



A Baptist Union of Wales (BUW) project in partnership with BMS World Mission.¹

Summary:

Looking for a challenge? Not sure what God wants you to do with your life?
How about taking a year out to find out and seriously explore where He's leading you?

Following the success of recent years, the Baptist Union of Wales is once again looking to invest in the younger generation by offering another gap year program to train and equip a team of 3 young people to experience missional living alongside the local church.

This gap year will include a careful balance of training, practical hands on mission experience in Wales through a local church, spiritual growth and of course loads of fun!

The year begins in September 2020 with a month of great training and team building with other young people preparing for similar mission. This will include time at an outdoor activity centre in Wales designed to be fun but teach you loads about yourself too.

Fully prepared, you'll head off in your team to spend six months on placement at the cutting edge of mission with a local church or churches. As you partner with existing mission work you'll get a clear idea of what mission looks like on the ground in some tough places. Your time on placement will stretch, challenge and deepen your faith. You'll learn to depend on God and discover gifts you never knew you had.

During the year, the 'Action Wales' team will be given an exciting opportunity to see and experience all the sights and sounds of mission work overseas in Kolkata, India over a short-term mission trip. This trip will help you to contrast and reflect on mission in different contexts and will give a flavour of BMS World Mission's work.

At the end of the year, a short tour of churches in Wales will provide an opportunity to use some of your new-found gifts to inspire and motivate as you share your experiences with

¹ BUW would like to acknowledge their gratitude to BMS World Mission's document 'Information Pack for Action Teams' in preparing this information pack.

others. You'll get a flavour of mission on other contexts and a chance to connect with other young people from all over Wales.

You'll also get a chance to join the annual Baptist Conference relate your life changing experiences and give God the glory by motivating others in mission.

The model for this 'Action Wales' gap year is based on the well-established and widely recognised BMS Action Team. For over 20 years BMS World Mission has been providing opportunities for young people to experience mission through the Action Team gap year programme. Our aim is to replicate this respected model to provide young Christians from Wales with missional experience within Wales.

Aims:

- To provide young people with a taste of mission and experience of embedding themselves in a location and working with the local church
- To allow young people to grow in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ by putting their faith into action in a radical way
- To provide a stepping stone for young people with a longer-term call to live missionally in Wales
- To meet the wider aims of BUW by equipping a new generation to the task of making Jesus known through the local church, evangelism and social action
- To enthuse and encourage churches in Wales to support the new generation

Selection:

We believe that God has a plan for each applicant and at each stage of the selection process we seek to discern his will for individuals and whether the Action Wales team is right for them. The selection involves:

- An application form
- Receipt of satisfactory references
- Attendance of a selection day (nothing scary!)
- An acceptable criminal record disclosure (DBS)
- Satisfactory completion of training (we reserve the right to remove individuals from the programme if issues arise that could lead to the detriment of their team, the BUW churches involved or the individual themselves)
- Agreement to respect the BMS Action Team Code of Conduct

Following the Selection Day, we will let you know whether you have been offered a place on the Action Wales programme.

We will carefully consider how you could fit into a team in which you can be most effective for God in the context of the placement. Several factors are prayerfully considered. They include:

- God's leading
- The nature of your giftings
- Specific health issues or restrictions
- A balanced team
- Requirements of the local churches

Applicants are asked to trust and respect the decisions made by BUW with God's guidance. If you will not be accepted to the Action Wales team, we will try and work with you to find another church based gap year in Wales, should you wish, at a future date.

When we offer you a place on the programme, we will ask you to confirm your acceptance of this place. We ask you to send a non-returnable deposit with your acceptance (see section on Finances).

Training - four weeks

You will receive a comprehensive and exciting training programme, which aims to equip you for mission emotionally, practically and spiritually. We look to develop in you flexibility, servanthood and humility – key characteristics that you will need for your year!

BMS International Mission Centre (IMC)

Training will be held at BMS World Mission's International Mission Centre (IMC) where all BMS mission workers are trained before working overseas. The Action Wales team will join with other Action Teamers who will be serving overseas to receive their training. There will be great advantages for you including receiving high quality training from BMS experts and spending time with like-minded young people who have a heart to serve God. Although you will be serving in Wales, not overseas, BMS will make sure the training will be relevant. There will be a few days when the training will be specifically for the Action Wales team and delivered by BUW or IMC staff.

