

1. Local Churches had the opportunity to share their basic membership and attendance statistics between the beginning of October 2019 and the end of February 2020. As in previous years, the response rate was high; only 71 of 4,110 societies across 9 of the 30 Districts (1.73%) did not provide a complete set of figures.
2. **As of 31 October 2019, there were almost 170,000 people who have made and sustained a commitment to Christian discipleship within the Methodist Church of Great Britain as active members of a local Methodist church.** While this represents a decrease of about 3,500 since October 2018, the decline has, compared to the previous two years, halved.
3. The attached District Summary reports show the membership and attendance of the societies reported as active (or “open”) at the time the statistics snapshot was recorded. This means that the total 2018 membership figure in the 2018 report differs from the total 2018 membership figure in the 2019 report as the more recent report does not include societies that have ceased to meet, become a class or merged during the latest statistical year. The total connexional membership figure for 2018 as per the statistical report published for the 2019 Conference is therefore 173,019, reflecting the membership of the 4,210 societies at that time. In the current report, the 2018 membership figure is listed as 169,351. This is the membership figure of the societies reported as active as of 1/11/2019, which are 110 fewer than at the time of the 2018 count. Two Districts (Birmingham and Northampton) have therefore actually experienced a decline in total membership while the 2019 report appears to show an increase. According to the year-on-year trend noted in the 2019 report, the overall membership of the active churches seems to have remained stable, although possibly aided by the change in the counting of joint or ecumenical members of Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) (see below).
4. The similar numbers of “transfers in” (3,588) and “transfers out” (3,688) shows that membership transfers between churches in case of societies becoming classes or two or more societies merging to form one multi-site entity did not lead to a significant loss of members. Deaths of members (5,574) remain the major cause of membership decline. The “other gains” (1,596) and “other losses” (5,016) figures are used to tidy up historical inaccuracies and other unknown membership movements.
5. In 2019, these options were also used to accommodate the **new way of counting members of LEPs**. The Methodist membership in LEPs is now defined as the number of LEP members (if any) being specifically members of the Methodist Church, including “joint” or “ecumenical” members. In previous years, joint or ecumenical members had not been counted as being part of the Methodist membership figure. For example, if a Methodist-Anglican LEP has 25 Methodist members, 25 Anglican members, 25 joint Methodist-Anglican members and 25 ecumenical members,

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then the numbers that should be recorded are: Total LEP Membership 100; Methodist membership 75. [Under the old counting system, the Methodist membership number would have been 25.] **The LEP membership recorded in 2019 was 29,217**, a small decrease from the 2018 figure of 30,941. There were no LEPs reported in the Channel Islands and Shetland.

- 6. The weekly estimated average attendance across the Connexion at typical worship services came to a total of just over 133,000.** This includes services on any day of the week and does not differentiate between adults or children, or whether attendees are Methodist members or not. It also does not focus on one month only (as previously captured in the traditional "October count"), but aims to give a better impression of

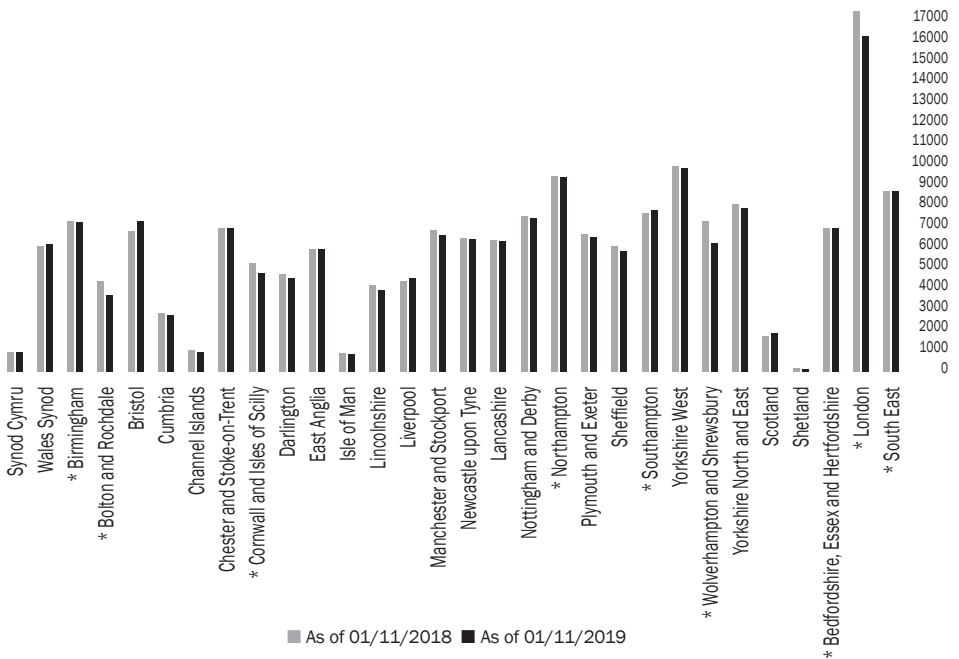


Figure 1: Comparison of Methodist membership figures between 2018 and 2019
 Membership was up in 7 and down in 23 Districts. London, Yorkshire West and Northampton reported the highest numbers of members.

