

# Action for Children Report to Synod

Autumn 2024



Action for Children celebrated its 155<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. We are thankful for the privilege to do this important work in partnership with our amazing Methodist Church supporters alongside other churches and organisations.

Thank you for all the ways you get involved – from taking part in Count Your Blessings, to holding an Action for Children Sunday service, and signing campaigns like Children at The Table to praying. The supporter-led fundraising events always show so much creativity and passion. Methodists have also taken part in many other fundraising events, such as the London Marathon and Great North Run.

We are always excited to meet our church supporters face-to-face. Earlier this year, we attended the Methodist Women in Britain residential in Swanwick and the Methodist Conference in Leeds. Thank you for welcoming us at these events and others.

## 687,755 people reached in 2023/2024

Action for Children's vision is to ensure that children have safe and happy childhoods. We have more than 400 services in local communities across the UK, including children centres and support services to help families prevent and reverse child neglect and abuse. We also have an online service called Parent Talk.

In 2023/2024, we reached 687,755 children, young people and families through all our services. These figures are lower than the previous year because fewer people used Parent Talk. However, the number of young people and children we reached through face-to-face services increased by 1%.

## Sister Eluned Williams MBE

Our staff are a great asset to our charity, selflessly supporting children and families and making life-changing impact. We were very sad to hear that Sister Eluned Williams MBE, one of our last Methodist-ordained 'Sisters of the Children' passed away in May 2024. This is a huge loss - she was not just a former staff member who had worked for Action for Children for 44 years; she remained a tireless advocate for children and an ambassador for the charity.

All who knew her remember her with much affection and will miss her, especially the National Children's Home 'Old Boys and Girls' that she looked after. Read about Sister Eluned's remarkable life in our tribute:

<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/blog/sister-eluned-williams-mbe-life-devoted-children-in-care/>

## Methodists win inspirational carer giver award

Join us in congratulating Angela and Nick Waterfield of the Sheffield Methodist District for winning the inspirational carer giver award at our annual Stephenson Awards. The Stephenson Awards recognise the work of our amazing supporters, volunteers, carers, and staff members, and the achievements of the children, young people and families we support.

Angela and Nick have been foster carers with Action for Children for 18 years. They were recognised for giving the young person who has been in their care for eight years exceptional support to work through their experiences of loss and trauma, get an education and make commendable progress. The young person has won awards and even set up a business. Being a foster carer is a huge commitment and we are grateful for foster carers like Angela and Nick who create a safe and happy place for children to thrive.

## Faith Space launched

Last July, we launched Faith Space – a quarterly online meeting for our incredible Methodist and church supporters. We created this space for them to hear about the huge difference their support makes, connect and inspire each other. A huge thanks to everyone who took part in it or has signed up.

At the first event, our Chief Executive, Paul Carberry, gave an update on our work and his meetings with Methodists. He also asked those who attended to convey his thanks to their churches. The event also featured talks about Tan Y Bryn residential home and our policy and campaigning work to influence government. Lifelong supporter, Liz Bishop spoke about her motivation for supporting the charity, and the remarkable ways she and her church raise funds, including a walk that raised over £2,500 this year.

Sign to receive future Faith Space invitations:

<https://forms.office.com/e/y2701CkN5e> You only need to sign up once.

## New partnership with Nationwide

In July, we launched our exciting new three-year partnership with Nationwide Building Society, aimed at tackling child poverty. Through Nationwide's Fairer Futures programme, we will provide a vital lifeline to tens of thousands of vulnerable children, young people and families. Our partnership will provide crucial support across the UK through two key programmes:

– **The Family Fund** will give families immediate, flexible support with essentials like food, bills, clothing and equipment for their homes. Children will also be

able to have activities and experiences that they otherwise would not have, such as a trip to the zoo, or a birthday cake.

– **Family Clubs** will provide welcoming, safe spaces in local communities where families can come to eat, get warm, feel comfortable and get support with whatever they are facing. They will provide the essential wrap-around support.

### New JoJo Maman Bébé partnership

We are also delighted to announce a new partnership with JoJo Maman Bébé starting from August 2024. The year-long partnership, which aims to raise at least £60,000 in unrestricted donations through staff and customer activities, will make a real impact for children and young people.

### Sky of Stars remembers generous donors

Action for Children created 'Sky of Stars' to recognise the generosity of all those who leave a gift in their will. Each time we receive a gift from someone's will, we add a star to the Sky of Stars in their name. We simply could not do our work without these vital donations. This is our way of saying thank you for each gift and remembering the difference they will make to vulnerable children and young people now and in the future. Visit our Sky of Stars where you can search for loved ones, and find out more about gifts in wills: <https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/support-us/make-a-donation/leave-a-gift-in-your-will/sky-of-stars/>

### Honouring our Heritage

Our 'Honouring our Heritage' campaign in June took our supporters on a journey through time looking at how our residential homes have changed over the years. It also featured four Bible reflections about gifts in wills: a legacy of kindness; helping to meet tomorrow's needs today; a shared harvest; and any act of generosity can make a difference. You can find them here: <https://www.actionforchildren.uk/heritage>

### Justice for Vulnerable Families

The theme for Action for Children Sunday this year was 'Justice for Vulnerable Families', exploring what justice means and what our active response to injustice should be. We are grateful to the churches that held a service or plan to hold one later this year. Colleagues who spoke at events felt very welcome.

The worship material is designed to be used flexibly and on any other Sunday you choose to remember our work and pray for us. Your feedback will help us ensure it continues to inform, inspire and help you plan an engaging service, so please email me to let me know what you think and how we can improve it.

### Contacting us

- Your local fundraiser: <https://bit.ly/fundraiser-contact>
- Supporter care: 0300 123 2112 (open 9 am to 5 pm, Monday to Friday) or [ask.us@actionforchildren.org.uk](mailto:ask.us@actionforchildren.org.uk)

### Connect with us on social media

 @actnforchildren  /actionforchildren  actionforchildrenUK

### A Place to Call Home campaign

Our next policy campaign focusing on children in care kicks off on 9 September with four new policy reports (for England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales), as well as a 'four nations', young person-friendly report, about what makes a good home for children in care.

Every 15 minutes, a child goes into care in the UK. They've already faced huge challenges in their young lives. And now they are in care, the world can see them differently. Our campaign will be calling on the UK governments to take immediate action on children's social care, so that children in care get the high-quality homes, love and support they need to thrive.

There are several ways you can get involved:

- Join us, care-experienced young and older people, and celebrities, if you can, for a photo opportunity and stunt in front of the Houses of Parliament on the morning of 9 September.
- Sign your name if you believe children in care deserve a place to call home.

For information about getting involved, sign up here:

<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/support-us/campaign-with-us/>

### Be a Secret Santa this Christmas

Our Secret Santa campaign is back again this year. Each year, we ask people to be a Secret Santa for a vulnerable child with Action for Children by donating directly to our appeal. Find out how you could help a vulnerable child feel the magic of Christmas: <https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/support-us/secret-santa/>

We enjoy reading about what your churches are doing to support Action for Children. So please do get in touch.

I wish you an enjoyable time at Synod. Thank you for your support.

Blessings,



Faith Partnerships Lead

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### 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.

