

LONDON
MOVEMENT for
RECOVERY
SUMMIT 2026

13TH OCTOBER 2026
ST PAUL'S HAMMERSMITH
LONDON

SUMMARY & REFLECTIONS REPORT



MOVEMENTFORRECOVERY.LONDON

INTRODUCTION

The London Movement Summit 2026 brought together leaders from churches, charities, community organisations and civic institutions to explore how greater collaboration can strengthen communities across London.

Building on the momentum of the 2025 Summit, this year's gathering focused on moving from understanding the contribution of faith communities to developing practical partnerships that address some of London's most pressing challenges.

Hosted by Andy Frost (**Gather Movement** and **Share Jesus International**) and Tania Bright (**Home for Good**), the morning combined new mapping insights, examples of local collaboration and borough-based discussions, encouraging delegates to leave with meaningful next steps.

The Summit was framed around three priorities:

- **Awareness:** Developing a greater understanding of the challenges facing London and the contribution of faith communities.
- **Inspiration:** Learning from examples of effective collaboration between churches, charities and civic organisations.
- **Action:** Identifying practical next steps that participants could take together in their own boroughs.





THE STORY SO FAR: MAPPING FOR IMPACT

Mark Cowling (**Gather Movement**) shared the growing impact of faith-based mapping, which is helping civic leaders understand the scale of services delivered by churches and other faith organisations.

Where mapping is commissioned by civic authorities, it includes organisations from across different faith communities. While this wider work is important, the focus of Mark's presentation at this year's Summit was specifically on the contribution of churches.

With mapping underway or completed across 58 local authority areas nationally, the research is revealing a substantial network of community support that often goes unrecognised. In Hillingdon alone, 389 regularly delivered church-based services had been identified.

The Summit heard how this work is developing across London:

- **Hillingdon:** Laura Laryea (Hillingdon Hubs and Children's Centres) described how mapping is opening opportunities for closer collaboration between the council and faith organisations supporting families.
- **Bromley:** Derek Holl (**Transform Bromley Borough**) and Helayna Jenkins (Bromley Council) reflected on progress since last year's mapping, including work towards stronger connections between faith organisations and council services.
- **Ealing:** Linda Ward (West London Leaders) and Anna Elliott (previously Ealing council) shared how the previous Summit inspired local action, leading to new relationships, interfaith collaboration and £15,000 of council funding.

A clear message emerged: mapping is not simply about gathering information. Its value lies in creating connections, identifying opportunities and enabling organisations to work together more effectively.

"The mapping is just the start of a journey."

MARK COWLING

WHAT IS FAITH-BASED SOCIAL ACTION MAPPING?

Mapping identifies the social action being delivered by churches and faith organisations across a local area, providing valuable insight for civic and health authorities. By understanding what is already happening, mapping can help build stronger connections, collaboration and networks between faith communities and local partners.

You can see the results of the mapping of Bromley from 2025 and the results of this year's mapping of Hillingdon using the QR codes. Gather Movement are in the process of mapping eight more London Boroughs, if you want to find out more about mapping and download the full report visit gathermovement.org/mfr



**VIEW THE
BROMLEY
REPORT**



**VIEW THE
HILLINGDON
REPORT FULL
SUMMARY**



LONDON'S SHARED CHALLENGES

Prior to the Summit, the Movement for Recovery steering team asked civic leaders across London where they saw the greatest opportunities for churches and the civic sector to work together. Three key priorities emerged, which became the focus of this year's Summit:

- Tackling Poverty and Creating Opportunity
- Building Resilient Communities
- Supporting Children, Young People and Families

Three speakers explored these pressures facing communities across the capital.

TACKLING POVERTY AND CREATING OPPORTUNITY

Max Stafford (Head of Policy and Public Affairs, **Christians Against Poverty**) highlighted the scale of financial insecurity across the UK, sharing CAP's research showing that 29% of people have less than £200 in savings. With the median monthly rent for a one-bedroom property in London at £1,850, many households have little protection against unexpected costs. He also highlighted council tax debt as a significant issue for people seeking support.

He emphasised the importance of better connecting data and services to understand the challenges people face throughout their lives. As an



example, CAP's debt centre in Cricklewood had recruited an adviser from the Iranian community after examining who was accessing its services, helping to overcome barriers and reduce the stigma associated with debt.

Across London, CAP operates 25 debt centres and has more than 50 money coaches, supporting over 2,000 people. Max encouraged closer collaboration between churches, charities and civic organisations, including partnerships around employment support and financial education. His challenge was to turn conversations into action and work together to tackle poverty more effectively.

BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Alison Tsang, (Head of **Compassionate Communities**, Diocese of London) reflected on the pressures contributing to division and polarisation across London, particularly loneliness, anxiety and fear, and the growing difficulty of having conversations across differences. She shared how churches have responded to the needs of refugees and asylum seekers, sometimes facing hostility themselves, while continuing to provide support and places of welcome.

