



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, governing bodies and councils and other 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.

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.

A significant 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 the Intern 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 and biblical counselling who provides encouragement in the Intern’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 monthly training and peer support groups 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.

Eligibility to Apply

In addition to being a Christian believer, applicants should have the following:

1. **Completion of all three BCUK Certificates:** Foundations, Skills and Topics, or equivalent through CCEF.

The Summer Intensive may be completed the summer before potentially beginning as an Intern. For example, you can apply to be an Intern in March 2022, take the Summer Intensive in July 2022, and begin as an Intern in September 2022.

2. **Church Leadership:** we don’t require the applicant’s church leadership to have an in-depth grasp of biblical counselling, but we do ask that the decision to apply to the Intern Scheme is jointly taken between the church leadership and the individual applicant. Internships work

well when the church leadership are invested in making the most out of the Scheme and involved in drafting and carrying out the ministry proposals.

NB: We ask that churches follow their own current procedures for the safer recruitment of Interns as they will be either employees or voluntary workers to the church. This may involve a separate interview process between the church and the applicant.

3. **Local Supervisor:** the church must provide a Local Supervisor for the Intern. The Local Supervisor will have direct supervision and oversight over the Intern's ministry and should have capacity to have weekly or biweekly meetings with the Intern.
4. **Time Requirements:** The amount of time each Intern is able to give to the Intern Scheme varies from person to person. To make the most of the Scheme, we ask that individuals are able to give at minimum two days a week.
5. **Finances:** there is no fee to apply to the Intern Scheme. For more information on finances, see page 7.
6. **Conduct:** the applicant should be free from any safeguarding or criminal convictions that would hamper the ministry of biblical counselling.
7. **Safeguarding:** you will be asked what training in the recognition and response to abuse you have had. If there is no training or the training is not recent (older than two years) or robust, you will be asked to show your plans to receive suitable training before the start of the Intern Scheme if accepted.
8. **The Biblical Counseling Coalition's Confessional and Doctrinal Statements:** if accepted, you will be asked to sign your agreement with these two statements, so it would be worth reading them before deciding to apply. You can find them [here](#) and [here](#).
9. **Other:** We will also ask about previous or current ministry experience.

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.

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.

Biblical Counselling UK and United for Mission (UFM) partnership

A partnership has been developed between Biblical Counselling UK and United for Mission (UFM) to provide a period of focused pastoral care to UFM missionaries who are struggling with a particular issue. The aim of this partnership is to provide a Christian brother or sister in Christ who will love wisely, listen well and speak the truth in love to the UFM missionary so that he/she might continue to mature in their faith through their particular struggle. Usually these conversations will take place via online video call unless the mission partner is on home assignment in the UK.

Participation in this partnership is optional for Interns, and should they desire to take part, they will become volunteers to UFM.

Intern Scheme Meetings

In addition to the ministry in the local church, we ask or provide the following support:

1. Local Supervisor Meetings: Each Intern will need a local supervisor with responsibility for their supervision and accountability, including all safeguarding responsibilities of children and vulnerable adults. 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 twice a month. 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. 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: Interns meet in person three times per year. Generally, these meetings take place in as central location as possible at the end of September (or early October), at the residential conference and in May or June of each year. Further training and face-to-face interactions are the highlights of these meetings.

6. Whole Group Zoom Meetings: Twice per year, mentors, local supervisors and Interns are invited to a 1.5 hour Zoom meeting for content input and breakout room discussion. These meetings give all those involved in the Scheme a chance to 'see' everyone and learn together. Generally, these happen in November and May.

Other

1. **Garnering Stories:** Twice per year, Interns will be asked to write a short (400-600 word) reflection on the Intern Scheme. More instructions and assigned topics 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 have a phone call with the Intern Scheme Director each autumn and write an 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/or local church have applied and received a grant from Biblical Counselling UK, an annual report written by the Intern to document the use of the grant will be required. This will be folded into the Intern's year-end report so it's not an additional piece of paperwork.
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. **Zoom:** 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 Zoom. Reliable Internet access and a webcam are required.
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).

