

Church Supporters' Newsletter  
September 2026

# Bringing joy

where it's  
needed

Action for  
Children

**Dear friends,**

We're delighted to bring you the latest news and updates from Action for Children.

We're so grateful to everyone who held an Action for Children Sunday event or supported us through other activities this year. Your support is helping to create more safe and happy childhoods for children right across the UK – thank you.

A highlight of our year has been our nomination as one of the charity partners for the President and Vice President of the Methodist Conference for 2026/27. It's a fantastic opportunity to share stories of the difference we make together, to celebrate our partnership and help children thrive.

In their conference speeches, the President and Vice President, The Rev Mark Slaney and Caroline Stead, said they've chosen two words for the year: sorrow and joy. These 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. So, this has inspired our theme for Christmas worship – bringing joy where it's needed. We want to acknowledge the sorrow many are experiencing, share the joy of the Christmas message, and show the love of Jesus through practical action.

Along with this newsletter you'll find a booklet with ideas for a Christmas service, which you can use to plan your own worship. We hope you'll find it helpful.

From all of us at Action for Children, thank you so much for your continued partnership and the difference you make to children every day. Have a happy Christmas and wonderful New Year.

Blessings,



**Karis Kolawole**  
Faith Partnerships Lead



**Katherine Woods**  
Director of Fundraising



We love hearing what your churches are doing to take action for children.  
Email your stories and photos to [karis.kolawole@actionforchildren.org.uk](mailto:karis.kolawole@actionforchildren.org.uk)

# Our fundraising *stars*



Here are a few highlights from your fantastic fundraising, which makes such a difference to children's lives. Thank you all for taking action for children.

## Stepping out in Huddersfield



Caroline Stead (pictured on the left), the Vice President of the Methodist Conference, joined dozens of walkers on a five-mile Step Out for Children sponsored walk in June. The circular route started and ended at **Lindley Methodist Church** in Huddersfield, taking in some

of the beautiful sights around the Grimescar Valley. Walkers and their sponsors, organised by Liz Bishop (in right of picture), raised £2,000 – thank you all very much. Read the full story at [methodist.org.uk/about/our-stories/action-for-children-yorkshire-walk/](http://methodist.org.uk/about/our-stories/action-for-children-yorkshire-walk/)



## Fabulous fundraisers

Thanks to **Stirling Methodist Church** for raising £535, and to Jean and Ray Burt of **Bembridge Methodist Church**, Isle of Wight, for your fundraising events which raised a total of £600.50.



## Fundraising flutes

Dorset Community Flute Choir, known as Flutecakes, held a concert in partnership with Dorchester Support Group and **Dorchester Methodist Church**, which raised £1,000. And in Summer, they performed all over again. Thank you.

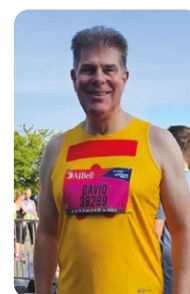


## Norton Bridge Methodist Church

We're grateful to have received an incredible £12,000 donation from **Norton Bridge Methodist Church**, Pontypridd, in memory of Terence Mower-Jones – a dedicated supporter of Action for Children. This special gift honours Terence's legacy and commitment to improving the lives of children and young people. Thank you.

## Runaway success

David Stabler, 71 and from **Brunswick Methodist Church**, has completed the Great North Run at least 38 times for Action for Children, raising around £80,000. This year, he was recognised at our Stephenson Awards – celebrating the work of our amazing supporters, volunteers, carers and staff, as well as the achievements of those we help.



David said, "I've supported Action for Children for most of my life, and it's incredible their work is still needed in the 21st century, actually even more so. This year will be my 42nd Great North run in aid of Action for Children."

## Coffee collections

Pat Nott and the members of **Wells Green Methodist Church**, Crewe, held another Easter coffee morning, which is always well supported. They raised £670 from the coffee morning and a further £597 collected from a mix of other fundraising activities.

**Westerhope Methodist Church**, Newcastle, also held a coffee morning that raised £380.

And Gaynor Paul and **Stanford Avenue Methodist Church**, Brighton, held a spring fair, raising £100, plus £520 from their Christmas fundraising.

Thank you all so much for your hard work and generosity.



Chris Paul,  
Gaynor Paul,  
Muhammed  
Asaduzzaman,  
Karen Bell  
(Minister)  
and Esther  
Harrington.