Most of the training takes place at our International Mission Centre in Birmingham and will cover a range of topics such as:

- Public speaking
- Evangelism
- Team work
- Children's work
- Teaching English
- Team building – adventure training
- Programme planning
- Different religions
- Cultural awareness
- What is mission?
- Health and hygiene

Four days of the training are held at a Christian activity centre where you will need to bond with your team mates like never before! People will probably see you at your worst: you'll be stretched, exhausted and challenged. This will be a time when you really get to know and grow with each other as a team.

Church placements

For two weekends of the training month, each team will spend time living and working with a local Baptist church – a chance to apply all your skills in the real world. There will be plenty of opportunity to:

- See each other's strengths and weaknesses in action
- Take part in church activities telling them why you are doing the Action Wales team
- Be ambassadors for God, BMS World Mission and the Baptist Union of Wales
- Receive constructive criticism from training host church that you will be able to apply when serving on your placement.

Commissioning

There will be a short commissioning service before you leave IMC. From there you will travel back home for a short time for final preparations and goodbyes before leaving for your placement. Don't forget to book in some time during a Sunday morning service for a proper send-off from your church!

Placement

Your placement could lead you anywhere in Wales; north or south, east or west, a diverse urban church or local country fellowship. Wherever you are located, you can be sure to be at the cutting edge of local mission. The church with whom you will be placed will work alongside the Baptist Union of Wales to put together an exciting, challenging and rewarding programme for the Action Wales Team. As you join local a local church and congregation in its work you will gain a first-hand understanding of different missional contexts and the practical aspects of Mission in Wales today. There will be plenty of opportunities for a team of young people to make a difference and show God's love in practical ways.

A new place, new people and new culture and almost every day...the unexpected! This is certainly a time when 'relying on God' will take on a whole new meaning. The programme may include any of the following, but be ready for anything!

- Children's and youth work
- Many styles of evangelism
- Practical work
- Supporting the work of the churches
- Care/Community work
- Music, drama and dance
- Testimony/Friendship ministry

Preparation – nine days

After your placement has come to an end you will be asked to spend around three weeks visiting churches in different areas of Wales. These nine days at IMC, will brush up your skills for relating to all ages of the public in BUW churches. A time to assimilate all your stories, experiences and personal testimonies of how you have seen God at work through your 'Action Wales' experience ... and getting ready to present this in a variety of ways! You will get a chance to return to your training church during tour training to tell them what you have been up to.

Overseas Trip

The 'Action Wales' team will then be given an exciting opportunity to see and experience all the sights and sounds of mission work overseas in Kolkata, India over a short-term mission trip. This trip will help you to contrast and reflect on mission in different contexts and will give a flavour of BMS World Mission's work.

Debrief – three days

Following your trip overseas you have time to re-unite with the overseas Action Teams at IMC, reflect on your experiences and learn how to apply them.

Tour – three weeks

You will spend three weeks in three different areas. Be aware that the overseas Action Teamers will be doing an 8 week tour, but for the Action Wales Team this is a 3 week only tour. Within those areas you will visit churches, speaking to congregations, small groups or children and youth about your experiences. Be prepared for: several different beds, taking RE lessons in secondary schools, children's groups, copious amounts of lasagne, leading services, one day off a week, assemblies, roast dinners, giving your testimony, expecting God to move, taking Bible studies, a chance to speak to hundreds of children and adults about God and constantly finding new ways to share the story of your experience. Time and again Action Team members have said how much they enjoyed this part of our programme.

Finances

You will need to raise a contribution of £2,500 towards the total cost of the programme.

Cost breakdown

After contributing your £2,500 you will not need to contribute further to the following costs:	Additional personal costs:
All training and debriefing costs	Travel to and from BMS International Mission Centre, Birmingham for training/debriefing
Accommodation and food allowance	Travel to and from a London-based airport

Flights and accommodation of Kolkata trip	Vaccinations and anti-malarials not prescribed by your GP on the NHS
Setting up placement	Mobile phone (although wi-fi will be available in the accommodation)

Deposit and payment deadline

Since we incur various costs in advance of the team we do ask that you pay a non-returnable deposit of £150 per person. This should be sent to the Baptist Union of Wales with acceptance of your place on the programme within seven working days of receiving the acceptance letter.

