



Synod Report

East Anglia District
Spring 2020

Introduction

I am delighted to bring you another report about your beloved charity, Action for Children. Thank you for making our 150th anniversary memorable and joyful.

Since, we launched our Choose Childhood campaign, we have had so many opportunities to reach a wider audience about what children need to have safe and happy childhoods. Our efforts have paid off, significantly increasing media coverage, our engagement and credibility with politicians and new supporters.

Sadly, Julie Bentley resigned in February after 18 months as Chief Executive. Although she was with us for a short time, she made a huge impact and was loved by staff. She worked tirelessly to champion the cause of children and further our work. Please join us in wishing her well as she moves on to other things.

Our Deputy CEO Carol Iddon will lead the organisation, while our Board of Trustees look for a new CEO. Please keep us in your prayers.

I wish you a productive time praying, learning and fellowshiping at Synod.

Blessings,

Karis

Head of Faith Partnerships

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National news

Birthday thanksgiving at St Paul's

In October, our Methodist friends and other guests including Christian leaders, old boys and girls from our children's homes and their relatives, trustees, volunteers, and former and current staff gathered in the magnificent St Paul's Cathedral to mark our 150th anniversary.

Our Chair of Trustees, Sarika Patel, and the Secretary of the Conference, The Revd Jonathan Hustler The hosted the event. It was a chance to officially mark our anniversary with the Methodist Church and openly thank members for their support over the years.

The Revd Michaela Youngson gave an impassioned keynote speech about how the work of Action for

Children is needed more than ever and pleaded with people to continue to support the charity at a time like this when the state of childhood is unacceptable.

BBC Songs of Praise features Action for Children

BBC Songs of Praise commemorated our 150th anniversary on 5th January with a special segment about us.

Our trustee, Dr Daleep Mukarji (pictured), talked about the ethos when we were founded and the ethos now.



Antiques Roadshow star, Ronnie Archer-Morgan, talked about his own experiences in care and his childhood growing up in one of our National Children's Homes. You can watch the full episode on [BBC iPlayer](#).

Secret Santa

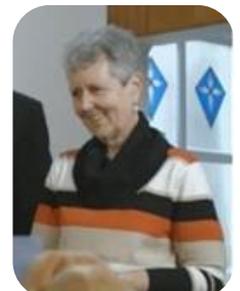
Our Secret Santa campaign has raised more than £500,000, and we are still counting! We would like to thank all our Methodist friends who supported the campaign - whether by sharing posts on social media, spreading the word in newsletters or taking part in a Secret Santa day, everyone's contributions helped make it extra special.

We were delighted that the Daily Mirror chose us as their charity partner, giving us some incredible coverage throughout December. They and their readers helped us raise £50,000 for Secret Santa.

Methodists nominated for Stephenson award

Our annual Stephenson Awards took place in London in February. Among the deserving nominees were Methodists Rosemary Hambly and David Stabler nominated for the Outstanding Supporter.

Winner, Rosemary (pictured), is a member of Callington Methodist Church, Cornwall, which raises more money than any other church in the county, thanks to her amazing commitment. She is a lifelong Action for Children supporter who has raised tens of thousands of pounds for us.



As well as raising money through his church in Newcastle, David runs the Great North Run every year. Since 2007 (as far back as our records go), he has raised more than £30,000 for us. But friends and colleagues say he's been taking part in the half marathon since the 1980s – and that his fundraising total is closer to £60,000.

The Stephenson Awards recognise outstanding staff, foster carers, volunteers and supporters as well as the young people who are part of this charity.

New plaque for former NCH headquarters

A new plaque has been installed next to the 'Ajar' sculpture on the site of former National Children's Home (NCH) headquarters in Highbury Park, London.

The site was home to our headquarters from 1925 to 2010 before it moved to Watford. It has served several purposes including a hospital for NCH children and a family centre.



Young people from NCH homes who started full time employment often lodged at Highbury. For many, it was like staying with a relative upon leaving home, and most valued the secure start in life that staff at Highbury gave them.

Due to the affection for the Highbury headquarters, Action for Children commissioned artist Gavin Tuck to design a sculpture to commemorate the significance of the site. 'Ajar' is a bronze sculpture of the first door to our first home at Church Street, which opened in 1869. The original door is in the reception area at our Great Queen Street office in London.

Highlighting the impact of Domestic Abuse

Our Policy & Campaigns team continue to work hard to ensure the voices of children are heard, and to campaign for lasting improvements to their lives. In February, they held two drop-in events in Parliament, great opportunities to engage with both newly elected and returning MPs.

The first, just before Children's Mental Health Week (3rd to 9th February), showcased the difference we can make through our mental health interventions. Over 50 MPs and Peers attended the event where they talked to three incredible young people who have taken part in our Blues Programme, funded by Royal Mail. They heard how the programme has improved their mental health. MPs then pledged to choose happy, healthy minds for all children and young people.

The second drop-in marked the launch of our 'Patchy, Piecemeal and Precarious' report which examines the support available to children affected by domestic

abuse. Over 40 MPs and Peers attended the event, including a minister leading on the Domestic Abuse Bill that will shortly be reintroduced to Parliament. Two of our Children's Services Managers and our policy experts shared valuable insight into the experiences of families that have experienced domestic abuse. You can read the report on our website.

Local news and events

The new Norfolk early childhood and family service is now up and running across the region. This service offers group and one-to-one support sessions for anyone who is finding parenting tough. If you would like to know more about our local services please contact your local fundraiser.

A HUGE thank you to everyone that supported Action for Children within Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire in 2020. In our 150th year this region has pulled together to raise over £41,898 - thank you!

Other fundraising events

- A BRAND NEW Step out for Children walk – Join this new event at Raynham Estate (near Fakenham) on Sunday 31st May 2020, 11am to 5pm. actionforchildren.org.uk/step-out
- Giant Wiggle 2020 registration is now open! Please sign up online before April 19th.
- BRAND NEW running event – Take part in the Cambridgeshire Summer Run a 10-mile run on Saturday 6th June. Contact your local fundraiser for more information.

To receive regular information about our work directly from Action for Children, please sign-up with your local fundraiser. Thank you.

Contact Details

Your local fundraiser is: **Holly Canham**

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*** Please note my phone number has recently changed ***

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actionforchildrenUK

Safe and happy childhood

Action for Children protects and supports children and young people, providing practical and emotional care and support, ensuring their voices are heard, and campaigning to bring lasting improvements to their lives.

