

Church Supporters' Newsletter  
February 2026

# Your kindness counts

Action for  
Children

**Dear friends,**

A happy new year to you all!

Thank you for all your amazing support throughout 2025. Your incredible fundraising really does make a difference, and we especially felt that dedication from you at Christmas. It was exciting to see so many donations pouring in. You're amazing!

As well as holding your own events, lots of you became a Secret Santa and invited your friends and families to get involved too. Thanks to your kindness and support of our Secret Santa campaign, more children could feel the magic of Christmas. As every child deserves.

We're excited about 2026 and all the opportunities to take action for more children, young people and families – showing them our love and support in practical ways that make a huge difference.

Once again, we'd like to invite you and your churches to get involved in 'Count Your Blessings' during Lent. With this newsletter, we've sent you a Lent calendar to use on your own or put up in your church (you can download spare copies from [actionforchildren.org.uk/faithFR](https://actionforchildren.org.uk/faithFR)). During Lent, enjoy inspiring stories showing the impact of your gifts, and reflections to connect you with our mission. We hope you like the new format and would love to hear your feedback after using it.

We're also looking forward to celebrating Action for Children Sunday with you later in the year. It means so much to us to have a special Sunday set aside to celebrate our strong partnership with the Methodist Church and affiliated churches and to thank you for your support, so please build it into your service plan for 2026. Action for Children Sunday is on 12 July, but you can celebrate it whenever you like.

On page 4, we share what Methodist supporters told us in a survey and focus groups about how we can improve the ways that we connect with you. Thank you to everyone who took part!

Wishing you a peaceful Lent and a very happy Easter,



**Katie Cartwright**  
Head of Relationship Fundraising



**Karis Kolawole**  
Faith Partnerships Lead



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)



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



**We talked to Action for Children's Clare Bowley and learned about how she takes action for children in the north-east.**

**Q Could you tell us about yourself and what your role is?**

I'm a Community Engagement Coordinator in Newcastle. I've worked for Action for Children for 15 years and my job is to develop partnerships and participation in our area. I also oversee the community café and soft play at our Galafield Family Hub.

**Q What do Action for Children's early help services do in Newcastle?**

We deliver early help services in three areas of the city: north, outer west and inner west. Each of these areas is different, so our work looks different too. But in all areas, we offer support to families and parenting support in groups like Family Club, Young Parents' Group, and SEND Social.

We work with various partners to deliver youth services, and youth outreach, and we work closely with the 0-19 health services who deliver baby clinics and development checks in our hubs.

**Q Can you tell us about a project you've enjoyed?**

We were given some funding to create a piece of art with people from the community to represent the Galafield Family Hub building, how the community cares for each other and the green space and wildlife around it.

We chose four groups from the community, including Westerhope Methodist Church, to work with our artist in separate sessions. She then pulled together the work they created into a mural.

I was really pleased that all the groups agreed to be part of the project, and it was amazing to see the children, parents and carers, our volunteers and the artist all so engaged with the activity. We now have the finished piece – it's absolutely beautiful and is exactly what we asked for.

**Q Are there other ways you've worked with the church?**

Yes – our local Methodist church supports us with regular donations of equipment for the café and from collections. We have also been able to support Lemington Methodist Church by sharing our space in Charlton Street Hub while they had building work done. This meant that they could continue to run their food and clothes bank weekly and that their Rainbows, Brownies and Guides groups could still run.

We're also fortunate to work with other partner churches, like St Wilfred's Church of England and St John Vianney Catholic Church.

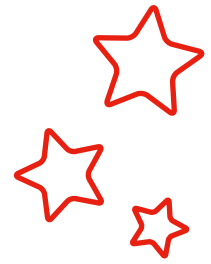
**Q Anything else you'd like to tell us about?**

I've been working on engaging dads in the work we do, talking to a local men's club to look at ways we can work together to offer groups and services to dads and their children. I'm really excited to see this develop.

