



# Baptists Together Settlement Process: Guidance for Ministers

## Introduction

The Baptists Together Settlement Process (BTSP) is designed to facilitate ministers, churches, and alternative ministry settings such as local chaplaincy or pioneering, as they seek new ministry. The aim is to provide a clear and transparent process that enables all involved to discern God's calling.

This document is intended to help an Accredited Minister or Minister-in-Training navigate the settlement process. If you have questions, please speak to your Regional Minister, or contact the Ministries Team via [btsp@baptist.org.uk](mailto:btsp@baptist.org.uk)

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## Abbreviations

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

<b>BUGB</b>	Baptist Union of Great Britain	<b>BTSP</b>	Baptists Together Settlement Process
<b>PVL</b>	Pastoral Vacancy List	<b>CMD</b>	Continuing Ministerial Development
<b>NAM</b>	Newly Accredited Minister	<b>MiT</b>	Minister-in-Training

## 1. Overview of the settlement process

The settlement process can be used by churches and other Baptist ministry settings such as missional and pioneering projects seeking to appoint an accredited Baptist minister. **For the sake of this document each of these opportunities is described as a ministry setting.**

The process is as follows:

- The ministry setting (most commonly a church) with a pastoral vacancy completes a Pastoral Vacancy List (PVL) form and a profile explaining their vacancy.
- 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 or a Minister-in-Training (MiT) in your final year at a Baptist college. Details of how to access the PVL can be found in section 3 below.
- The PVL entry includes:
  - a short description of the ministry setting;
  - links to the ministry setting website (if appropriate) and its full profile;
- As an Accredited Minister or a MiT seeking settlement, you complete a ministerial profile and settlement form in conjunction with your Regional Minister who sends them to the Ministries Team.
- Ministries Team sends to you an anonymised version of your ministerial profile.
- You may send this profile, together with an accompanying letter or email, to any ministry setting on the PVL that is open to receiving expressions of interest.
- The ministry setting uses the profiles received to discern which minister or ministers they wish to meet. They should respond to you within two weeks to indicate they either:
  - would like to meet with you;
  - do not discern that you are call to fill the vacancy;
  - are interested in your profile but are considering other ministers first.
- If you have not heard back from the ministry setting within two weeks, you should inform your Regional Minister, and also tell the Ministries Team by emailing [btsp@baptist.org.uk](mailto:btsp@baptist.org.uk).

Throughout the process you should remain in regular contact with your Regional Minister who will support, advise and encourage you as necessary. This regular contact should happen at least every two months. This is so your progress may be discussed at a bi-monthly meeting held between all the Regional Minister Team Leaders and the Ministries Team Leader. This meeting will talk through what help and support can be offered. This might be targeted, for example by suggesting to you certain churches in other Associations that you may wish to consider.

## 2. The Baptists Together Settlement Process in more detail

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

- 1. With the assistance of a Regional Minister, complete a ministerial profile and a settlement form.**

The **ministerial profile** is the document you send to a ministry setting when you wish to express an interest in a role advertised on the PVL.

The **settlement form** is for use by Associations and the Ministries Team only. It enables the Ministries Team to keep a record of those in the settlement process at any one time. The form can also help Regional Ministers to support you because it contains your preferences. Your Regional Minister then knows when it would be appropriate to suggest to you a certain church or other ministry setting which you might not have otherwise considered.

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.

**If you are an Accredited Minister**, once you have completed your ministerial profile and settlement form, you must discuss both with your Regional Minister. You agree your profile with them and the Regional Minister adds their own comment and signs the profile. You also agree with your Regional Minister what, if any, confidential information should be included on the settlement form (see section 5 below).

**If you are a MiT**, once you have completed your ministerial profile and settlement form, you must discuss both with a college tutor. You agree your profile with them and the tutor adds their own comment and signs the profile. You also agree with the tutor what, if any, confidential information should be included on the settlement form (see section 5 below). You must then send both the ministerial profile and the settlement form to the Regional Minister who is helping you with settlement.

Once your Regional Minister has both your completed profile and settlement form, they will send them to the BUGB Ministries Team. Copies of both documents are held by the relevant Association for as long as you remain in the settlement process. The Ministries Team hold both documents in your ministerial file as per the BUGB data retention policy.

The Ministries Team then anonymises your profile. Each minister in the settlement process is assigned a code (e.g. AB01) and it is this code rather than a name which appears at the top of a ministerial profile. Search teams in churches and other ministry settings 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 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 converts your anonymised profile into a PDF and returns it to you. It is this anonymised profile, and not any other version, that you send to any ministry setting listed in the PVL.

## **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. The Ministries Team may well have yours on file already, but if they do not, or it needs updating, they will ask you to complete one. If you have any questions about overseas declaration forms, please contact the Ministries Team for guidance.

## **3. Send your completed ministerial profile to any ministry setting you wish to meet**

The PVL lists ministry settings that are currently open to expressions of interest. The PVL is updated on a regular basis.

You should only send the anonymised version of your profile that was returned to you by the Ministries Team.

You may send an accompanying letter or email which should be no more than 500 words. The person who receives your profile is asked not to pass on accompanying emails or letters to their search team until all search team members have read section A of the profiles they receive. This is for the same reason as mentioned in (1) above.

Regional Ministers are happy to guide and support you as you consider options on the PVL. As well as talking with your own Regional Minister, you may also contact the Regional Minister in the Association in which the new ministry setting is situated. These conversations can help sharpen a sense of the type of ministry setting to which God is calling you. A Regional Minister may also suggest to you options you would not otherwise consider.

