

Press release – embargoed until 00.00hrs 14th February 2025

14th February 2025

International Childhood Cancer Day – Inspiring action

Childhood Cancer Day aims to raise awareness about childhood cancer and the unique challenges faced by children, young people and their families.

Although cancer is uncommon among children, globally, 1,000 children are diagnosed with cancer every day, with more than 400,000 children, teenagers, and young adults under the age of 20 being diagnosed with cancer every year.

Around 1,900 children in the UK are diagnosed with cancer each year. The incidence of childhood cancer is noted to be on the rise in the UK. One child in 500 will develop some form of cancer by the age of 14 years¹. Cancer incidence is highest in children under five years old.

The most common types of cancer in children are leukaemia (30%), brain, Central Nervous System, and intracranial tumours (20%), and lymphomas (11%).

While the survival rate for children's cancer has more than doubled since the 1960s, there are around 250 cancer deaths in children in the UK every year.

Unlike cancer in adulthood, the underlying factors that contribute to childhood cancer are poorly understood, and only a small fraction of childhood cancers can be prevented. This means that the recovery of these children largely depends on the capacity of health systems to ensure timely diagnosis, early referral and appropriate treatment. 8 in 10 children can now be treated successfully.

Despite the advances in medicine and medical technology, cancer remains one of the leading causes of death from disease among children. The actual number of children who die because of cancer has been reducing due to specialised treatment and care, stemming from years of research and international clinical trials.

The 100,000 Genomes Project sequencing genomes from those affected by rare disease or cancer is leading to groundbreaking insights and potential treatments².

The ABPN acknowledges the important role of charities in the sector and the support they and specialist nurses provide to children, young people and families throughout their diagnosis and treatment journey.

¹ www.childrenwithcancer.org.uk/

² <https://www.genomicsengland.co.uk/initiatives/100000-genomes-project>

The ABPN believes that

- Every child has a right to access high quality health care services in age-appropriate facilities that meets their specific needs^{3,4}
- The voices of children and young people should be heard and inform the development and planning/ commissioning of services for them.
- Infants, children and young people should receive care from nurses that have the child specific knowledge, skills and competencies to meet their unique needs^{5,6}
- Child field specific pre-registration undergraduate education programmes, as well as specific post registration education is crucial to equip nurses to meet the needs of children and young people, including at home or closer to home in the community

“Nursing children and their families through their cancer journey requires skill, knowledge, competency and the ability to tailor care to the many challenges and uncertainties. This requires nurses to have access to high quality education and support structures to ensure that they can provide optimal care so they can sustain a robust nursing presence”

Professor Bernie Carter, President

Notes for editors

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.

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

X (formerly Twitter): @ABPN_ChildNurse

Facebook: Association of British Paediatric Nurses

Tik Tok: @ABPN_ChildNurse

-YouTube: @ABPN_ChildNurse

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 UN Declaration of Human Rights 1948 see <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights/>

⁵ See ABPN Position statement on Workforce planning nurse staffing

[abpn_position_statement_workforce_planning_and_nurse_staffing-final_nov_2024.docx](#) and ABPN

Background briefing on Workforce planning and nurse staffing

[abpn_workforce_planning_and_nurse_staffing_background_briefing_paper-final_nov_2024.docx](#)

⁶ See 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](#)-