I could go on and on talking about all our work in Newcastle. I'm so proud to work for Action for Children and passionate about the work we do.

# Our fundraising stars

Here's just a few highlights from your 2025 fundraising.



## Sponsored strides

Jacqui Massie of Barton On Sea Methodist Church and a group of nine walkers took part in a sponsored walk in June, raising **£702**. They all stopped for ice cream and had lunch in Jacqui's garden afterwards. Well done, everyone!

## Well done, Eileens!

A huge thank you to Eileen Bridge and members of Trinity URC/Methodist Church, Great Harwood, who raised over **£1,587** from home collection boxes in August, and held other fundraising events to reach a total of **£2,081!**

And Eileen Jones, one of our Crewkerne Methodist Church supporters, sent this photo of a special Action for Children noticeboard she created, which has helped her raise £100 from passers-by. Along with money raised from home collection boxes, she's sent us a total of **£445**.

Thank you so much for showing your creativity!



## Our cup of tea

St Luke's Methodist Church, Wirral, raised an amazing **£1,197.50** from their annual Community Coffee Morning. Thank you!



## A whirlwind success

Allyson Barnes and Chepstow Methodist Church members and friends braved the windy weather to attend a garden party that raised **£346**. Thank you!



## Musical stars

Cawthorne Methodist Church had a Sing and Service, with a collection raising **£120**. Every year the community comes together on the village green to hold a short service with both Methodist and Anglican churches, a local brass band, children's activities, and a picnic. Thank you, Cawthorne!



## Porthcawl's fundraising flair

Thank you to Porthcawl Support Group for their recent donation of **£4,500**. In 2025, they raised funds from their church charity shop, home collection boxes, a toy sale, an Action for Children Sunday service and lots of Christmas activities. This took their total fundraising for the year to over **£8,000!** Thank you!

## Donation labelling checklist

Remember to label your donation – it really helps us! However you send us your donation, please let us know your name, your Constituent ID, church name, or postcode and how you raised the money. Thank you!



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

# Dates for your diary



There are lots of fundraising activities happening across the UK in 2026 to raise even more money for Action for Children. You can get involved by signing up to take part, or to volunteer at events – helping us to cheer participants along a route or at the finishing line.

Join us on our overnight walk to enjoy **Ben Nevis at Sunrise** on **13-14 June**.



**Action for Children Sunday** is on **12 July**, but your church can celebrate whenever works for you.

**The Great North Run** is on **13 September**. The next ballot for places opens in January.









Bring some friends and **Step Out for Children** on a sponsored walk – Contact your Relationship Fundraising Executive for sponsorship forms and support materials.

Get in touch with your local fundraiser for full details at [actionforchildren.uk/your-local-fundraiser](https://actionforchildren.uk/your-local-fundraiser)

# We asked and you said

We really value our relationship with the Methodist Church. So we're keen to make sure our supporters know how much we appreciate you and feel that we're communicating with you effectively.

That's why we ran two focus groups in September and a survey in October, asking about how you like to fundraise and the tools you would find helpful and easy to use. 64 of you across England, Wales and Scotland took part in the survey. You told us:

-  The majority of supporters are motivated by a belief in Action for Children's mission to make sure every child has a safe and happy childhood. And Christian values and authentic stories are the main reasons Methodists give their support.
-  Fewer people in congregations and less local contact are making it harder for churches to fundraise in traditional ways. But churches are using new and creative ways to fundraise like coffee mornings and seasonal events. You also told us that that you would like Action for Children to be more visible locally.
-  The most helpful resources for church fundraising are templates (like posters and leaflets) from Action for Children and stories of our work.
-  People prefer to get updates by email, printed materials, or on the website. They want updates once or twice a year.
-  Supporters most often ask for information about what Action for Children does, stories from children and families, and details on how money is spent.
-  Supporters find real-life stories – especially from guest speakers and videos – the most powerful way to encourage donations.

