

PRESS RELEASE

National Children's Day UK 2019
Sunday 12th May



- for immediate release -

National Children's Day UK (NCDUK) is all about the importance of a healthy childhood and how we need to protect the rights and freedoms of children in order to ensure that they can grow into happy, healthy adults.

This year National Children's Day UK is taking place on **Sunday 12th May** and people can run any kind of big or small event that they want for the week up to and including the day. From small family outings, to whole school and community events, local authority initiatives, talks, seminars and city-wide celebrations, it's an opportunity for everyone to raise awareness about the things they care about or projects they are running.

An increasingly important national event

Over the five years since its launch the day has attracted the support of thousands of organisations throughout the UK. These include: community groups, children's centres, nurseries, schools, local authorities, hospitals, hospices, museums, theatres, play organisations, arts centres, local charities, business and shopping malls!

Why is it so important?

Because happy and healthy children create happy and healthy societies.

And yet children in the UK are having a hard time. Currently:

- 30% (4.1 million) currently live in poverty
- 22% are clinically obese (with the number of 10 and 11-year-old children classed as severely obese in the final year of primary school now nearly double those found in reception classes)
- one in eight (11.2%) children under 19 in England currently have a mental health disorder
- 2 million children in England live in families with substantial complex needs and of these
- 1.6 million children have no established, recognised form of additional support.

Wendy Ellyatt, Chief Executive of the Save Childhood Movement said:

"Children are our future - and protecting the health and wellbeing of children is everybody's business. No matter what role we have in society, we need to work together to ensure that every child in the UK feels safe, loved, valued. If we want to create a more caring and compassionate world, we must start with children".

People can run any kind of big or small activity or event that they want for the week up to and including NCDUK.

The conversation continues on social media #NCDUK2019
www.nationalchildrensdayuk.com

- Ends -

For more information please contact

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- National Children's Day UK is an initiative of the Save Childhood Movement – www.savechildhood.net. The movement was established in 2013 and consists of a growing collaboration of individuals and organisations that share a deep concern about societal values and wellbeing and the current erosion of childhood.
- The concept of Children's Day was established by the UN General Assembly in 1954 as a day of worldwide fraternity and understanding between children. The Assembly suggested to governments that the day be observed on the date and in the way which each considers appropriate. In the UK it was launched by the Save Childhood Movement in 2014 and is now held at the beginning of summer.
- The initiative has been the recipient of two 'Awards for All' Big Lottery grants

CHILD WELLBEING IN THE UK

- **Child Poverty:** The UN's children's rights body directly criticised the government by predicting that its ambitions to eradicate child poverty were unlikely to materialise in the near future. Among key areas of concern, Britain was also ranked bottom out of 37 countries for the disparities in healthy eating between children from differing social and financial backgrounds. https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/RC13_eng.pdf

According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Child poverty has been rising since 2011/12 <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-2018>

4.1 million children in the UK are currently living in poverty, a rise of 500,000 in the last five years;

In-work poverty has been rising even faster than employment, driven almost entirely by increasing poverty among working parents.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies believes that relative child poverty is now set to increase from 30% to 37% by 2021
<https://www.jrf.org.uk/press/benefit-freeze-uk-record-tackling-child-poverty-risk>

Children and adults from the lowest quintile (20 per cent) of household income are three times

more likely to have common mental health problems (than those in the richest quintile) - *Centre for Social Justice Report, Feb 2011*

Early child poverty has been linked to brain changes related to depression in older children. "Children from poorer families are more likely to experience changes in brain connectivity that put them at higher risk of depression, compared with children from more affluent families." *American Journal of Psychiatry, January 2016* <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/305208.php>

- **Mental Health:**

One in eight (12.8%) 5 to 19 year-olds had at least one mental disorder when assessed in 2017 <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england/2017/2017>

In a typical UK classroom of 30 children - 15 children (52%) report having been bullied at some point, 3 (11%) currently live with limiting long-term conditions and 8 (25%) have a parent with mental health problems.

