



Ministers' Guide to the Baptists Together Settlement Process

Introduction

The Baptists Together settlement process, or BTSP, is designed to facilitate churches and ministers as they seek new ministry. The aim is to provide a clear and transparent process for both churches and ministers that will enable them to discern what God is calling them to next. This document is intended to help you as an accredited minister or minister-in-training navigate the process. The process is also open to you if you are a nationally recognised pastor.

We recognise that for ministers and churches already in settlement the transition from one process to another will mean that we are asking you to navigate through additional changes that you will not have anticipated. This guide has been written for those entering settlement rather than those already in settlement, but we anticipate that it will give you all the information you need to adapt to the changes. While the process will be different there is no need for you to change your profile. We encourage you to read all the guidance notes.

If you have any questions or need to clarify anything about the process you can contact your Regional Team, or the Ministries Team via btsp@baptist.org.uk

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Abbreviations

Full terms and their abbreviations are explained as they arise, but for reference:

BUGB	Baptist Union of Great Britain	BTSP	Baptists Together settlement process
PVL	Pastoral vacancy list	CMD	Continuing ministerial development
NAM	Newly accredited minister	MiT	Minister-in-training

1. Overview of the settlement process

For brevity, the text below refers only to churches that have a pastoral vacancy. However, the settlement process can also be used by some other settings seeking ministry, such as missional and pioneering projects.

The process is as follows:

- Churches with a pastoral vacancy complete a Pastoral Vacancy List (PVL) form.
- The vacancy is listed on the PVL which is held in a protected area of the Baptists Together website. You can access the PVL if you are an accredited minister, a minister-in-training (MiT) or a nationally recognised pastor. Details of how to access the PVL can be found in section 3 below.
- The PVL entry includes:
 - a short description of the church;
 - a link to their full profile; and
 - a closing date by which expressions of interest should be submitted.
- You, as a minister or pastor seeking settlement, complete a ministerial profile.
- You can send your (agreed and anonymised) profile, together with an accompanying letter or email, to any church on the PVL that is open to receiving expressions of interest.
- Churches use all the profiles they receive to discern which minister or ministers they wish to meet. They should respond to you within two weeks of their closing date to indicate they either:
 - would like to meet with you;
 - do not discern you are called to fill the vacancy; or
 - are interested in your profile but are considering other ministers first.
- If you have not heard back from a church within two weeks of their closing date, you should inform the Ministries Team by emailing btsp@baptist.org.uk.

We strongly encourage you to liaise closely with your regional minister throughout the process. They can advise you and help you discern which churches you may want to send your profile to. They will also confer with one another from time to time and may suggest that you consider specific churches following those conversations.

2. The Baptists Together Settlement Process in more detail

To engage with the Baptist Together Settlement Process, you should do the following:

1. Complete a ministerial profile and a settlement form, with the assistance of your regional minister

The **ministerial profile** is the document that you eventually send to those churches you hope to meet. The **settlement form** is for the use of the associations and the BUGB Ministries Team only. It enables them to keep a record of those in the settlement process at any one time.

The ministerial profile and settlement form both use standard templates. Your regional minister supplies these to you. You **MUST** use these standard templates in order to enter the settlement process. Guidance notes to help you complete these forms are shown in sections 4 and 5 below.

Unless you are a MIT, once you have completed the ministerial profile and settlement form, you discuss them both with your regional minister. You agree the profile and your regional minister adds their own comment. You also agree what, if any, confidential information should be included on the settlement form.

If you are a MiT, once you have completed the ministerial profile and settlement form, you discuss them both with a college tutor. You agree the profile and your tutor adds their own comment. You also agree what, if any, confidential information should be included on the settlement form. You then send both the ministerial profile and the settlement form to your regional minister.

Your regional minister forwards both your profile and your settlement form to the BUGB Ministries Team. (Copies of both documents are held by each association for as long as you remain in the settlement process, and both documents will be held by the Ministries Team in your ministerial file.)

The Ministries Team anonymise your profile. Each minister in the settlement process is assigned a code (e.g. AB01) and it is this code rather than your name which appears at the top of the ministerial profile. Churches and search teams are strongly urged to read section A of each profile prayerfully, before viewing the name and personal circumstances of each minister. This is so that first impressions may be protected from assumptions about gender, age, race, education, family circumstances or previous employment. Clearly, the person in the church who receives ministerial profiles will be aware of the names of prospective ministers, but they are asked not to reveal the names to the rest of their search team before they have all read section A of the profiles.

The Ministries Team convert your anonymised profile to a PDF and return it to you. It is this anonymised profile, and not any other version, that you may send to any churches that are listed in the PVL. *If you are an MIT*, your profile will not be returned to you before 1st August (as you prepare to enter your final year at college).