Thanks to everyone who took part in the focus groups and survey. Your detailed responses will help us shape how we work with you.

If you missed the chance to complete the survey but would like to share your views, please email Karis Kolawole:  
[karis.kolawole@actionforchildren.org.uk](mailto:karis.kolawole@actionforchildren.org.uk)

## Come to your Faith Space

Join our inspiring online community connected in faith and supporting Action for Children. You'll connect with others and hear directly from our frontline staff, young ambassadors and fundraisers – seeing the difference your support is making.

Sign up: [actionforchildren.org.uk/faith-space](https://actionforchildren.org.uk/faith-space)

# Week one

18-22 February 2026

“ The children only had hoodies and walked to school in all weathers. We were able to help keep them warm by providing winter coats and cosy bedding. ”

Action for Children Support Worker



The growing number of families trapped in poverty, despite working as much as they can and making every sacrifice, means too many children are going without essentials every day and living with the consequences. Poverty touches every part of a child's life. From living in a damp and mouldy house, to clutching their broken toy, knowing they won't get another one. Struggling to fit in when they don't have the right school uniform, and worrying about getting in trouble for not doing their homework when they don't have the physical or mental space for it.

It's not just about what they don't have. Poverty can change a child's path. It can make dreams harder to reach, potential harder to fulfil. And it's relentless.

At Action for Children, we see the faces behind the numbers. We understand the many different ways poverty can rob children of their childhoods and future chances. And we're here to help when families feel hopeless. With your help, we can take action to stop children suffering.

## Fundraise with us!

Visit [actionforchildren.uk/ideas](https://actionforchildren.uk/ideas) or scan the QR code for ideas and support.



## Take action for children this week:



If you're giving something up this Lent, set up a JustGiving page and ask friends and family to sponsor you.



Scan the QR code to hear from Georgia and Tracy about their experiences of growing up in poverty and supporting families. You can also share the video on social media or WhatsApp and let your friends know that you're taking part in Count Your Blessings. It's not too late for them to join us too! They can download their copy here: [actionforchildren.uk/faithFR](https://actionforchildren.uk/faithFR)

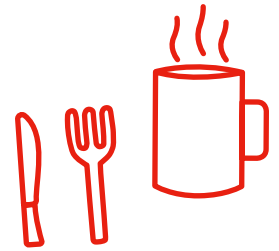


Pray for the 4.5 million children and their families living in poverty in the UK. Thank God for the thousands of Action for Children support workers meeting with them, building friendly, trusted relationships and providing essentials like food, school uniforms, coats and shoes that fit, and money for gas and electricity for heating their home, cooking, and keeping the lights on.



Join our online community of supporters connected in faith and passion for creating safety and happiness for children: [actionforchildren.org.uk/faith-space](https://actionforchildren.org.uk/faith-space)





## Week two

23 February – 1 March 2026

*“For I was hungry and you gave me food,  
I was thirsty and you gave me drink,  
I was a stranger and you welcomed me.”*

Matthew 25:35, RSV

A hot meal on a chilly day doesn't only fuel a child's body. It can provide comfort and joy too. But for too many families, there's uncertainty about where that meal will come from, and how to pay for the fuel to cook it. That's where Action for Children makes a difference in the lives of families like Paul and Fiona's, who can't work because of long-term health conditions.

We help the child coming home from school to an empty fridge. We put food on the table so families don't go hungry. And we're helping to break down the barriers that stop parents from working or boosting their incomes.

Because going without affects who children believe they are. Their place in the world. Their life chances. And their dreams for the future. We're tirelessly fighting for lasting change – working to tackle the root causes of poverty by campaigning for a fairer social security system that allows children to thrive.

Child poverty isn't inevitable – it doesn't have to be this way. With your help, we can take action to stop children suffering.

Remember to put **Action for Children Sunday** –  
**12 July** – in your church calendar!