She highlighted the unique contribution churches can make in tackling isolation through community groups, drop-ins, meals and other spaces where people can simply belong. Recalling a conversation with someone who had experienced



homelessness, she explained how being known by name, rather than

treated as a case or service user, can make a profound difference.

Alison encouraged churches and civic organisations to create more opportunities for people from different backgrounds to meet, listen and build relationships. She shared the example of a community supper club in Islington that brings refugees, migrants and local residents together around a meal. These seemingly ordinary encounters, she suggested, lay the foundations for stronger communities that can respond together when challenges arise.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

Tom Isaac (Capacity Building Lead, **London Violence Reduction Unit**) explored how violence affecting young people can be prevented through early intervention and stronger partnerships. He explained the Violence Reduction Unit's public health approach, which brings together education, health, local



authorities,
voluntary
organisations and
faith communities to
address the factors that
contribute to violence.

He highlighted the significant contribution churches already make, from providing safe spaces and trusted adults to mentoring, safeguarding, family support and rehabilitation. The Violence Reduction Unit is exploring this contribution further and, through **Power the Fight**, providing free training to help faith leaders and communities recognise risks, understand exploitation and respond appropriately.

Tom encouraged churches to combine preparation and training with purposeful partnerships and practical local action. He shared the example of Oak London in Bethnal Green, which supports young men experiencing isolation, mental health challenges and difficulties following time in care or the criminal justice system. He also highlighted how churches can work with established organisations that provide the training and infrastructure needed to deliver effective local programmes.

Together, the presentations demonstrated that these challenges are deeply interconnected, requiring responses that extend beyond individual organisations or sectors.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE PANEL

Victoria Mason (Metropolitan Police volunteer, Empathy Action and Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Service), Rev Nims Obunge MBE DL (Freedom's Ark and **The Peace Alliance**) and Bishop Alastair Cutting (Diocese of Southwark) reflected on the opportunities and barriers to collaboration.

The discussion reinforced the importance of trust, understanding and sustained relationships. Effective partnership is not simply about organisations sharing resources, but recognising the contribution each can make and building the confidence to work together.





PARTNERSHIPS THAT WORK

The Summit heard practical examples of how churches, charities and civic organisations are working together to support people and strengthen communities.

TACKLING POVERTY IN ENFIELD

In Enfield, 16 churches work together through Enfield Churches Debt Centre, partnering with **Christians Against Poverty** to provide free debt advice, money coaching, job clubs and life skills support across the borough. Nicky Routledge (**Enfield Churches Debt Centre**) explained how relationships with the council, Citizens Advice, Jobcentre Plus and other local organisations have enabled people to access more joined-up support. Sharon Jacques, now a CAP Debt Centre Manager in Harrow, shared her own journey from experiencing debt to helping others find financial stability.

One particularly powerful example involved a family of six facing overwhelming debt, unemployment and language barriers. Through collaboration between CAP, **Citizens Advice, Acts 435**, local churches and volunteers, the family received debt advice, food provision and practical household support, eventually becoming debt free from more than £30,000 of debt. The mother went on to volunteer locally, while her daughter secured employment through CAP's job club support. Their story demonstrated how coordinated support can restore confidence, create opportunities and transform lives.

Grace Advocacy and **Spear** provide similar support.



SUPPORTING FAMILIES IN SLOUGH

Catherine Barker (Director of Advocacy and Mobilisation, **Spurgeons**) and Lucy Newton (Cippenham Baptist Church) shared how a small church in Slough has developed a partnership with the local authority to provide greater support for children and families. Despite having a congregation of around 30, Cippenham Baptist Church has become part of the local family hub network, helping families access services and support. Marie-Claire Avis from Slough Borough Council, highlighted the value of working with trusted community organisations to identify needs earlier and help families before difficulties escalate.

Lucy shared the example of a mother who attended the church's summer activities while struggling with several challenges. Through the relationships established with local services, the church was able to connect her with a family hub and health visitor. When she returned to the toddler group in September, she spoke of the difference that support had made. The church is now developing

its facilities to provide more activities and support on site, demonstrating how even a small congregation can play a significant role in strengthening local family provision.

CREATING BELONGING THROUGH FOSTERING

Billy-Jo O'Leary (Church and Community Relationship Team Leader, **Home for Good**) shared Home for Good's vision for a society where no family feels alone and every child has a home in which they can flourish. Working alongside children's social services and churches, the organisation supports families facing difficulties and encourages individuals and households to consider fostering, adoption and supported lodgings. Billy-Jo highlighted that around 9,000 children and young people were in care across London, with one in five living more than 20 miles from home, demonstrating the importance of local families and communities offering support.

An interview with foster carer Andrew illustrated the difference a welcoming church community can make. After the death of his wife, Andrew pursued their shared interest in fostering and welcomed a young boy into his family. He described how his church had embraced his foster son, providing a place where he felt loved, accepted and able to belong. The story highlighted that supporting children in care extends beyond individual foster families, with churches able to provide a wider network of friendship, encouragement and practical care.





BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

A panel exploring community resilience brought together Abigail Bate (**Good Faith Partnership**), Paul Pickhaver MBE (**City Changer Projects**), Yinka Afuwape (Joy House Brent and Jet Out2Reach) and Bishop Rob Wickham (**Church Urban Fund**).

The discussion considered how churches can strengthen neighbourhoods through their relationships, resources and commitment to local people.

Abigail highlighted opportunities for faith communities to engage with the **Pride in Place** programme. Paul shared an approach to community engagement

based on stepping in, standing with and strengthening others, while Yinka and Bishop Rob reflected on the importance of safe spaces, local relationships and recognising the assets already present within communities.

The conversation challenged churches to move beyond simply delivering activities and consider how they can help communities develop lasting resilience.

The emphasis was on working with communities, rather than simply doing things for them.



INSIGHTS FROM THE BOROUGH DISCUSSIONS



Throughout the morning, delegates met in borough and pan-London groups, sharing experiences and exploring opportunities for collaboration.

In the final roundtable discussions, each group was encouraged to identify one insight and one practical action to take forward.

Several common themes emerged:

- **Making connections:** Delegates recognised the importance of knowing which organisations are already working locally and creating opportunities for them to meet.
- **Building on mapping:** Boroughs at different stages of mapping discussed how the findings could support stronger partnerships and better coordination.
- **Working across sectors:** Participants highlighted opportunities for closer relationships between churches, councils, charities and other community organisations.
- **Turning ideas into action:** Groups recognised the need for continued conversations, clear responsibilities and practical follow-through.

While the boroughs face different challenges, the discussions demonstrated a shared commitment to moving beyond isolated projects towards more connected local responses.

FROM CONVERSATION TO ACTION

The borough feedback highlighted a range of practical commitments and emerging opportunities.

Enfield identified mapping as a priority, recognising that stronger knowledge of local provision would help organisations work together.

Bromley proposed smaller, focused conversations around family hubs and other areas of shared interest.

Croydon and Lambeth reflected on strengthening church networks and developing the relationships needed to support future collaboration.

Brent raised the important challenge of ensuring mapping leads to meaningful action rather than becoming an end in itself.

Southwark highlighted opportunities to explore the role of churches in housing and wider community support.

Pan-London groups emphasised sharing resources, reducing duplication and finding ways for organisations to complement one another's work.

These actions represent different starting points, but share a common ambition: to strengthen collaboration so that local communities benefit.





A CITY-WIDE PERSPECTIVE

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard, Deputy Mayor for Communities and Social Justice, offered a closing reflection on the vital contribution of faith and community organisations across London.

She highlighted the importance of community spaces that welcome people from all backgrounds, sharing how 420 organisations had applied for support through the Mayor's Loved and Wanted campaign.

At a time when division and hostility can threaten community relationships, she recognised the importance of those who continue to open their doors, challenge hatred and offer practical support to vulnerable people.

Her contribution reinforced the significance of the Summit's central message: London is strengthened by the many organisations and individuals committed to serving their neighbours, often quietly and without recognition.

Poet Naomi Hutchison also contributed two spoken word reflections, *Together* and *Some Angels Wear Jeans*, celebrating the power of collective action and everyday acts of kindness.

KEY TAKEAWAYS & NEXT STEPS

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Mapping is a starting point

Understanding existing services helps make collaboration possible, but relationships and action must follow.

2. Trust takes time

Effective partnerships are built through consistency, openness and a willingness to understand different perspectives.

3. Communities have valuable assets

Churches and faith organisations bring people, buildings, experience and trusted relationships that can complement civic services.

4. Collaboration strengthens impact

Working together enables organisations to respond to complex challenges more effectively and avoid unnecessary duplication.

5. Local action matters

The next stage of the movement depends on turning shared ideas into practical commitments within London's boroughs.



FROM SUMMIT TO MOVEMENT

The Summit demonstrated both the scale of London's challenges and the potential that exists when organisations work together.

The next steps are clear: strengthen local relationships, develop mapping where needed, connect existing services and create opportunities for continued collaboration.

The measure of the Summit's success will not simply be the conversations held on the day, but the partnerships and actions that follow.



LONDON MOVEMENT for RECOVERY SUMMIT 2026

CONCLUSION

The London Movement Summit 2026 marked another step forward in strengthening relationships between London's faith, civic and community sectors.

From the progress of mapping in Hillingdon, Bromley and Ealing to the practical stories and borough commitments shared throughout the morning, the Summit demonstrated that meaningful change begins when people recognise what they can achieve together.

The challenge now is to maintain that momentum, turning awareness into stronger relationships, shared responsibility and practical action for the good of London's communities.

Sign up here if you'd like to receive e-updates about London Movement for Recovery.

LONDON
MOVEMENT for
RECOVERY
SUMMIT 2026
MOVEMENTFORRECOVERY.LONDON



This event was underwritten by SJL and Gather Movement.

