

**Press release – embargoed until 00.00hrs 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2025**

**24<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

**World Immunisations week - "Uniting for Universal Vaccine Coverage"**

The World Health Organisation spearheads the annual global campaign aimed at

- raising awareness of the importance of vaccines
- highlight the need for collective action to increase vaccine coverage
- ensuring that governments have the guidance and support to implement immunisation programs.

Since vaccines were introduced in the UK, diseases like smallpox, polio and tetanus that used to kill or disable millions of people have either been completely eradicated or are now very rare. Others like measles and diphtheria have reduced to a very low number of cases each year since vaccines were introduced. It is estimated that more recent vaccinations such as the introduction of HPV vaccination for school children could prevent over 110,000 cases of cancer by 2058<sup>1</sup>

Immunisation issues for children in the UK include inequities in uptake, and public concerns about vaccines since the Covid-19 pandemic.

Public health services across the UK have over recent years raised specific concerns regarding the low uptake of MMR immunisations. There is geographical and ethnic group variation in uptake. With lower uptake in London and amongst Black, African, or Caribbean groups.

When vaccination rates drop, diseases like measles are more likely to spread quickly. Measles, mumps, and rubella can cause serious illness and complications such as blindness and meningitis.

Educating children and young people within PSHE curriculum in schools is vital to ensure future generations understand the importance and benefits of immunisations.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/hpv-vaccine-could-prevent-over-100-000-cancers>

## The ABPN believes that

- Every child and young person has a right to have their specific needs recognised and addressed<sup>2,3</sup>
- Infants, children and young people should receive care from nurses that have the child specific knowledge, skills and competencies to meet their unique needs in age-appropriate facilities, at home or closer to home in community, schools and general practice settings<sup>4</sup>
- 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 across all settings, including at home or closer to home in community and general practice settings<sup>5,6</sup>
- Healthcare professionals should use every opportunity to discuss and promote immunisations with parents, children and young people.

“Vaccination is a powerful intervention that saves lives. Findings from a study published in 2024<sup>7</sup> note that “since 1974, vaccination has averted 154 million deaths, including 146 million among children younger than 5 years of whom 101 million were infants younger than 1 year ...[they] estimate that vaccination has accounted for 40% of the observed decline in global infant mortality, 52% in the African region”.

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.

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<sup>2</sup> 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](#)

<sup>3</sup> UN Declaration of Human Rights 1948 see <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights/>

<sup>4</sup> See ABPN Position statement on Workforce planning and 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](#)

<sup>5</sup> See ABPN Position Statement on Children’s Nurse Education

[abpn\\_position\\_statement\\_nurse\\_education\\_final\\_24\\_november\\_2024.pdf](#)

<sup>6</sup> See ABPN Background Paper on Children’s Nurse Education

[abpn\\_cn\\_education\\_background\\_paper\\_final\\_22nd\\_november\\_2024.pdf](#)

<sup>7</sup>Shattock, A. et al. Contribution of vaccination to improved survival and health: modelling 50 years of the Expanded Programme on Immunization. The Lancet, 403(10441):2307 – 2316

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.

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