e.g. Easter, Christmas)
- Opportunities to make a positive contribution to the organisation.

8.3 *Anglian Water (Thorpe Wood House Peterborough) Christian Group*

Background– We have been meeting at Thorpe Wood House for the last 12 years and we believe Christianity is not just for church, but for every aspect of life including the workplace.

Aims and Objectives– Our aims and objectives are in alignment with Anglian Water's approach of innovation, collaboration and transformation.

Innovation– Innovation is the application of better solutions to changing requirements and needs. As a group, we support one another through prayer and Bible study seeing how Jesus' message can encourage and guide us in our work.

Collaboration– Christianity welcomes people from all backgrounds and we support one another through encouragement, support and finding solutions to life's problems, encouraging a positive outlook.

Transformation– We believe Jesus sought to transform lives leading to the transformation of attitudes. The ongoing support of our members has led to the uplift of morale and ultimately performance in the workplace and a happier home life.

8.4 *Christians in the Audit Commission*

Prior to the Government decision to close the Audit Commission, Christians in the Audit Commission (CiTAC) had operated effectively as a staff group for a number of years. Its aims and objectives were as follows:

- To serve the Commission faithfully

Starting a Christian Workplace Group

- To share our faith with others
 - To provide an opportunity to learn about Christian faith and practice
- CITAC developed a statement expressing its overarching view to all workplace colleagues: "We unconditionally support all workplace colleagues in their right to representation in the workplace; that we support their right to be treated with an absence from prejudice, that we wish to love and befriend all our colleagues, whilst maintaining our own specific beliefs".

8.5 PwC Christian Network

Long-term Dream: A global community living out Jesus' Lordship at PwC

5-year Goal: A UK community that understands and demonstrates the relevance of God to PwC

Daily Focus: How is God relevant to this?

Group Structure:

- Sponsor partner and steering committee overseeing activities across the UK. A representative from diversity is invited to steering committee meetings.
- Network of office group leaders. This covers around 20 offices.
- Activities are organised at a national and local level.
- The group is based in the UK firm but increasingly has contacts with Christians in PwC across the globe. This is in-line with the firm's overall strategy.

Activities:

Activities run by the group vary from office to office but focus on encouraging each other in our faith at work, prayer, and reaching out to others. When organising an activity, we link it back to our goal of understanding and demonstrating how God is relevant to PwC. Weekly meetings usually involving a time to catch-up, pray, discuss a Bible passage, share testimonies about what God is doing in PwC.

8.6 E.ON Christian Network

Vision: Our Christian colleagues working across E.ON UK feel part of an authentic and vibrant Christian community, which is a blessing to the company: united, active, supportive and providing a focal point for Christians throughout E.ON in the UK.

Starting a Christian Workplace Group

Purpose: We intend to bless the company through a faithful expression of Christian labour, love, integrity and compassion at work; to help Christians focus on and serve God while at work; and to be a friendly and authentic community of believers to be here for each other.

All our colleagues are welcome to the local meetings and activities of the E.ON Christian Network (ECN). We are a collection of site-based groups of non-denominational Christians across E.ON UK who meet up to chat, encourage and support each other through our actions and prayer.

All our colleagues who are part of the E.ON Christian Network (ECN) receive the weekly newsletters, and meet monthly via telephone and video conferencing. We have an internal Portal page available for all colleagues to visit and a mailbox for anyone who has a question relating to E.ON Christian Network (ECN). Our Christian Group at E.ON meet every week at sites throughout E.ON.

8.7 Department of Health Christian Network Group

Aim

To be recognised as a respected and valued staff network group, which contributes to the general health and wellbeing of staff within the department and provides a Christian perspective on key health policy developments.

Objectives

- Contribute to the Core Values of the Department of Health by actively providing a source of Christian advice, representation and support for all staff.
- Provide a forum for Christians of all denominations working within the Department of Health.
- Recognise the contribution that Christians can make and work to build relationship for a more inclusive culture.
- Work to dispel any myths about Christianity by creating opportunities for staff at all levels to learn about the key issues and beliefs of the Christian Faith.

Activities

There are no formal membership requirements. The weekly meetings in the three main departmental buildings are open to all staff. The Network has a Committee to plan events, discuss pertinent staff issues where the Network may provide input and provide a formal link to the wider Christians in Government UK group.

9. CWG SUMMARY SHEET

When you have completed working your way through this booklet, you might find it helpful to make a note of the key points and list them in the table shown on the next page.

It will help you provide a short succinct summary describing what your CWG is all about to managers, group members and potential new members – and of course don't forget to send a copy electronically to the Transform Work Team. We are interested in how your group is developing!

Email: office@transformwork.net

| | |
|---|--|
| Name of CWG (Page 18) | |
| Aims and Objectives (Page 18) | |
| Benefits the CWG brings to the Organisation (Page 22) | |
| Leadership Team (Page 12) | |
| Communication Arrangements (Page 21) | |

10. ABOUT TRANSFORM WORK

Our mission at Transform Work is:

Empower Christians to transform their workplace and the nations

We do this through the following major initiatives:

- Helping and supporting Christians to establish and grow effective Christian Workplace Groups (CWGs) in their places of work
- Encouraging CWGs to engage effectively with management and their work colleagues
- Assisting Christians in becoming effective and confident witnesses of the Christian faith in their places of work.
- Helping Christians in the workplace deal effectively with workplace pressures such as stress at work
- Raising the profile nationally of the positive contribution that Christians can make to the workplace
- Assisting church leaders in equipping their congregations to make a positive difference where they work
- Facilitate networking opportunities to support the development of Christian Professional and Sector Groups. These initiatives are implemented by the TW team, which comprises the TW Management Board and Trustees and a number of key volunteer workers. Several hundred Christian Workplace Groups and Christian Professional & Sector Groups have registered with us. These groups meet together on a regular basis and find ways to be 'Good News', including the provision of pastoral care, advising on ethical issues, running events that explain the Christian faith, supporting those in crisis, and praying for the organisation.

Transform Work was established in 2007. We are a registered charitable organisation (No. 1120053). Our task of encouraging and supporting Christian Workplace and Professional Group leaders is done through a team of regional ambassadors through phone calls, e-mail and visits. Group leaders are encouraged to develop positive links with HR and senior managers to ensure full participation in developing the ethos of the organisation.

WILL YOU SUPPORT US?

Transform Work is funded entirely from loyal supporters. We do not charge for our work and so it's essential to find people who can partner with us to keep going.

We currently have contact with over 400 Christian workplace groups with additional groups being added week by week.

Monies raised are used to support the setting up and growing of groups, whose purpose is to bring God's Kingdom values into the organisation.

Could you support us financially with a regular standing order of £25 or £50 a month to the work? If you are a UK tax payer then the value of that gift can be increased by 25% by signing a Gift Aid declaration form. Details on how to give can be found on our website at:

www.transformwork.net/Donate

WORKING FROM HOME?



If most of your workplace group works from home you can still organise regular meetings through Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

For those who work in the office, a hybrid approach might be more appropriate where they can link online with those who work from home through Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

Transform Work is an inter-denominational organisation whose mission is to encourage the setting up and growing of Christian Workplace Groups.

Such groups can be of real benefit to the organisation as well as to colleagues and management alike.



For more information:



office@transformwork.net



transformwork.net



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Booklet price: £5

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