



Biblical Counselling UK

Church-based Intern Scheme

Helping churches develop
biblical counselling in ministry

Before You Apply

Contents

Introduction	2
Overview of Intern Scheme	3
Eligibility	6
What to Expect	8
Competence, Confidentiality & Liability	10
Finances	11
Application Process	14

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 for two years to support that person's development and the development of biblical counselling across the life of the whole church.

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.

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.

Overview of the Intern Scheme

From September 2023, we are introducing some changes to the format of the Intern Scheme. Churches who apply for the September 2023 intake will still engage in the first year of the Scheme in largely the same way as the current format.

Year One

Through the process of applying and in their first year, we hope Interns (in collaboration with their church leaders) will develop and carry out plans that help foster richer and wiser pastoral care right across the church family. While the specific activities will vary depending on church context and individual gifting, this may include activities such as running a Real Change course, small group leader training, leading a seminar on an area of common struggle (e.g. anger or anxiety), or supporting church leadership in developing the pastoral care structures of the church. Again, depending on experience and context, Interns may also gain further experience in conversational ministry, with opportunities ranging from “kitchen table” ministry, discipleship of individuals to more structured conversations about specific struggles.

Any activities carried out by the Intern will remain under the authority and supervision of the local church, and we ask that churches provide a Local Supervisor who can deliver the day-to-day accountability and support to help the Intern flourish in their role.

All first year Interns will receive the same benefits of the Scheme:

- A BCUK mentor to facilitate their growth in monthly 1:1 meetings
- Monthly training meetings on a variety of topics (online)
- Monthly peer consultation group (online)
- In-person training meetings three times per year
- Two whole-group meetings (Interns, Mentors and Local Supervisors) per year to provide additional input and support (online)
- Feedback in the form of mid and end-of-year reports

We trust this range of support will continue to help resource churches and individuals in their growth.

The main development going forward in Year One is that at the point of application and throughout the first year, churches and their Interns should be considering whether they would like to pursue a church-growth emphasis in their second year or a counselling emphasis.

Year Two

Church growth:

If this track is chosen, Interns will collaborate with their wider church leadership to identify a particular area in church life to develop with a biblical counselling framework in mind before the end of their first year. Suitable areas may include small group development, developing pastoral care structures, developing premarital & marriage refresher material, evangelism & outreach and so on.

Alongside their leadership, the Intern will begin researching and creating a ministry development plan for the specific area chosen before the end of their first year and over the course of the first term of their second year. The rest of their second year will see the beginning of implementation of the plan. Alongside this main focus, Interns will still engage in other activities such as running a Real Change course and meeting with people for more informal / discipleship conversations.

Training meetings, mentoring from a BCUK mentor and peer consultations will continue throughout the second year, but be tailored to fit the needs of Interns whose focus is more on wider church growth.

Who would this track benefit: Individuals who are passionate about biblical counselling and find themselves drawn to more informal conversational ministry and helping their church grow in wise care of one another. Churches who are keen to see biblical counselling develop but are not currently focused on developing formal counselling provision within their church.

Benefits: churches who choose this track for their second year benefit from the opportunity to really focus on a specific area of church life. While helping the whole church grow in one-anothering ministry is the heartbeat of BCUK, an Intern Scheme that tries to target all areas of church life in the two years can sometimes struggle to gain momentum. Narrowing the focus in the second year allows churches to develop clearer aims and set a trajectory that will not only be sustained for years to come but also Lord willing gradually inform patterns for ministry in other areas of the church.

While any plans must be developed under the authority and leadership of the church, having an Intern who is set aside to spearhead the research and creation of a ministry plan helps ensure momentum gets established amidst the pressures and busyness of church life.

Churches that choose this track will be connected into the wider biblical counselling network in the UK and able to see how other churches have gone about developing similar areas in their church.

After the Scheme: Following the completion of the Scheme, Intern Alumni will be able to access a range of ongoing resources and training opportunities as part of the Alumni network. Interns may also choose to participate in ongoing informal peer consult groups and BCUK-run consultation groups. Many of our Alumni go on to play a role in the wider network of biblical counselling in the UK.

