



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE NURSE ACADEMICS UK
(CYPNAUK)**

BACKGROUND

The contribution of children and young people's nurses to the health and wellbeing of infants, children, and young people in the UK

Children and Young People's (CYP) nurses make a significant and sustained contribution to the health and wellbeing of CYP and young adults from birth up to the age of 25 years in the United Kingdom. Essentially, NMC qualified and registered 'children's nurses', as the profession is formally termed in the UK (NMC, 2023; NHS, 2024), secure the best possible physical, psychological, social, and emotional health outcomes for CYP in their care, supporting and working in partnership with families in the joint endeavour of meeting holistic health and care needs. They require a sound knowledge of developmental anatomy, physiology and pathophysiology and a clear understanding of emotional and social development specific to the 0–25-year spectrum of which 25 years is now reported as the end point of the crucial developmental stage of adolescence (Hunt, 2024; RCPCH, 2019). They also need the skills to apply this knowledge to promote healthy development, prevent ill health and meet the physical and emotional support needs of this group in the context of a wide variety of complex clinical conditions. Significantly, this includes mental health, as one in five CYP in England aged eight to 25 years were reported to have a probable mental disorder in 2023 with eating disorders identified in 2.6% of 11–14-year-olds and 12.5% of 17- to 19-year-olds suggesting a developmental trajectory through adolescence. Additionally, CYP experiencing long term illness are twice as likely to develop emotional disorders and most mental health problems in adult life start by the age of 18 years (NHS England 2023, 2015).

Children and young people's nurses require an understanding of the complex and dynamic relationships in which CYP grow, develop, and interact with society since their work takes place in a diverse and ever changing social and political context, and in collaboration with a multitude of other health and social care professionals, and third sector organisations. They carry out these activities in nurseries, schools, colleges, and universities, in hospitals, health centres, youth centres, in the many and varied places that children and young people call home, and, indeed, places for those without a home. Children and young people's nurses deliver, lead, and manage this care within all practice settings, promoting and upholding the standards of the profession through education, research, leadership and evidenced based practice. The public health and health promotion work they undertake to foster healthful lifestyles in CYP subsequently contributes to reducing the illness burdens of adulthood. The economic case for investment in CYP nursing as a profession is therefore powerful since it exerts a cost-effective, positive impact on the major physical and mental health problems of the nations', children, young people, and adults.

Contemporary Issues for CYP Health

The post-pandemic landscape has highlighted a surge in CYP mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, and self-harm, driven by lockdowns, educational disruptions, and social isolation. Comprehensive, integrated mental health services are urgently needed, extending support beyond episodic care into schools, community programmes, and healthcare networks to build resilience and enable timely intervention.

Social determinants of health—inclusive of poverty, education, and housing—significantly shape CYPs health. Low-income households face higher risks of poor health, inadequate nutrition, unstable housing, and limited healthcare access. Education impacts long-term outcomes, while poor housing conditions contribute to chronic issues such as respiratory diseases.

Climate change further exacerbates health risks, with rising air pollution and extreme weather events increasing respiratory conditions and creating additional mental health stressors. Addressing these interlinked challenges requires holistic solutions combining healthcare access, policies to tackle socioeconomic inequities, and environmental protections to safeguard the well-being of future generations. The CYP nursing workforce must be educationally equipped to deliver care to this distinct service user population within these evolving and complex arenas.

The education of CYP nurses in the UK

The 1994 Clothier Report recommendations highlighted the importance of ensuring that an appropriate number of qualified CYP nurses are present during each shift of duty to ensure the safety of the CYP in their care. However, there remains a chronic shortage of CYP nurses in all care settings including out of hours services, with staffing gaps at all levels. Whilst approximately 23% of the CYP population are under 19 years old, only 7.6% of registered nurses have undertaken specific programmes that lead to a CYP nursing qualification. The CYP nursing profession have been engaged in hard fought battles for registration and direct entry education for over a century.

In 2018 the NMC published the updated standards of proficiency for registered nurses, this raised concern as all reference to CYP that had appeared in previous NMC standards was removed. This has resulted in a set of general nursing proficiencies designed to apply across all four fields of nursing (adult, children's, learning disabilities and mental health) and in all care settings – denoting a shift from the previous field-specific focus (NMC 2018). As a national group of academics engaged in the provision of programmes designed to suitably prepare the CYP nursing workforce of the future, we aim to ensure that learners undertaking a qualification to nurse CYP in all care settings are equipped with the appropriate knowledge, values, and skills to deliver evidence based and high-quality care to this distinct service user population. It is in the best interests of CYP and their families that the NMC re-embed specific CYP relevant competencies into its standards of proficiency. This would enable the 'future-proof' of CYP nursing and ultimately ensure that the ongoing care of CYP is safe, compassionate, and effective. In addition, it has been proposed that the title of 'children's nurse' on the NMC register be amended to 'children and young people's nurse' to reflect the service user population more accurately and broad scope of nursing practice involved in this field of care.

VISION & COMMITMENT

Children and Young People Nurse Academics UK (CYPNAUK) was founded by Debbie Fallon from the University of Manchester in 2016 to provide a vehicle for a strong unified voice for academics from higher education institutions across the four UK nations who are engaged in the initial preparation and further education of children's nurses. In this context 'children's nurses' are regarded as those who nurse CYP across the 0–25-year spectrum but we acknowledge that the children's / CYP terminology for each educational programme may differ.

