

Dear Member of Parliament,

As doctors, midwives, nurses and allied health professionals, we urge you to support the [Infants, Parents and Carers \(Babies\) Bill](#) at its Second Reading on 4 September, and speak up for the opportunity this Bill presents to improve health outcomes for children.

The first 1,001 days, from conception to age two, lay the foundations for lifelong health, development and wellbeing. It is a critical window to promote good health and healthy development, prevent the onset of health problems and ultimately reduce the demand that poor health places on health services and the economy throughout the life course.

The Bill, introduced by Sir Desmond Swayne MP seeks to strengthen support during the first 1,001 days, by placing a duty on the Secretary of State to:

- to regularly assess level of need for infant support services
- ensure an appropriate level of provision of infant support services (services to be set out in regulations)
- annually report to Parliament on the services provided and outcomes.

We welcome the aims of this Bill to raise the profile of babies' and families' needs and to protect vital support from being eroded in the future and strengthen accountability for delivering the Government's ambition of giving every child the best start in life.

The Bill is also an opportunity to recognise and strengthen the health support provided during the first 1,001 days. It should aim to drive stronger collaboration between the Department for Education and the Department of Health and Social Care in what should be a shared endeavour to improve outcomes for babies, children and families.

RCPCH's State of Child Health 2026 found that across a range of measures, including infant mortality, school readiness, mental health, vaccination uptake, obesity and tooth decay, children's outcomes have worsened or stalled, particularly in the most deprived communities.

These outcomes are not inevitable. They reflect years of underinvestment in the services that support babies, children and families. Today, too many parents struggle to access timely information, advice and practical support, while key early years services face significant workforce pressures and wide variation in local provision. Our members see the consequences every day: worsening physical and mental health, widening health inequalities, increasing pressure on families, growing waiting lists for specialist support, and rising demand on already overstretched NHS services.

This Bill could be the first step in helping to address these challenges. We therefore urge you to attend the debate on 4 September and speak in support of the Bill, and ensure it, and subsequent regulations deliver for all children by asking:

- How can the Bill help protect and strengthen the health services that babies and families rely on in the first 1,001 days?
- How will the Bill promote stronger collaboration between the Department for Education and the Department of Health and Social Care to deliver the government's ambitions on raising the healthiest generation ever?

If you would like further information or briefing materials, please contact **public.affairs@rcpch.ac.uk**.

The Babies Bill offers an important opportunity to ensure every baby and family has access to the support they need to build strong foundations for a healthy life.

Yours sincerely

Professor Steve Turner, President
Dr Saraswati Hosdurga, Early Years Clinical
Lead
**Royal College of Paediatrics and Child
Health**

Gill Walton CBE, Chief Executive, General
Secretary and Chief Midwife
Royal College of Midwives

Alison Morton OBE, CEO
Institute of Health Visiting

Professor Mumtaz Patel, President
Dr Chris Packham Special Adviser on
Population Health
Royal College of Physicians

Professor Tracy Daszkiewicz, President
Faculty of Public Health

Alice Wiseman MBE, Vice President
Association of Directors of Public Health

Dr Stephen Wardle, President
British Association of Perinatal Medicine

Professor Subodh Dave, President
Royal College of Psychiatrists

Karin Orman, Director of Practice, Innovation
and Advocacy
Royal College of Occupational Therapists