The Ministries Team will remove any confidential information (see page 10) from your settlement form before it is shared with the associations.

2. If requested by the Ministries Team, complete and return an overseas declaration form

For safeguarding purposes all ministers should have completed an overseas declaration form. If you have previously completed one, it will already be on record and you will not be asked to complete another one.

3. Send your completed ministerial profile to those churches you wish to meet

The profile you send should be the anonymised version returned to you by the Ministries Team.

The PVL lists churches that currently have pastoral vacancies and is updated regularly. The PVL webpage always shows the date on which the list was last updated.

Each church's entry indicates the date by which they wish to receive 'expressions of interest'. Before sending your profile to a church, check their closing date and make sure your profile is sent before that date.

You may send an accompanying letter or email with your profile to explain why you are particularly interested in the church concerned. However, please keep this to a maximum of 500 words. The person who receives your profile on behalf of the church is asked not to pass on accompanying emails or letters until the search team read section A of your profile. This is for the same reasons as mentioned in (1) above.

Your regional minister will be very happy to guide you as you consider different churches. This can help sharpen your sense of the type of ministry setting to which God is calling you next. They may suggest you consider churches which you would otherwise not think about. Sometimes they will be asked by one of their colleagues in another association to ask you to consider sending your profile to one of their churches.

4. Focus on one church only once you have accepted an invitation to the final stage of discernment.

In the initial stages of meeting with church search teams, you may talk to more than one church at a time. However, once a church invites you to preach with a view or join them for an alternative equivalent final discernment stage, you should give your whole attention to them. Unless and until you or they decide not to progress any further, you should neither send your profile to any further church, nor continue to explore a calling to another church.

5. Share with a church all the confidential information as agreed with your regional minister before accepting an invitation to the final stage of discernment.

Your regional minister in consultation with the Ministries Team Leader may have required you to include some relevant confidential information on your settlement form. This is not common, but if it is the case, you must share this information with any church that invites you to preach with a view or its equivalent. Failure to do so constitutes a disciplinary offence. Churches are asked to contact their regional minister before issuing an invitation to check whether there is confidential information which needs to be shared with them.

6. Inform your regional minister when you accept a call.

You should let your regional minister know when you have received a call to a church or other ministry setting. Please also let the Ministries Team know by mailing btsp@baptist.org.uk. You should also tell your regional ministers the start date and date of any induction service as soon as these are known.

7. Obtain a new DBS enhanced disclosure.

Contact your current association as soon as possible after accepting a call to ask them to initiate a new DBS check.

3. The Pastoral Vacancy List (PVL)

The PVL can be found at www.baptist.org.uk/pvl

It is only available to people who have been provided with login details. The login button is at the bottom of the page.

If you are an accredited minister or a BUGB minister-in-training, you will have been provided with a username and password at some point. If you are a nationally recognised pastor and you wish to have access to the PVL, please speak to your regional minister. If you cannot remember your password, click on the 'login' button anyway and you will see an option to reset your password. If you cannot remember your login name or email address, please email website@baptist.org.uk and ask for new login details, stating your name and current church, other ministry setting or college.

The PVL is one document but it is divided by association. Each entry provides you with some basic information about the church and what they are looking for. It contains links to their full church profile and, where relevant, their website.

There is also an Excel spreadsheet which lists all vacancies and this can be ordered by association, church size and type of vacancy, as well as alphabetically by church name. This also contains links to church profiles and websites.

The webpage has a separate list for Baptist Union of Scotland vacancies and chaplaincy vacancies where they are known.

4. Guidance for completing your ministerial profile

We strongly recommend that you meet with your regional minister before you start to complete your ministerial profile. They can discuss with you informally your sense of calling to seek a new ministry setting.

The profile is laid out as a Word document for ease of editing. **Please do not change the margins, font or format of the existing text.** You are welcome to format your answers how you wish, bearing in mind that the readers may draw assumptions from the presentation as well as your content of your answers.

Once you have completed the profile, email it to your regional minister. Please put your name in the document title and **please make sure you send it as a Word document** and not as a PDF.

Please note that **the completed profile should be no longer than four pages in total.**

Section A

The heart of the profile lies in your answers to twelve questions. Please ensure you answer them all except for question 12 which is optional.

We hope the questions are self-explanatory, but for the sake of clarity, the following notes in italics may be helpful. They are made as suggestions only – please do not be constrained by them.

