



Biblical Counselling UK

Church-based Intern Scheme

Helping churches develop
biblical counselling in ministry

Before You Apply

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Introduction

Biblical Counselling UK's Church-based Intern Scheme seeks to assist churches who want to develop a biblical counselling approach to ministry. Where a local church has identified an individual with training and gifting in biblical counselling, this scheme provides a framework to support that person's development and the development of their ministry. The intern will be offered an initial year of training with Biblical Counselling UK, and if their engagement with the Intern Scheme over the course of the year is satisfactory, they will be offered a second year, after which their involvement in the Intern Scheme will finish.

Many conversations with church leadership, parochial church councils and other bodies or individuals within the church take place to determine the shape of the scheme in the particular context. This handbook is intended to help guide those conversations and the decisions made.

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Benefits of the Intern Scheme

Many churches recognise that the resources they have to help people with ‘problems of daily living’ are more limited than they would wish. This scheme seeks to develop local resources and foster a culture within the local church that mobilises the body of Christ in ‘one-anothering’ ministry. Rather than being the sole focus for biblical counselling ministry, we hope the intern will be a catalyst to foster richer and wiser pastoral care right across the church family. In some cases an intern might also support the provision of training events to stimulate an interest in biblical counselling ministries in other local churches as well.

For some individuals the main benefit of the scheme will be the opportunity to gain further experience in biblical counselling ministry. This experience will be put to use in whatever future formal or informal ministry roles they might take on. In other cases, however, one or more local churches might decide to provide ongoing funding that would allow the individual to develop their role further into the future.

Each intern is linked with a mentor who has experience in pastoral ministry (usually a member of the Biblical Counselling UK executive committee) who provides encouragement in the trainee’s personal development. Pastoral responsibility, however, remains firmly with local church leadership. Input from the intern’s mentor does not seek to replace or undermine local pastoral responsibility.

We also provide a peer support group where interns meet electronically and in person to provide mutual encouragement and as a stimulus to further reading and study. Discussion of pastoral situations respects the confidentiality of those involved.

We ask interns to be involved in Biblical Counselling UK’s annual residential conference and regional conferences and, where possible, to visit a local centre where the Certificate course is being taught to describe the intern scheme to students currently taking the course.

What does the Intern Scheme look like?

Rather than having a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach, internships adapt to local situations and can therefore reflect the strengths and experience of each particular intern. While an internship may involve establishing new ministries, often the focus will be on improving existing ministries rather than starting something new.

Instead of allowing themselves to become a focus for pastoral work, we encourage interns to help their church improve the quality of pastoral care across the entire body of Christ. This would mean facilitating training with groups and individuals both to develop a vision for biblical counselling ministry and help the development of personal skills. Where an intern

has sufficient experience they might also be a point of reference for more complicated life difficulties, either by the direct provision of help or by supporting those already doing so.

Where an internship works well, we expect a vision for richer personal ministry to develop across the church. As more individuals learn that God would have them move toward others in their difficulties and as 'one-anothering' becomes a more routine part of discipleship, we hope the culture of church life will begin to change.

Though some interns might be capable of supporting those with complex difficulties (persistent depression, eating disorders, alcohol dependency, etc), this will not always be the case. Interns will often be helping the church identify and engage biblically with the sort of problems we all face (grumbling, social anxiety, bitterness, irritability, overworking, fear of man, etc.).

The work of an intern should be intimately connected to the life of the local church. An internship that is working well will be fully integrated into the church's existing pastoral care. It will support and augment that pastoral care, not function as a replacement for it or run in parallel to it. We also encourage interns to provide training courses for members of local churches.

Concerns about Confidentiality, Competence and Liability (insurance)

These interns will not be 'accredited counsellors' and we do not encourage them to describe themselves as 'biblical counsellors'. Those receiving support from the interns should not imagine they are receiving some form of professional secular counselling. They should expect to receive wise and godly counsel but this would not be counselling that falls under the umbrella of any authorising body other than their local church. Biblical Counselling UK will provide a mentor to support the intern in their spiritual, personal and pastoral development, but this will not provide any formal or legal accountability for their work. The mentor will discuss individual pastoral situations, but pastoral responsibility will remain with the local church.

The different labels used in this area (Christian counselling, pastoral care and biblical counselling, to name but a few) can be confusing and can produce concern over legal responsibilities. Biblical Counselling UK does not define biblical counselling as a professional service or the activity of experts. We use the label 'biblical counselling' to describe the provision of wise counsel to a person who is seeking help and wishes that help to be founded on a biblical understanding of life. This is part of the normal work of pastoral care

within a church community and, as such, we do not understand it to require special insurance arrangements any more than a youth worker or community pastoral worker does.

