



Introduction to the Baptists Together Settlement Process

Summary

Churches with pastoral vacancies (and who have completed a PVL Form) will be listed on the online Pastoral Vacancy List (PVL) – www.baptist.org.uk/pvl - with a link to their full Profile. Their listing will indicate their current 'closing date' – i.e. the date by which they would like to receive 'expressions of interest'.

Any Minister who has access to the PVL and who has completed a Ministerial Profile (MP) in conjunction with their Regional Minister (RM) can send their MP, with an accompanying letter/email, to any church on the PVL currently open to receiving 'expressions of interest'.

Churches will then undertake their own discernment process to determine to whom a call should be made. They will start to do this by looking at the MPs they receive and prayerfully discerning if they wish to meet with any of the ministers.

Churches must respond to all Ministers who have sent their MP to them to indicate that they would like to arrange a meeting with them, do not feel they are the right fit for their church, or are interested in them but would like to put them "on hold" whilst they consider other people.

All Ministers seeking settlement would be strongly encouraged to liaise closely with their Regional Minister seeking their advice and discernment on which churches they might want to look at.

Regional Ministers will focus their time on walking with ministers and churches as they go through the process. They would also confer with one another to suggest names of ministers who could be encouraged to consider specific churches etc.

Regional Minister Team Leaders will meet every 3-4 months with the Ministries Team Leader to discuss various aspects of ministry - including looking at ministers and churches who are taking a long time to settle.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Ministries Team will

- Maintain and update the PVL making it available to all accredited ministers, ministerial students and, where agreed by the Ministries Team Leader (MTL) and the relevant RMTL, unaccredited ministers who wish to enter the settlement system.
- Maintain a list of all ministers in settlement and collate the Ministerial Profiles and Settlement Forms for all such ministers, making these available to the Regional Teams on a monthly basis.

- Anonymise all MPs they receive and return them in pdf form to the relevant Minister.
- Record all settlements and changes, relating to MITs and Accredited Ministers, in the National Baptist Database.
- Agree with the relevant Regional Minister Team Leader (RMTL), the Profile comments for ministers where there are questions over their competency or conduct.
- Write the Profile comments for a minister entering settlement, when the relevant Regional Minister is unwilling to do so due to a matter of conscience.
- Work with the relevant Associations to undertake reviews of accreditation for MITs and out-of-pastorate ministers who fail to settle within 2 years of entering the system. ^[Note 1]
- Supply all documentation needed to assist the process.
- Facilitate reviews of the settlement process

Regional Ministers will

Walk with Ministers ^[Notes 2 and 3] (and MITs) as they go through the process by

- Explaining to ministers looking to move how the settlement process works, checking that they have access to the PVL and providing them with the Settlement Documentation (Blank Ministerial Profile, Blank Settlement Form and Guidance Notes)
- Working with ministers entering settlement to complete their Settlement Form and advising them in the drawing up of their Ministerial Profile - adding their own comments in Section D. ^[Note 4]
- Maintaining regular contact with ministers in the settlement process to provide advice, encouragement and suggesting churches they might wish to consider, whether in their own Association or elsewhere. ^[Note 5]
- Reminding ministers who settle that they need to undertake a DBS enhanced disclosure through the Association as soon as possible.

Walk with Churches as they go through the process by

- Explaining to churches how the settlement process works, providing them with the relevant guidance notes and asking them to complete a PVL Form .
- Helping churches to produce a Church Profile which gives a realistic impression of the church including its vision and the qualities they are looking for in a new minister. This may involve running a 'Church Vision' Day or similar for them. In some cases it may also involve asking a church to redo a Profile which is not helpful to them (for whatever reason)
- Helping a church find an appropriate moderator, if necessary, to help them through the settlement process.
- Maintaining regular communication with churches in the settlement process via an agreed contact person such as the Moderator or Church Secretary. ^[Note 6]
- Considering the Ministers in settlement to see if there is anyone who could be asked by their RM to consider a particular church – particularly if the church has had very few ministers contact them. RMs can also discuss churches with other RMs to see if they have anyone who might be suitable who could be encouraged to approach them
- Helping churches to consider any confidential information shared with them by a potential minister. In the eventuality of a minister failing to share confidential information prior to

accepting an invitation to preach with a view, the RM will share the information on the Settlement Form with the church and report the failure to disclose to the MTL.

- Where appropriate, exploring with churches whether there are alternative models of leadership / ministry they might consider.

Work with the Ministries Team by

- Sending completed PVL forms and Church Profiles to the Ministries Team.
- Sending completed Ministerial Profiles and Settlement Forms to the Ministries Team

It is helpful if these have been checked through by the RMs (to ensure there are no glaring errors or omissions) before passing on to the Ministries Team.

- Ensuring that all settlements of ministers and churches are reported to the Ministries Team as soon as possible.