### Take action for children this week:



Scan the QR code to read the story of Paul and Fiona and the impact of the cost of living crisis on their family. Share Paul and Fiona's story, and tell your friends about your experience of Count Your Blessings so far.



St Luke's Methodist Church Barton's annual community coffee morning raised over £1,000 in 2025. You could plan one with your church and invite your community, or hold a virtual one with friends. Get in touch with your Relationship Fundraising Executive for ideas and resources to support: [actionforchildren.uk/your-local-fundraiser](https://actionforchildren.uk/your-local-fundraiser)



Pray for the meals that children get at school. Ask that they will receive the nutrition and energy they need to learn and grow from their lunches and in breakfast club or after-school clubs. Thank God that families will feel the relief of this helping hand.



Donate £3 or the cost of a supermarket meal deal and you could help Action for Children provide essential groceries for a family living in poverty.



Get ready to take part in 'Step Out for Children', a sponsored walk for Action for Children. Contact your Relationship Fundraising Executive for sponsorship forms and support materials by visiting [actionforchildren.uk/your-local-fundraiser](https://actionforchildren.uk/your-local-fundraiser). Or visit our challenge page for other outdoor activities: [actionforchildren.uk/CYB\\_Challenge](https://actionforchildren.uk/CYB_Challenge)



Donate 20p for each piece of fruit in your kitchen this weekend. You could help Action for Children give nutritious food to children who would otherwise go without.

# Week three

## 2-8 March 2026

“As long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality exist in our world, none of us can truly rest.”

Nelson Mandela



Thursday 5 March is World Book Day, but many children don't have books of their own – they're a luxury for families living in poverty. If you love reading, you'll know the power of books to inspire, educate, and entertain. To shape young minds and suggest new possibilities. To let them know there is hope, and life can be different. The same is true of activities like after-school clubs and trips to museums or theatre performances. Often these are out of reach to children whose families simply can't afford them.

In our 2024 research, 7,000 teachers across England said that 37% of their pupils – equivalent to 3.3 million schoolchildren or nine pupils in an average class of 25 – faced barriers to their education. Poverty was shown as a significant barrier – identified by teachers working in the most deprived areas. One secondary school teacher said, “When you're not with them you're worrying about them, thinking 'even though I feel like I'm at capacity, if I did this extra thing, that could really make a difference.'”

With your help, we can take action to stop children suffering and give them opportunities to reach their potential. Because with every child we support, we can make a difference to their lives. Today, tomorrow and for their future.

*“If I did this extra thing, that could really make a difference.”*

Secondary school teacher

### Take action for children this week:



Scan the QR code to read Meghan's story about how being given a computer has helped her keep up at school. Share Meghan's story with someone else – in person or online.



Plan a book-themed fundraiser – like a book sale at your church or run a sponsored readathon with the young people. Get in touch with your Relationship Fundraising Executive for sponsorship forms and support materials – visit [actionforchildren.uk/your-local-fundraiser](https://actionforchildren.uk/your-local-fundraiser)



Find out more about the effect of living in poverty on the education and life opportunities of children and young people: [actionforchildren.uk/challenges-barriers-impacting-pupils-education](https://actionforchildren.uk/challenges-barriers-impacting-pupils-education)



Pray for children and young people living in poverty and the effect that has on their education. Pray that they'll be well-fed and able to concentrate in lessons.



Get in touch with a school near you to ask if there's anything you can help with: books, resources for after-school clubs or other types of donations. World Book Day can add expense and anxiety for many parents – is there something you could do to help more children have fun, worry free, on this day? Could your church partner with a school to meet some of their needs?



One of our incredible Methodist supporters, Ken Dunkerly, creates a quiz for his community twice a year – a total of 47 quizzes so far! In 2025, he raised £826. Could you follow in his footsteps by organising your own?





## Week four 9–15 March 2026

“*In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for thou alone, O Lord, makest me dwell in safety.*”

Psalm 4:8, RSV

This week, our focus is on children and families who need a safe, warm, comfortable place to sleep.

