

Hi everyone,

I'm Andrew – the new Officer for Child Protection at the RCPCH. I'm a Consultant Paediatrician in Manchester; Honorary Professor (Children's Rights, Law, and Advocacy) at the University of Salford; and Lead Employer Medical Director at Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust ([biography](#)).

It is a pleasure to be able to bring you this first update in my term of office as Officer for Child Protection. And what an entry into the role it has been!

You will, no doubt, have seen all of the activity in the media to do with the Illegal Migration Bill (now Act) and I can tell you that RCPCH worked tirelessly both in public and in private to try to secure changes to the Bill to protect children's rights. Sadly, the Bill was voted through without the necessary protections that children need, deserve, and are (frankly) entitled to. Our work has not stopped just because we now have an Act rather than a Bill... we now need to double our efforts to do everything possible to ensure that the health and overall wellbeing of children who are affected by this legislation is protected as best we can.

Aside from the above significant work, I'm pleased to be able to report that through the hugely appreciated leadership of our Assistant Officers we can now bring you updates to the Child Protection Companion (links later in this document) and very, very soon we'll be able to bring you a brand new, fully updated Purple Book (more on that later).

One of my first tasks in post was to revise the strategy for the Child Protection Standing Committee and by the time of my next update we'll have that on the website so that Members and Fellows can see the pillars of our work, linked directly to RCPCH's charitable objects, and the projects that underpin those pillars. We have an ambitious programme of work over the next 12-36 months, and have started in earnest with the release of RCPCH's updated position on mandatory reporting of child abuse (the link is further in this bulletin).

In my next update I'll be able to show you the strategy working in practice, and we'll realign this bulletin to the four pillars of that strategy so you can get an idea of the work that RCPCH is undertaking for children and young people as well as for our Members and Fellows. Until then, I hope there is something in this bulletin that is useful to you. I'd welcome your views and input of our Members and Fellows into the work that the Standing Committee is engaged with, so please do feel free to get in contact with me via health.policy@rcpch.ac.uk

Thanks for reading.

Best wishes,



Professor Andrew Rowland
RCPCH Officer for Child Protection

Work of the RCPCH Child Protection Standing Committee

Below is a summary of some of the other pieces of work that are currently being discussed by the Committee:

- Mandatory reporting of child abuse
- Workforce issues
- Refugee and asylum-seeking children and young people's health and wellbeing
- Updates to the Safeguarding Children: Guidelines for occupational health professionals
- Illegal Migration Bill- RCPCH continues to work with peers in the House of Lords to ensure the health and wellbeing of children is put at the forefront of government decision making in refugee policies. Now that the [Illegal Migration Act has been passed](#), we have refined our strategy for supporting children seeking refuge and asylum. Our focus for the next six months will be on lobbying the government to ensure that children are afforded their rights as set out by the UNCRC to access healthcare. Several policy tools are in development, including an assessment of current procedures, updated guidance for initial health assessments and a map of best practice.

RCPCH Recent and Upcoming publications

Our position on Mandatory Reporting of child abuse has now been published on our website [here](#).

RCPCH is asking the government to consider five key points before considering whether a mandatory reporting duty is best for children in England and Wales:

1. All types of child abuse must fall under any mandatory reporting duty
2. A children's rights-based approach must be followed, and a children's rights impact assessment must be carried out
3. A Government systems impact assessment must be carried out
4. Measurable outcomes for children must be built into any plans
5. Clearer definitions must be provided before further consultation

Child Protection Portal

A range of our publications and other child protection resources including the Child Protection Companion can be found on the RCPCH [Child Protection Portal](#).

RCPCH members can access the portal. Options for access by non-members and organisations can be found [here](#). To find out more about subscribing for a team or organisation, please contact child.protection@rcpch.ac.uk

Latest updates to the Child Protection Evidence reviews:

The Child Protection Evidence Systematic Reviews on Oral Injuries, Bites and Dental Neglect are due to be updated. Updating of the head/spinal injuries systematic review will begin soon. These reviews are part of the [Child Protection Evidence systematic review series](#).

Updates to the Child Protection Companion

The following chapter of the Child Protection Companion has been updated:

- Chapter 17: Photo Documentation as part of the child protection medical assessments (excluding child sexual abuse examinations)

Updates to the "Purple Book"

Physical signs of child sexual abuse (The Purple Book): The team are currently making final adjustments to nine chapters following sign off and will be launched in Autumn 2023.

The [Child Protection Companion](#) can be accessed via the RCPCH [Child Protection Portal](#).

Education

Spotlight on...

[Child sexual assault and the forensic examination \(Level 3+\) – London](#). *This two day in-person course equips paediatricians with both the technical and forensic skills to obtain high quality samples and the knowledge and understanding of the physical, emotional and procedural considerations of managing children who have experienced suspected sexual assault.*

A full range of virtual and eLearning Safeguarding courses can be found on our [website](#).

Opportunities

Within the College, we have a dedicated stakeholder group comprising of members who work closely with children seeking asylum, refuge or international protection. If you are interested in joining this expert group, please contact: health.policy@rcpch.ac.uk. I promise that we won't ask too much of you, and even joining the e-mail group does not bring with it any obligation on your behalf. We use this reference group to occasionally test out potential policy plans as well as to gather evidence to support our work, and also to get ideas about guidance that may assist children and those working in paediatrics and child health.

Please do stay in touch

The Child Protection Standing Committee meets three times a year and these summaries of our work are made available on the RCPCH Child Protection Portal. An email linking to these summaries is sent to all those who have updated their contact preferences on the RCPCH website to receive updates about child protection.

For further information please contact: health.policy@rcpch.ac.uk.