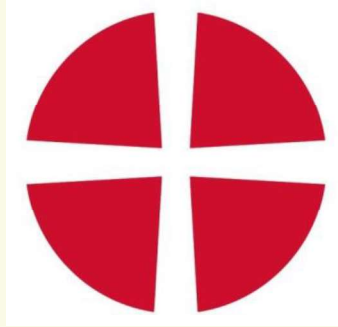




EDI Officer Newsletter

Issue Five

26 June 2026





Dear District EDI Officers,

Welcome to the latest edition of the EDI Officer Newsletter.

As we approach the Methodist Conference, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the commitment, care and energy you continue to bring to your role. Whether you are supporting local conversations, championing inclusion, or helping others feel seen and valued, your contribution makes a real difference across the Connexion.

Conference is an important time in the life of the Church, and we hold in our prayers all those who will be gathering, discerning and making decisions in the days ahead. May they be guided by wisdom, grace and a shared commitment to God's mission.

I hope you find this edition informative, encouraging and helpful in your work and please remember that support is available through the JDS Team, the Learning Network, and your fellow EDI Officers across the Connexion.

With every blessing,

Kim Medford-Vassell – JDS Programme Coordinator

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Meet The Team! - Profile Series



Stuart Watkin, EDI Learning and Development Officer

1. Please share a bit about yourself and your background.

My background is in teaching and educational leadership. That has included leading on working for greater inclusions and more equal outcomes for staff and students.

I have been involved with the Methodist Church for many years, serving as a church and circuit officer in a range of roles. For the past few years I have worked in the Learning Network, using my experience to support the implementation of the strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity.

We are called to be salt and light in the world and demonstrate God's love. So when our church community is less just and inclusive than other institutions in our society, which it can often be, I am passionate that we need real cultural change in how we do things.

2. What is your role within the Connexional Team?

I work as a Learning Network Officer, aligned to the Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire District. Within the Learning Network we have a shared work group who support the Justice, Dignity and Solidarity strategy, which I co-lead. I also contribute to other areas of the Learning Network's work.

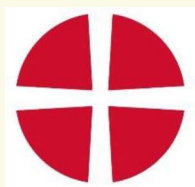
3. What's the most exciting project you've worked on and what made it memorable?

Probably the latest version of the Safer Spaces Foundation Module training, which I helped put together. Inclusion isn't an extra set of things we need to do, it's about the approach we take to everything we do. The same is true of safeguarding: if we can develop a culture where we have open and candid conversations about how we do things, and how we could do things in a way that make everyone less vulnerable, we will have a far safer church community culture where it is much harder for people to get away with bullying or abuse. Similarly, a culture where we have open conversations about things that could change to allow everyone to thrive, will be more just and more inclusive and one in which it is far harder to marginalise others.

So the latest version of the Foundation Module moved away from merely training people to recognise the indicators of abuse, and towards training people in how to create a more positive culture in the first place. For me, that shift in attitude was absolutely crucial and is at the heart of the attitudinal change that the Justice, Dignity and Solidarity calls for.

4. What's your most favourite way to unwind after a busy day at work?

Analysing statistics from the day's sports events.



Share your stories for the EDI Tool kit

As part of our ongoing review of the EDI Toolkit, we are refreshing and strengthening the resources already available across the Connexion. A key part of this work is ensuring that the toolkit continues to reflect the lived experiences of our churches in honest and practical ways.

Case studies are designed to do more than describe a situation. They invite reflection, deepen understanding, and encourage action. They often begin with a real or realistic story from church life, followed by questions that help individuals and congregations think about experience, learning, and change.

We would really value your help in shaping more of these.

What kind of case study are we looking for?

We are looking for short, story-based examples from church life that:

- Reflect a real situation involving inclusion, exclusion, or misunderstanding
- Help others step into someone else's experience
- Prompt reflection through gentle questions
- Encourage practical action within a church setting

These do not need to be perfect examples. Situations that were challenging or unresolved are often the most helpful.