Churches wishing to be included in the Baptists Together Settlement Process will need to

- 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 church profile as per the guidance in the 'Guide to creating a Church Profile'
- Ensure that they treat all personal data received from Ministers as confidential.
- Respond (within 2 weeks of their closing date) to all ministers who express an interest in their vacancy to either invite them to meet with the church / search-group, to explain that they will not be taking things any further or that they will be in touch later once they have met with other ministers.
- Keep the Ministries Team informed as to any new dates for receiving MPs 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.
- Inform both the Association and the Ministries Team when a call has been accepted. This will include the name of the Minister and the approximate date when they anticipate the ministry commencing.

Ministers wishing to be included in the Baptists Together Settlement System will need to

- Complete, with the assistance of their RM, a Ministerial Profile and Settlement Form
- If requested by the Ministries Team, complete an overseas declaration form and send to the Ministries Team.
- Send their completed Profile (as received from the Ministries Team) to churches whom they wish to consider them along with a covering letter or email.
- Refrain from sending any further Profiles to churches once they have accepted an invitation to preach with a view (unless/until they or the church agree not to progress any further.)
- Share with a church all the confidential information as required by their RM before accepting an invitation to preach with a view.
- Inform their Regional Minister when they accept a call.

- Obtain a new DBS enhanced disclosure through their current Association as soon as possible after accepting a call.

NOTES

1. If a Minister who has been out of pastorate for 2 years and failed to settle, or a ministerial student has been out of college for 2 years and not settled, then they will be invited to meet with their RMTL and the MTL to review their ongoing accreditation. A recommendation will then be made to the Ministerial Recognition Committee (MRC) as to whether an extension of their time in settlement for up to 2 years will be granted. The final decision rests with the MRC
2. RMs are expected to facilitate the settlement of accredited ministers who are in good standing. If the theological stance of the minister differs from that of the RM to the extent that it becomes a matter of conscience for the RM to facilitate their settlement, then alternative arrangements should be made to enable the minister to be in settlement. If the RM believes that the minister is in breach of the Declaration of Principle this should be discussed with the MTL.
3. By agreement with the MTL and the relevant RMTL, and following already agreed criteria, (see Appendix 1) unaccredited ministers can be included in the settlement system as outlined above. The Settlement Profile (and comments from the RM) must make it very clear to the churches that the minister is not accredited and that the church must take up references and determine for themselves whether the minister is suitable for them.
4. If the minister is under discipline this must be disclosed. Where there are significant concerns about a minister's conduct or competency these should also be considered with the MTL for inclusion in the (confidential) information to be shared with the churches (Settlement Form)
5. This is a critical role for RMs in this model and will, inevitably, take different forms for different ministers. Generally it will mean exploring with them their next phase of ministry, challenging them to consider situations that they may not have considered, sometimes passing on requests from other RMs to consider churches in their Association, occasionally talking to other RMs to get a better idea about a particular church.... It may also involve helping Ministers to think more realistically about their ability to take on a situation.
6. Where a Church hasn't appointed a Moderator, there may be a role for an RM to help the church consider the MPs they have received.

APPENDIX 1: Guidelines about allowing Unaccredited Ministers to enter Settlement

Please note that these are currently under review

These guidelines are intended to assist Associations in deciding whether to recommend that an Unaccredited Minister be allowed to enter Settlement.

The following categories of ministers and pastors can usually be included

- Existing Baptist Nationally Recognised Pastors and Pioneers / locally / regionally recognised ministers or other Baptist staff members in our churches.
- Those ministers in pastoral charge accepted by association MR and commended for RSC, who are in pastorate and seeking settlement ahead of the conference.
- Those seeking a year as a pastoral assistant prior to College entrance
- Those from other Baptist Unions coming to MR Sub for transfer and already in pastorate in a Baptist church
- Those previously accredited by BUGB, but transferred to another Baptist Union/Convention, who are seeking a return to BUGB, whether they have accepted a call to a BUGB church or not.
- Those from other recognised denominations seeking transfer to the BUGB list and settlement ahead of MR Sub-committee and already in pastorate in a BUGB church

The following should generally not be included

- Any person in whom the interviewing Regional Minister lacks sufficient confidence to commend.
- Those who would fail to receive a waiver from qualifying office.
- All for whom there is insufficient commitment to Baptist identity (i.e. we are not a clearing house for uncommitted evangelicals!)
- All for whom a short delay until acceptance by RSC or MR Sub-committee is no handicap.
- Those who are not in a BUGB pastorate, and seeking a first/fresh appointment

The following process should normally be followed:

- Initial interview with Regional Minister
- Application for DBS disclosure and submission of AM1-1 and AM1-2
- References to be taken up as a prelude to a gateway interview with small group from Association MRC
- Discussion between the relevant RMTL and the MTL to decide if the person can enter settlement
- Ministerial Profile to be drawn up (including the names of referees which churches can approach), and agreed with the relevant RMTL and the MTL
- Normally, inclusion in the system would be for a maximum period of 2 years



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