RCPCH Spending Review submission September 2021

1. welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the 2021

- 4. The picture that is emerging from the impact of the pandemic on CYP shows child health outcomes have got worse over the last eighteen months. In addition, there are significant concerns about the paediatric backlog caused in relation to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), a doubling in the number of paediatric beds filled by CYP in hospital because of severe mental ill health³ and CYP with complex needs who usually access care in the community. This will compound worsening outcomes. There was also increasing demand on CAMHS before the pandemic started, and waiting times were already long in many areas.
- 5. In addition to pressures on paediatric health services now, many of the preventative and surveillance programmes such as routine immunisations, oral health checks and the ______ have been interrupted during the past eighteen months.⁴ This means we are storing up more health problems for the future by missing opportunities for early intervention.
- 6. We welcome the Government's commitment to Build Back Better post-pandemic, and in particular the emphasis placed on ensuring strong and innovative public services and levelling up the country.
- 7. Paediatric care should provide a safe, sustainable, high-quality, and modern service that meets the health needs of every child, young person and their families. Beyond this, services for children in each local area must be equipped to identify and meet local need. We have long called for a national Child Health and Wellbeing Strategy to provide a cross-government approach. It would identify and address the full range of child health issues in a co-ordinated way across all government departments and ensure child health outcomes across the UK are improved, and health inequalities are reduced.
- 8. In our submission to the SR, we consider how to ensure strong and innovative public services in the context of the paediatric service backlog caused by the pandemic and levelling up.
- 9. Ensuring strong and innovative public services for health is considerably contingent upon adequately addressing the backlog caused by the pandemic. RCPCH welcomes the additional funding for the NHS in England announced in September 2021 but shares concerns across the health sector that more investment will be needed. In addition, to improve child health outcomes, wider investment in public services in local communities is critical.
- 10. The nature of child health means it is difficult to get an accurate measure of the paediatric backlog. The latest data says over 267,000 CYP are currently waiting for

³ RCPCH, Impact of COVID-19 on child health services, 2021, available at:

NHS treatment, with significant variety between regional areas.⁵ However, it is unlikely this figure represents the full picture of the paediatric backlog. This is particularly the case with regard to ________ services where data are not captured in the same way as it is for primary and secondary services. Community child health is where most of the assessment and treatment for autism and behavioural difficulties take place. _______ the National Institute for Care Excellence (NICE) recommended waiting time of 13 weeks before the pandemic, and for some, waiting lists were 18 months long. The window for treatment or intervention to have a positive effect is smaller for CYP than it is for adults.

11.

- 14. Our ______ reveal a widening gap between the health of children from wealthy and deprived backgrounds. This is particularly acute with regard to obesity, where the most deprived children aged 4-5 years in England were 1.6 times more likely to be overweight than the least deprived.¹¹ Vulnerable groups such as Looked After Children (LAC) and young carers have significantly worse health outcomes than their non-vulnerable peers.¹²
- 15. The SR should act to tackle the root causes of disadvantage and inequality to ensure all children have the best start in life, regardless of where they live. There is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to level up the country by taking a cross-government strategic approach to child health and wellbeing.
- 16. The wider societal impacts of COVID-19 have both compounded and exposed the inequalities in health. Deprived communities have borne the brunt of the wider negative impacts of the pandemic.
- 17. Whilst CYP have overwhelmingly been spared the worst of the clinical impact of COVID-19, the response to the pandemic has had far-reaching negative effects on their health and wellbeing. This is largely because ______ in the health and wellbeing of all CYP

addition, serious incident notifications relating to children's safeguarding were up

in order to

improve child health outcomes across the country, help cement the UK as a science superpower and provide paediatricians and paediatric trainees with opportunities to undertake research across the course of their career.

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The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health is a registered charity in England and Wales (1057744) and in Scotland (SCO 38299)