



FirstNews CHILDREN'S PARTY first.news/FNCP

MANIFESTO

We don't get a vote, but we do get a voice!

The Children's Party is bringing young people together to get our voices heard about the things that matter to us.

Every person under the age of 18 is automatically a member.

Our manifesto has been written using data collected by the Children's Commissioner for England. Over the last few years, Dame Rachel de Souza has heard from more than a million children and young people. The manifesto is based, particularly, on the recommendations of The Big Ambition survey in 2024, which heard from 360,000 young people. We have also included the learnings from the offices of the Children's Commissioners of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

It is being supported by the Children's Commissioner for England's 16 Youth Ambassadors, who champion issues that children and young people have said are important to them.

The aim of our manifesto is to call for changes to make all children's lives better now and in the future. We are the ones who know what a positive childhood could, and should, be – for all children.

1. Family Life

We should all be able to grow up in a stable and loving family that is given the support to enjoy life together. A happy family life is at the centre of our hopes and ambitions for the future. We should get the support we need to have a brilliant start to life. We want family hubs in every area to support all families and to make sure special attention is given to the needs of disabled children and their families. All parents should be helped to be the best parent they can be, with information and courses available to them. None of us should grow up in poverty, with all families having enough money for children to have a home, good clothing, to be warm, safe and to eat well.



3. Health

Good physical and mental health is important for us all. We should be helped to have a healthy lifestyle, including being active and having a good diet. We should all have a health check each year to identify any problems early so that we get the help we need. There should be a school nurse in each school who can help and advise us all, but particularly children at risk of poor health. We want a mental health hub set up in every local area to give us wellbeing support. Mental health teams should keep an eye on us in all schools so we can get help if we need it. We all should be supported to feel positive about our bodies and to have high self-esteem. We want a national fitness plan that helps us to make the right choices about what we eat, how to be active and so we understand more about dangers to our health, such as vaping and smoking. Mental health care and support for children with disabilities needs to be improved so that disabled children have happy childhoods and futures.

2. Education

We value our education and our teachers and we understand that working hard now will help set us up for success in later life. Therefore, all children should have the chance to go to a good school, be happy and safe there, and have a brilliant education. Those who need extra help should be able to get it easily and quickly, particularly those with special needs or disabilities who might learn in a different way. Those who are missing school, for whatever reason, should be treated kindly and helped to go back. All schools should have zero tolerance of bullying and it should be treated seriously. More physical activity should take place in schools, as well as bringing in more school trips and opportunities to learn outside the classroom. What we are being taught needs to be continually reviewed because our education must prepare us for a digital future as technology changes the workplace across the world.



4. Our free time

Sport, drama, music and other opportunities should be available for us all at the end of the school day, free of charge for families who can't afford to pay. We also want more spaces to go to out of school where we can enjoy ourselves with our friends. Young carers need help to make sure they get time just to 'be a kid', too. Our views should be listened to in our communities about what facilities we would like. Every child and teenager should have a good quality, free or cheap youth club we can go to, where we can be safe and take part in things that interest us. This would also help cut down on the number of young people hanging out on the streets and getting into trouble. We should have adults we can talk to at these youth clubs about any problems we have, to stop them getting worse, and to get us help if we need it. We should all be close to a green space, so we can feel nature around us. Research shows this helps our mental health and wellbeing.

5. Jobs and skills

We need to be taught about important life skills that will help us as we become adults. We need to learn about personal issues, such as how to have healthy relationships, but also practical life lessons, particularly financial education, so we know how to manage our money. We want better careers advice so we know more about what jobs might suit our talents, particularly with new tech and AI changing the workplace. That means more teachers getting better careers training. All schools should be supported by careers hubs to help us get on the right path after school. Is university right for us, or an apprenticeship, for example, to land us our dream jobs? We want apprenticeships to be funded and available to all school leavers who want one. Schools should bring in local employers and businesses so we understand the opportunities around us.



6. Social care

All of us should feel loved, safe and secure. Young people who are not with our birth families, who have become homeless, or are being looked after in the care system, must get care in a loving and stable home. Brothers and sisters should be kept together if that's what we want. We should be listened to so we get a say when decisions are being made about us, whether we are in care or are young carers ourselves. Children needing social care need to have happy, trusted and ongoing relationships with social workers so we can speak openly and honestly. We must be listened to and action must be taken to help us, giving care as well as support. All families who are struggling should get help early to improve children's welfare, so that we are supported to remain with our families, if that is what is best for us. All of us should get help if we need it.

7. Children seeking asylum

Children who arrive in the UK on our own seeking asylum are very at risk. We need care and protection from the moment we arrive. Most of us have left behind distressing lives and difficult situations. We need time, support and understanding to recover from the things that have happened to us. We should all have access to caring and loving homes, so a new campaign to find more foster carers for unaccompanied children seeking asylum should be launched. We should be supported to get a good education from the moment we arrive in an area, and to get great help to learn English quickly and well. We should be protected from bullying, by schools building a sense of everyone belonging. If we have made Britain our homes – the place where we have been schooled, made friends and built our lives again – we should be allowed to stay after we reach 18 years old.



9. A better world

Around 20% of the people in our country are under 18, yet we are 100% of the future. So, the Government should listen to our ideas more. We believe the Government can change our lives for the better but they need to listen first to the things we care about. We want our views on important issues to be reflected in decisions that affect our futures. For example, our environment is a big worry. Pollution needs to be cleaned up, we need action on climate change, and the huge biodiversity crisis in Britain has to be tackled. We will hold the UK's Governments to task on Britain reaching net zero by 2050. We want more and bold action to secure a future where humans and nature live together in balance and harmony. MPs should hold meetings just for children, to hear what we care about. We want more opportunities to take part in youth and school councils, youth parliaments, and other local and national groups, to make sure our voices are heard and acted upon.

8. Online safety

Every child should be able to play and learn online safely. We should be given the knowledge and support to keep us safe online. We should be protected from seeing, or experiencing, anything harmful online. All online spaces and platforms should have child safety built into them and there should be tools to stop us seeing things we shouldn't. Developers should make sure there are ways to stop us becoming addicted to games or other online experiences. We must be protected from extreme views, scammers and harmful trends that appear online. We want it to be easy for us to report problems, using things like red flag buttons on platforms, whether this is online bullying, seeing distressing images, or someone trying to find out information about us. If anything bad does happen to us online, we should get support to deal with it.



10. Safety from crime

We want to feel safe and confident in public places. We want to be safe in our homes, schools, relationships and where we live. The people who make decisions should talk to us about improvements to our environment, including those that would help children with different needs. It might be lighting on school routes and in parks, access to playgrounds and open space for games. Plus we need safe ways to get around, including for children with physical or mental challenges. All of us should be protected against violence and criminals, and work must be done to cut knife crime. Police must be friendly and respectful towards children, and organise events to help children get to know officers. We need to know what to do, and who to speak to, if something bad happens to us. If we do become victims of crime, we should get specialist care and support to help us recover. We should all be kept safe from bullying or any other abuse, with teachers trained to give us high-quality lessons about our safety. Every young person who is being held in a secure setting, because they have been in trouble with the law, should be given the chance to change and to rebuild their life. More work should be done to stop children getting in trouble and becoming involved in crime in the first place.