By August, we will tell you how much your trip to Kolkata in India with BMS World Mission will cost. You will then deduct this amount from £2500, and pay that total to the Baptist Union of Wales by the end of August (all cheques should be sent to the office in Carmarthen). You will pay BMS World Mission directly for the trip to Kolkata and we will advise you how to do this.

How to raise the cash?

There are lots of ways of making fundraising really fun and easy. There's a fundraising section on the BMS website at www.bmsworldmission.org/fundraise including a sponsorship form download.

A popular way to raise money is online: you can use websites like '[Just Giving](#)' or '[Crowd Funding](#)'. By sharing your plans and asking people to donate on social media, you'll be surprised how people will want to invest in your future and support your journey with God.

Please do not be anxious about raising the money. You will need to think creatively, but remember also to commit this side of things to God and trust him to provide. There are Action Teamers who have been tested to the last, but all have stories to tell of God's provision.

If by the beginning of August you are struggling with raising the full amount, then we would love to hear from you and to join with you in prayer. We may also be able to give you some ideas and advice that you might not have thought of. Your Action Wales team group is a TEAM and as a team you will need to pull together to ensure that no one is left behind. If you feel that you would like to give to someone else that is struggling then we would love to hear from you as well!

If at any point you would like advice concerning fundraising, have a query about your finances or are struggling to raise the funds then PLEASE get in touch with us.

Other info:

Time off and team break

The programme is very full-on and NOT for the faint-hearted, lazy or those that are just after a year off! During the year you will have one day off per week. If the team work during an evening then a morning or an afternoon session can be taken off in lieu. As part of the local church placement we expect you to be available to the local church on the weekends, aside from specific breaks built in to the program. You should also be aware that whilst you will be within reach of family in and around Wales, it is also not advisable for you to travel home to see family often and taking time to do so will need to be discussed with your supervisors. You will be given a holiday time over Christmas and after returning from India and other days to be confirmed within the schedule for the year. Some refresher training days will also be included in the program to give you time and space to refocus.

Language

The ability to speak Welsh is not essential to be part of the Action Wales Team. However, a willingness to learn and embrace linguistic and cultural difference is an essential aspect of mission. Like any language it's surprising what you can learn when you must, the more you use it the better you become. Therefore, if you are not a fluent Welsh speaker please don't let this put you off.

Visa and passport

Please make sure that you have a full passport valid for the duration of your time overseas, plus six months after your return.

Disclosure and Barring Service

The Action Wales team will work with children and young people, and as we are sure you will recognise, this involves great responsibility. BUW takes this seriously, and therefore requires all team members to obtain an acceptable enhanced criminal record disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Because of the nature of BUW work, the Rehabilitation of Offenders legislation does not apply. Please do speak to us if this is likely to be a problem. All information will be treated as confidential.

Next Steps

1. Following the Selection Day, you will receive a letter saying whether you have been offered a place on the Action Wales programme. Acceptance is subject to an acceptable disclosure and barring service and satisfactory completion of training.
2. Send BUW acceptance of your place within 7 working days of receiving an offer of a place, together with a non-returnable deposit of £150 (this will count towards your £2,500)
3. Start to raise awareness of your year out within your church and friendship circles
4. Brainstorm ideas for fundraising and plan how you will raise the money over the coming months
5. Wait for further information in the Action Wales Team Preparation Pack (we aim to get this to you by the end of July)

6. Continue to commit your year to God in prayer.

If you would like more information or an informal chat please contact Christian on 07954706780 or send an email to christian@ubc.cymru

Who's who? Contact List:

Action Wales management and administration:

Rev Simeon Baker, Director of Mission, BUW simeon@ubc.cymru / 01267 610344

Dr Christian Williams, Mission Co-ordinator, BUW christian@ubc.cymru /07954706780

Simeon and Christian work for the Baptist Union of Wales (BUW) and they will be the overall co-ordinators of the gap year

BMS World Mission

Ben Drabble

Short-term Programmes Co-ordinator

Mark and Claire Ord

IMC Directors

Ben Drabble is the BMS Action Teams co-ordinator and Mark and Claire Ord are the Directors of the International Mission Centre in Birmingham. You will see them a lot during training and debrief, and also Ben will be organizing your trip to India.

Roles within the Action Wales Team

There is no team leader in Action Wales. Each person will be assigned a role within the team as follows. The co-ordinators should not be expected to DO everything, but to make sure that it gets done and act as a contact point for both BUW and placement supervisors. These co-ordinator roles will be decided at training.