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Childrens-Commissioner-Vulnerability-Report-2018-Overview-Document-1.pdf>

Three children in every classroom have a diagnosable mental health disorder.

Roughly 725,000 people in the UK suffer from Eating Disorders, 86% of these will have shown symptoms before the age of 19.

One in 10 deliberately harm themselves regularly (and 15,000 of them are hospitalised each year because of this

Nearly 80,000 children and young people suffer from severe depression

Half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14

45% of children in care have a mental health disorder - these are some of the most vulnerable people in our society

- **Screentime**

The latest figures from the independent CHILDWISE Monitor Preschool Report 2018 show that preschoolers now spend an increasing amount of their day watching television and online video content – nearly 3 hours on average. This increase comes after three years of relative stability. "Their access to tablets, PCs and laptops, has increased in the last 12 months to 75%. This is the highest it has been since we started the survey ,"

Personal ownership of connected devices (eg a tablet device, laptop/netbook, or a desktop PC) is now 44%, up from 37% in 2017, 35% in 2016, 29% in 2015 and 26% in 2015.

2018 was the first year that there are more 3-4 year-olds with their own connected device, than there are without (54%, up from 47% last year)

The amount of content that children watch increases with age, from around two hours among 5 to 6-year olds, up to more than three hours a day among 13-14 year olds, falling back marginally among 15-16 year olds.

Boys aged 13-14 are the heaviest viewers, clocking up three and a half hours a day on average. One in six boys this age says that they watch more than six hours a day. Boys remain heavier

viewers than girls, watching 2.7 hours of content a day on average compared to 2.5 hours among girls. However, the gender gap has narrowed since last year.

http://www.childwise.co.uk/uploads/3/1/6/5/31656353/press_release_preschool_monitor_2018.pdf
http://www.childwise.co.uk/uploads/3/1/6/5/31656353/childwise_press_release_tv_2018.pdf

- **Obesity:** Today nearly a third of children aged 2 to 15 are overweight or obese, and younger generations are becoming obese at earlier ages and staying obese for longer.
Childhood Obesity: A plan of action www.gov.uk

The latest data from the national child measurement programme (NCMP), overseen by Public Health England (PHE), also shows stubborn inequalities persist, with obesity in the poorest areas more than double that of the richest areas.

The rate of severe obesity among year 6 children (aged 10 to 11) has increased by more than a third since 2006 to 2007 to 4.2%, its highest rate ever.

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/national-child-measurement-programme/2017-18-school-year>

- **Physical Literacy:** the numbers of young boys and girls meeting the Chief Medical Officer's (CMO) physical activity guidelines *has fallen below one in five*. This is less about the number of children who are playing sport and more about the number of children growing up without the aptitude for basic motor and coordination skills learned through childhood activity. A study by Cambridge University published in Paediatrics in March 2014 found that children are not just 'naturally active' or inactive, but that they take their parents' lead in developing healthy exercise habits early on. *Childhood Physical Literacy Report, 2015*
http://www.ukactive.com/downloads/managed/Start_Young_Stay_Active.pdf
- **Lack of contact with nature:** Children are twice as likely to be short-sighted than 50 years ago. Short-sightedness has more than doubled in UK children in the last 50 years, according to a recent study
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/health/children/1211882/Children-twice-as-likely-to-be-short-sighted-than-50-years-ago.html>

Fewer than a quarter of children regularly use their local 'patch of nature', compared to over half of all adults when they were children

www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/Childhood%20and%20Nature%20Survey_tcm6-10515.pdf

Fewer than one in ten children regularly play in wild places; compared to almost half a generation ago. www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/Childhood%20and%20Nature%20Survey_tcm6-10515.pdf

Children spend so little time outdoors that they are unfamiliar with some of our commonest wild creatures. According to a 2008 National Trust survey, one in three could not identify a magpie; half could not tell the difference between a bee and a wasp; yet nine out of ten could recognise a Dalek. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/what-we-do/news/archive/view-page/item737221