Concerns about Confidentiality, Competence and Liability (insurance)

Liability: Interns are not ‘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.

Interns are not to use language that would lead people to see them (explicitly or by implication) as a ‘qualified Biblical Counsellor’ or a ‘licensed professional counsellor’. To do so risks suggesting that they have an accredited qualification or they have had training and supervised practice similar to that required of a secular counsellor, which is not the case.

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. However, we encourage applicants to discuss any concerns regarding insurance and liability with their church leadership as part of the decision process to apply to the Intern Scheme.

Competence: Though some Interns might be capable of supporting those with more complex difficulties because of other training and experience, 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.). An important part of the Internship will be thinking through limits of competence and wisely ministering within those limitations.

Confidentiality: Because a key dynamic of the Intern Scheme is that the church retains and maintains pastoral authority over the Intern and their activities, the church leadership must remain actively involved and aware of all that the Intern is participating in, whether that is meeting with individuals, running groups or similar activities.

Biblical Counselling UK expects Interns to be communicating who they meet with to their church leadership and where necessary, directly involving church leadership in the pastoral care of individuals, particularly with more complex situations.

Biblical Counselling UK expects Interns to clearly explain how the flow of information works to any individuals with whom they may meet. For example, if the church's agreed-upon practice is that the senior leadership team or eldership body will be informed of who the Intern is meeting with and that broad-brushstroke information will be shared, then the Intern should explain this to the individual.

Biblical Counselling UK expects Interns to keep any notes they take when meeting with individuals in compliance with the data protection policies of their 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.

Peer Supervisions are an informal exchange of ideas, advice and best practice. Biblical Counselling UK accepts no liability for advice given to or actions taken by a counsellee as a result of the advice provided in peer supervision. Responsibility for care given by an Intern to a counsellee rests with the Intern and their church leadership.

Interns are required to have an enhanced DBS check (or similar) relevant to their role and duties as an Intern. Where an enhanced DBS is not possible to obtain due to the change in which roles are applicable, we ask that churches complete a Basic Check and arrange to have the Intern sign a Declaration Form if possible. The NSPCC provide a template [here](#).

Finances

There are no fees associated with becoming an Intern but it is common for an individual to take a step back from other employment in order to have time for the Intern Scheme. This can create questions and uncertainties around finances. Biblical Counselling UK seeks to support Interns in the following ways:

1. Travel Expenses: Most Interns will be in a position where expenses are covered by their church or through their own funds. However, this is not always the case, so where funds are available, Biblical Counselling UK will seek to cover the cost of travel. 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 Intern Scheme 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. We strongly encourage Interns and their churches to fundraise where able and have put together a separate *Raising Support* document to support this goal.

However, we recognise that individual churches may not have the resources to financially support an Intern and his/her ministry. There are grants available through Biblical Counselling UK for up to a **maximum of £7,000 per annum**, but the process of receiving this grant differs depending on whether the Intern will be a volunteer or an employee of the church.

Employees

If the Intern is already an employee of the church or will become an employee at the beginning of their Intern role, the church can apply for a match-funded grant through Biblical Counselling UK. For example, if the church were to request £4000 from Biblical Counselling UK, the church must also be providing at minimum £4000 themselves towards the employee's salary (which should be at least national

minimum wage). The grant from BCUK is given to the church directly and passed on to the Intern as part of their salary.

Volunteer where match funding is available

If the Intern is to carry out their duties in a voluntary capacity, things become a little more complicated!

In this case, Biblical Counselling UK would award a grant direct to the individual. Unfortunately, the church cannot match this by giving directly to the volunteer. Under HMRC and Employment law rules churches are allowed to cover the normal expenses incurred by their voluntary workers, such as travel or resource expenses (eg. Books necessary for the role). But churches must not provide any other monetary payments of any description, and the voluntary worker is not to be treated as an employee (eg. There is no mutuality of obligation).