Finances

Biblical Counselling UK seeks to support the intern in the following ways:

1. Travel Expenses: Where funds are available, Biblical Counselling UK is able to assist interns by reimbursing travel to and from the September and June in-person meetings, but interns may be in a position where those expenses can be covered by their church or through their own funds. Where expenses are claimed, mileage is reimbursed using the AA Fuel Calculator. Trains, flights, and taxis (if needed) are also reimbursed, though interns are encouraged to book ahead as soon as possible to secure lower prices, and to share taxis if able. Please note: Biblical Counselling UK does not reimburse travel expenses for local supervisors.

2. Residential Conference: Interns are expected to cover their own travel expenses to the Biblical Counselling UK residential conference, but are offered a discounted ticket price, provided there are sufficient funds to do so. Please note: Biblical Counselling UK does not offer a discounted price to local supervisors.

3. Biblical Counselling UK Grant: The vision is that the fostering of a biblical counselling mindset and approach to ministry in the intern's church will be sustainable even after the Intern Scheme finishes. Thus, we do not want churches/interns to be dependent on Biblical Counselling UK funds and we encourage interns to fundraise where able.

However, we recognise that individual churches may not have the resources to financially support an intern and his/her ministry. Thus, there are match-funded grants available through Biblical Counselling UK. Please contact the Director of the Intern Scheme at interns@biblicalcounselling.org.uk for more information.

If you need a grant, a separate application form to be completed by the church leader will be required. Please email interns@biblicalcounseling.org.uk for the form and submit the completed form along with the rest of the Intern Scheme application documents. Churches will be asked to outline why they are requesting a grant, the detailed purposes for which the grant will be used and a vision for how the church might garner the financial resources to support their plans after the end of the Intern Scheme.

If the grant is approved, an annual report detailing the use and impact of the grant will be required.

Meetings

1. Local Supervisor Meetings: Each intern will need a local supervisor with responsibility for their supervision and accountability. This is normally provided by a member of the church's pastoral leadership team, but might occasionally be delegated to another suitably experienced member of the church. Interns should meet with their local supervisor at minimum on a monthly basis. Local supervisors are also required to connect at minimum once per year with the intern's mentor.

2. Mentor Meetings: Mentors and interns should plan to meet once a month. This can take place either in-person, over the phone, or via video call.

3. Peer Supervision: The intern cohort will be divided into groups of three, usually a mix of first and second year interns. Each group will meet once per month via video call, and the meeting will be supervised by either the Director of the Intern Scheme or another Biblical Counselling UK mentor. Each intern will have an opportunity to present on a situation or question they have, followed by feedback from the rest of the group.

4. Monthly Training Meetings: Once a month, the Director of the Intern Scheme hosts an online training meeting via video call. These are two hours long, and first-year interns and second-year interns have separate meetings on different topics. Depending on the number of interns in each year, the group may be further split into two to aid the flow of conversation online. In advance of the meeting, reading material and a handout on the chosen topic are sent out. Second-year interns are given the opportunity to lead one training meeting on a topic of their choice, provided it is approved by the Director of the Intern Scheme.

5. In Person Meetings: Three times a year, mentors, interns, local supervisors who gather together in-person for a day in a central location. Further training and face-to-face interactions are the highlights of these meetings. Generally, these meetings take place in September, at the Biblical Counselling UK residential conference, and in June.

Time Requirements

The amount of time each intern is able to give to the Intern Scheme varies from person to person. Some are able to do it full-time, while others are able to allocate one full day a week, with small slots of time scattered around other working hours and commitments throughout the week. Meetings are arranged to best suit everyone's schedule wherever possible, and term schedules are sent out.

Other

1. **Garnering Stories:** Once per term, interns will be asked to write a short (400-600 word) reflection on the Intern Scheme. More instructions and prompts will be provided.
2. **Mentor Reports:** The mentor will write a mid-term and end-of-year report to assess the intern's involvement in the Scheme.
3. **Local Supervisor Reports:** The local supervisor will write a mid-term and end-of-year report to assess the intern's involvement in the Intern Scheme and the impact of the Intern Scheme on the church.
4. **Self-assessment:** The intern will write a self-assessment of their engagement with the Intern Scheme prior to the mentor's mid-term and end-of-year report.
5. **Grant Reports:** If the intern and local church have applied and received a grant from Biblical Counselling UK, an annual report written by the intern to appraise the use of the grant will be required.
6. **Audio Recording:** Interns are encouraged to record a sample of their counselling to pass on to their mentor for further supervision and training. More instructions and help will be provided to do so in a secure, confidential way.
7. **Google Hangouts Meet:** While mentors and interns are free to use whatever method or online platform they prefer in order to meet, the Peer Supervision and monthly Training Meetings take place using Google Hangouts Meet. If Google Hangouts Meet is unfamiliar, the Director of the Intern Scheme will provide assistance and an instruction video on getting it set up prior to the start of the Intern Scheme. Reliable internet access and a webcam are required. Recording the monthly training meetings and peer supervisions directly through Hangouts Meet is currently disabled. Other forms of audio/video recording are prohibited.
8. **Dropbox:** Each intern will be granted access to a personal folder on Dropbox where they will upload their Garnering Story submissions directly. This folder will be shared with their local supervisor, mentor and the Director of the Intern Scheme. Mentor and local supervisor reports will be uploaded here as well. The Director will provide instructions as needed.
9. **Residential Conference:** Interns will be expected to help with various tasks at the residential conference, including but not limited to assisting with registration, ushering and tidying the meeting room(s).

