

# Synod Report



## Sheffield Methodists District Autumn 2021

### Introduction

I am delighted to tell you that Action for Children continues to thrive despite the pandemic. Even during a challenging year, we have touched more than 600,000 lives, strong evidence of our determination and focus on creating innovative ways to support those who need us.

I would like to thank our Methodist supporters. Without you, our work would not be possible. Even in the most challenging times, we know we can count on your generosity and prayers.

The pandemic and current economic climate have prompted us to make significant changes to how we operate. We are aware that during furlough and while we adjusted to change, there were times when supporters struggled to speak to their local fundraiser or when we didn't promptly acknowledge donations. We would like to apologise for this and assure you that we are working on resolving these issues.

It is wonderful that Synods can resume – even as hybrid events. I pray that you have a lovely time of fellowship.

Blessings,

Faith Partnerships Lead

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### 600,000 children, young people, and families supported in 2020-21

Statistics for 2020-21 showed that Action for Children made a difference to more than 600,000 children, young people, and families last year - significantly more than our 2019/2020 figure of 370,000.

604, 885	Total charitable reach	
83,577	■ Direct reach – targeted services	
396,179	■ Services open to all children & young people	
125,129	■ Additional beneficiaries	
83,577	396,179	125,129

The increase of 64% in just a year was due to a decision to increase our digital outreach during the pandemic. The online support provided by our Parent Talk service more than tripled (up 244 per cent) compared to the previous year. The reach for this service alone over the past year was more than 360,000. We are now seeking long-term funding for Parent Talk.

### Dawn is Pride of Cumbria Keyworker of the Year

We are proud of Dawn Lockwood, one of our Children and Families Practitioner's based in South Lakeland, who won an award for 'Keyworker of the Year' in the Pride of Cumbria Awards for inspiring children, parents and carers across Cumbria.

Dawn helps children at home and school, providing therapy sessions for young people with disabilities or mental health issues.

The parent who nominated her said, "*Dawn is absolutely so caring and calming to each person. She has been helping my daughter through a very low place in her life when no one understood her. She is incredible and her selflessness is truly inspiring to other families.*"

### Headlands School hosts Big Lunch with the Eden Project

Our [Headlands School](#) in Penarth hosted a Big Lunch with the Eden Project to celebrate the launch of the school's Nature Learning Centre in July. The school has embedded animal husbandry and outdoor vocational work into its curriculum.



Over the past 18 months, they have acquired alpacas, chickens, ducks and a companion dog with students actively involved in all aspects of their care - from feeding the animals to building and maintaining their living areas. The animals have proved very popular with students, with the grounds being constantly improved to provide a safe and comfortable space for interaction.

Headlands is an independent day and residential special school for children and young people aged 7 to 19 years. The [Big Lunch](#) is sponsored by the National Lottery, Iceland and The Food Warehouse.

## Spring by Action for Children rated in top 20 by parents

We are delighted that our Spring nurseries have received the '2021 Top 20 Nursery Group' [Day Nurseries award](#) for the 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive year. This award recognises nurseries across the UK with the highest parent ratings. Our group holds a rating of 9.7/10.



Spring is also a finalist in the prestigious 2021 [Nursery World Awards](#) for the 'Nursery Group of the Year'. This follows previous award wins: Spring Bensham won Nursery of the year in 2019 and Rob Sherrington won Nursery Practitioner of the year in 2020. The awards ceremony will take place on 25 September in London.

Spring by Action for Children provides 37 award-winning nurseries and 25 out-of-school clubs across the UK, delivering high quality and affordable childcare.

## Join Action for Children's craftivism campaign

We would like to invite everyone to take part in our craftivism campaign to urge MPs to commit to making children a personal priority by sending them a handcrafted star.

We believe there's a star in every child. When a child has the safe and happy childhood they deserve, their star shines brightly. But too many children in the UK right now don't have the chance to shine. Their childhoods are overshadowed by poverty, abuse, neglect and poor mental health. And the pandemic has only made things worse. Our elected politicians can change this.

Whether you do craft as a hobby or are a seasoned craftivist, please sign up for our September activity here: <https://bit.ly/Craftivism-signup>

## Boycott your Bed to raises over £150,000

We would like to say a massive thank you to everyone who took part in Boycott your Bed on 9 July, raising an amazing £152,800 and counting.

More than 3,000 people boycotted their beds, so that we can stop poverty and the pandemic from scarring a generation. It was an evening of family-friendly fun.

This year, we involved children in a Children's Drawing Challenge, won by six-year-old Tabitha Turk. She drew a wonderful picture of a dreamy sleeping spot atop fluffy clouds in a blue sky, held up by beautiful, bright balloons. Visit the online [gallery](#) to see other entries.



## Make a difference through Local Action Squads

Our Action Squads are a wonderful family of community event volunteers who do incredible things to raise vital funds for our work. They are also ambassadors for our work.

They are set up to make sure members feel supported, valued and a real part of our Action Squads family.

If you're already part of a fundraising or community group, we'd love to tell you more about the many benefits of making a transition into an Action Squad! Ask your [Regional Support Officer](#) about setting up or joining a local Action Squad.

## Methodists step out of lockdown to raise funds

Many fundraising activities were on hold during the lockdown. However, Methodist support didn't stop; we are grateful to everyone who continued to give generously, donating through regular giving and to our Emergency Fund appeal.

Once the lockdown eased, our amazing Methodist friends jumped at the opportunity to step out into the lovely weather to raise funds. One of them is Richard Crispin, supported by four other cyclists, who raised over £2,000 in a [cycling challenge](#) around the Christchurch and Wimborne Methodist Circuit. Richard has supported us since the 60s when he used to sell Sunny Smiles.

It would be impossible to list every single person, but we want you to know that we appreciate everyone.

## Star Jump Challenge launches in September

The Star Jump is a new challenge launching in September.

We believe that there's a star in every child. So, we are inviting supporters to raise funds so that we can ensure children have the basics – the things every child needs: warm clothes and proper meals, and things that help them to reach for the stars, like tutoring or learning a musical instrument.

The Star Jump Challenge is really simple, and anyone can do it with friends and family. To sign up, visit our [website](#).

Contacting us

- Your local fundraiser: <https://bit.ly/fundraiser-contact>
- Supporter care: [0300 123 2112](tel:03001232112) (open 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday) or [ask.us@actionforchildren.org.uk](mailto:ask.us@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.

