

Protecting and safeguarding children and young people

Purpose

This position statement affirms the beliefs and values of the Association of British Paediatric Nurses. It has been produced by officers and members of the Association in line with our role to protect and safeguard children and young people, as well as to promote the development of children's nursing through evidence-based information about practice and education.

Background

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) of which the UK is a signatory has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child's life and set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights¹. This includes specific articles that relate to implementation of the Convention such as:

- Legislation to make sure every child can enjoy their rights by creating systems and passing laws that promote and protect children's rights (Article 4).
- The right to life, with Governments doing all they can to ensure that children survive and develop to their full potential (Article 6).
- Protection from violence, abuse and neglect which require Governments to do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them (Article 19).

In 2023 the UN committee identified that there had been some further progress across the UK to achieving the articles encompassed within the UN CRC and made a significant number of recommendations. In response the UK Government committed to implementing equal protection from assault legislation.²

The ABPN believes that

- Children and young people have a right to be protected and safeguarded from harm³
- The voices of children and young people should be heard and inform the development of policy, services and practice
- Infants, children and young people should receive care from nurses who have the right education, training, knowledge and skills to meet their needs, including that defined by the intercollegiate framework^{4,5,6,7}

For nurses this means:

- Children's nurses should be fully involved in multi-agency meetings, child protection plans, and ongoing support of children, young people and families

- For children's nurses, collaboration and professional curiosity are critical
- Children's nurses play a key role in early identification and ongoing support not just escalation
- All nurses working with babies, children, young people and families should reflect on how inequality affects access to services, safeguarding decisions and outcomes
- To protect babies, children and young people timely escalation is essential by all nurses working with adults who have children, as well as those who care for babies, children and young people.

The ABPN calls on the UK Government and the devolved nations to:

- Place children and young people at the heart of all policy-making decisions
- Ensure that legislation, policy, procedures and systems in place protect and promote the welfare of children and young people
- Act upon recommendations from reviews and Independent inquiries
- Implement equal protection from assault legislation⁸
- Invest in accessible intercollegiate and interagency child protection and safeguarding education and training

Terms

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

About the ABPN

The ABPN is a network of children's nurses with a wide membership of experts in clinical practice, education, leadership and research. It is the oldest children's nursing association in the world, established in 1938.

www.abpn-uk.com

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References

¹ United Nations, 1989, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child - <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>

² See ABPN Position statement on children and young people's rights [abpn_position_statement_children_and_young_peoples_rights.pdf](#) and ABPN Background briefing on children and young people's rights [abpn_background_briefing_children_and_young_people.pdf](#)

³ See ABPN Position statement on children and young people's rights [abpn_position_statement_children_and_young_peoples_rights.pdf](#) and ABPN Background briefing on children and young people's rights [abpn_background_briefing_children_and_young_people.pdf](#)

⁴ Royal College of Nursing (2019) Safeguarding Children and Young People: Roles and competencies for health care staff

⁵ Association of British Paediatric Nurses Position Statement on Children and Young People's Rights [abpn_position_statement_children_and_young_peoples_rights.pdf](#) and Background Briefing paper on Children and Young People's Rights [abpn_background_briefing_children_and_young_people.pdf](#)

⁶ ABPN Position Statement on Children's Nurse Education [abpn_position_statement_nurse_education_final_24_november_2024.pdf](#) and ABPN Background Paper on Children's Nurse Education [abpn_cn_education_background_paper_final_22nd_november_2024.pdf](#)

⁷ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/national-standards-for-neonatal-qualified-in-specialty-qis-education/>

⁸ Noting that Wales and Scotland have already enacted legislation in this regard.