Applying to the Intern Scheme

The Biblical Counselling UK Church-based Intern Scheme is a competitive programme. The submission of an application form does not guarantee you will be offered a place on the Intern Scheme.

Suitable applicants will have completed the certificate programme offered by Biblical Counselling UK or have equivalent training and experience.

Those wishing to apply to the scheme are invited to submit an application outlining plans for the development of biblical counselling locally. This description of the proposed ministry must be written in collaboration with their church leader(s) who would then complete the second part of the application form.

The Application Process

Our conviction that God chooses to pastor his people in the context of the local church means we want the local church to be fully involved in the process of applying for an intern. Normally, someone interested in becoming an intern approaches their church leadership to discuss the idea and if the church is supportive they would then work jointly on an application. We are happy to respond to enquiries and help the church leadership decide the particular form the internship should take. We do not expect, or require, the church leadership to feel fully informed about biblical counselling or provide a local supervisor who was informed about biblical counselling. One of the main benefits of an internship is helping a church, and its leadership, to learn more about a biblical counselling approach to ministry.

The application form invites a description of the joint vision for the intern and in particular their plans for local accountability. We ask for details of two referees who could speak to the spiritual gifts and maturity of the applicant. There is also a due diligence form which the senior pastor of the church will need to complete.

Intern Application Form

The application form is divided into two main parts. Part One is to be completed by the individual applicant. Part Two must be completed by the applicant's church leader, usually the senior pastor or nominated local supervisor.

Part One, completed by the applicant, requests the following information:

1. Personal Details

This includes basic biographical information, current occupation and basic church information.

2. Relevant Training

This includes biblical counselling training, theological training, secular counselling training, ministry training, other relevant training and any practical placements undertaken as part of training.

3. Relevant Experience

This includes details of your informal and formal counselling experience, ministry experience, current experience in your local church and any other areas of service over the past ten years.

4. Personal Statements

This includes an outline of how and when you became a Christian, Christian growth, development of interest in biblical counselling, any areas of question and/or disagreement with Biblical Counselling UK's approach to ministry and biblical counselling, hours per week available and specific character/skills-based personal goals you have for the Intern Scheme.

5. References

You must provide the contact details of a ministry referee (who has known you for at least two years and is able to comment on your skill in personal ministry and the contact details of a personal referee (a mature Christian who has known you for more than five years, is able to comment on your personal spiritual growth and is not your senior pastor of your church).

6. Applicant's Declaration

Part Two, completed by the applicant's church leader, requests the following information:

1. Church Details

This includes basic church information such as denomination and website.

2. Counselling Ministry Proposal

This includes sharing the church's vision behind the application to the Intern Scheme *and* the specific structures, plans and goals the church and applicant have for the Scheme if offered a place.

3. Financial Information

The vision is that the fostering of a biblical counselling mindset and approach to ministry in the intern's church will be sustainable even after the Intern Scheme finishes. Thus, we do not want churches/interns to be dependent on Biblical Counselling UK funds.

However, we recognise that individual churches may not have the resources to financially support an intern and his/her ministry. Thus, there are match-funded grants available through Biblical Counselling UK.

If a church decides that they need a grant is needed to make the Intern Scheme feasible, the church leader will need to complete a grant application form (available from interns@biblicalcounselling.org.uk) where they will need to outline why they are requesting a grant, the detailed purposes for which the grant will be used and a vision for how the church might raise the financial resources to support their plans after the end of the Intern Scheme.

If the grant is approved, regular reports detailing the use of the grant and its impact will be required.

4. Local Accountability Arrangements

This includes basic information about the local supervisor nominated to support and manage the intern in the local context.

Safeguarding responsibilities and overall pastoral authority of the intern remain with the local church, so the local supervisor should be in a position to carry out these duties effectively. We encourage local supervisors to attend the in-person meetings where able, and we expect an intern's local supervisor and mentor to connect at minimum once per year, either in person or online.

Grant Application Form

The grant application form (available from interns@biblicalcounselling.org.uk) requests the following information:

- 1. Basic church details**
- 2. Goals for the Intern Scheme** – these may be the same as stated in the application form.
- 3. Grant Details**
 - A) Amount of grant requested
 - B) Reasons why a grant is being requested
 - C) A breakdown of how the grant would be used
 - D) How you will work towards building financial support for the future
 - E) How plans for ministry would change if the requested grant was not approved.
 - F) Name and contact details of person filling out the form.
- 4. Declaration**