

24. Methodist Homes (MHA)

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Thank you to our Methodist family for your continued generosity and partnership. Your commitment to Methodist Homes' (MHA) mission – to help people live later life well is rooted in a shared calling to justice, dignity, and compassion. Your support strengthens our work and helps ensure that older people are valued, heard, and supported with love and respect.

1 General Report

- 1.1 At MHA, we exist to help older people live later life well. Founded by the Methodist Church in 1943, our roots lie in a vision of social justice where every person is seen, valued, and supported. Through creating communities of care, we offer older people support, belonging, dignity, and meaning.
- 1.2 In this year's report, we share how we are navigating a time of change – rooted in our Methodist values, responsive to the complex needs of our time, and preparing faithfully for the future.
- 1.3 A key part of this preparation has been the launch of our new Strategy for 2025–30, "People, Places and Processes: Together as One MHA". This strategy is both a continuation of our journey and a renewed commitment to inclusive, person-centred care across all that we do.
- 1.4 Over the past two years, we have developed blueprints to shape the future of our care homes, retirement living schemes, community services and central support teams. They form the foundation of our new strategy, bringing our purpose to life by creating environments that support people physically, emotionally, and spiritually. They respond to today's challenges while opening up space for growth and innovation. Whether reimagining what it means to live in a care home or retirement living setting, or deepening sustainable community connections, the Blueprints are a vital expression of our mission to enable older people to live later life well.
- 1.5 This new strategy also leads us forward, after what has been an unprecedented period of challenge, not only for social care for older people, but for the nation as a whole. The long shadow of the pandemic has taken an immense human and financial toll on our sector, followed by the energy, workforce and cost of living crises. The ongoing worsening of public funding for adult social care also continues to play its part.
- 1.6 As a consequence, measures taken by MHA since the pandemic, to ensure its financial sustainability, are also embedded within this strategy and will crucially inform our plans for growth and sustainability, currently being developed.

2 Governance and accounts

- 2.1 Effective leadership has been essential in helping MHA navigate this recent period of change. As we continue to adapt and grow, the role of our Board of Trustees remains vital in providing oversight and direction.
- 2.2 All of MHA's Trustees are appointed for a three-year term and can serve up to three terms. Last year, the Methodist Conference appointed the Revd Derek McLean to the Board of Trustees, replacing the Revd Ruth Gee who served for five years.
- 2.3 We also welcomed Frances Beves, Richard Humphries, Archana Srivatsa and Cathy Kerr as new trustees for MHA. We very much look forward to working with them and benefitting from the expertise they bring to the Board.
- 2.4 They replace Lisa Commane (who served for six years), Martin Burkitt (nine years), and Bala Gnanapragasam (nine years). We thank them for their wisdom and guidance during their time as trustees.

- 2.5 The latest annual report and accounts are available from our website www.mha.org.uk or are available on request from Epworth House.

3 Chaplaincy Feedback from Residents and Relatives

- 3.1 In 2025, as part of our annual care home resident and relative survey, we received truly affirming feedback about the support our chaplains provide. The survey received 4,000 responses, representing 70 percent of residents and relatives.

- 3.2 Key results included:

- 97% of residents agreed that the chaplain contributes positively to the life of their home or scheme.
- 95% of relatives said that the chaplain helps provide spiritual and emotional reassurance to their loved one.

- 3.3 Individual responses from both residents and relatives also suggest an intrinsic link between speaking with a chaplain and feeling safe, part of a community and comforted when unwell or approaching end of life.

4 Changes in Chaplaincy

- 4.1 The survey affirms both the strong value placed on chaplaincy and the need to sustain it into the future. To support MHA's financial sustainability, we restructured the chaplaincy leadership and central support model, while preserving the amount of time chaplains spend with residents, relatives and colleagues.
- 4.2 The most significant change is that chaplaincy support is now aligned with MHA's nine care home regions, rather than with Methodist Districts. This is intended to support clearer communication and more consistent operational oversight. Each District, however, continues to have a named point of contact within the Chaplaincy Support Team.
- 4.3 Leadership of the department now rests with the Revd Sam Cowling-Green, our Head of Chaplaincy, who joined us a year ago. He reports directly to the Chief Executive. We were also delighted to appoint Abigail Ogier to the new role of Deputy Head of Chaplaincy. This role has been introduced to strengthen leadership capacity and provide additional support to the national team of over 100 chaplains. As part of the broader review of chaplaincy, the decision was taken not to recruit to the role of Director of Chaplaincy and Spirituality.
- 4.4 Engagement with local Methodist churches continues to play an important role in sustaining chaplaincy across MHA. If you would like to explore how to support older people in your community, whether through prayer, volunteering, partnership, charitable giving, or by inviting an MHA chaplain to speak, please contact us at chaplaincy@mha.org.uk.

