

Press release – embargoed until 00.00hrs 11th December 2024

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UNICEF's Birthday

The 11th December marks the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) birthday, the date in 1946 when the UN General Assembly first established a fund¹ to provide aid to children across all of the countries affected by World War II.

Today, UNICEF operates across 192 countries and territories, providing immunisations, disease prevention, administering treatment for HIV, promoting education, addressing childhood and maternal nutrition, as well as sanitation issues and responding to disasters.

UNICEF's programmes of work focus upon the health and wellbeing of children and young people, highlighting their rights^{2,3}, and ensuring their voices are heard. During the Covid pandemic in 2020, UNICEF published respective guidance to support parents and families and for the first time made funds available to food banks in response to increasing food poverty in the UK. UNICEF estimated that a fifth of all children were going hungry across the UK.

UNICEF also support services for infants and children across services for children through UNICEF Baby and Child Friendly initiatives. In 2022, UNICEF reported that 97% of UK maternity services were working towards Baby Friendly accreditation and a number of councils participating in the Child Friendly Cities and Communities initiative.

A better future for everyone can be achieved by promoting and prioritising children's rights and involving them in decisions.

The ABPN believes that

- Every child has a right to an adequate standard of living⁴.
- Services for infants, children and young people should be age appropriate in facilities that meet their specific needs
- The voices of children and young people should be heard and inform the development and planning/ commissioning of services for them

¹ UNICEF is the successor of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

² See United Nations, 1989, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-wedo/un-convention-child-rights/>

³ See ABPN Position statement on Children and Young People's Rights and ABPN Background briefing on Children and Young People's Rights - [abpn_position_statement_children_and_young_peoples_rights.pdf](#) and [abpn_background_briefing_children_and_young_people.pdf](#)

⁴ See ABPN Position statement on Child Poverty and ABPN Background briefing on Child Poverty [abpn_child_poverty_position_statement_final.pdf](#) and [abpn_child_poverty_background_paper_final.pdf](#)

- Infants, children and young people should receive care from nurses that have the child specific knowledge, skills and competencies⁵.

“The global reach and work of UNICEF provides a lifeline for infants, children and young people focussing on early intervention to support and promote infant and child health, providing infrastructure support in many contexts including disaster situations. These humanitarian actions, their reporting of data on serious issues alongside their commitment to children’s rights mean that UNICEF is a serious force for good in a troubled world. Much of their work can inform the wider practice of child health care and children’s nursing”

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

⁵ See ABPN Background briefing on Workforce planning and nurse staffing [abpn_workforce_planning_and_nurse_staffing_background_briefing_paper-final_nov_2024.docx](#) and ABPN Position statements on workforce planning and nurse staffing [abpn_position_statement_workforce_planning_and_nurse_staffing-final_nov_2024.docx](#)