



# Synod Report

East Anglia District  
Spring 2021

## Introduction

Action for Children's work has been a vital lifeline to children, young people and their families during the lockdown. We are thankful that we can bring you this report outlining good progress we have made.

We are proud of the sterling work of our passionate staff, and grateful for the loyal support of Methodists and other during this challenging time.

I wish you an enjoyable and productive time of fellowship at Synod.

Blessings,

Head of Faith Partnerships  
[karis.kolawole@actionforchildren.org.uk](mailto:karis.kolawole@actionforchildren.org.uk)

## National news

### Goodbye Carol and welcome Tim

We said goodbye to Carol Iddon, Deputy CEO and Manager Director of Children's Services in January. Carol retired after 18 years at Action for Children. A former social worker, she joined us in 2003 as Assistant Director of Children's Services in the north-west of England. As a member of the executive leadership team, she has helped guide the charity through one of the toughest periods in its history. We will miss her.



Carol won't be putting her feet up in retirement. Last year, she became the Independent Safeguarding Advisory Panel chair for Canterbury Cathedral and the Diocese of Canterbury and will join the Board of the Independent Schools Inspectorate as Safeguarding Lead in early 2021.

We are delighted that Dr Tim O'Neill (*pictured right*) is our new Managing Director of Children's Services. Tim joined us from Birmingham City Council where he was Director of Education and Skills. He has spent most of his career working with services for children and young people in local authorities across the Midlands. Learn more about Tim on our [website](#).



### Reverend Newman former NCH Principal

The Reverend Michael Newman, the last ordained Principal of National Children's Home (NCH), sadly passed away aged 90. He was also our first Chief Executive when we became Action for Children.

His daughter wrote a beautiful tribute to him in the Guardian in December, which you can read here: [bit.ly/2Mef2DX](https://bit.ly/2Mef2DX) The charity is blessed to have had him as a leader.

### Secret Santa appeal raises over £1m

We would like to thank all our Secret Santas for their overwhelming support for last December's appeal, which raised more than £1m. The appeal asked people to become a Secret Santa to vulnerable children.

The campaign included two virtual events: Christmas carols supported by Channel 4 News presenter, John Snow, and a quiz supported by Instagram sensations, Mr and Mrs Hinch. We also received amazing support from the Iceland Charitable Foundation, which donated £280,000, and Liam Gallagher's charity single.

Money raised went towards our Winter Emergency Fund to help hard-hit families with basics like food, heating and clothing. It really is making an incredible difference!

### Methodists' creativity raises funds at Christmas

Lockdown did not stop Methodists from finding creative ways to raise funds to support Action for Children. We were touched and impressed to see many great ideas.

Vickie Heydon-Matterface and Angela Newey of the Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury District created and sold Christmas Nativity window packs raising over £340.



Jim Godfrey's book 'Trying Times,' cartoons for a pandemic, not only made us giggle but raised funds to help us to continue to ensure that children are safe and happy. To order the book, email [churchoffice@wesleymem.org.uk](mailto:churchoffice@wesleymem.org.uk) or call 07979 767630.

### Blues Programme wins highest accreditation

Our Blues programme recently received The Early Intervention Foundation's highest mark of accreditation, 4+, following a rigorous assessment process, which showed it improves outcomes for children and young people.

This six-week programme supports young people to better understand their feelings and improve their mental and emotional well-being.

The programme has made a difference to thousands of young people like 15-year-old Esther from Merseyside. She says the Blues Programme has helped her to cope with the pressures of lockdown.

She said, "Schoolwork became an issue for me as I started to feel like I was bombarded with work. Both my parents are key workers, so we rarely get to see each other, and I was left to look after my no-so-little younger siblings. I could see that the pressure was starting to affect me, so I had to contact my teachers and let them know that it was too much. I never would have had the confidence to speak up about it, but since completing the Blues Programme, it doesn't faze me now."

Click [here](#) to read more about the programme.

### 2020 – a big year for volunteering

Last summer 2020, we were awarded Investors in Volunteers for the first time following a tough 12-month assessment. It means we have achieved the UK's quality standard for good practice in volunteer management.



With 982 new recruits in 2020 alone, we now have more than 2,500 amazing volunteers working in nearly 200 projects, services and departments around the UK. The value of their contribution in monetary terms was worth nearly £3 million in the last financial year. We are so grateful for their support!

### Expanding our fostering service to North Wales

Our successful therapeutic fostering service is expanding its model and approach in the North Wales area. For the first time, North Wales foster parents will be able to join Action for Children's innovative service

that helps children and young people who have had difficult starts in life and give them a chance to thrive in a loving family. The area can look forward to their children and young people having life changing foster parents. To find out about fostering, visit: [bit.ly/fosterX](http://bit.ly/fosterX)

### Parent Talk awarded Helplines Standard Accreditation

Our free online parenting service, [Parent Talk](#), has been awarded the Helplines Standard Accreditation.

The Helplines Standard is a nationally recognised quality mark which defines and accredits best practice in helpline work. To achieve this endorsement, the information, support and advice that we provide within Parent Talk was independently evaluated. We now join the likes of organisations such as NSPCC, Childline, Mind, CALM, Missing People, Papyrus and The Mix.

Since launching in 2020, our service has supported over 350,000 families and almost 9,000 people have had a 1:1 conversation with a Parent Talk practitioner online.

### Fundraising to support Action for Children

We are currently designing some exciting new fundraising events and activities. News of government's plans to help us come out of lockdown is great. However, we know that it will take a while to return to life without restrictions. So, we are looking at ways to keep you involved in supporting your beloved charity in a safe way.




You can sign up for regular updates on how our work is making a difference here: [bit.ly/AFCNewsletter-F](http://bit.ly/AFCNewsletter-F)

Thank you for your support and God bless you.

### Contacting your local fundraiser

Your local fundraiser is: Holly Canham.  
[holly.canham@actionforchildren.org.uk](mailto:holly.canham@actionforchildren.org.uk)  
07976764591  
[actionforchildren.org.uk](http://actionforchildren.org.uk)

### Connect with us on social media

-  @actnforchildren
-  /actionforchildren
-  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.

