



Working with children,
for children

National Children's Bureau Annual Review 2012/2013

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Introduction

Welcome to our 2012/13 Annual Review, exemplifying our work helping to improve the lives of children and young people and reduce the impact of inequalities.

2012/13 has been a year of change and challenge. It has been another tough year for the economy and this continues to impact on the vulnerable children, young people and families we all work for. As an organisation we have had to deliver more with less and make difficult choices to ensure our future sustainability and provide the most effective services, refocussing some of our activities, taking on new programmes and moving away from others. These organisational challenges will continue.

We are pleased to see early signs of economic recovery and anxious to help ensure that this recovery impacts quickly on the lives of our most vulnerable children. Our recent report *Greater Expectations* was produced as part of our 50th anniversary celebrations and as a follow up to our seminal 1969 report *Born to Fail*. This report demonstrates that, despite 50 years of intervention from successive governments, the number of children living in poverty continues to grow and they continue to be as disadvantaged by that poverty as in the past. We are asking the Government to develop and implement a cross-government strategy to tackle inequality and disadvantage in childhood.

Our partnerships across every area of children's services continue to be strong and we look forward to the year ahead

as strategic partners for Department for Education and for the Department of Health supporting a number of key areas. We would like to pay tribute to our team – the strength of NCB lies in the quality, commitment and expertise of the staff and we are honoured to employ so many individuals dedicated to improving the life chances of children and young people, especially the most vulnerable.

It is 50 years since NCB was founded and our original principles continue to underpin our work today and are demonstrated within the projects and programmes highlighted throughout the review.

Elaine Simpson
Chair

Dr Hilary Emery
Chief Executive



Who we are and what we do

The National Children's Bureau (NCB) is a leading children's charity that for 50 years has been improving the lives of children and young people, especially the most vulnerable.

Working with children and for children, we reduce the impact of inequalities by:

- being a strong independent advocate for children and young people
- ensuring that government policies and legislation have a positive impact on their lives
- being a voice for practitioners and supporting them to deliver the very best outcomes for children and young people
- bringing together groups and organisations, to achieve more by working in partnership
- involving children and young people so they are able to make a difference to their lives
- providing the evidence from research, analysis and practice to make the case for change.





Our vision

A society in which children and young people contribute, are valued and their rights respected.

Our mission

To improve children and young people's experiences and life chances by reducing the impact of inequalities.

Our policy work

We work closely with both national and local government to improve public policy and government legislation affecting children and young people.

We actively engage MPs and peers from across all political parties, as well as advisors and civil servants, to ensure the voices of children and young people reach decision makers, and that policies positively impact on their lives. We achieve this by responding to consultations, giving evidence at parliamentary committees, providing the secretariat for the All Party Parliamentary Group for Children (a group of more than 100 MPs and peers), lobbying on specific legislation, and briefing parliamentarians on our key concerns.

We always work from an evidence informed perspective and what makes us different is that our policy recommendations are backed by robust academic research, the experience of practitioners in our networks, and the voice of the children and young people we work with.

As a membership organisation, we provide up-to-date policy information to individuals and organisations working with children and young people, and work in partnership with those who share our goals, including other charities, VCSE

sector organisations and agencies to achieve more and maximise our impact.

We have a long history in pioneering better health policies for children and young people and considering recent reforms to the NHS, children's health and the healthcare system was a major priority for our policy work in 2012/13.

If they want to improve the NHS more young people need to have a say about where the money is spent and if they can spend it in different areas – for example, therapy for people that will help them in the future.

Young NCB

We regularly facilitate Young NCB members' visits to parliament





Our achievements: Health

Key agencies in the reformed health system including NHS England, Public Health England and the Royal College of GPs signed a pledge to improve health outcomes for children and young people following NCB led lobbying in 2011/12.

The first NHS mandate responded to the recommendations made by NCB and the Council for Disabled Children (CDC), including: holding the NHS to account for the health outcomes it delivers for children; committing the NHS Commissioning Board to work towards improving how children's voices are heard in the health service; and sending a stronger message on the need for the Board to promote integration between health and other services that support children.

Action by the Department of Health and the Local Government Association to promote the role of Healthwatch in involving children and young people in decisions about health services referred heavily to the work of NCB and we were appointed to the Healthwatch Programme Board.

