



# Introduction to the Baptists Together Settlement Process

## 1. 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 an introduction for all involved and should be read in conjunction with the *Settlement Guide for Ministers* or the *Settlement Guide for Churches* as relevant. You can find these guides on the Ministries Team [resources pages](#) of the Baptists Together website, or by contacting your Regional Minister.

## 2. Summary

Churches or alternative ministry settings that are seeking fresh ministry are included in the online Pastoral Vacancy List (PVL), found at [www.baptist.org.uk/pvl](http://www.baptist.org.uk/pvl), and to which all Accredited Ministers have access.

**A church or alternative ministry setting with a pastoral vacancy** must write a 'vacancy profile' that provides prospective ministers with an overview of their context, features, vision, and hopes for ministry. The profile is agreed with the Regional Minister who adds a comment of their own. The church or ministry setting also completes a PVL form with the help of their Regional Minister. The Regional Minister sends both the vacancy profile and the PVL form to the Ministries Team who add the relevant details to the PVL. Each listing in the PVL contains a summary of the vacancy taken from the PVL form, a link to the full vacancy profile and an indication of the vacancy's current review date. A review date is the date by which they would like to receive expressions of interest from ministers.

**A minister seeking new ministry** completes a 'ministerial profile' in conjunction with their Regional Minister, who adds a comment of their own. The minister also completes a settlement form which is used by the Regional Minister Team Leader (RMTL) and the Ministries Team Leader to offer advice and help the minister discern the shape of their desired future ministry. The Regional Minister sends both the ministerial profile and the settlement form to the Ministries Team.

The Ministries Team anonymises and logs the profile and returns it to the relevant minister. The minister may then send this returned ministerial profile, with an accompanying letter or email, to any church on the PVL currently open to receiving expressions of interest.

Each church or alternative ministry setting undertakes their own discernment process to determine whom to call as minister. The leaders or a search team look at the ministerial profiles they receive and prayerfully discern whether to meet any of the ministers.

A church or alternative ministry setting must respond to all ministers from whom they receive a profile, indicating that they either:

- would like to arrange a meeting with them; or
- do not feel they are the right fit; or
- are interested but would like to put the minister 'on hold' whilst they consider other people.

Regional Ministers accompany and support ministers and churches or alternative ministry settings throughout the settlement process.

RMTLs meet with the Ministries Team Leader every two months. Information in ministerial profiles and settlement forms is used in these meetings to explore possible connections between ministers and ministry opportunities across Baptists Together. In particular, the meeting discusses how to support ministers and churches or other settings that are finding it hard to settle. To support these meetings, both ministers and churches or other settings with a vacancy must update their Regional Minister on a bi-monthly basis.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

#### 3.1 The Ministries Team will:

- maintain and update the PVL, making it available to all Accredited Ministers, Ministers-in-Training (MiT) in their final year at college and, where agreed by the Ministries Team and the relevant RMTL, unaccredited ministers<sup>1</sup> who wish to enter the settlement system;
- maintain a list of all ministers in settlement, collating their ministerial profiles and settlement forms, and making these available to RMTLs for the bi-monthly settlement meeting;
- anonymise all ministerial profiles sent in by ministers, returning them to the minister as a pdf;
- record all settlements and changes relating to ministers and MiTs in the BUGB database;
- agree with the relevant RMTL what comment they should enter on the ministerial profile for any minister where there are questions over their competency or conduct;

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<sup>1</sup>Unaccredited ministers can be included in the settlement system when agreed between the Ministries Team and the relevant RMTL, using criteria set out in guidelines for allowing those who are not Accredited Ministers to access the BTSP. The minister's profile and the comments from the Regional Minister must make it very clear that the minister is not accredited. In certain instances, the church may have to take up their own references and gain an enhanced DBS themselves as part of the process of determining whether the minister is suitable for them.

- work with the relevant Associations to review the accreditation of any MiT or minister out of pastorate who fails to settle within two years of entering the system<sup>2</sup>;
- supply all documentation needed to assist the process;
- facilitate the bi-monthly settlement meeting with RMTLs; and
- facilitate reviews of the settlement process.

### **3.2 Regional Ministers will:**

#### **Walk with ministers and MiTs<sup>3</sup> throughout the settlement process by:**

- explaining to ministers how the settlement process works, checking that they have access to the PVL and providing them with the BTSP documentation (blank ministerial profile, blank settlement form, and guidance notes);
- advising ministers as they complete their settlement form and ministerial profile, adding their own comment in section D of the profile and agreeing the profile is accurate;
- helping ministers determine if there is any confidential information that they should include in their profile. If any of the confidential information relates to a ministerial disciplinary issue, the Regional Minister will consult with the Ministries Team Leader about what should be included.
- maintaining bi-monthly contact with ministers to provide advice and encouragement and to suggest to the minister churches or other settings they might consider, whether in their own Association or elsewhere<sup>4</sup>; and
- reminding ministers who settle that they need to apply for a DBS enhanced disclosure as soon as possible after receiving a call.
- advising ministers regarding terms of appointment and stipend, to ensure they are not treated less favourably because of race, gender, disability, or marital status.