## Home Collection Boxes add up

A huge thank you to all of you who use our Home Collection Boxes to donate to us. Each box is so important, and together they add up to help us make a powerful difference to children's lives.

A special thanks this time to Beryl Watts of **Grimston Pott Row Methodist Church** for the superb collection of over £900. Thank you to Pat Martin of **Court Hey Methodist Church**, Liverpool, for collecting £304 (see more of her story below). And thanks to Marion Kaiser and **Southwick Methodist Church** who collected a fantastic £1,048. They also held a coffee morning where they brought their boxes in to count the money together, raising another £245. Thank you.

If your community has any Home Collection Boxes that you're no longer using, please send them back to us so we can reuse them. Send them by freepost to:

**FREEPOST RUEY ECGU ZKZL**  
**Supporter Care**  
**Action for Children**  
**3 The Boulevard Ascot Road**  
**Watford WD18 8AG**



## We'd like to thank...

**Pat Martin of Court Hey Methodist Church.** Pat, who will be 95 in September, has been supporting Action for Children since she was a teenager, and sent a lovely letter about her lifetime of support. She's completed her last Home Collection Box (HCB) collection before stepping down as HCB secretary after about 50 years of holding the role. Pat also organised the street collections for at least 20 years, with help from her young children in the early days. Our electronic records show that she's helped raise around £12,000 to date – and there may have been more donations that predate our current system. Thank you so much, Pat – and a very happy birthday.

**Valerie Owen of Llanidloes Methodist Church.** The church closed in June, and Valerie is retiring after 42 years, having raised over £8,600. Your dedication has been phenomenal – thank you, Valerie.



**Gail Johnson of Hathersage Methodist Church.** Gail (centred in the picture) has served faithfully as our Action for Children contact for the church for the last eight years, inspiring and coordinating fundraising

efforts that have raised an extraordinary £15,700. Through church fairs, collection boxes, special appeals, community activities and her own tireless fundraising through plant sales and second-hand stalls, Gail has encouraged the whole congregation to play a part in this remarkable achievement. Her dedication, creativity and commitment have made a lasting difference, not only through the funds raised but also in keeping the work of Action for Children at the heart of our church community. We thank Gail warmly for her outstanding service and support.

# A **day** in the **life**



**Sally Noden** manages several of our services in Newcastle, including Breaking the Cycle that supports children who are victims of domestic abuse. She tells us how she and her team help children recover from the effects of abuse, and how they help during Christmas.

**Q** Tell us about your role.

**A:** I support children aged four to 16 who have experienced domestic abuse. Working with both children and their parents, I help them begin their recovery journey by providing specialist therapeutic support and a safe space for children to talk, play and process their experiences.

**Q** Why is the service so important?

**A:** Leaving domestic abuse is often only the beginning of a family's recovery. Children can be left dealing with fear, confusion and trauma, and need specialist support to understand what's happened, express their feelings and rebuild their confidence. Our service helps children and their families take those first steps towards healing.

**Q** What does an average day for you look like?

**A:** A typical day involves supporting children and families affected by domestic abuse. We meet with non-abusing parents and children to understand their experiences from the child's perspective, before providing up to 12 sessions with a specialist counsellor. Using creative and therapeutic activities, we help children explore their feelings and develop healthy coping strategies.

**Q** What's it like for families fleeing domestic abuse at Christmas?

**A:** Domestic abuse often increases during the festive period, as Christmas can provide more opportunities for abusers to exert power and control. For children, what is meant to be a joyful time can instead be filled with fear, conflict and uncertainty.

Families who flee abuse at Christmas face additional challenges. Children may be leaving behind their home, friends, pets and belongings, while worrying about what comes next. Through our recovery programme, we provide specialist support to help children process their experiences, make sense of their emotions and begin to rebuild a sense of safety and stability.

We also support families through our Family Fund, which provides immediate and flexible help when it's needed most. That might be help with everyday essentials like food, utility bills, clothing, or household items. It also gives children opportunities to take part in experiences that many of us take for granted, like school trips or birthday and Christmas celebrations, helping to make sure they don't miss out because of financial pressures.



