

NHS 10 Year Health Plan - overarching policy briefing

[Health Policy team](#)

We call on all RCPCH members in England to input into the new 10 Year Health Plan for the NHS, both via the Change NHS Portal and through any Trust or regional opportunities. This is your opportunity to make the case for children and the child health workforce to be at the centre of plans for the NHS, and we need a strong collective voice to ensure they are not forgotten.

This briefing outlines our four overarching recommendations to the Government: to prioritise children's health in national plans, to ensure fair funding, to make devolution to Integrated Care Systems work better and to support a sustainable workforce.

We encourage members to use the evidence, key messages and recommendations provided here, and in our briefings on the three shifts, to support your own engagement on the 10 year plan.

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What is the 10 Year Health Plan?

In October 2024, the UK Government announced a new 10 Year Health Plan for the NHS in England and launched a major public engagement initiative to help shape it. The Prime Minister set out the government's vision for the future of the NHS in his 2024 State of the Nation speech.

We are calling on all RCPCH members in England to engage whenever possible: to take up any Trust or regional opportunities and to spend a few minutes filling in the Change NHS portal. This is your opportunity to make the case for the direction of health services over the next ten years, and to ensure children and the child health workforce are fully considered.

The Change NHS portal includes specific questions about what is working well in the NHS, the biggest challenges, your personal experiences and questions about each of the three shifts. It also has a section to submit your overarching ideas for change.

We would love to see the Change NHS portal flooded with suggestions related to children's health! Please look at our key messages and recommendations, and add your voice to Change NHS. Go to 'In case you missed it' section of the website and see:

- [Your experiences: workforce](#)
- [Your ideas for change](#)

Why we need change – the evidence and key messages

Child health outcomes have worsened and demand for health services has increased due to preventable and non-preventable causes of childhood illness

These include:

- **Respiratory illness** - Around one in 11 children live with asthma, and the UK has one of the highest rates of emergency admission for childhood asthma.
- **Medical complexity** - There has been an increase in the number of children with multiple conditions and life-limiting conditions, including a 250% rise in the prevalence of life-limiting and life-threatening conditions in childhood between 2001 and 2018.
- **Obesity** - Two and a half million children in England are affected by excess weight and obesity, and 1.2 million are living with complications from obesity. 23.4% of Year 6 children were obese in 2021/22, 80% of whom are predicted to remain obese as adults.

- **Mental health** - Almost one in five (18%) children aged 7-17 now has a probable mental disorder, a 50% increase from one in nine (12%) in 2017.

justice, labour market inactivity as well as within the health system).

Investing in children's health now is vital for the future economic wellbeing and health of the country.

What needs to change - RCPCH priorities

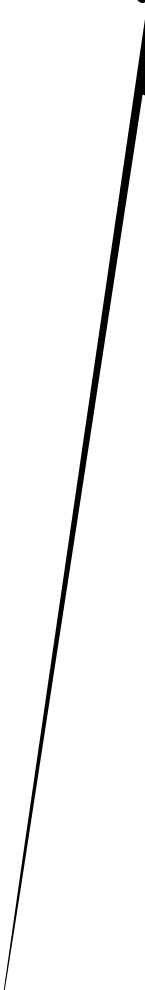
Paediatricians and the wider child health workforce are working hard to deliver safe and high-quality services for children and to implement innovative models of care. But they cannot do this alone. **We need a rebalancing of the health system so there is a greater focus on meeting the needs of children and young people.**

- **National prioritisation categories and risk frameworks must take into account the differential risks experienced by CYP (children and young people),** including the impact of long waits on children's healthy development and ability to participate in education.

2. Ensure fair funding for children

- **Introduce a Children's Health Investment Standard** to address the investment gap between child and adult health services. Similar to the Mental Health Investment Standard, this would require ICBs to increase their spending on children's health services at a faster rate than their spending on other services, and gradually move towards more equitable service funding.

3. Make devolution to Integrated Care Systems work better for children

- **Establish clear national oversight of Integrated Care System performance** for children and young people.
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Our [Blueprint for transforming child health services](#), published in September 2024, sets out these recommendations and the evidence for them in more detail.

External links

[Change NHS - Your experiences: workforce](#)

[Change NHS - Your ideas for change](#)