The specific aims of the membership are:

- To represent and promote the education, research, and practice development of CYP nurses.
- To influence and respond to the UK CYP health agenda through informed discussion, debate, and the dissemination of expertise, including the development of consultation responses and position papers.
- To act as a source of consultation and advice to CYP nurses and other health professionals on matters of CYP health, nursing, education, and research
- To provide a means of sharing optimum evidence-based practice and innovation related to CYP health and nursing.
- To ensure that the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), including the rights to health, education, protection, and participation, are embedded in all activities, fostering an environment where CYP's rights and voices are prioritised.
- To advocate for health equity in a commitment to reducing disparities in health outcomes among socioeconomic and ethnic groups.
- To influence national and local policies to improve CYP health and its services.
- To communicate and collaborate with relevant stakeholders in promoting these aims.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Membership

- Membership to the network is open to academics from UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) who hold a children's nursing / CYP nursing qualification and who are engaged in the initial preparation or further education of CYP nurses.
- A maximum of two members representing each HEI is suggested with scope to review individual HEI requests for additional network members.
- We promote inclusivity and encourage participation from a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences.
- Where a vote on any issue is required, each HEI will have up to two votes. Voting members will ordinarily be the two representative members from the HEI or agreed by each individual HEI and notification will be given to the chair prior to voting.

Committee Leadership Roles and Terms of Office

- Expressions of interest submitted to the current Chair via the Secretary outlining eligibility with membership voting to take place based on detailed statements if more than one eligible individual submits interest.
- We promote inclusivity in leadership roles and encourage participation from a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences.
- Normally a three-year term of office which may be extended with the agreement of the membership for those who continue to meet the eligibility criteria and are willing to serve additional one-to-two-year terms.
- No Committee Lead will serve for longer than five years in total unless in exceptional circumstances.

Chair

The role descriptor is available upon request and details specific responsibilities pertaining to fostering effective networking, skills in planning and vision and facilitation of stakeholder engagement.

- To initiate and coordinate task and finish groups to respond to issues or requests for advice and guidance that arise between meetings.
- To chair the meetings of both the committee and the membership.
- To consider and approve all consultation responses, position statements and other documents emanating from the group prior to public circulation.
- To liaise with the communications and social media representative(s) to maintain the web content, social media and facilitate external communication.
- To liaise with the secretary to maintain an up-to-date list of contacts of members and external stakeholder groups to whom position statements, and such like should be issued.
- To represent CYPNAUK at national events liaising with other organisations who represent interests of CYP. To delegate representation to the Vice Chair and / or alternative committee members where required.

Vice Chair

- To work in support and collaboration with the Chair including deputising and delegation of tasks when required.
- At no time should the Chair and Vice Chair be from the same HEI.

National Representatives from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales

The role descriptor is available upon request and details specific responsibilities pertaining to advocacy, communication, consultation, knowledge sharing, networking, feedback, and reporting.

- To provide a crucial link between CYPNAUK and the academic and nursing communities within their respective nation to ensure that the differing nursing, health, and social care contexts are adequately accounted for in discussions, debates, consultations, and position papers for the relevant part of the UK.

- This role supports the promotion of CYPNAUK's mission, advocacy for CYP nursing education and collaboration across approved higher education institutions.
- Members from HEIs in each nation will be eligible to vote for the member in their own part of the UK.

Secretary

The role descriptor is available upon request and details specific responsibilities pertaining to organisational and administrative activities such as meeting coordination and facilitation, communication support and correspondence management.

Communications & Social Media

This role is in close collaboration with the Secretary and involves aligning activities with the memberships mission by creating and sharing relevant content through the website and social media. It includes managing active social media platforms, engaging with members and stakeholders, promoting key advocacy issues, and amplifying the profile of CYP nursing education. By monitoring analytics, gathering feedback, and evaluating strategies, the role ensures effective communication strategies are refined to maintain a strong and engaging national presence.

Methods of Working

Frequency of meetings

Membership meetings are to be held twice a year inclusive of CYPNAUK updates in education, research, policy, and practice.

Location/Venue

The membership meetings will be hosted online with a review process regarding the potential of 'in person' hosting at HEI's across the UK alongside hybrid accessibility.

Meeting Format

It is anticipated that the agenda for each of the membership meetings scheduled from 10:00 to 14:30 will be circulated approximately one month prior to the meeting.

Standing items:

- Business (notes from previous meeting, rolling action log and updates from the chair/matters arising).
- National and four nation updates.
- Update from Fit4CYP project regarding activity and outcomes.
- Representatives from key organisations e.g. NMC/RCN, invited to update membership and receive questions.
- Presentation and discussion on two specific topics agreed by the committee but proposed by members.
- Open forum where members can raise ad hoc issues for discussion (AoB)

References

CYPNAUK (2017) CYPNAUK POSITION PAPER The education of children's nurses in the UK: Current position and future directions [CYPNAUK-Position-Paper-June-2017.pdf](#)

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NHS (2024) Children's Nurse <https://www.stepintohenhs.nhs.uk/careers/childrens-nurse>

NHS England (2023) News - One in five children and young people had a probable mental disorder [NHS England » One in five children and young people had a probable mental disorder in 2023](#)

NHS England (2015) Future in Mind – Promoting, protecting and improving children and young people's mental health and wellbeing https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/414024/Childrens_Mental_Health.pdf

NMC (2023) Part 3 – Standards for Pre-registration Nursing Programmes <https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/standards/2024/standards-for-pre-registration-nursing-programmes.pdf>

NMC (2018) Standards of Proficiency for Registered Nurses [standards-of-proficiency-for-nurses.pdf](#)

RCPCH (2019) NHS Long Term Plan – A Summary of Child Health Proposals [NHS Long Term Plan - A summary of child health proposals | RCPCH](#)

University of Plymouth (2024) Fit for Children and Young People Project [Fit for Children and Young People project \(Fit4CYP\) - University of Plymouth](#)