An example might be:

Amira is a teenager who recently began attending a local Methodist church with her family. English is not her first language, and she often finds it difficult to follow the service and conversations afterwards. While people are friendly, most interactions remain brief, and no one has taken time to help her feel more included. Over time, Amira has become quieter and less engaged, and her family have started to attend less regularly.

Questions for reflection:

- Experience: What might Amira and her family be experiencing in this situation?
- Learning: What assumptions might be shaping how others respond?
- Action: What small, practical steps could the church take to help Amira feel more included and able to participate?

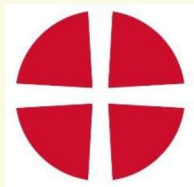
What you might include?

- A short, realistic story from your context (this can be anonymised or adapted)
- A focus on someone's experience within church life
- 2–3 reflective questions under headings such as Experience, Learning, and Action

A brief contribution will be more than enough. The aim is to create space for reflection and to support churches in thinking differently about how inclusion is lived out day by day.

Your insight will help ensure the toolkit remains grounded, relevant, and shaped by the voices of those actively engaged in this work across the Connexion.

If you would like to contribute, please do send your case study to equality&diversity@methodistchurch.org.uk



The Learning Network

This coming year we have a broader than ever programme of “Equipping for Equality” events.

Please do take a look and book on yourself as well as advertise them far and wide:

[Equipping for Equality by Methodist Learning Network | Eventbrite.](#)

Register also for Guide to The Inclusive Language Guide: **Thursday 9th July 19:00-20:30** and

Thursday 25th September 10:00-11:30 led by Roxanne Bainbridge and Stuart Watkin:

[Eventbrite Registration](#)

We look forward to seeing you and as always, please do let us know what else might help equip you in your role.

‘After The Flood’

The Methodist Conference of 2026 will consider the Methodist Church’s historical involvement in the trafficking of enslaved African people. The church have also been granted access to a film, After the Flood, which considers the role of churches in this trafficking: [After the Flood - The Methodist Church](#)

The Learning Network are offering an opportunity to meet with others online to discuss the video and our responses to it. Members of the Learning Network will facilitate the conversation and chaplaincy will be available. If you would like to discuss this topic and do not have a group in your local church context that is suitable for a discussion, you are very welcome to join us.

The session is **Tuesday 14th July at 19:00**. You can book, and get full details, at:

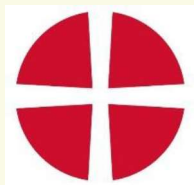
[Online discussion of 'After the Flood' film Tickets, Multiple dates | Eventbrite](#)

People will need to watch the video in advance of the session and spend some time reflecting afterwards.

Be aware it can give rise to strong emotions, so people will need to plan time to look after themselves after viewing it.

Please share this opportunity throughout your churches, circuits and districts.

Stuart and Roxanne, The Learning Network



The Solidarity Circles – a new strategy for engagement

As a reminder we are working on a new strategy for engagement with local congregations and communities (including those without easy website access) to join the Solidarity Circles and to strengthen the voice of lived-experience in the Church's work of justice, dignity and solidarity. (Based on the Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity). ([The Methodist Church](#))

The key objectives is to:

1. **Raise awareness** in local churches about what Solidarity Circles are, why they matter, and who can join.
2. **Engage potential members**, especially those who may not regularly use the website, using a variety of channels.
3. **Build local ownership** so that churches and circuits feel part of this recruitment, rather than it being only central.
4. **Reflect diversity** in membership (age, background, geography, lived experience) in line with the Terms of Reference. ([d1yuutt686hfi0.cloudfront.net](#))

The target audiences:

- Members of local Methodist churches (lay and ordained) who have interest in equality, diversity, inclusion and justice work.
- Those who feel under-represented or whose voices are less often heard (e.g., people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ members, women, rural church members).
- Church leaders and EDI officers who can act as ambassadors.
- Local communities connected to Methodist churches who might feel distant from central communications or websites.

Channels & Methods:

- Send posters to Supers (A4 & A5) to be placed on noticeboards, in church vestibules, halls, church coffee areas.
- Insert a short announcement and tear-off slip in the Sunday bulletin / newsletter.

- Use the circuit or district EDI officer to host drop-in information sessions (tea & chat) after worship where people can ask questions and fill paper forms.
- Also accessible via the Methodist Church website.

