

30 September 2021  
Coventry



Dear Faithful Supporter,

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

My name is Malcolm Gray and it is my honour to serve as the director of WEC UK & Ireland. My family served for sixteen years in Thailand with WEC before returning to the UK in 2018.

I would like to take a moment to thank you for the way in which you have faithfully journeyed together with our common friend who has sent this letter to you. Your faithful prayers are more powerful than you may imagine. And your practical support has been such a blessing.

During my time abroad, I was so grateful to know that we were not walking the journey alone. Not only were we a part of a WEC team, but we also had a close connection with faithful supporters who had committed to walk the journey with us. Through the good times and the bad times, we felt supported and encouraged by faithful partners all around the world.

I write to inform you as a valuable Kingdom partner that in the last nine months there have been some significant developments in WEC UK & Ireland. For many years, our WEC members have been considered to be volunteers. As a result of some essential research recently, it has become clear that due to the way WEC operates and the way most of us work, our members cannot be considered to be volunteers, from a legal perspective. It also became clear that some of our members, due to some of the benefits they have received from WEC - such as free or subsidised housing or other financial assistance - are in fact in an employment-like relationship with WEC, even though this was never intended by either party.

In January this year, the WEC UK & Ireland Board of Trustees made a decision to further research the options around the employment status of our members, to establish an employment status change implementation team, and to begin helping WEC UK & Ireland resolve the compliance issue it was facing especially related to UK employment law.

After months of research, a decision has recently been taken by the trustees that all WEC UK & Ireland members will adopt an employment status called 'Voluntary Worker'. The impact on our members will be that WEC can no longer offer free or subsidised housing or provide any financial help to those struggling with low support. Another aspect of the change means that WEC UK & Ireland can no longer channel the financial support of individual members. We have identified other ways for our members to receive financial support from their supporters that will not have to pass through WEC. It would be helpful if you could contact the member that you currently support about other ways of giving, should you wish to support them financially in the future.

This decision means that WEC UK & Ireland will become an employer of Voluntary Workers, taking on employer responsibilities but without paying salaries. Voluntary Worker status was established in the National Minimum Wage Act 1998 to enable charities operating like WEC to continue to do so and to cover charity workers who choose not to take a salary. This employment status represents the working

relationship many WEC UK & Ireland members currently have, hence, for many, there will be very little change in day-to-day ministry.

This may further impact the member you support in other ways. The biggest impact will be that any benefits they have been receiving from WEC will have to stop by 1 January 2022. If they are living in free or subsidised accommodation, WEC will no longer be able to cover the costs of housing. They are welcome to continue living in the accommodation, but as of 1 January 2022, they will now have to pay the full market value rent for that property themselves. For those who have received monthly or yearly financial assistance from WEC, this will also have to come to an end by 1 January 2022.

We are having to make these changes quickly as we aim to become legally compliant by the next tax year. We have also made an effort to support our members through the transition period, especially to those most impacted. Please contact the member you currently support for details of the short-term steps that have been taken to assist them with this big transition. Can I encourage you to get in touch with them about any possible long-term implications this may have for them?

As a faith mission, anyone wishing to join the WEC UK & Ireland fellowship does so with the desire to walk the venture of faith with us coming with a support base that enables them to fulfil their calling and ministry. All members affirm their agreement with the WEC principles and re-affirm their on-going commitment every three years. This practice reminds us to keep our eyes on the Lord and not on the organisation for every provision. WEC fellowship becomes more meaningful for us as we all come on the same basis, trusting the Lord for provision, and sharing our resources with one another as we are able. This may appear to be a somewhat risky approach, but if we believe that God is almighty, all-sufficient, and knows our needs, then we can trust Him to meet those needs. So our confidence is not in people or institutions (whose circumstances and interests can change), but rather in God who is unchanging.

May I request that you join us in prayer for this significant transition in WEC UK & Ireland? This is new territory for us, and we are finding our feet as we take hold of the Lord's hand heading into the unknown. Though this is an unsettling time, we trust that the Lord is pouring out His peace and leading us into a less precarious legal position, enabling us to forge ahead into a new chapter of fulfilling our vision: *To see Christ known, loved and worshipped by the unreached peoples of the world.*

Allow me to bless you and your family with the words from Philippians 4:19 which WEC has treasured for over one hundred years. *"And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus."*

Thank you for all the care, support and encouragement you offer. It all contributes to the global endeavour to see the unreached peoples of the world encounter the one, true and living God. And it really is an honour to partner with you, for His sake, along the way.

Together for the Kingdom,