Our hope is that Interns will be able to continue in a recognised role in their church after the Intern Scheme ends. While we recognise the resources to enable an ongoing paid role may not always be available, we hope the two years of the Scheme will give churches the time to consider how this ministry might be sustainable long-term, and what part the Intern will play in that.

Counselling:

If this track is chosen, Interns should expect to spend the majority of their time in the second year engaging in more formal counselling conversations, alongside activities that foster a biblical counselling mindset across their whole church (such as running Real Change or a seminar).

In light of that, once this track is chosen and before the end of their first year, Interns should collaborate with their leadership to discuss how people will be referred to the Intern and whether it will be purely from within the church or from a network of local churches with whom there is a degree of relationship and trust. Interns will work alongside their leadership to structure this counselling ministry wisely and establish clear channels of accountability, with guidance and support from BCUK. The other part of preparing for their second year will be to consider who else in the congregation displays conversational skill and how those individuals might be trained up (eg. Through the certificate course).

Training meetings will continue but focus more on counselling topics and methodology with guest speakers with specialised experience helping to deliver content. Mentoring hours may be increased depending on how many individuals Interns are meeting with, and more structured peer consultations will also provide monthly support.

Who would this track benefit: Individuals who are passionate about biblical counselling and bring a measure of expertise in conversational ministry either through church ministry experience or professional secular roles. Churches who are keen to develop a more formal counselling provision within their church or in connection with other local churches. Churches who are keen to be able to wisely speak into more complex situations.

Benefits: churches who choose this track for their second year will benefit from support and guidance to create wise and safe structures around the delivery of more

formal pastoral counselling. As the wider church discovers there is rich hope and help to be had within the church even for more complicated struggles, we hope something of the culture of the church might shift too.

The Intern would benefit from an experienced BCUK mentor to help them think through situations they are involved in and learn from a peer group where they will both receive and provide support.

While the emphasis in this track is on the Intern delivering pastoral care to individuals within the church, they will also be able to help the church develop the wider structures of pastoral care and encourage the training up of others, creating a long-lasting, sustainable approach to ministry.

After the Scheme: Following the completion of the Scheme, Intern Alumni will be able to access a range of ongoing resources and training opportunities as part of the Alumni network. Interns may also choose to participate in ongoing informal peer consultation groups and BCUK-run consultation groups. Many of our Alumni go on to play a role in the wider network of biblical counselling in the UK.

Our hope is that Interns will be able to continue in a recognised role in their church after the Intern Scheme ends. One path this track may also lead to is the establishment of local fee-for-counselling services supported by the church or a network of local churches, though this by no means is the right fit for every graduate of this track.

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 must be completed **before applying** to the Intern Scheme. If you are considering an application to the September 2023 intake, you should have completed the Summer Intensive in the summer of 2022 (or earlier).

In the past, we have allowed applicants to complete the Summer Intensive during the summer between the point of application and beginning as an Intern (eg. Apply in March 2023, Summer Intensive in July 2023, begin as Intern in Sept 2023) but this is no longer the case.

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. We are looking for churches who are just as committed as the individual Intern to developing biblical counselling in their church. 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, voluntary workers or volunteers to the church. This may involve a separate interview process between the church and the applicant, updating of DBS checks and provision of updated safeguarding training.

3. **Local Supervisor:** the church must be able to 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 16-20 hours per week.
5. **Finances:** there is no fee to apply to the Intern Scheme but we expect churches to cover any reasonable travel expenses and (if funds permit) to cover any resources Interns may purchase as part of their role. 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. Part of the application process requires references that comment on the applicant's character and suitability for the Intern role.
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. **Experience:** We will also ask about previous or current ministry experience. While it is not necessary to have formal counselling experience to apply, we are looking for

individuals who already display skills and gifting in conversational ministry, whether in church, parachurch settings or secular workplaces.

What to Expect:

In addition to the ministry in the local church, we require 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 term with the Intern's mentor.

2. Mentor Meetings: Upon a successful application, we will match each Intern with a BCUK mentor. A mentor is someone with substantial experience in pastoral ministry and biblical counselling. 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 Consultations: 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 facilitated by either the Director of the Intern Scheme or another Biblical Counselling UK mentor. Each Intern will have an opportunity to present on an anonymised pastoral situation or question they have, followed by feedback and prayer 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 the topic 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 in 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.