Be Heard. Be Seen. Be the Change.

Join a Methodist Church Solidarity Circle

Solidarity Circles are small groups of Methodists across Britain who share lived experiences and help guide the Church's journey toward justice, dignity and solidarity.

Each Circle welcomes members with experience to any of the following Circles:

- Disability Solidarity Circle
- LGBTQ+ Solidarity Circle
- Racial Justice Solidarity Circle
- Women's Solidarity Circle
- Rural Church Solidarity Circle

Why it matters:

The Church needs your perspective. Circles help ensure decisions, priorities and worship reflect the full diversity of God's people.

No experience needed — just your story and faith.

👉 Apply online: *[insert link]*

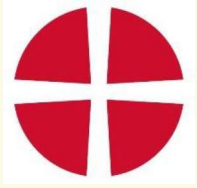
✉ Or request a paper form from your District EDI Officer [your Superintendent will have the contact details]

Deadline: *[insert date]*

Your voice. Our Church. Let's grow together.

Justice. Dignity. Solidarity.

Further information on this new strategy and recruitment will follow soon.



Spotlight On... **District Mission Enablers**

Have you ever wondered what a District Mission Enabler does and how they might support the work of EDI Officers?

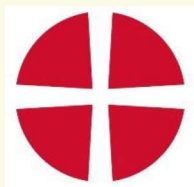
District Mission Enablers are appointed by many districts to help churches and circuits engage more effectively in mission, evangelism, discipleship, and church growth. Their role is to walk alongside churches, helping them discern where God is calling them and how they can respond to the needs of their local communities.

District Mission Enablers work with lay and ordained leaders to support mission planning, encourage new ways of engaging with communities, provide coaching and mentoring, facilitate training opportunities, and help churches explore fresh expressions of church and new Christian communities.

For EDI Officers, there are natural connections between mission and inclusion. A church that is seeking to reach its community must also consider how welcoming, accessible, and inclusive it is for those who may not traditionally feel represented or valued within church life. Mission and inclusion are not separate activities, they both contribute to creating communities where people can belong, flourish, and encounter God's love.

District Mission Enablers can often be valuable partners in conversations about community engagement, intercultural church development, accessibility, new ways of connecting with diverse communities, and supporting churches to think creatively about who they are reaching and who may still be missing from the conversation.

If you would like to learn more about the role of District Mission Enablers, or explore how their work may connect with your role as an EDI Officer, you will find your District contact via the following link to the website: [Find help available near you - The Methodist Church](#)



Making Inclusion Part of Decision Making: Using Equality Impact Assessments

One of the most practical tools available to support inclusion within the Methodist Church is the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

An EIA is a simple process that helps us think carefully about how a proposed decision, policy, project, event, or piece of work may affect different groups of people. It encourages us to ask important questions before decisions are made, helping to identify potential barriers, unintended consequences, and opportunities to make our work more inclusive.

The aim is not to create additional paperwork. Rather, it is to ensure that equality, justice, dignity, and belonging are considered from the outset, rather than as an afterthought.

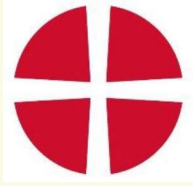
Using an EIA can help districts, circuits, and churches to:

- Make more informed and inclusive decisions.
- Consider the experiences of people from different backgrounds and circumstances.
- Identify barriers to participation and belonging.
- Demonstrate a commitment to the principles of the Justice, Dignity and Solidarity Strategy.
- Embed good practice into planning and decision-making processes.

As EDI Officers, I'd like to encourage you to familiarise yourselves with the EIA resources and to promote their use within district and circuit life. Whether planning an event, developing a policy, reviewing a process, or considering a new initiative, an EIA can be a valuable tool for reflection and action.

By taking time to consider who may be affected by our decisions, we can help create a Church where more people are able to participate fully and flourish.

For further information, guidance, or support in using Equality Impact Assessments, please contact the Learning Network (contacts and links below). Forms are also available via the following link: [Equality Impact Assessment - The Methodist Church](#)



EDI, JDS and the Equality Act: What's the Difference?