- 1. How did you come to faith in Christ and what prompted you to enter Baptist ministry?** *Outline in broad terms your journey to faith and ministry, perhaps naming the most significant moments, guidance, encouragements or experiences.*
- 2. What have been your recent mission and ministry (or training placement) highlights?** *Outline what in your recent ministry or training has been especially profound or noteworthy. Try not to be too modest here. Allow your readers to see what you have achieved or enabled that has made you rightly proud.*
- 3. Which are your strongest ministry skills and how have you used these to serve God's kingdom?** *Name what you consider to be your primary gifts and skills that you are likely to bring to any setting. Name some examples of the fruit of exercising these gifts to date.*
- 4. Which areas of ministry do you find a particular challenge?** *Be honest about the areas of ministry that you find hard or are less suited to. No minister can do everything. This is a chance to say where you will need the support or leadership of others. No minister is energized by everything either, so you might say here what you tend to find draining.*
- 5. What are your key priorities for a future ministry setting?** *Explain what you especially hope for in any new setting. You might want to think in terms of completing the sentence, "I would love the chance to..." You might want to exercise a certain gift more; or serve a particular community of people; or develop a church in a certain direction; or step outside the norms of inherited church; or... whatever is on your heart.*

6. **What are your core theological convictions and how do you apply them in ministry and mission?** *Expand on how your understanding of the nature of God, his Son, Spirit, creation, church and mission determines who you are and the way you expect to minister.*
7. **What principles of leadership are important to you and how do they affect the way you lead?** *Outline the way you envisage working within the structure of a church or mission setting. What is your expectation of other leaders and of the whole church or mission community?*
8. **How do you pursue the ongoing development of your ministry? What in your theology and practice has changed as a result of your growth and learning?** *Outline how you go about gaining new understanding or new skills. How do you keep yourself fresh? What has changed in the way you minister as the years have gone by (whether in ministry or training)?*
9. **What practices, habits, interests and hobbies help you to sustain your own spiritual, physical, emotional and relational well-being?** *Outline what you do that keeps your relationship with God grounded, and what brings you joy and helps you to rest and relax.*
10. **How do you connect with and contribute to the wider Baptist family and other Christian partners?** *Outline the ways you encourage and are encouraged by relationships with other Baptists churches, leaders or networks. How important are your relationships with ecumenical partners? What is your relationship with other Christian mission organisations and personnel?*
11. **Why are considering leaving your current position (if you are still at college, please give completion of training as the reason) and how would you describe your relationship with those you will be leaving behind?** *This is a chance to be open about the reasons for moving on. There may be some sensitivity around this question, but an honest answer may help to build trust between you and those who read it.*
12. **Are there any further matters or circumstances you wish to be taken into account?** *This is an opportunity for you to add anything you want the church or mission setting to know. For example, there are personal circumstances which you want to be known from the beginning, or you are half-way through an academic qualification.*

Section B

Please outline your **employment and education history** since leaving secondary education. This should be a clear, chronological account of your main occupation at any one time, including periods of further education, unemployment, travel and so on.

An example layout would be:

Sep 1986 – Jul 1989	University of Sheffield – B.Eng in Mechanical Engineering, class 2.1
Jul 1989 – Sep 1989	Casual bar tender at the Hollies Hotel, Weymouth

Sep 1989 – Mar 1996	Jones and Smith Ltd. Various roles from graduate trainee to becoming regional technical sales rep for Yorkshire before being made redundant
Mar 1996 – Sep 1996	Unemployed
Sep 1996 – Jun 2000	Projects Manager – Green and White Cable Company
Jun 2000 – Sep 2000	Travelling in Australia and the Pacific
Sep 2000 – Jul 2003	Minister-in-Training – Bristol Baptist College and Bristol Street Baptist Church. Diploma in Theology, Ministry and Mission.
Jul 2003 – Mar 2010	Minister – London Road Baptist Church, Coventry
Mar 2010 – present	Minister – York Street Baptist Church, Leeds

To avoid confusion, additional training or secondary occupations should not be included under ‘employment and education history’, but under ‘any other qualifications and experience’ below. Where it is absolutely necessary to include concurrent roles, these should be included as a single section, for example:

Aug 1983 – Nov 1994	Part Time sales rep for Freemans Catalogues <i>and</i> bookkeeper for Holman and Hunt Enterprises
Nov 1994 – Sep 1996	Full Time bookkeeper for Holman and Hunt Enterprises

Under **any other qualifications or experience**, please list anything you think enhances the understanding of your readers of who you are and what you will bring. For example, you have a performance diploma in violin; you have a football coaching qualification; you are a trained counsellor; you have just attended a conflict resolution training course; you volunteered at a community café for a couple of years.

