

Memorials M3, M4, M5, and M6 (2025)

The XXXXX Synod draws the attention of the Conference to the current housing crisis in the UK. A shortage of truly affordable homes is pushing more people into homelessness than ever before.

Record numbers of people are stuck for years in temporary accommodation that harms their health. This includes over 164,000 children in England who are growing up in unsafe conditions, restricting their life chances and trapping them in poverty.

People are being forced to sleep on friends' sofas, fearing they have overstayed their welcome, and thousands are left to face the danger of sleeping on the streets.

This is all having a huge impact on wellbeing, health, employment, education, community cohesion and it is happening in every part of the UK, affecting all the communities we serve, whether they are urban, rural or coastal, or in areas of affluence or deprivation.

Local paragraphs from the four Districts were added here

It should be recognised that this housing crisis harms us all and that The Methodist Church can play its part in responding to the housing need, particularly in so far as it affects the poorest and most marginalised in our communities.

Such a response by The Methodist Church would strengthen communities, combat poverty, reduce destitution, and increase wellbeing and flourishing. Everyone needs a safe, secure, affordable and warm home in order to live well.

However, there are currently legal limitations for churches, circuits, and districts who wish to respond by selling or leasing land or buildings to provide accommodation. An increased provision of accommodation for those affected by the shortage of genuinely affordable housing and of good quality emergency provision including modular requires more flexibility to facilitate this work.

Conference (i) affirms that the provision of genuinely affordable homes and of emergency accommodation is an integral part of the mission of The Methodist Church as a sign of the gospel of Jesus Christ and as an outworking of our commitment to be a justice seeking church and is furthering the purposes of The Methodist Church ;

(ii) recognises the rich heritage of the Methodist Church and celebrates the work that Methodist churches, circuits, districts and others are engaged in to meet local housing need, including emergency accommodation. The Conference strongly encourages the Methodist people to consider what more they can do to tackle the housing and homelessness crisis in their area;

(iii) directs the Connexional Council to consider the steps to be taken to achieve greater flexibility in order to facilitate (i) and (ii) above;

(iv) directs Districts and Circuits to identify suitable manses, church premises, buildings, and land that could be used to meet housing need.

Reply

The Conference thanks the Synod for its memorial, and for highlighting the current housing situation in its areas and across the UK. The Conference is troubled by the current levels of homelessness, numbers of people in temporary accommodation and shortage of affordable housing, and notes that the housing crisis impacts individuals and communities throughout the Connexion, in both urban and rural contexts. The Conference recognises that the Church can and should play a part in addressing the systemic causes of homelessness and the housing crisis, including through advocacy and practical responses.

The Conference therefore agrees with the general intentions of the memorials. It affirms that the provision of genuinely affordable homes and of emergency accommodation can be an integral part of the mission of The Methodist Church as a sign of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and can further the purposes of The Methodist Church as an outworking of our commitment to be a justice seeking church. In living out the gospel of Jesus Christ, the provision of genuinely affordable homes and of emergency accommodation may be a powerful response to this call.

The Conference recognises the rich heritage of the Methodist Church and celebrates the work that Methodist churches, circuits, districts and others are engaged in to meet local housing need, including emergency accommodation. **The Conference strongly encourages the Methodist people to consider what more they can do to tackle the housing and homelessness crisis in their area.**

The Conference reminds churches, circuits and districts that the Property Support Team is available to support Managing Trustees in considering how they can use property and land missionally, including to address housing need and homelessness.

The Conference also notes that for a variety of reasons, including the legal frameworks within which charities have to operate, this is not always straightforward work to pursue. For that reason, the Conference believes that a review should be undertaken to understand and clarify the legal, procedural, practical and resourcing issues involved in enabling Methodist buildings and land to be used to meet housing need.

The Conference notes that learning may be gathered from ecumenical partners around these questions, particularly from the work that has been undertaken in the Church of England following the report of the Archbishops' Commission on Housing, Church and Community (2021), which was supported by the Methodist Church.

The Conference therefore directs the Connexional Council to undertake a review of the issues highlighted in the Memorial and report to the Conference in 2026. It is recognised that this will require input from various stakeholders across the Connexion.