Friday 13 March is World Sleep Day, but sleep doesn't come easily to everyone. Living in poverty means families can't always afford beds, bedding or heat for their homes. Too many children are living this reality today.

There are also young people like Lorna, whose story you'll read this week, who need emergency accommodation when they've got nowhere else to turn.

Action for Children is here, helping the child with no bed who's struggling to sleep in the bitter cold, and the parents struggling to pay for heating. Thanks to your generosity, we can provide them with beds and bedding and help with paying essential bills. And we can be there with a spare room, a cup of tea and the willingness to listen and care for a vulnerable young person.

*“They treated me very well and they were very welcoming. I was given food and refreshments, and my clothes were washed.”*

Nightstop service user

### Take action for children this week:



Lorna found herself homeless and living on the street at just 16 years old. To read how Action for Children supported her with emergency accommodation and the love and security of a host family to care for her, visit [actionforchildren.uk/Lorna](https://actionforchildren.uk/Lorna)



Could you Boycott your Bed for one night (and recruit some friends to take part with you) so we can help more children and families? Scan the QR code or visit [actionforchildren.uk/BYB\\_Methodists](https://actionforchildren.uk/BYB_Methodists) to read about our Boycott your Bed fundraising sleepout. Or donate £1 for every bed in your house.



Pray for the children and families who need our help, that we would be able to connect with them and provide hope and practical help. Pray that we would be visible to those who need to find us – maybe hanging one of our posters (e.g. Parent Talk, our online service) somewhere families might see it. And pray for our amazing host families who help young people who need somewhere to stay and be cared for.



Could you volunteer with us? There are all kinds of roles that help us support the children, young people and families who need us. Find opportunities in your area and start your volunteering journey at [actionforchildren.uk/volunteer\\_church](https://actionforchildren.uk/volunteer_church)



It's Mothering Sunday this weekend. Pray for all those carrying out a mothering role for children and young people, and especially for the staff in our children's homes, as they use their specialist skills to care for those who have experienced trauma. Also remember those who find this day difficult and pray that they will experience peace and comfort.



Donate 50p for every coat or jacket you own, and you could help us give a warm coat to a child going to school cold every day.

## Week five

16–22 March 2026

“The staff have been there emotionally, physically and financially. As my circumstances changed, the level of support they provided changed too. I would’ve been lost without them.”

Suzanne\*

Suzanne\* joined Action for Children’s Sure Start parental support groups as an older mum when her first child, Caleb\*, was born, continuing to come to these groups with her other two sons. When Suzanne became a carer for her mother in 2018, she had to take a career break to support her mother and children. While still using Sure Start programmes for her youngest child, the Action for Children team noticed she was struggling and told her more about the Crisis Fund.

Suzanne had financial help from Action for Children and believes the emotional and practical support she received was life-changing for her family. Through the difficult times that Suzanne faced looking after her mother and three children, she described the support she received as “a lifeline”, especially during the isolation caused by lockdown.

“They were there for me the whole time, calling up to check in on me and making me feel comfortable enough to be honest and just chat away when I needed it. Hearing someone else’s voice during such a difficult time was such a boost.”

Caleb is now eight and the family’s chief apple crumble maker after the family took part in a Sure Start Masterchef programme – learning how to cook healthy meals on a budget. Suzanne’s now joined the volunteering team as she hopes to offer other parents the same support she had.

Find out more about the ways our frontline staff are helping children, young people and families like Suzanne’s\* by visiting [actionforchildren.uk/our-work-around-the-uk](https://actionforchildren.uk/our-work-around-the-uk)

\* Names have been changed to protect family members’ identities.



### Take action for children this week:



Pray for families like Suzanne’s, struggling because they’ve needed to leave work to care for family members. Pray that our services would be able to reach more people in her situation, bringing them hope and practical help.