## Could you be a Secret Santa?

The magic of Christmas begins in childhood. Hanging stockings. Sharing festive food. Presents under the tree. It's a time for children to feel loved and make memories that last a lifetime. But for too many children across the UK, Christmas is anything but magical. No stockings. No presents. No festive food – often no food at all.

**You could help change that. Your gift could help a vulnerable child feel the magic of Christmas. Be a Secret Santa for a vulnerable child. Visit [iamsanta.org.uk/hope](https://iamsanta.org.uk/hope)**



# Millie's story

**Nine-year-old Millie\* lives with her mum Isla\* and eight-year-old sister Emily\*. They've been struggling with the cost-of-living, and the amount Isla now has to spend on food and bills means she's had to make cutbacks.**

Christmas is especially difficult financially for the family. So Action for Children gave them a supermarket voucher and a food hamper to help ease the financial pressure during the festive season.

***"The price of food keeps going up. We can easily go through four litres of milk a day, so the voucher was really helpful. And the girls were so excited, their mouths opened with shock and their eyes widened as they saw the food hamper. There was hot chocolate, biscuits, pasta sauces, beans, gravy. The girls were so grateful to have our cupboards full for Christmas."***

We also surprised Millie and Emily with a bag filled with toys and their favourite dolls.

***"Millie and Emily ripped open their presents and screamed with happiness. Millie hugged the toys and Emily started crying saying 'I really wanted these'."***

And thanks to support like yours, we also made sure the family had energy vouchers - allowing them to keep their lights on longer during Christmas.

***"I've always had to be strict with turning the lights off. But this meant we could have the Christmas tree lights on for longer and the kids could have their own Christmas lights on in their bedroom."***

***"Without [Action for Children], we definitely wouldn't have been able to afford to do that. It made the girls feel so festive and it was nice not to have our electricity meter running out and beeping every day."***

***"Action for Children changes the lives of children and their families. I don't know where we would be if it wasn't for the support that we received. We're all so grateful."***

\*This story has been made anonymous – names, ages and images have been changed to protect the identity of the family involved.

# Dates for your diary



## Which events will you be involved with in 2027?

Every event you hold for Action for Children helps create more safe and happy childhoods. Add these dates to your diary and your church calendar.

★ **Count Your Blessings.** Lent starts on Wednesday **10 February 2027** and for 40 days you can count your blessings with Action for Children. We have inspiring stories and one activity for each day of Lent. 'Sign up, if you haven't already, at [forms.office.com/e/zNAtme5Xyn](https://forms.office.com/e/zNAtme5Xyn)



★ We're so pleased to have 200 places in the special **London Marathon Saturday event** on **24 April** – 2027's one-off additional race day. And now we're looking for volunteers to join

our cheer points along the route. Whether you can spare a few hours or know someone who can, your support could create an unforgettable atmosphere for our runners. Sign up to help now at [challenge@actionforchildren.org.uk](https://challenge@actionforchildren.org.uk)

★ **Action for Children Sunday** is held on **Sunday 11 July 2027** (or another Sunday that works for you). It's a celebration of the work we do and of your fantastic support. A resource pack will be sent to people on our mailing list in April and available to download at [actionforchildren.org.uk/faithFR](https://actionforchildren.org.uk/faithFR)



★ You can plan a **Step Out for Children** sponsored walk with family and friends at **any time of year**. Sign up for a fundraising guide with all you need to help you plan: [actionforchildren.org.uk/stepout](https://actionforchildren.org.uk/stepout)



★ You could **Boycott your Bed** at **any time of year**. By raising money and taking part, you could help vulnerable children in desperate need. For a fundraising pack with everything you need to know, email

[communityfundraising@actionforchildren.org.uk](mailto:communityfundraising@actionforchildren.org.uk)



Find lots more ideas for fundraising in your church community at [actionforchildren.org.uk/support-us/fundraise-with-us/](https://actionforchildren.org.uk/support-us/fundraise-with-us/)



And find out how you can volunteer at our events at [actionforchildren.org.uk/your-local-fundraiser](https://actionforchildren.org.uk/your-local-fundraiser)

## Donation labelling checklist

Remember to label your donation – it really helps us! However you send us your donation, please let us know your:

- Name.
- Constituent ID.
- Church name and postcode.
- And how you raised the money.



Need help? Contact our Supporter Services Team: [ask.us@actionforchildren.org.uk](mailto:ask.us@actionforchildren.org.uk) 0300 123 2112.

