Up to 50 people are to be trained to work as leaders on estate churches thanks to a generous grant from Allchurches Trust.
The Church of England has welcomed a grant of more than £155,000 from Allchurches Trust to provide support for leaders ministering on estate churches with a focus on encouraging work with children and young people.

The grant will help train 50 new leaders selected from estates and neighbouring communities over the next three years and a doubling of networks providing support for people ministering on estates.

The funding will help estate church leaders work in partnership with organisations to increase the number of children and youth groups working in areas such as courses on the Christian faith, education, wellbeing, crime reduction and improvements in the environment.

The award comes after the General Synod earlier this year overwhelmingly backed a drive to support estates ministry so that there will be a flourishing church presence on every significant social housing estate in the country. The work on estates is part of the programme of Renewal and Reform aimed at ensuring that the Church of England becomes a growing church for all people in all places.

Jeremy Noles, Allchurches Trust Grants Officer, said: “At the heart of our grant-giving is connecting churches with their communities and equipping them to meet the physical and spiritual needs of local people.

“Our grant to the National Estate Churches Network is aimed at resourcing the growing network of estate church groups across the country, and developing leaders who will act as catalysts for building impactful community partnerships on estates in Birmingham and London, with the learnings from these pilots then providing a blueprint for a national network.

“The focus on encouraging ministry with children and young people is also a great fit with our new Growing Lives programme, which offers funding to churches and Christian organisations to help them connect with local families.”

The Bishop of Burnley, Philip North, who heads the Church of England’s Estates Evangelism Task Group, said: “We are enormously grateful to Allchurches Trust for this generous grant which will be vital in helping us support those people, both lay and ordained, who are leading transformative work on housing estates, bringing the Good News of the gospel to all.

“This is yet more evidence of the Church of England’s commitment to carrying through its pledge at the General Synod to establish a loving, serving and worshipping Christian community on every significant social housing estate in country.”

Canon Andy Delmege, Chair of the National Estate Churches Network, said: “This grant comes at a critical point for the work of the Church of England on estates, at a time when residents and local services are under increasing pressure. Our vision is of estate churches that are a point of community cohesion, support and spiritual nourishment and, above all, a sign of hope for residents.”

Debbie Clinton, Director of Renewal and Reform, said: “Renewal of our ministry on estates is absolutely core to our vision of being a growing church for all people and places. I’m inspired by the joyful and faithful work that is already under way and delighted this has received such substantial support from Allchurches Trust.”
Notes to editors:

The National Estate Churches Network (NECN) is the main ecumenical partner for the Church of England in work to support estates ministry. The plans will be discussed at the NECN 2019 conferences later this month.

The Church of England has announced more than £8 million from its Strategic Development Fund (SDF) since 2017 for mission and ministry on deprived urban estates. The fund is part of the Church's Renewal and Reform programme.

Many churches and pioneer ministers working on estates already support social action projects such as school uniform banks and low-cost food provision. Examples of this include Blackpool’s Hope Community Church, which runs school uniform giveaways and a summer lunchbox project for children.

A fifth of the Church of England's 12,500 parishes are estimated to be 'estates parishes' meaning that they include at least 500 social housing units.

Allchurches Trust is one of the UK's largest grant making trusts with an aim of helping people and communities most in need. More information can be found here [https://www.allchurches.co.uk/about](https://www.allchurches.co.uk/about)