

Guidance Notes for Baptists Together Home Mission Grants in the West and South Partnership

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Purpose

Home Mission Grants are awarded to help Baptist churches and individuals to fully engage in the mission of God and share his love within their communities.

1. Guidance for applicants

A. The Application Process

Churches seeking to apply for a Baptists Together Mission Grant should contact their Association Team prior to making an application.

Where the applicant is a church it must be in membership with the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the regional association appropriate to its geographical location.

In all cases an application requires an application form, financial statements and a resolution, either made at a Deacons' Meeting (or equivalent) or a Church Members Meeting. For a **Special Ministry Grant application**, a report on ministry and plans/priorities for the coming year is also required.

Most documents can be submitted electronically, but the original (i.e. hard copy) of the resolution is needed. Only one copy of documents is required.

Following receipt of an application the regional association will arrange a visit which will report to the grants committee.

Applications for grants should be received by the end of February. If successful, a grant will not normally be paid before 1st January the following year. In the case of church-based students, churches will have to cover the full costs for the first 4 months of the first academic year, unless they have applied a year earlier.

B. Mission through Ministry Grants

These grants are awarded to churches already engaging in the mission of God, to encourage and further equip them in reaching out to their local community. They are normally only paid to churches with Baptists Together Accredited Ministers, who pay their Minister the Home Mission stipend (or appropriate proportion thereof). They are also available for ministers-in-training and recognized ministers from other denominations in LEPs. In considering an application the Partnership will be applying the following guidelines:

Missional criteria

- Evidence that the church is seeking to connect with its local community in ways that are appropriate to its culture and in addition to its worship services.
- Connecting with people in the community (and not just by the minister).
- A mission strategy for engaging with what God is doing in the local community and in the various connection points with people outside the local church by congregational members.
- A commitment to work in 'consultation' with association and/or cluster colleagues/churches (e.g. through 'Re-Focus' or 're-Imagine,' an appropriate mission audit or through joint initiatives).

- Processes for ‘discipling’ congregational members – equipping and enabling them to grow as disciples of Jesus and as a result engage in the mission of God.
- In allocating grants we will also bear in mind the presence of other missional churches in the surrounding area, giving priority to those places with little other Christian witness.

We recognise there will be particular contexts that currently don’t meet the above criteria but where maintaining an incarnational Christian presence is of strategic importance. Under such exceptional circumstances a grant application might be considered.

Practical criteria

The following points should be borne in mind when considering making an application:

- A church applying for a grant should normally be contributing 5% of its general income to Home Mission.
- The normal maximum grant is 50% of stipend.
- All grant supported churches should pay their minister a stipend equivalent to the Home Mission stipend figure agreed each year by the Baptists Together trustees (or its pro rata equivalent) and adhere to the recommended terms of appointment agreed by the national settlement team. Churches should also pay their minister all legitimate expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. Pioneers and church planters may apply for a grant that remunerates for the equivalent of one or two working days per week (depending on what is ‘worked’ for that purpose).
- The church should ensure that giving by the church to non-Baptist causes does not normally exceed % of the total given by the church to Home Mission and BMS World Mission.
- Grants will not normally be given to churches with paid staff other than the minister for whom grant support is requested.
- Normally, we have expected grants to be awarded to churches calling an accredited minister. **Where a church wishes to call an unaccredited minister partly financed by grant funding, the Partnership will need to give their approval prior to a call being issued.**
- The financial capacity to ‘support’ a stipend initially for a minimum of three years (including any grant that is awarded) is required.
- In order to enable stability and planning, the Partnership normally anticipates funding in respect of new grants continuing for an initial three-year period, often at a reducing rate (assuming the basis on which the grant was awarded remains unchanged). The process will involve an initial review and mission accompaniment of some kind in the year before a grant is expected to begin, a light touch intermediate review for the first two years the grant is paid followed by a full review in the spring of the third year. If the review leads to funding continuing for up to a further three years the pattern will then be repeated (two years of intermediate review followed by a full review). The intermediate review will be conducted by one or two visitors using the partnership visitors’ form (HMY series). The initial and full review will be undertaken by a member of an association team and two other visitors/mission accompaniers.