The church cannot apply for a grant from BCUK, as distributing the grant money to the voluntary worker could be seen as remuneration, and therefore an indicator of employment, which is not the case.

However, some churches have separate grant making bodies, e.g. a Trust fund or a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. The Trust or CIO could therefore award a grant to the voluntary worker (instead of the church) which matched the grant awarded by Biblical Counselling UK to the individual. The individual would have to apply both to Biblical Counselling UK and to the grant making body.

Churches: Please read this [helpful article](#) outlining current advice on financially supporting ministry Interns.

Volunteers where match funding is not available

Individual Interns may apply for a grant from BCUK directly if all of the following is true:

- A) They will be volunteers to their church
- B) There is no separate grant making body the church can direct them to
- C) Their church has agreed to cover normal volunteer expenses
- D) The Intern is able to clearly demonstrate why they are in need of further financial assistance in order for the Intern role to be possible.

NB: In this instance, we would not require the grant to be match-funded by another source, but still strongly encourage individuals to read the *Raising Support* document to help offset costs.

If you wish to apply for a grant, a separate application form will be required. Please email Interns@biblicalcounseling.org.uk and state whether the Intern will be an employee or a voluntary worker of the church. The relevant form will be sent either to the church leader to complete (where the Intern will be an employee) or to the Intern applicant directly (where the Intern will be a voluntary worker).

Please complete the form and submit along with the rest of the Intern Scheme application documents. If the grant is approved, an annual report detailing the use and impact of the grant will be required.

In order to receive a grant for the second year of the Intern Scheme, the Church Leader or Intern must submit another grant application. In addition, the Intern's local supervisor and mentor must each submit a year-end progress report and recommend the Intern to a second year. Should the reports and grant application prove satisfactory, Biblical Counselling UK will provide a written offer of a second year, which the Intern must accept, sign and return to the Director of the Intern Scheme before any grant monies will be given.

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. This includes the Summer Intensive, though we are happy to accept applications from individuals who are planning on doing the Summer Intensive in the summer before potentially beginning the Scheme.

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.

Safer Recruitment: Because the Intern will be taking up a role (either on a voluntary or staff basis) with their church, with BCUK acting as the training and facilitating organisation, we expect churches to recruit the individual according to Safer Recruitment best practice. This may involve the church completing its own interview process and following the steps for normal recruitment of employees or volunteers.

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.

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.

Interviews

We will request an online video interview with applicants and their church leader. The interview will usually last no longer than thirty minutes.

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, safeguarding 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 is not the senior pastor of your church) 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

This is where the church can state whether they or the individual Intern will be seeking to apply for the grant.

4. Local Accountability and Safeguarding Arrangements

This includes basic information about the local supervisor nominated to support and manage the Intern in the local context and the person overseeing the church's safeguarding responsibilities.

Grant Application Form

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

NB: Note that there are two different forms – one for churches or the church's separate grant making body, and one for the Intern applicant. You only need one of the forms so please specify whether the Intern will be an employee or voluntary worker. If the Intern will be a voluntary worker and there is a separate grant making body available to match-fund, you will be sent the church version of the form.

1. Basic details

2. Goals for the Intern Scheme – these may be the same as stated in the application form.

3. Grant Details

- A) Reasons why a grant is being requested
- B) Amount of grant requested
- C) What other sources of funding have been explored
- D) A breakdown of how the grant would be used
- E) How you will work towards building financial support for the future

- F) How plans for ministry would change if the requested grant was partially approved or not approved.
- G) Name and contact details of person filling out the form.

4. Declaration

Due Diligence Form & References

The Due Diligence form is to be completed by the Senior Pastor of the church. It ensures the church will obtain the relevant DBS checks for the Intern role and recruit the applicant as an employee or voluntary worker to the church according to safer recruitment best practice. It also asks the Senior Pastor to comment on the applicant's suitability for biblical counselling ministry and whether their immediate family are supportive of the application (if relevant).

References: We ask the two named persons on the application form to comment on various aspects of the applicant's suitability for biblical counselling ministry.