**The terms EDI, JDS and Equality Act are often used together,
but they each have a different purpose...**

The Equality Act 2010 is the law. It protects people from discrimination based on characteristics such as age, disability, race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.

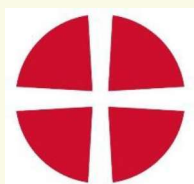
EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) is the practical work of creating environments where everyone is treated fairly, valued for who they are, and able to participate fully. EDI helps us put equality into practice in our churches, circuits, districts and communities.

JDS (Justice, Dignity and Solidarity) is the Methodist Church's strategy for embedding these values throughout the life of the Church. It goes beyond legal compliance and asks how we can become a Church where every person is treated with dignity, where justice is pursued, and where we stand in solidarity with one another.

A simple way to remember it is:

- The Equality Act tells us what the law requires.
- EDI helps us put inclusion into practice.
- JDS provides the Methodist Church's vision and framework for this work.

**Together, they help us build churches and communities where everyone can belong,
contribute and flourish.**



Current District EDI Officer List

District EDI Officers [26/06/2026]		
	Districts without a dedicated EDI Officer	
	DISTRICT	POST TYPE
1	1 North West England	
2	2 Wales Synod Cymru	EDI Officer
3	5 Birmingham	EDI Officer
4	7 Bristol	EDI Officer
5	10 Channel Islands	EDI Officer
6	11 Chester and Stoke-on-Trent	EDI Officer
7	13 Darlington	
8	14 East Anglia	EDI Officer
9	15 Isle of Man	EDI Officer
10	17 Lincolnshire	EDI Officer
11	20 Newcastle upon Tyne	EDI Officer
12	22 Nottingham and Derby	EDI Officer
13	23 Northampton	EDI Officer
14	25 Sheffield	EDI Officer
15	26 Southampton	EDI Officer
16	27 Yorkshire West	EDI Officer
17	28 Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury	EDI Officer
18	29 Yorkshire North and East	EDI Officer
19	31 Scotland	EDI Officer
20	32 Shetland	EDI Officer
21	34 Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire	EDI Officer
22	35 London	EDI Officer
23	36 South East	
24	37 South West Peninsula	EDI Officer

I am hoping the list above will help to facilitate communication and support between you, if you'd like to get in touch with one another, please use the equality&diversity@methodistchurch.org.uk email address.

The JDS Team can forward messages between you as needed until you are happy to share email addresses (GDPR friendly!)

Please also let me know if there are any amendments needed to the list.



Notice Board

EDI Officer Meetings

The District EDI Officer meetings are a great opportunity to connect with colleagues from across the Connexion, share ideas, celebrate good practice, and discuss the challenges and opportunities we encounter in your roles.

Whether you are new to the role or have been an EDI Officer for some time, these gatherings provide a welcoming and supportive space to learn from one another, hear about current developments, and access resources and support from the Connexional Team and Learning Network.

You do not have to have all the answers, and you do not have to do this work alone. We hope you'll join us for conversation, encouragement, and fellowship as we continue to support one another in building a Church where everyone can flourish. There are meeting dates scheduled for July, September and November this year, these can be found in the Dates for your Diary section further along in the newsletter.

We look forward to welcoming you!

Zoom and Teams User Guides

Click on the link below for a quick guide to run and participate in inclusive meetings on Zoom and Microsoft Teams, with steps for hosting, access, sharing and follow up.

[EDI Newsletter 270326- Zoom and Teams Guide.pdf](#)



Links to Webpages and Newsletters

Follow the links below to Methodist items of interest.

