

RCPCH &Us

The voices of children, young people and families.

What helps children and young people to be healthy, happy and well?

Voices of children and young people across the UK

Thank you for looking at this report. We hope that you can use it to make a difference for children and young people in your work, community and life.

We are young people from RCPCH &Us, the children, young people and family network for the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health. We volunteer our time along with 1000s of others across the UK, to help improve health services, health care and children and young people's health. Why? Because we matter, our voices count and we have a right to have access to good health services and support to be healthy, happy and well.

RCPCH &Us started in April 2015 and since then, over 16,000 children, young people and their families have shared what matters to them. To celebrate our 10th birthday, we've been looking at what was important to volunteers in the past and what over 3000 children and young people have told us in the last year.

In 2025, children and young people shared their 10 health wishes for the next 10 years:

- Remember everyone's voice matters - mine too
- Involve me in making decisions about my care
- Consider me, and my life outside of health
- Think - how can I empower the child?
- Give me choices, and respect my decisions
- Be realistic with your advice and promises
- Explain things at my level
- Make the environment in which we meet a comforting one
- Make transition to adult services smoother
- Remember I am not my symptoms, I am me

Aiden, Bryn, Demi, Hanin, Hrutika, Prayksha, Natalia, Niamh, Sohan on behalf of RCPCH &Us

Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

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Our priorities

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Over the past 10 years, children and young people shared their priorities for decision makers:

2015-2019

Reducing the impact of poverty, improving mental health support, increasing health education, improving communication between health services and children/young people, creating child and youth friendly health services, improving transition, focus on children's rights, support for LGBTQIA+ health.

2020 – 2022

More accessible health information, improving mental health support, improved virtual health experiences, access to youth-friendly health services, skilled staff, accessible and inclusive support, focus on children's rights, reducing the impact of climate change.

2023 – 2024

Improving mental health support, focus on children's rights, access to youth friendly information and services, improving communication between health services and children/young people, increasing health education, reducing health inequalities.

Open for 2025 (*designed version has a poster in the centre for 2025*)

What is going to change over the next 10 years so that these things are no longer an issue for children, young people & families?

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(Poster)

What helps children and young people to be healthy, happy and well in 2025? We asked children and young people and they said...

Voice and rights

89% of children and young people said they want to be involved in sharing their ideas to improve the NHS. 85% wanted to help with training doctors and healthcare workers, with 95% saying doctors and healthcare workers should receive training on understanding children rights in health. Ensuring health services include children and young people, will help to make them better for the people using it.

Help to be healthy, happy and well

Having access to help before things become a big problem, more health education and support to live a healthy lifestyle is important to children and young people. 80% want this to be done together with health, education and in the community so there is help outside of the clinic too. Being able to meet other children and young people with the same experiences is a big help!

Accessing healthcare

95% of children and young people wanted to make sure there was equal access to good care for all, no matter what your background. 94% said that we should speed up getting treatment and being able to see someone who can help. 92% of children and young people wanted health services to be easier to find, understand and use.

The way healthcare is provided

Being able to see the same doctors, having consistent care and help for mental health as well as your physical health was seen as being important. Getting involved in training doctors and healthcare workers, and creating safe spaces to speak directly to children and young people, trusting them and their lived experience, will help to create the best possible healthcare workers and support services for children and young people.

Keep track of how you are helping children and young people to be healthy, happy and well

	Getting started	Working on it	Made changes
Voice and rights			
Help to be healthy, happy & well			
Accessing healthcare			
The way healthcare is provided			

Space to write your ideas, notes and next steps

Read the full data report: www.rcpch.ac.uk/voice-of-the-nation

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What matters to children and young people is important because we have a right to health care and our voices and ideas influencing the decisions that will have an impact on us. (UNCRC article 12 and 24).

The RCPCH &Us team have found out what matters to over 3000 children and young people in 2024/25, to improve their physical and mental health. The aim was to ensure their voices were heard and made a difference to decision makers responsible for child health across the UK.

We need you to get involved and help make a difference for children and young people.

You can:

- make sure children and young people's needs and wishes are remembered in the planning of health services
- actively promote and embed children's rights (UNCRC) in health services
- speak up for what matters for children and young people by using this report.

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