

The Second World War had an undeniable effect on the health of the population, both at home and abroad. Rationing and food shortages had a detrimental effect on nutrition, whilst damaged hospitals struggled to cope with an influx of casualties. Post war health issues were just as critical, as the care of orphaned children and injured servicemen remained a paramount issue for the health profession.

### **The BPA and the war effort**

By working alongside other organisations and individuals the founding organisation of the College, the British Paediatric Association (BPA), worked to safeguard the health of a children suffering from the effects of war. Principally, they sought to influence policy and support doctors and health professionals during the war effort.

At the outbreak of war, the BPA worked to ensure that there were sufficient provisions to ensure the health of evacuated children, and suggested founding a National Paediatric Emergency Service. The Executive Committee continued to meet regularly and considered numerous issues, including juvenile delinquency, neonatal mortality, immunisation, rickets, milk and vitamin D.

Post war, subjects included medical assistance for children, and the training of children's nurses.

### **Relevant records held at RCPCH**

- **Records on the founding of a National Paediatric Emergency Service (1939-1945)**  
*Ref: RCPCH/004/002/026, RCPCH/007/019, RCPCH/007/001*

Records regarding the establishment of a National Children's Service during World War Two and the evacuation of children. Includes correspondence, press cuttings and reports.

- **Meeting between the Minister of health and representatives of the British Paediatric Association (1939)**

*Ref: RCPCH/004/002/027*

Letter sent to members regarding the deputation sent to the Ministry of Health regarding a proposed National Paediatric Service to support evacuees.

- **Extract from a report of the Chief Medical Officer Meeting (1946)**

*Ref: RCPCH/004/003/073*

Extract of a report by the Chief Medical Officer 'On the state of the Public Health during six years of War', commending the British Paediatric Association.

- **Report on War Time Nurseries (1942)**

*Ref: RCPCH/004/002/098; RCPCH/007/002*

Report on war time nurseries prepared by a subcommittee, including information about play equipment, hygiene and food, and records relating to the standards of nurseries, particularly during the World War Two, including reports, correspondence with the National Society of Children's Nurseries and press cuttings.

- **Draft outline for discussion on the aims and scope of a post war maternity and child welfare service (1943)**

*Ref: RCPCH/004/002/131*

Report produced for a Conference on the Future of Maternity and Child Welfare, which was attended by members of the BPA

- **Cutting from the 'Express and Star' on a visit to The Royal Hospital by members of the BPA (1945)**

*Ref: RCPCH/004/003/022*

Article regarding a visit by members of the BPA to the Royal Hospital, Wolverhampton to discuss post war reconstruction of the hospital

- **Extract from a report of the Chief Medical Officer (1946)**

*Ref: RCPCH/004/003/073*

Extract of a report by the Chief Medical Officer 'On the state of the Public Health during six years of War', commending the British Paediatric Association.

- **Records on the evacuation children and the establishment of a National Paediatric Service (1939-1967)**

*Ref: RCPCH/007/019*

This file contains records concerning the evacuation children and the establishment of a National Paediatric Service, including correspondence between the BPA and various bodies on the evacuation of children during World War two and ensuring their health,

completed questionnaires from members on the possibility of establishing a National Paediatric Service and press cuttings.

- **Survey of Rickets during wartime (1943-1944)**

*Ref: RCPCH/013/001/005*

Records of the development of a survey of the incidence of rickets, including a sample questionnaire and a list of doctors available to take part in the survey.

- **Medical Research Council War Memorandum (1943)**

*Ref: RCPCH/011/008/196*

Booklet produced by the Medical Research Council during the war on the determination of blood groups.

**Reviewed September 2017**