Section C

The personal details section is self-explanatory. Note that your name appears for the first time in this section. It is deliberately withheld from the front page as churches and search teams are urged to read section A of each profile prayerfully before viewing the name and personal circumstances of each minister. This is so that first impressions may be protected from assumptions about gender, age, race, education, family circumstances or previous employment.

Section D

Once you have completed sections A to C, please ask your regional minister or appropriate college staff member to add their comments. This enables them to affirm your strengths and gifts and draw attention to any facet of your ministry or college formation where you may have been overly modest. They can also write as your advocate if you are presently in a demanding or difficult setting. Conversely, if they feel you have not been wholly open in your profile, they will speak to you about this before they complete section D. Whatever is written in section D must be agreed by both you and the regional minister.

5. Guidance for completing your settlement form

Your settlement form is used only by the regional ministers and the BUGB Ministries Team. It enables them to keep a record of those in the settlement process at any one time. It is not shared with anyone else.

Please note which regional association your church or mission setting belongs to. If you are at college and are church-based or mission setting-based, please enter the association to which your placement belongs. If you are at college and are college-based, please enter the association that you will be working with as you seek to settle. This might be the association in which your college is located or the association to which your sending church belongs. If in doubt, speak to your college and ask about this.

If you are an accredited minister, **please note your accreditation category**. Most ministers are category 1. If in doubt as to your category, your regional minister can access the BUGB database to find the answer.

Please enter the date of entering settlement. This is the date you submit your fully completed ministerial profile and settlement form to your regional minister.

Questions 1 to 5 are there to help the regional ministers as they advise and support you and their churches. They will use your answers to assist you in considering which churches to approach. Importantly, other regional ministers will also use them to identify ministers who could be encouraged to approach a church in their association.

You may include as much detail as you wish here about your preferences. However, you are encouraged to be as flexible as possible. This increases the number of possible ministry options, but it also makes room for the surprising call of God to a ministry setting you may not initially have imagined.

The following notes in italics may be helpful as you answer the questions:

- 1. What type of setting do you hope to minister within? Sole pastor; defined role within a team ministry; pioneer; church planter; rural; urban; large; small; traditional; contemporary; charismatic; etc.** *As mentioned above, be as broad as you dare in the type of ministry you would consider. However, if you feel strongly called to a particular form of ministry, please give details of this.*
- 2. Would you prefer full-time or part-time? If part time, what arrangement are you seeking? Please be specific about the number of days and what flexibility you have.** *Make it clear what are restrictions and what are preferences.*
- 3. What are your financial and housing expectations, and do you have any flexibility?** *Give details of the stipend you currently receive or are seeking. Outline the housing arrangements you either require or would consider, such as a manse, shared ownership, or owning your own home. Please indicate if your family arrangements require any special housing, such as needing more than 3 bedrooms, or disability access. If you own a house that you envisage*

selling in order to buy one near your next ministry, please arrange an informal valuation so that this can be considered.

- 4. What geographical limitations or preferences do you have for your new setting?** *You are encouraged to be as open as possible to God's leading you to different places, though there may be good reasons for naming geographic restrictions or preferences. Please be very clear in identifying what are restrictions such as needing to be within easy distance of an elderly parent, and what are preferences, such as wanting to be situated in the inner city.*
- 5. What are your key priorities for a future ministry setting? (This answer should be the same as your answer for Q5 on the ministerial profile.)** *Please see notes above on question 5 of the ministerial profile.*

Finally, you should agree with your regional minister any **confidential information** that needs to be included. If you are a minister-in-training, you should complete this in conjunction with the appropriate college staff member. The content and wording of this section will be mutually agreed between you and your regional minister or college staff member, who will also have consulted with the Ministries Team Leader. You should note that this information will NOT be passed onto any church – BUT you will need to disclose it to any church that invites you to a final stage of discernment such as a preach with a view, before you accept their invitation. Failure to do so constitutes a disciplinary offence.

It is not often that ministers have to include any confidential information at all, but by way of example, it will include but not be limited to:

- If you have an active final warning issued by the Ministerial Recognition Committee.
- If you are returning to ministry following a period of discipline.
- If there has been a vote of no confidence or an agreement reached to end your ministry.

If you have already included any of this in your ministerial profile, then it does not need to be included here as well.

If you have confidential information which needs to be disclosed then you will be asked to keep the Ministries Team Leader and your regional minister aware of which churches you are sending your profile to, and update them if, following the first meeting with the church search group, there is going to be further consideration of a potential call.



Baptist Union of Great Britain, PO Box 44, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon OX11 8RT
Tel: 01235 517700 Email: ministries@baptist.org.uk Website: www.baptist.org.uk
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