- **If the minister leaves the church the grant will not automatically continue.** A full review will take place to determine this.
- Historically, once a grant has been agreed it has often been assumed that the grant would remain in place if needed for the duration of that ministry. This assumption is no longer appropriate or possible. **The expectation is that the grant will normally reduce to nil as quickly as possible rather than funding continuing indefinitely.**
- In situations where a grant is discontinued, payments will continue to be made throughout the required notice period.
- Where the continuous decline in income of a church means it is impossible to keep their current minister, a Baptists Together Mission through Ministry Grant will not normally be suggested or offered. This challenging financial situation will need to be communicated at the earliest possible opportunity to one of the regional ministers so that the Association can help the church to discern its immediate needs, priorities and options. This will also enable the current minister to discern and decide about their options with as much notice as possible.

Reserves Policy

In determining the level of grant, account will be taken of the level of general reserves held by your church or missional expression.

C. Special Ministry Grants

Special Ministries are ministries in a context usually outside of an existing church; these may be a special initiative or a church planting/replanting situation.

The Association in consultation with the wider partnership makes these grants.

The normal practical criteria (per the previous page) and processes do not apply, but the Association must be able to demonstrate that the situation being funded is missional.

There must be an accountability structure in place to oversee the work which is being financed and periodic reviews should take place to assess the effectiveness of the work.

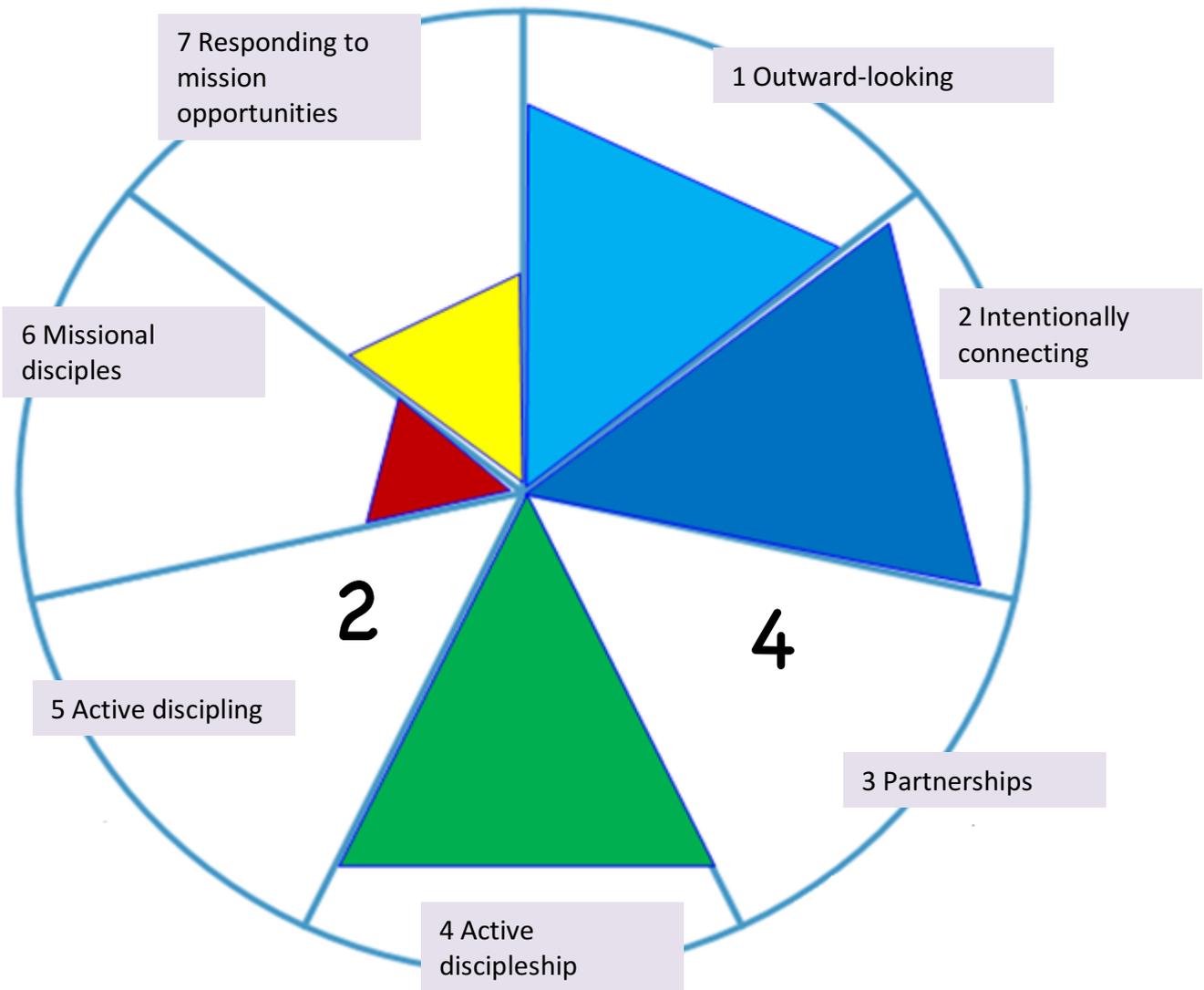
Where an individual is working part time and/or bi-vocationally the expectation would be that the finance they receive would cover their time at a rate equivalent to a minister on standard stipend.