Communication Co-ordinator

BUW will communicate directly with the communication co-ordinator; this person will take responsibility for team communication with the placement supervisor and Action Wales managers at BUW.

He/she will:

- Be the main communication link between the BUW and the team
- Be the main contact person with the supervisor
- Be responsible for ensuring blogs are completed on time

Finance Co-ordinator

This person will take responsibility for the team finances. This will include money for food, accommodation, work-related travel etc, which the team funds pay for, but not each individual's personal spending money.

He/she will:

- Keep a written record of all team expenses and any gifts, both overseas and during the UK tour
- Be responsible for the security of the team cash

- Liaise with the local church supervisors about releasing funds for the team as appropriate
- Make sure the team has enough cash to cover expenses as they fall due

Spiritual Life and Practical Duties Co-ordinator

This person will plan cooking, buying food and keeping accommodation clean and in good order and will be responsible for co-ordinating the spiritual input and devotional times for the team.

He/she will:

- Ensure that shopping and eating are co-ordinated so that there is always a meal when needed
- Ensure that the team's accommodation is kept clean, safe and in good order
- Draw up any rotas the team need to achieve the above
- Undertake a risk assessment on arrival, at the team location and whenever circumstances change
- Hold a valid first aid qualification and be the appointed team first aider
- Hold information regarding team health issues (including first aid kit) and liaise with local church supervisors/BUW concerning team health matters
- Ensure the team meets regularly for prayer, Bible study and worship
- Arrange resources such as Bible study notes, books etc to help in this
- Liaise with leaders with whom they are working to give input in the form of prayer, teaching or encouragement

Code of Conduct

Wherever you go, you will be setting an example to others. Your life will be observed closely and you will be looked upon as a Christian role model. You are a representative of the Baptist Union of Wales and BMS World Mission and the local churches for whom you will be working and of course your placement supervisors. Most importantly, you'll be a representative for Christ (2 Corinthians 5: 20). You will be required to act with integrity and consideration for others. Thank God for this opportunity, to show others the life of Christ within you, as you live your life before them.

There are three elements to the Code of Conduct that we ask you to agree to: serving God above all, placing the team's needs above your own and being culturally (and spiritually) sensitive.

In greater detail:

- Respecting your team: Your relationships with your team mates will define your Action Wales team year more than anything else. Commit to your team, and always put the team before yourself. Remember Ephesians 4: 2 – “always be humble, gentle and patient and accept each other in love”. Seek to resolve any conflict quickly and maturely.
- Respecting leadership: it is expected that during the course of the programme, and especially whilst in placement, you will respect the leadership of the supervisors and of BUW/BMS staff.

- Respecting the local culture, town and church: make every effort to fit in with local people/culture.
- No exclusive relationships: Exclusive relationships can easily damage team dynamics. Keep relationships within the team platonic, and don't form cliques. We ask that you don't enter into romantic relationships with other members of the Action Wales or BMS Action Team programme until the year has finished – this could become a real distraction, and we would ask that you ensure your focus is first on God and the mission he's called you to. A romantic relationship with a person in the placement locality (or even the appearance of one) is also strictly off limits.
- No alcohol, smoking or illicit drugs: both smoking and drinking alcohol can damage the Christian witness of the team.
- Leaving home in body and spirit: the Team programme is a commitment to God of your time, energy and self. We ask that during your time with Action Wales you commit to the team programme in full. Monitor the amount of skype calls and emails home. Be accountable to one another. You are asked to look to your team for support rather than people at home, and seek at all times to throw yourselves in to the opportunity that a new culture brings. For Action Teams this is one of the most important disciplines.
- Disciplinary and grievance procedures: by signing your acceptance form for the Action Wales programme you are agreeing to abide by the Code of Conduct (as above). Any team member found to be in serious breach of this commitment will be subject to disciplinary procedures.
- If you have a genuine grievance against your team leaders, placement supervisors or any of the BUW staff, you should speak first to the Action Wales management and administration team. If the grievance is with the Action Wales management and administration team, then you may speak to any other member of staff who will then follow BUW/BMS protocol.

Liability

BUW excludes liability for personal injury or death suffered by you as a result of:

- Events outside its control or the control of the officially appointed leadership
- Actions by any team member at variance with the BUW Code of Conduct
- Actions by any team member deemed illegal
- Actions by any team member in contravention with the instructions of BUW.