average attendance figures throughout the whole year. Compared to the 2018 figure, this is a decline of about 7,000 attendees per week.

- 7. **Church closures** were reported in all but two Districts (Bolton and Rochdale, and Shetland). In about two thirds of cases, the reason for closure was the cessation of the society itself. The number of societies becoming classes or entering into a merged church was evenly split. One church reported a “de-merger”, resulting in a temporary increase of church numbers. Throughout the year, **112 changes of status** were reported, with a net decrease of 110 in the number of churches. This also included some historical closures that had not previously been brought to the Team’s attention.

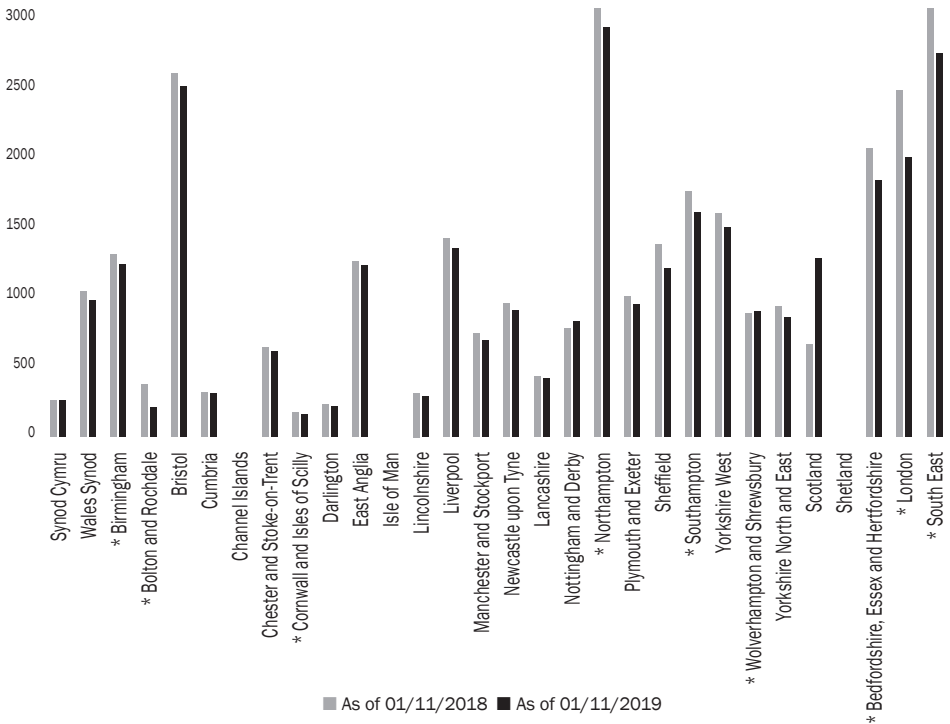


Figure 2: Comparison of Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) membership figures between 2018 and 2019

LEP Membership was up in 4 and down in 26 Districts. Northampton, the South East and Bristol reported the highest total membership numbers.

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- 8. The charts below give a simple overview of 2019 membership and attendance numbers**, including comparisons to the 2018 figures. Overall, the downwards trend continues, although there are some encouraging signs of growth, with a handful of Districts reporting increased numbers. Interestingly, an upwards or downwards trend in one category was not necessarily reflected in the other two. Only Scotland reported the same (upwards) trend in all three categories.
9. Figures reported are as submitted by Local Churches. Districts that had not submitted statistics for all of their churches are denoted by an asterisk (*).