A similar pattern of three yearly reviews will be followed, with two intermediate reviews followed by a more thorough review. The relevant Association will determine the way this will be done.

D. How to complete The Circle Diagram (see the HMY series of forms)

The following is an example of how to complete the Circle Diagram (see the graphic below).

1. *What proportion of the church is outward looking? E.g. 75-80% in this example.*
2. *What proportion of people within your Christian community has intentional connections with your wider 'community'? See point 7. E.g. 90% in this example.*
3. *How many people or organisations outside the church are you proactively partnering with? Please write the number in the segment (e.g. '3'; '4'; ...'7'...whatever) and list below the people or organisations outside of the church/your Christian community that you are partnering with.*
4. *What proportion of your Christian community are engaging in proactive discipleship? E.g. over 75% in this example.*
5. *How many people who are spiritually curious or new to the faith are you proactively discipling? Please simply write the number in the segment (e.g. '3'; '4'; ...'7'...whatever).*
6. *What proportion of your Christian community is currently living as missional disciples? E.g. 10-15% in this example.*
7. *What proportion of your Christian community is actively responding to missional opportunities and challenges? As a church being re-planted and rebuilt as individuals we are fairly new to the thinking about being missional disciples- but together we will be exploring what it means to be church and as His disciples living as 'missionaries in our own land'. We know that we must move beyond building buildings that say 'come to us'. We are exploring how disciples should live and serve - in order for our practice to reflect our theory! E.g.20% in this example.*



2. Guidance for visitors and assessors

These notes are for people who have been asked to visit a church or ministry applying for a grant from Home Mission. Thank you for your willingness to be a visitor. Your work is crucial and we take your reports very seriously. They are a key part of the process that helps us to determine the amount of any grant that might be needed.

A. The Visit

- Although grants have to be applied for each year, comprehensive visits do not necessarily have to take place every year.
- The Association will provide you with a copy of all the paperwork that has been submitted by the applicant in connection with the application.
- Your Association should be able to advise you on the most appropriate people to meet with in the specific situation you are visiting.
- **Special Ministries** – ideally you should meet with the person being supported and 2 or 3 others. These could be deacons in a church-sponsored ministry or members of a management, Core or Steering group.

B. The Report

- Please be as objective as possible in your report!
- There are a great variety of situations in this category. Please don't feel that you need to be rigidly bound by the questions in the form, but tailor questions to the situation you are visiting.
- Please note that 'minister' refers to the person undertaking the ministry being supported by this grant, who may not be an ordained minister.
- The report should be sent to the designated person for your association; contact details are at the end of these guidance notes.

4. Contact Information

To enquire about a grant please contact your Association:

<p>Southern Counties Baptist Association Amy Allen (Administration Manager) Southern Counties Baptist Association Baptist House 129 Broadway Didcot Oxfordshire OX11 8XD</p> <p>Tel: 01235 517673 Email: office.administrator@scba.org.uk</p>	<p>South Wales Baptist Association Siân Ashiru Association Administrator South Wales Baptist Association 54 Richmond Road, Cardiff CF24 3UR</p> <p>Tel: 029 2049 1366 office@swbabugb.org.uk</p>
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<p>South West Baptist Association</p> <p>Carl Smethurst South West Baptist Association 36-38 Wonford Street Exeter EX2 5DL</p> <p>carl@swbaptists.org.uk</p>	<p>West of England Baptist Association</p> <p>Simon Bartlett 12 Orchid Way, Radstock, Somerset, BA3 3FR</p> <p>Simon.bartlett@virtuality.co</p> <p>For further information or queries please contact: Alisdair Longwill (Regional Minister) alisdair.longwill@webassoc.org.uk</p>
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