Association of British Paediatric Nurses
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Committed to promoting the development of children's nursing through evidence based information about practice and education

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Association of British Paediatric Nurses Marks International Nurses Day 2026 and Calls for Greater Support for Children's Nurses

On International Nurses Day 2026, the Association of British Paediatric Nurses (ABPN) proudly celebrates the outstanding contribution of children's nurses across the United Kingdom and joins the global nursing community in recognising this year's official theme: "Our Nurses. Our Future. Empowered Nurses Save Lives."

Led by the International Council of Nurses (ICN), this year's theme highlights the urgent need to empower nurses through safe and supportive working environments, strong professional leadership, access to education and development, and the ability to practise to the full extent of their expertise.

For children's nurses, this message is especially significant. Across neonatal units, children's wards, outpatient services, community teams, schools, specialist care settings, and emergency departments, children's nurses provide highly skilled, compassionate, and family-centred care to babies, children, young people, and their families. Their role is essential not only in delivering clinical excellence, but also in advocating for children, reducing health inequalities, supporting families, and improving lifelong outcomes.

Professor Bernie Carter, President speaking on behalf of the Association of British Paediatric Nurses, said:

> "On International Nurses Day 2026, we stand proudly with children's nurses across the UK and around the world in celebrating the vital role of nursing in shaping healthier futures for children and young people. This year's theme, 'Our Nurses. Our Future. Empowered Nurses Save Lives,' is a powerful reminder that when nurses are supported, valued, and enabled to lead, the impact is profound. Children's nurses bring specialist knowledge, compassion, and resilience to every aspect of children's healthcare. Investing in and empowering this workforce is essential if we are to deliver safe, high-quality care and better outcomes for every child and family."

International Nurses Day offers an important opportunity to celebrate the professionalism and dedication of nurses, while also drawing attention to the challenges they continue to face. The ABPN is calling for sustained investment in the

children's nursing workforce, including improved recruitment and retention, safe staffing, equitable access to education and professional development, wellbeing support, and greater recognition of children's nursing as a specialist and essential field of practice.

As demand for children's health services continues to evolve and grow, empowering children's nurses must remain a national priority. Ensuring that children's nurses are heard, supported, and equipped to lead will be critical to the future of healthcare across the UK.

The ABPN encourages healthcare leaders, policymakers, organisations, and the public to use International Nurses Day to celebrate nurses and reaffirm their commitment to strengthening the nursing profession for the future.

On this International Nurses Day, the Association of British Paediatric Nurses extends its heartfelt thanks to every children's nurse for their expertise, compassion, leadership, and unwavering dedication to children, young people, and families.

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Notes to Editors

International Nurses Day is celebrated annually on 12 May, marking the birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale, and is led globally by the International Council of Nurses (ICN). The 2026 theme is "Our Nurses. Our Future. Empowered Nurses Save Lives."

The Association of British Paediatric Nurses (ABPN) is the oldest children's nursing association in the world, established in 1938. Our wide membership includes experts in clinical practice, education, leadership and research. The ABPN is committed to supporting and championing paediatric nursing across the United Kingdom, promoting excellence in clinical practice, education, leadership, and advocacy to improve outcomes for babies, children, young people, and their families.

The term child refers to infants, children, young people and young adults up to 25 years of age.

The ABPN recognises that primary and community services, as well as child public health and mental health services, including school nurses and health visitors also have a key role in supporting children, young people and families.