7. Residential Conference: Interns are expected to attend the conference and will be asked to help with various tasks at the residential conference, including but not limited to assisting with registration, ushering and tidying the meeting room(s).

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 where possible 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 Consults and monthly Training Meetings take place using Zoom. Reliable Internet access and a webcam are required.
8. **Sharepoint:** Each Intern will be granted access to a personal folder on Sharepoint where they will upload any 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.

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.

Confidentiality, Competence and Liability

Liability:

1. 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.

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. Every effort should be made to help those receiving support from the Interns to understand they are not receiving professional counselling.

2. 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.
3. Peer consultations are an informal exchange of ideas, advice and best practice. Biblical Counselling UK accepts no liability for advice given to or actions taken by individuals as a result of the advice provided in peer supervision. Responsibility for care given by an Intern rests with the Intern and their church leadership.

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.

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. 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.

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 an employee or a voluntary worker 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 grant from Biblical Counselling UK to help fund the Intern's salary. As an employee, the Intern should receive at least the national minimum wage and have an employment contract. They will be entitled to employment rights such as statutory sick pay, maternity/paternity pay, paid annual leave, employer's pension contributions, etc.).

Occasionally, church staff are employed by a separate trust or grant-making body. If the Intern is to be an employee of one of these, it is the trust or grant-making body that should apply for the grant from BCUK.

Voluntary Worker

A voluntary worker does not work voluntarily but is under a contractual obligation to provide the services for which she/he is engaged. Voluntary workers are not paid. Just like a volunteer, a genuine voluntary worker is exempt from receiving the National Minimum Wage. It is essential they must not receive remuneration for the work they do.

Often, ministry trainees or apprentices in a church will be voluntary workers. A voluntary worker has a contract specifying working hours, who they are accountable to, etc. but they are not entitled to the same employment rights as an employee. They are allowed to receive subsistence (reimbursement of food and drink consumed while volunteering) and/or accommodation which is reasonable given their role, but they do not receive a salary or any other benefit-in-kind.

The church therefore 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. Instead, the individual applicant can apply for a grant from BCUK directly.

Volunteers

A volunteer provides their services voluntarily – there is no mutuality of obligation. For this reason they should not be signing any form of contract, although an informal ‘volunteer agreement’ is allowed, often phrased in terms of hopes and expectations rather than obligations. As with voluntary workers, volunteers receive no salary from their church. Church members offering to serve on teams such as the Sunday School rota would be classed as volunteers. It is unlikely an Intern would be regarded as a volunteer – they are more likely to be a voluntary worker or employee.

The individual or organisation applying for the grant must clearly demonstrate why they are in need of further financial assistance in order for the Intern role to be possible. We strongly encourage individuals to read the *Raising Support* document to help offset costs if they are not in receipt of a salary.

Churches/trusts can read this [helpful article](#) outlining current advice on financially supporting ministry Interns.

Applying for a grant

If you wish to apply for a grant, a separate application form will be required. Please email interns@bcuk.org and state whether the Intern will be an employee (and whether they are employed by the church or a separate organisation) or a voluntary worker of the church. The relevant form will be sent either to the church leader or to the Intern applicant to complete.

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 offer of a second year and the Intern must sign the new Intern Agreement and code of conduct before any grant monies will be given.

Applying to the Intern Scheme

Applications open on the 1st of January of each year, and close around mid-March of each year.

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.

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.

We are happy to respond to enquiries and help the church leadership decide the particular form the Internship should take

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.

Intern Application Form

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. Here we also ask for summaries of the applicant's approach to personal ministry and the interaction between psychology and biblical counselling.

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. We also ask applicants to share how their experience has affirmed their gifting in biblical counselling and whether they are aware of any weaknesses.

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

Church Leader Application Form

1. Church Details

This includes basic church information such as denomination and website.

2. Interest in biblical counselling

Here the leader can share what connections they have had with biblical counselling, any questions they have about it and how they arrived at the decision to apply for the Intern Scheme.

3. 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.

4. Financial Information

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

5. 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@bcuk.org) 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.

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.

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.

Interviews

Once the application form is submitted, we will request an online video interview with applicants and their church leader. The interview will usually last no longer than forty-five minutes.

Decisions

Our aim is always to have final decisions back to applicants as soon as possible, and no later than the end of April of each year.