If you would like to add links from your Circuit or District to this section, send an email to the following address – equality&diverity@methodistchurch.org.uk

JDS Pages - [Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity - The Methodist Church](#)

The Learning Network Pages - [About the Learning Network - The Methodist Church](#)

Methodist News - [News - The Methodist Church](#)

The Connexion Magazine - [The Connexion magazine - The Methodist Church](#)

Prayer for Today - [A prayer for the day](#)

Methodist Publishing, order free A5 size copies of the booklet for you and your local church - [Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity](#)



Contacts

Contact the Team on the email addresses below:

Hartwell Mhunduru - Director for Inclusion

mhunduruh@methodistchurch.org.uk

Kim Medford-Vassell - JDS Programme Coordinator

Medford-vassellk@methodistchurch.org.uk / Equality&Diversity@methodistchurch.org.uk

Stuart Watkin - EDI Learning & Development Officer

Watkins@methodistchurch.org.uk

Roxanne Bainbridge – Learning & Development Officer

bainbridger@methodistchurch.org.uk

Natalie Hastings - Administrator

hastingsn@methodistchurch.org.uk



Dates for your diary...

2026 Methodist Conference:

25 June – 1 July, Telford International Centre

For information on The Conference, visit the following page –

[The Methodist Conference - The Methodist Church](#)

2026 EDI Officer Meetings, online via Zoom 19:00-20:30:

30 July
24 September
26 November

2026 EDI Newsletter Publication dates

25 September (deadline for submissions 4 September)
19 December (deadline for submissions 4 December)

2026 Inclusion and Awareness dates, July to September:

- ❖ **Disability Pride Month - 1-31 July**
- ❖ **International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition**
– 23 August
- ❖ **National Inclusion Week – 14-20 September**
- ❖ **International Day of Peace – 21 September**



A Thought For The Day...

Supporting one another in a time of political change

Across the UK, the political landscape continues to evolve. Recent elections and public debates have highlighted growing support for parties and movements whose views on migration, diversity, equality, and inclusion have prompted concern among many people, including some within our churches and communities.

You may find this a challenging time. Some may find themselves supporting individuals who feel anxious, unsettled, or uncertain about what these developments may mean for them, their families, or their place within society. Others may be navigating difficult conversations within churches where strongly held and differing views are being expressed.

At times such as these, it is important to remember that the Church's calling remains unchanged.

As followers of Christ, we are invited to see the image of God in every person, to uphold the dignity of all people, and to be communities of welcome, justice, compassion, and grace. Throughout Scripture, we encounter a God who consistently draws near to those who feel excluded, marginalised, or fearful. Jesus' ministry was marked by hospitality, reconciliation, and a willingness to stand alongside those whose voices were often overlooked.

The Justice, Dignity and Solidarity (JDS) Strategy seeks to help us live out these Gospel values in the life of the Church today. While political circumstances may change, our commitment to affirming the worth of every person remains rooted in our faith and discipleship.

This does not mean avoiding difficult conversations. Rather, it means engaging with one another respectfully, listening carefully, and responding in ways that reflect Christ's love and concern for all people.

We recognise you may receive questions, concerns, or requests for support arising from the current political climate. We want to reassure you that you are not expected to carry these challenges alone.

A range of support is available through the Connexional Team and the Learning Network, including:

The JDS Team:

- Advice and support on matters relating to inclusion, equality and belonging.
- Opportunities to share experiences and concerns through District EDI Officer gatherings.
- Access to resources and guidance connected to the JDS Strategy.
- Support in identifying appropriate Connexional colleagues where specialist advice may be needed.

The Learning Network:

- Training and development opportunities exploring inclusion, intercultural awareness, unconscious bias, belonging, and justice.
- Facilitated conversations and learning spaces designed to help churches engage constructively with difference.
- Resources that support churches in building healthy, welcoming, and inclusive communities.
- Ongoing programmes that equip local churches and circuits to navigate complex social issues with confidence and compassion.

Peer Support:

- The EDI Officer network continues to provide an important space for encouragement, learning, and mutual support.
- Sharing experiences, challenges, and examples of good practice can help remind us that many others are navigating similar conversations.

As EDI Officers, you play an important role in helping the Church embody that encouragement. Through your commitment, patience, listening, and leadership, you help create spaces where people can encounter God's love, experience belonging, and be treated with dignity.

***Thank you for all that you continue to do in your districts, circuits, and local communities.
Your ministry matters, and your contribution to the life of the Church is deeply valued.***

If you would like support, guidance, or simply a conversation, please do not hesitate to contact the JDS Team or speak with colleagues within the Learning Network.