Regional Minister Team Leaders meet with the Ministries Team Leader every two months to discuss the settlement process. They will discuss your progress and talk through what help and support can be offered. The Regional Ministers may make connections between the type of ministry you are seeking and opportunities in their area. Your Regional Minister will then suggest to you these opportunities for you to consider.

Ministers are advised to read 'Baptists Together Settlement Process: Guidance for Churches'. This guidance clearly outlines a process for discernment (Section 8) and how to manage issues relating to discrimination and unconscious bias (Appendix 3). If when engaging with a church or alternative ministry setting, you have concerns regarding these issues, please discuss this with your Regional Minister Team Leader who will discuss this with the Ministries Team Leader.

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

In the initial stages of meeting with search teams, you may talk to more than one ministry setting at a time. However, once a ministry setting invites you to preach with a view or join them for an alternative equivalent final discernment stage, you must give attention to that situation alone. Unless and until you or they decide not to progress any further, you must not send a profile to other options or continue to explore a calling to another ministry setting.

**5. Share confidential information before accepting an invitation to the final stage of discernment.**

A Regional Minister in consultation with the Ministries Team Leader may have required the inclusion of relevant confidential information on your settlement form. This is not common, but if it is the case, you must share this information when you are invited to preach with a view or its equivalent and before you accept it. Failure to do so constitutes a disciplinary offence. The ministry setting will have been told to check with their Regional Minister at the point of inviting you to their final stage of discernment whether there is confidential information you should have shared with them.

**6. Inform your Regional Minister and Ministries Team when you accept a call.**

You should inform your Regional Minister or college as soon as you receive a call to a ministry setting. It is helpful also to tell them the start date and date of any induction service as soon as they are known.

You should also let the Ministries Team know by emailing [btsp@baptist.org.uk](mailto:btsp@baptist.org.uk).

**7. Obtain a new DBS enhanced disclosure.**

You must contact the Association where your new ministry setting is situated 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](http://www.baptist.org.uk/pvl)

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

If you are an Accredited Minister or a BUGB MiT, you will have been provided with a username and password at some point. If you cannot remember the password, you can click on the 'login' button and follow the option to reset the password. If you cannot remember your login name or email address, please email [website@baptist.org.uk](mailto:website@baptist.org.uk) and request new login details, stating name, current church, ministry setting and/or college.

The PVL is one document, divided by Association. Each entry provides some basic information about the ministry setting and what they are looking for. It also contains links to the ministry setting's full profile and, where relevant, a website.

There is also an Excel spreadsheet which lists all opportunities. You can download and rearrange in various ways, such as by Association. The spreadsheet also contains links to profiles and websites.

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

### 4. Guidance for completing your ministerial profile

You are strongly encouraged to meet with your Regional Minister before starting to complete your ministerial profile.

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 answers how you wish, bearing in mind that readers may draw assumptions from the presentation as well as the content of your answers.

Once you have completed the profile, email it to your Regional Minister. **Make sure that your name is in the title of the file you send, and that you send a Word document and not a PDF.** The Regional Minister will add their comment and agreement and then forward the profile and settlement form to the Ministries Team.

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

#### Section A

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

The questions are self-explanatory, but for the sake of clarity, the following notes in italics may be helpful.

- 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 marriage, family, health or other personal circumstances which you want to be known from the beginning; or you are half-way through an academic qualification. If you have access to the PVL but are not yet accredited, for example if you are transferring your accreditation from another union or denomination, this must be made clear in question 12.*

## Section B

Please outline **employment and education history** from and including secondary education. This should be a clear, chronological account of occupation, 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 that enhances the understanding of the readers in terms of who you are and what you will bring. For example, you speak another language; you have a performance diploma in a musical instrument; you have a sports 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; and so on.

### Section C

The personal details section is self-explanatory. Note that your name is not asked for until this section. It is deliberately withheld from the front page as 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 and sign Section D. Whatever is written in Section D must be agreed by both you and the Regional Minister. If you have access to the PVL but are not yet accredited, for example if you are transferring your accreditation from another union or denomination, this must be made clear in Section D as well as under question 12.

## 5. Guidance for completing your settlement form

Your settlement form is only used by Regional Ministers and the BUGB Ministries Team. It is not shared with anyone else.

**Please note which Regional Association** your current 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 a college-based student, please enter the Association in which your college is located. If in doubt, ask your college 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 BU 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 Ministries Team and Regional Minister Team Leaders when they meet every two months to discuss the Baptists Together Settlement Process. Information in it may be used to suggest to you any churches or other ministry settings you might wish to consider. You can include as much detail as you wish here about your preferences. This information can make room for the surprising call of God to a ministry setting you may not initially have imagined.

You should agree with your Regional Minister any **confidential information** that will eventually be shared with a church or other ministry setting at the appropriate time. 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 are a MiT, 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. You should note that this information will not be passed onto any church. Rather, you must disclose it yourself to any ministry setting 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 are within a final warning period following a finding of serious fault by the national Ministerial Recognition Committee.
- If you are returning to accredited ministry following a period of discipline in which you were removed or you resigned from the register of Accredited Ministers.
- If in your present or most recent ministry, there has been a vote of no confidence or an agreement reached to end your ministry.

If you do have confidential information which needs to be disclosed then you must keep the Ministries Team Leader and your Regional Minister up to date about:

- which ministry settings you are sending your profile to; and
- whether, following the first meeting with the ministry setting's search team, there is going to be further consideration of a potential call.

There may be other personal circumstances which you did not want to include in your ministerial profile but which you would want a ministry setting to be aware of before you accept a call. You can note these also in this section and discuss with your Regional Minister when would be the appropriate moment to share them with the ministry setting.



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