#### **Walk with churches and other ministry settings throughout the settlement process by:**

- explaining how the settlement process works, providing them with the relevant guidance notes and asking them to complete a PVL form;

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<sup>2</sup> If a Minister has been out of pastorate for two years and failed to settle, they will be called to meet with their RMTL and the Ministries Team Leader to review their ongoing accreditation. The Ministries Team Leader will make a recommendation to the national Ministerial Recognition Committee (MRC) as to whether MRC grants them an extension of their time in settlement for up to two further years. The final decision rests with the MRC.

<sup>3</sup> Regional Ministers are expected to facilitate the settlement of Accredited Ministers who are in good standing. Sometimes, a Regional Minister may feel they cannot in good conscience facilitate a minister's settlement because of significant theological difference. In this case, the Regional Minister should make alternative arrangements to enable the minister to be in settlement. If the Regional Minister believes that the minister is in breach of the Declaration of Principle, they should contact the Ministries Team Leader.

<sup>4</sup> This is a critical role for Regional Ministers. It inevitably takes different forms for different ministers. Generally, it means exploring with a minister their next phase of ministry; challenging them to consider situations that they may not have considered; passing on requests from other Regional Ministers to consider churches in their Association; and talking to other Regional Ministers to get a better idea about a particular church or ministry opportunity.

- helping to produce a vacancy profile that is accurate and gives a realistic impression of the ministry setting, including its vision and the qualities sought in a new minister. In some cases, this may involve asking for a profile to be reworked if it is not helpful or realistic;
- helping to find an appropriate moderator, if necessary, to help them through the settlement process;
- maintaining bi-monthly communication with any church or alternative ministry setting via an agreed contact person such as the moderator or church secretary;
- considering all ministers in settlement to see if there are any who could be asked by their Regional Minister to consider a particular ministry opportunity;
- discussing churches and other ministry settings with other Regional Ministers to see if they know of suitable ministers who could be encouraged to approach them; and
- helping those receiving ministerial profiles to consider any confidential information shared with them by a potential minister. Some ministers are obliged to disclose certain confidential information to a church prior to accepting an invitation to preach with a view. If the minister fails to disclose this information, the RMTL will share with the leaders or search team the information contained on the settlement form. The RMTL will also tell the Ministries Team about the minister's failure to disclose.
- advising churches regarding terms of appointment and stipend, to ensure that no applicant is treated less favourably because of race, gender, disability, or marital status.

**Work with the Ministries Team by:**

- sending completed vacancy profiles and PVL forms to the Ministries Team;
- sending completed ministerial profiles and settlement forms to the Ministries Team;
- reporting all settlements of ministers and churches or other ministry settings to the Ministries Team as soon as possible;
- attending the bi-monthly meetings between RMTLs and the Ministries Team Leader.

**3.3 Churches or other ministry settings wishing to be included in the BTSP will:**

- meet with the relevant Regional Minister who will explain the settlement process and provide them with appropriate documentation;
- complete a PVL form and a realistic vacancy profile, as explained in the *Guide to Creating a Church Profile*;
- ensure that they treat all personal data received from ministers appropriately;
- respond within two weeks of their review date to all ministers who express an interest in their vacancy to either: invite them to meet with the leaders of search team; inform them that they will not be taking things any further; or explain that they will be in touch later once they have met with other ministers;
- initiate bi-monthly conversations to update their Regional Minister, via an agreed contact person.

- inform the Ministries Team about any new date for receiving ministerial profiles so the PVL can be updated;
- check with their RM, prior to issuing an invitation to preach with a view, whether there is any confidential information that the minister is required to share with them; and
- inform both the Association and the Ministries Team when a minister has accepted a call, who the minister is, and the approximate date when they anticipate the ministry commencing.

### **3.4 Ministers wishing to be included in the BTSP will:**

- complete, with the assistance of their Regional Minister, a ministerial profile and settlement form. The minister must discuss with the Regional Minister anything they feel may be confidential information, to determine whether it should be disclosed to a potential new church or other ministry setting;
- complete an overseas declaration form and send it to the Ministries Team if requested to do so by the Ministries Team;
- send their completed ministerial profile, as received back from the Ministries Team, along with a covering letter or email, to churches or other ministry settings they are interested in.
- refrain from sending any further profiles once they have accepted an invitation to preach with a view or equivalent, unless or until this prior exploration of possible ministry comes to an end;
- share with a church or other ministry setting all the confidential information as required by their Regional Minister before accepting an invitation to preach with a view;
- initiate bi-monthly conversations to update their Regional Minister;
- inform their Regional Minister when they accept a call.
- obtain a new DBS enhanced disclosure through their new Association as soon as possible after accepting a call.

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