5 Ongoing Engagement with the Methodist Church

- 5.1 Our relationship with the Methodist Church remains a vital and valued part of MHA's identity. Sam Monaghan, our Chief Executive, continues to meet regularly with the Secretary of the Conference, the Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler.
- 5.2 In 2025, we have also begun meeting with Jo Hibbard, the connexional Director of Engagement, to explore new ways of deepening our connection with the wider Church. These conversations are helping us to explore how MHA's work can resonate more fully with the life of the Methodist Church.
- 5.3 Looking ahead, we are keen to renew and strengthen our relationships with District Chairs across the Connexion. We recognise the pivotal role they play in shaping local mission and ministry, and hope to create more opportunities for meaningful partnership – rooted in our shared commitment to dignity, compassion, and community in later life.

- 5.4 We're grateful that 59 of our care homes and retirement living schemes are supported by their local Methodist church through regular acts of worship. If your church would like to explore how you can support older people in your area – through worship, volunteering, or partnership – please get in touch with us.

6 MHA Sunday 2025

- 6.1 MHA Sunday 2025 takes place on 8 June although churches are, of course, able to choose their own date to celebrate. This year's theme focused on supporting people living with dementia, rooted in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37). Through the story of Irene, an MHA resident, we explore the importance of mutual care and belonging in later life. As 8 June falls on Pentecost, churches are welcome to mark MHA Sunday on an alternative date, such as 13 July, when the parable appears in the lectionary.
- 6.2 MHA Sunday offers churches a timely opportunity to reflect on how we respond, both as individuals and as Christian communities, to the needs of those living with dementia, and to consider what it means to be a good neighbour in later life.
- 6.3 A full set of free worship resources is available, including an order of service and sermon outline, a short video of Irene's story, and prayers, hymns and content suitable for all-age worship. Download them at mha.org.uk/get-involved/fundraise/mha-sunday

7 Organisational changes

- 7.1 In the past year we completed the sale of ten of our care homes announced in 2023. Sadly, we had to close one of the homes, but eight successfully transferred to new owners, and one remains with MHA.
- 7.2 In May 2024, we announced the closure of a further two care homes which, due to high levels of publicly funded places, were loss-making and MHA could not continue to subsidise them.
- 7.3 As part of the strategic review which led to the sale of the care homes, we also looked at the types of retirement living we currently offer and the future needs and wishes of older people. We examined the different types of leases and rental arrangements we have and where we would like to create a more consistent approach in the future. The work led to the announcement of plans to sell 14 of our retirement living schemes and remove care from six of these along with another two schemes.
- 7.4 These decisions were taken with deep regret, but out of necessity for us to best steward our resources responsibly, and shape MHA for the future, so that we can continue offering care to those who need it most.
- 7.5 Organisational changes also affected our MHA Communities and Central Support services.
- 7.6 MHA Communities schemes play a vital role in our charitable mission, but delivering these requires significant and ongoing financial investment, especially with grants to support this vital work being harder to secure. In the past year we have had to sadly close three schemes due to us no longer being able to financially support them.
- 7.7 With the contraction of our operational services, we also looked at our Central Support functions. As a result, a number of teams have been restructured, resulting in the loss of some roles.
- 7.8 At the time of reporting, MHA now has 75 care homes, 59 retirement living schemes and 39 MHA Communities schemes. We currently support more than 16,000 older people and remain the country's largest charitable care provider.

8 Looking forward

- 8.1 As we look to the future with our new strategy, our charitable calling remains the same: to enable older people to live later life well in body, mind and spirit. We do this in close partnership with the Methodist Church, drawing on our shared heritage and the enduring values that first gave rise to MHA. Inspired by the vision of the Rev. Walter Hall, and sustained by the prayers, presence and support of local churches, we continue to respond to the needs of our time with compassion and conviction. In all that lies ahead, we remain committed to building inclusive communities of care and to pursuing justice for older people – so that every life is valued.

Thank you for standing with us as we build communities of care, rooted in justice, where every older person can live later life with dignity and purpose.

*****RESOLUTION**

24/1. The Conference received the Report.