Membership: Local Ecumenical Partnerships

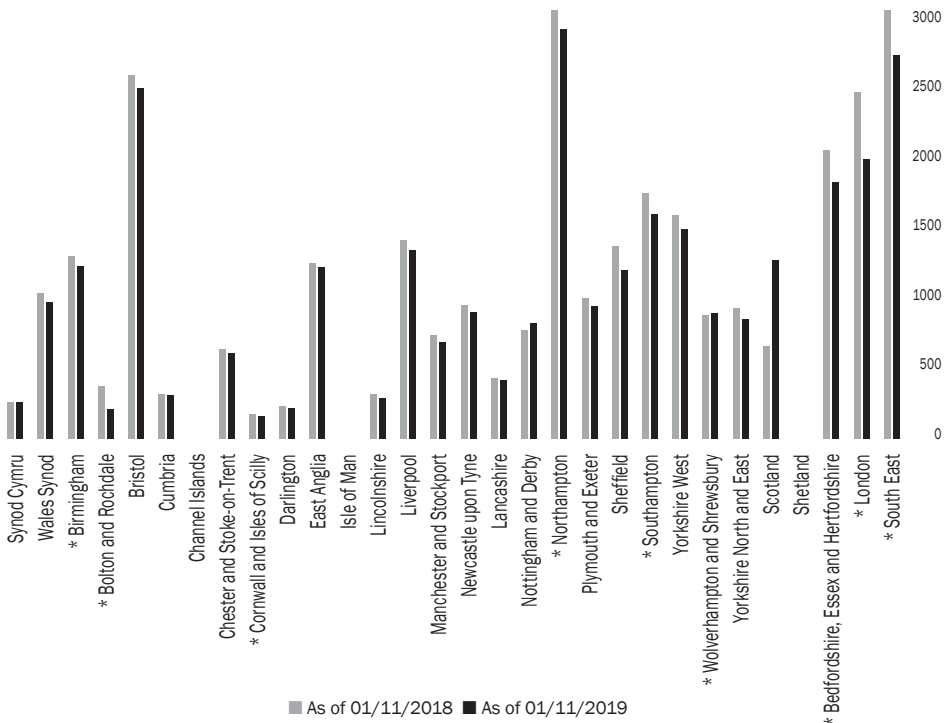


Figure 3: Comparison of estimated weekly attendance figures between the latest and previous statistical years

Estimated average attendance was up in 4 and down in 26 Districts. London, Northampton and the South East reported the highest number of attendees.

Raw data

District	2018 members	2019 members	2018 LEP members	2019 LEP members	2018 attendance	2019 attendance
Synod Cymru	933 [^]	866	260	261	622	685
Wales Synod	5,868	5,970	1,013	954	4,463	4,205
Birmingham *	7,035 [^]	6,952	1,269	1,204	5,236	4,903
Bolton and Rochdale *	4,234 [^]	3,618	376	211	3,125	2,537
Bristol	6,561	7,031	2,523	2,435	6,378	6,236
Cumbria	2,760	2,666	319	305	2,335	2,184
Channel Islands	1,006	934	0	0	840	762
Chester and Stoke-on-Trent	6,702 [^]	6,688	628	598	5,352	5,030
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly *	5,072 [^]	4,600	175	163	4,209	4,305
Darlington	4,543	4,377	227	215	2,961	2,928
East Anglia	5,758	5,745	1,223	1,197	5,702	5,612
Isle of Man	842	813	0	0	594	536
Lincolnshire	4,038	3,784	312	286	3,271	3,071
Liverpool	4,216	4,380	1,385	1,314	3,797	3,620
Manchester and Stockport	6,629	6,408	720	673	4,855	4,419
Newcastle upon Tyne	6,262	6,204	929	885	4,726	4,420
Lancashire	6,169 [^]	6,134	425	408	4,514	4,402
Nottingham and Derby	7,266	7,144	763	803	6,023	6,075
Northampton *	9,158 [^]	9,093	2,984	2,848	8,102	7,751
Plymouth and Exeter	6,459 [^]	6,301	981	920	5,696	5,418
Sheffield	5,858	5,651	1,343	1,175	5,186	5,045
Southampton *	7,423 [^]	7,537	1,706	1,564	6,490	5,897
Yorkshire West	9,628	9,513	1,558	1,456	7,626	7,191
Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury *	7,027 [^]	6,020	861	871	5,425	4,759
Yorkshire North and East	7,815 [^]	7,624	909	836	5,970	5,736
Scotland	1,648	1,830	651	1,246	1,114	1,157
Shetland	182	175	0	0	228	178
Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire *	6,694 [^]	6,742	2,005	1,780	6,030	5,479
London *	16,802 [^]	15,651	2,406	1,942	12,095	11,063
South East *	8,431 [^]	8,926	2,990	2,667	7,555	7,403

The 2018 members column shows the membership number of active societies in as reported to the 2019 Conference. [^] denotes a difference to the 2018 Methodist Membership figure listed in the current report dated 4 May 2020.

Districts that had not submitted statistics for all of their churches are denoted by *.

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*****RESOLUTION**

31/1. The Conference receives the Report.