

*Sgrolwch i lawr i weld yn y Gymraeg*

## **It's Time Wales Started Putting Children First**

### **An open letter to political parties ahead of the Senedd election**

With only a few weeks to go before the Senedd election, we write as members and supporters of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) Wales to urge you to support our call and make the health and wellbeing of babies, children and young people a national priority.

A healthy childhood is the foundation for good physical and mental health in adulthood. Yet every day, child health professionals across Wales see significant challenges facing children and their families:

- Long waiting times for care and treatment, with mounting pressures on an overstretched workforce
- A third of our children growing up in poverty
- A quarter of our 4-5 year olds overweight or obese
- The rate of children and young people with a diagnosable mental health condition doubling over the past two decades.

Children's needs have too often been overlooked in a health system largely designed around adults. We cannot continue like this. Children cannot wait another Senedd term for things to change.

**The status quo is not an option. Children in Wales deserve to know they are a priority.**

We call on all political parties to put children at the centre of policymaking, address the historic underfunding of child health services and support the workforce that cares for them.

Investing in children's health is one of the most effective ways to build a healthier, fairer and more prosperous Wales. Giving child health services its fair share would reduce long-term pressures on the NHS and give more of our children the chance to thrive.

### **Our call to action**

We urge you, as a party leader, to:

- Commit publicly to prioritising the health of babies, children and young people in your campaign pledges
- Support positive change for child health by tackling poverty and mounting inequalities that harm children's health and wellbeing
- Meet with RCPCH representatives within the first 100 days of the new Senedd term and work with us to build a system that reflects the needs of the next generation.

**Find out more about RCPCH Wales's calls in our manifesto at [www.rcpch.ac.uk/Senedd-election-2026](http://www.rcpch.ac.uk/Senedd-election-2026)**

Signed,

170 paediatricians and child health advocates from across Wales.

#### **About the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH)**

RCPCH works to transform child health through knowledge, innovation and expertise. The RCPCH is responsible for training and examining paediatricians. We also advocate on behalf of members, represent their views and draw upon their expertise to inform policy development and the maintenance of professional standards. We have over 25,000 members, with 600 members in Wales.

For further information please contact Sarah Williamson, Policy and Public Affairs Manager, [Sarah.Williamson@rcpch.ac.uk](mailto:Sarah.Williamson@rcpch.ac.uk)

Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health  
Royal Charter and registered as a Charity in England and Wales: 1057744 and in Scotland: SCO38299.  
Registered Office 5-11 Theobalds Road, London WC1X 8SH.  
Patron HRH The Princess Royal