

EDI Officer Newsletter Issue Four

27 March 2026





Dear District EDI Officers,

As we move through Lent and look ahead to Holy Week, we are reminded of the quiet strength, compassion and perseverance that shape this season.

In many ways, these same qualities are reflected in the work you do.

We hope you find this newsletter a helpful and encouraging resource in your role, offering support, insight and a sense of shared purpose as we continue this work together.

In this Issue we are pleased to welcome Hartwell Mhunduru,
Director for Inclusion, who joined us earlier this year.

We hold him in our prayers and look forward to the wisdom, leadership
and care he will bring to this work.

Hartwell, may this season bring you encouragement and clarity in this new role, with a strong sense of support and shared purpose across the Connexion.

With every blessing,

Kim Medford-Vassell – JDS Programme Coordinator

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Meet The Team! - Profile Series



Hartwell Mhunduru, Director for Inclusion

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

I have worked in equality, diversity, and inclusion for over a decade, most recently at the Royal British Legion, where I led work on modernising recruitment processes to improve outcomes for neurodiverse employees. I am passionate about creating environments where people can thrive, and I bring that passion to my work in the Church.

2. What is your role within the Connexional Team?

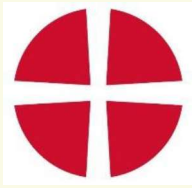
I am the Director for Inclusion. My role is to provide strategic leadership for the Justice, Dignity and Solidarity (JDS) Strategy, working alongside the JDS Committee, District EDI Officers, and colleagues across the Connexion to help the Methodist Church become a fully inclusive community.

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

At the Bank of England, I worked on a project to modernise the approach to occupational health to ensure they were appropriate for 5000 People. What made it memorable was seeing the tangible difference it made – employees who had previously struggled with traditional approach were suddenly able to show what they could do, and the organisation became richer for it.

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

Football, sports, and time with family. I find that moving my body and being with people I love helps me reset.



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?

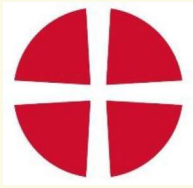
- A short, realistic story from your context (this can be anonymised or adapted)
- A focus on someone's experience within church life
- 2–3 reflective questions under headings such as Experience, Learning, and Action

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

Thank you, we would love to hear from you.



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](#).

There will be a repeat this year of some workshops. Simon Sutcliffe will be discussing “Reimagining masculinity: Creating safer spaces for all (20th April) and Sharon Nugent will be leading a session entitled “Becoming an Intercultural Church” (May 12th).

There are also opportunities for people who want to attend an online session of the Unconscious Bias training, so if you know of anyone who hasn’t completed this training, the dates are here: [Unconscious Bias Training by Methodist Learning Network | Eventbrite](#) and also included below:

Equipping for Equality Programme – all here:

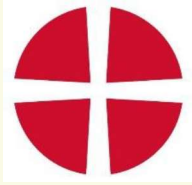
Mon 20th April [Reimagining masculinity: Creating safer spaces for all Registration, Mon 20 Apr 2026 at 19:00 | Eventbrite](#) by Revd Simon Sutcliffe

Tues 12th May [Becoming an Intercultural Church Registration, Tue 12 May 2026 at 19:00 | Eventbrite](#) by Sharon Nugent

Thu 9th July [Guide to the Inclusive Language Guide Registration, Thu 9 Jul 2026 at 19:00 | Eventbrite](#) by Kristie Eve and Stuart Watkin

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

Kristie and Stuart, 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.

An example for advertisements for the church notice boards, newsletters:

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.



Notice Board

Quick Pulse...

A check-in where you tell us what support you need and flag any immediate priorities

What support would you welcome in this space?

- Policy updates
- Training
- Templates

Send your thoughts to equality&diversity@methodistchurch.org.uk

Your EDI Win...

invites you to share a short success from your context.

One or two lines and a photo with consent, so we can spotlight practical ideas other can use next month.

We look forward to hearing from you equality&diversity@methodistchurch.org.uk

Peer Support Circle...

Share a real scenario you would like to discuss, keep it brief, and get practical peer advice you can use right away.

- Send 2 to 3 sentences, what happened, what you tried, and the question you want help with.
- Remove names and identifiers, include any access or safeguarding factors we should consider.
- Submit to equality&diversity@methodistchurch.org.uk

- We discuss the scenarios at the next online meeting, the owner of the scenario gives a 60 second intro, then the group offers options and resources.
- After the meeting you receive a one page summary of suggestions, links to tools, and an optional follow up slot with the JDS team.

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](#)

We look forward to hearing from you.

Kim Medford-Vassell - equality&diversity@methodistchurch.org.uk



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](#)

Advent Resources - [Advent and Christmas Resources - The Methodist Church](#)



Contacts

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Dates for your diary...

2026 Connexional Council Meetings:

5 June

For information on Connexional Council and membership, visit the following page - [The Connexional Council - The Methodist Church](#)

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](#)

April – June 2026 Inclusion and Awareness dates:

- ❖ **World Autism Day** - 2 April
- ❖ **Stephen Lawrence Day** - 22 April
- ❖ **Deaf Awareness Week** - 4-10 May
- ❖ **World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development** – 21 May
- ❖ **Pride Month** – June
- ❖ **Carers week** – 8-14 June
- ❖ **Refugee week** – 15-21 June

2026 EDI Newsletter Publication dates

26 June (deadline for submissions 5 June)

25 September (deadline for submissions 4 September)

19 December (deadline for submissions 4 December)



Thought for the day..

As we journey through Lent and approach Holy Week, we are invited again into a season of reflection, patience, and quiet faithfulness. It is a time that reminds us that meaningful change often begins in unseen, ordinary moments, in conversations, in persistence, in choosing to show up with care.

For those of you working across districts, circuits and within local churches, much of what you do may not always be visible or immediately recognised. Yet your work matters deeply.

Each step you take towards inclusion, each space you help to open, each voice you help to be heard, reflects something of the Gospel lived out in practice.

Lent holds space for both challenge and hope.

It acknowledges the weight of what is difficult, while gently pointing us towards renewal. As we approach Holy Week, we are reminded that transformation often comes through courage, through standing alongside others, and through a commitment to dignity even when the path is not straightforward.

Please be encouraged in knowing that your work is seen, valued, and shared across the Connexion, there are many walking this same path with you, each contributing in their own way to a more just and welcoming Church.

Hold onto the quiet impact of what you are doing.

It is making a difference.