

Action for Children Report to District Synod Autumn 2026



Report by Karis Kolawole, Faith Partnerships Lead, karis.kolawole@actionforchildren.org.uk

We remain deeply grateful for our shared heritage and our partnership with the Methodist Church and affiliated churches. Whether through fundraising, volunteering, praying, campaigning or simply raising awareness, you are helping us be there for children and families when they need us most. Thank you.

Although children are still facing significant challenges, we are inspired by so many stories of resilience, hope and transformation as we and our supporters work together to provide the right support to help them thrive – stories like Christopher's who entered care at 11 after experiencing neglect and an unstable childhood. Action for Children supported his education and career goals, leading to a qualification and his first job. Today, he feels safe, valued and optimistic about a brighter future.

Standing up for children facing poverty

Poverty remains one of the greatest challenges facing children in the UK. The latest official child poverty statistics published this year show that 4 million children are currently growing up in poverty. Children in single-parent families, larger families and households affected by disability are particularly vulnerable, while many families struggle to afford essentials such as food, heating and clothing. It is worrying that many children living in poverty belong to working families, highlighting that employment alone does not guarantee financial security.

With the help of our devoted supporters, Action for Children provides practical support through more than 300 services across the UK. By supporting families today and campaigning for the long-term changes needed to address the root causes of poverty, we are ensuring that every child has the opportunity to thrive. The following reports give more details the challenges and about what we are doing about them:

- *Updated child poverty statistics 2024-25* on our website: actionforchildren.org.uk/blog/updated-child-poverty-statistics-2024-25/
- *Work isn't working - family, work and progression on a low income*, a collaboration with the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) on in-work child poverty and the changes needed to help children thrive: media.actionforchildren.org.uk/documents/Work_isnt_working_May26.pdf

Breaking down barriers to employment for care-experienced young people

Action for Children conducted some research with the John Lewis Partnership Foundation's support to highlight the challenges care-experienced young people seeking employment face.

Our research found that a quarter (25%) of care-experienced respondents did not have ID documentation, such as a passport or driving licence to prove their right to work in the UK. It also highlighted other practical barriers that can prevent them from getting their first job, including suitable work clothing, digital technology and affordable transport.

Action for Children runs employability programmes that provide practical support, such as tailored mentoring and job coaching. But the UK government needs to do more. In our report, we recommend ways the government can help remove employment barriers and provide greater support for care-experienced young people. Read more: actionforchildren.org.uk/media-centre/care-experienced-young-people-face-barriers-to-jobs/

A special year with the Methodist Conference President and Vice-President

We are especially excited that the President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference for 2026/27, the Revd Mark Slaney and Caroline Stead, have chosen Action for Children as one of their charity partners. This is a wonderful affirmation of the close relationship between Action for Children and the Methodist Church and provides an opportunity to share stories of the impact we are making together.

Since taking office, we have been greatly encouraged by how they have shown their support. Revd Slaney visited an Action for Children service in West Lothian, meeting children and staff and learning about the life-changing work taking place there. Read more: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about/our-stories/president-visits-action-for-children/>

Caroline joined Huddersfield Methodists for Step Out for Children, a sponsored walk helping raise awareness and over £2,000 to support our work. Read more about the event, which brought Methodists together in a wonderful expression of community, generosity and commitment: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about/our-stories/action-for-children-yorkshire-walk/>

We look forward to working with the President and Vice-President over the coming year and sharing more stories from across our services that show the impact of our partnership.

Celebrating faithful Methodist support

We were delighted to see Methodist supporter David Stabler recognised with a Stephenson Award this year. David's commitment to Action for Children is extraordinary. Having completed more than 40 Great North Runs and raised tens of thousands of pounds over many years, his dedication has touched countless lives. His award is a fitting recognition of a lifetime spent supporting vulnerable children and young people. Our warmest congratulations and heartfelt thanks David. Read more: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about/our-stories/long-running-dedication/>

Thank you for celebrating Action for Children Sunday

Our thanks to every church and that celebrated Action for Children Sunday this year. We were amazed by the different services and fundraising activities that took place across the Connexion. We are grateful to those churches that welcomed Action for Children colleagues and volunteers to share stories from our work. Your hospitality, enthusiasm and faithful support mean a great deal to us. Every prayer offered, every conversation held and every pound raised helps create brighter futures for children across the UK.

Help us recycle Home Collection Boxes

A huge thank you everyone who uses our Home Collection Boxes to raise funds for us. Each box is so important, and together they add up to help us make a powerful difference to children's lives.

If anyone has a Home Collection Box that they are no longer using, we would be grateful if they can send them back to us so we can reuse them. Send them: FREEPOST RUEY EGCZL, Supporter Care, Action for Children, 3 The Boulevard Ascot Road Watford WD18 8AG.

Christmas - Bringing joy where it's needed

Each year, we are blown away by how much churches do at Christmas to raise even more to boost what they have raised during the year. Thank you!

If you are planning a special Christmas service, look out for our worship resources in the post and online at actionforchildren.uk/faithFR from September. The theme, 'Bringing joy where it's needed' was inspired by the Methodist President and Vice President's focus for their tenure: sorrow and joy. These words resonate with us. Christmas is meant to be a time of joy, but sadly we know that for many children going without food, warmth and presents, it's a time of sorrow. We want to acknowledge that and share the joy of the Christmas message.

For support with your plans, fundraising ideas or paying in donations, contact your local fundraiser at actionforchildren.uk/your-local-fundraiser or Supporter Care at ask.us@actionforchildren.org.uk.

Thank you for your faithful partnership, kindness and prayers throughout the year. Together, we continue to help create safe, happy and hopeful childhoods for children across the UK.

Have a wonderful time at Synod.