Last year, Derby Support Group held an afternoon tea with delicious food, poetry and tap dancing – raising an amazing £400. You could host an afternoon tea and help more children and families like Suzanne’s have the same lifeline that she experienced. Visit [actionforchildren.uk/faithFR](https://actionforchildren.uk/faithFR) for all the resources you need to get started.



Share a list of things that have brought you comfort this week with a friend or on social media. Remember to tag **#ActionForChildren #CountYourBlessings**



In honour of Caleb’s apple crumbles, could you host a coffee morning, or bake sale to raise money for Action for Children? You could even make it crumble themed! Or donate the cost of a cup of coffee. Contact your local fundraiser for all the information you need at [actionforchildren.uk/your-local-fundraiser](https://actionforchildren.uk/your-local-fundraiser)



Pray for the conversations and actions of our frontline staff and volunteers, that they would be a source of comfort and hope for the people they serve.



Donate 20p for every person in your life that you feel you can talk to.





## Week six 23-29 March 2026

*“What has happened to Tom and me can happen to anybody. I was no better or no worse than anyone else before this happened. I’m just an average person, who was working, my partner was working, and we fell onto hard times.”*

Kerry



Benji’s parents, Tom and Kerry, were referred to Action for Children when their health visitor recognised they were struggling and needed support. A caesarean section left Kerry in chronic pain, unable to walk properly and suffering from seizures. Her partner Tom had to give up his job to care for newborn Benji along with Kerry’s two children from her previous relationship.

He says “It’s hard when you pick up the kids from school knowing there’s no activity to go to or you can’t afford to give them a snack. You’re stressed, you’re at rock bottom, and so to be given a £100 food voucher is just amazing. Action for Children’s help has meant everything to us. It’s just been incredible.”

When the family were referred to Action for Children, they were struggling emotionally and financially. They were offered emotional support as well as funds to buy a new washing machine and supermarket vouchers. Support workers also helped them to apply for fuel and energy vouchers they were eligible for.

“Tom and I are so careful with the benefits,” explains Kerry. “We cook from scratch and batch cook and make sure the kids eat good food, but sometimes it’s just not enough so we need to use the food bank. I feel guilty and like I need to protect my kids from our financial problems, but I also feel the need to be open and honest with them, so I explain how sometimes people just need a bit of help.”

During the summer holidays, Action for Children helped them go on a family day to Cadbury World and a trip to the local swimming pool, which their children loved. “Action for Children’s support has been life-changing,” says Kerry. “We cannot put into words what your help has meant to us and the children.”

### Take action for children this week:



To find out what living in poverty looks like for children and families in your area visit [actionforchildren.uk/child-povertyCYB](https://actionforchildren.uk/child-povertyCYB)



Regular, ongoing support means we can plan our resources and be a vital lifeline for families and children whenever they need us. Consider becoming part of our regular giving family and helping children day in, day out. Find out more at [actionforchildren.uk/RG\\_Methodist](https://actionforchildren.uk/RG_Methodist)



Pray for your neighbourhood and all those living in poverty near you, whether their need is obvious or hidden. Pray for your nearest Action for Children project and the staff there, that they would have good relationships with the community.



Donate £4.50 to represent the 4.5 million children living in poverty in the UK.



Can you think of three people who you can tell about an Action for Children service this week? Perhaps you could use social media to spread the word about our Parent Talk website ([parent-talk.org.uk/faith](https://parent-talk.org.uk/faith)), which offers reliable, down-to-earth parenting advice.



Encourage creativity, empathy and generosity in the children in your life and get them involved in fundraising for Action for Children. Visit [actionforchildren.uk/ideas](https://actionforchildren.uk/ideas) for child-friendly ideas.

We’d love your feedback on this Count Your Blessings calendar. Scan the QR code to let us know what you think!

[forms.office.com/e/s7YSivFvGP](https://forms.office.com/e/s7YSivFvGP)

