Children and Young People's Sleep Manifesto
Approximately 40% of children and young people across England and Wales are currently affected by sleep issues.1 They would fill Wembley Stadium more than 55 times!

Their parents and families are also affected taking the total to approximately... 11 million

We want to support the mental, physical and emotional health of children and their families by ensuring a good night’s sleep.

We believe this can happen with:

- Better national understanding of the importance of sleep
- Quality sleep support available to families
- Sleep to be recognised as a vital component of mental health
Sleep issues are rarely given the attention they deserve. As a mother of a child who didn’t sleep I can fully recognise the impact of sleep deprivation on both my own and my child’s mental, physical and emotional wellbeing.

Poor sleep patterns adversely affect learning and cognitive ability and children who are sleep deprived often fail to meet their full potential in school. Sleep deprivation is also linked to obesity. Children’s sleep problems are associated with high levels of parental stress and increase the risk of daytime behaviour problems arising. Prescription drugs are often used in the absence of the specialist behavioural sleep support that we offer.

Children with disabilities are at increased risk of developing sleep issues. The Family Fund’s “Tired All the Time” report published in 2013 recommended that “Sleep difficulties need to be given a higher priority by health, education and social care professionals and included in relevant needs assessment processes and frameworks.” Clearly this is still not happening and sleep support is still scarce.

The Children’s Sleep Charity believes there should be quality sleep support freely available for children, young people and their families to help them to lead more fulfilling and healthier lives.

We exist because sleep issues can have a devastating effect on family life. Many parents report feeling exhausted and isolated and sleep issues are unlikely to resolve without intervention. Our team of staff and trustees bring together experts in key areas to ensure that we have the necessary skills and experience to deliver our work. We have grown and developed rapidly since being founded in 2012 to now being regarded as the leading provider of sleep support and information for families and professionals in England and Wales.

Our manifesto outlines three key measures that if implemented could make a tremendous difference to transforming outcomes for families.

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Vicki Dawson
CEO
The Children’s Sleep Charity
Sleep is as fundamental to survival as food and water.

Poor sleep is linked with the following:

- Daytime behaviour issues
- Relationship difficulties
- Lower mood
- Increase in anxiety
- Difficulties with siblings
- Weight issues
- Social isolation
- Hyperactivity
- Concentration difficulties
- Parental stress
- Attachment issues
- Memory problems
Growth problems 21
Substance misuse 22
Potential safeguarding issues 23
Mental health 24

Lack of patience
Irritability 25
High blood pressure 26
Diabetes 27

Coronary heart disease 28
Strokes 29
Reduced quality of life 30
Inability to meet full potential 31

Metabolic abnormalities 32
Impulsivity 33
Sleepiness 34
Falls and trips 35
Our Vision

Our goal is to raise awareness of the importance of sleep to support the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of children, young people and their families. We will bring together clinicians, service users, politicians, leaders in the healthcare system and education systems to make our vision a reality.

This specifically means:

Better National Understanding of the Importance of Sleep

The important role that sleep plays in wellbeing is still seriously undervalued. We are committed to raising the profile of the importance of sleep to improve the health of our children.

We are calling for:

- Information to be available to parents about the importance of sleep and sleep routines to prevent sleep issues developing.
- Access to accredited training around sleep support for professionals supporting families.
- Sleep to become embedded in the PHSE curriculum for all pupils.
- Parents to have access to appropriately trained sleep practitioners in their localities.

“If only I knew then what I know now after attending a sleep workshop, I’m sure my daughter’s sleep issues would never have developed. Knowledge is a wonderful thing!”
Quality Sleep Support Available to Families

Time and time again parents and professionals tell us about the lack of sleep support that is available.

To improve support for families there needs to be:

- Commissioned sleep services so that families can access support by an appropriately trained sleep practitioner free of charge in their locality.

- An early intervention approach. Sleep issues should be properly evaluated and treated at the earliest opportunity, to reduce the need for prescription drugs. GPs and Health Visitors should ask about children’s sleep at routine appointments.

- Sleep support available in secondary schools via Sleep Champions who are appropriately trained to offer information to young people.

“It took years to find support for our child’s sleep issue, all I can say is when we did, it was life changing for all of us.”
Sleep to be Recognised as a Vital Component of Mental Health

A wealth of evidence exists linking sleep deprivation to mental health issues yet sleep issues are still not taken seriously.

To improve this there needs to be:

⭐ A commitment from the Government to invest in evidence based parenting support programmes addressing sleep issues at the early intervention stage.

⭐ Recognition from professionals that sleep deprivation impacts on mental health and the capacity of both parent and child to change sleep patterns.

⭐ Investment in sleep support.

⭐ Training in cognitive and behavioural sleep strategies for professionals supporting children and young people with mental health issues.

“I felt so alone, I dreaded bed time, it made me feel anxious. My sleeping patterns have now improved, I feel so much better in myself”

Young Service User
Pledges of Support

The following organisations have pledged their support for the Children and Young People’s Sleep Manifesto:

- Ambition
- Autistica
- Blackpool Teaching Hospitals
- BT
- Centre for ADHD & Autism Support
- Cerebra
- The Childhood Trust
- Contact a Family
- Cottonsafe
- CPHVA
- Derbyshire Healthcare Support
- Derbyshire Health Visiting Service
- Dovecote Primary School
- Eric
- FaithAction
- Family Fund
- FFT
- The Gro Company
- Tired Out
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The following organisations have pledged their support for the Children and Young People’s Sleep Manifesto:
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- **Rainbow Trust Children’s Charity**
- **Reigate Grammar School**
- **Scope**
- **Sense**
- **Sibs**
- **Sirius Academy**
- **Sleep Scotland**
- **Sleep for All**
- **The Sleep Council**
- **Slumbersac**
- **Sue Atkins - The Parenting Expert**
- **S4A**
- **Tamba**
- **Together Trust**
- **Unite in Health**
- **Unique Ways**
- **Westfield Health**
- **Young Health Movement**
With thanks for their support:

Members of Parliament

Clive Betts  
*Member of Parliament for Sheffield South East*

Peter Kyle  
*Member of Parliament for Hove and Portslade*

Adam Holloway  
*Member of Parliament for Gravesham*

Julie Cooper  
*Member of Parliament for Burnley*

David Drew  
*Minister of Parliament for Stroud  
Shadow Farming and Rural Affairs Minister*

Members of the House of Lords

The Earl of Listowel  
*Treasurer: All Party Parliamentary Group for Children*

Lord Beecham

Baroness Lister of Burtersett

Baroness Healy of Primrose Hill
With thanks for their support:

**Individual Supporters**

Dr. Tobias Sonne  
Dr AP Bagshaw  
Dr Anna Joyce  
Dr S. Pai  
Kirsty Crooks  
Anne Cresswell  
Liz Dowen  
Mair Elliott  
Anne Reece  

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*University of Manchester*

Dr Gabriella Romano  
*Clinical Psychologist*

Dr Michael Boyle  
*Gp Partner Birley and trustee of the British Society of Lifestyle Medicine*

Lucy Wheeler  
*Children’s Occupational Therapist*

Dr Megan Thomas  
*Consultant Paediatrician (Child Development)*

Dr Andrew Mayers  
*Principal Academic (Mental Health), Bournemouth University*

Lisa Gagliani MBE  
*Advisor for Social Good*
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For more information

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#sleepmanifesto #sleepmatters

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