Following joint consultation responses by NCB and CDC, Government made clearer the importance of involving children and young people in their care. The *NHS Constitution and Handbook* was revised to better reflect the need for children, their families and carers to be informed and involved and Government stated their belief that the principle of 'no decision about me, without me' should apply to children.

NHS England established a Strategic Clinical Network for Maternity and Children to support an integrated approach, in response to lobbying led by NCB, and recommendations in EDCM's *Disabled Children and Health Reform* report.

Government announced proposals to develop front of pack food labelling using a standardised hybrid system including colour coding, guideline daily amounts (% GDA) and high/medium/low text, in response to a consultation supported by NCB.

The Children and Young People's Health Outcomes Forum established as a result of coordinated lobbying by NCB.

Why focus on health?

In Britain five children die every day from preventable and manageable conditions such as asthma and meningitis

Our research

We undertake high quality and robust research to inform policy and improve practice across the children's and young people's sector.

Our research portfolio spans the work of NCB, focusing on children who are, or become, vulnerable, marginalised or disadvantaged across a range of areas: early childhood, disability and SEND, vulnerable children, health and well-being, involving young people and practice improvement through project evaluations. We support the whole organisation, including our partnerships and networks, to always work from an evidence-based and child-centred perspective.

We focus on generating research that is accessible to a diverse audience and we actively engage with children and young people as participants, as well as in the planning, delivery and dissemination of our research projects.

A key theme of our work is the active involvement of children and young people in research





Case study: Child protection

Involved by Right – the voice of children in the child protection process

Recent high profile cases have once again put child protection services under close scrutiny. The exposure of systematic safeguarding failures in Oxford, Rochdale and Edlington have raised questions about the extent to which services are putting children's experiences and voices at the heart of the child protection process. Advocacy is one way of ensuring the child's voice is heard and has an influence and this NCB research project piloted and evaluated an advocacy service for child protection conferences provided by the London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, in partnership with Barnardo's, and which aimed to incorporate children's views in the decision-making process.

We found that children, parents and professionals all highlighted how the advocacy service enabled children to have a say in decisions and made everybody think and act in a more child-centred way. Analysis of cases where an advocate was not involved showed that there was less coverage of children's views and priorities in child protection plans, compared with the plans of children who had been supported by an advocate. As well as good

collaboration between social services and the advocate, the effectiveness of the service in supporting children's rights clearly reflected how the advocate operated: she was there just for the children; she was guided by their wishes and needs; she was there to inform and empower them and ensure their wishes were not overlooked.

The evaluation also provided evidence that advocacy can contribute to keeping children safe and improving their lives, for example, by identifying new safeguarding issues, or solutions that are more likely to work and avoid the need to take children into care. Comparison of the plans of children who had been supported by an advocate and those who had not showed that the former had better targeted services for the whole family.

The best thing [about the advocate is] ... having someone actually listen to you, rather than just saying what they think you would say.

A child who took part in the evaluation

Why focus on child protection?

In 2012 there were 42,850 children subject to Child Protection Plans in England

What next?

- Kensington and Chelsea have secured funding to continue the advocacy service for another year.
- Barnardo's will use the evaluation results to promote their model and encourage greater use of advocacy in child protection across England.
- We will lobby government to make advocacy a legal right for children in the child protection system.

Our practice improvement work

We bring together professions concerned with children and young people to improve their services.

At NCB we provide a variety of practical support and resources for professionals working with children, as we still believe that helping professionals to deliver better services for children, young people and families is key to our mission to improve the lives of children and young people, especially the most vulnerable.

Part of our work to improve children's services is running the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO) which gathers emerging and promising practice, along with supporting data about 'what works' in one place, and validates local practice.



Why focus on early childhood?

96% of 3 to 4 year olds in England attend some early education

Case study: **Early childhood** Listening to Young Children

During 2012/13 our Early Childhood Unit further enhanced and delivered a range of courses to support practitioners and those in strategic roles to listen to and enable young children's participation in decisions that affect them.

The training aims to ensure that all early childhood services develop and embed a listening culture that values children's views and involvement, and supports local authorities in meeting their duty under the Childcare Act 2006, 'to have regard to any information about the views of young children which is available and relevant to these duties'.

“ I think this course should be given to all settings for children as it is so important and worthwhile listening to children of all ages. ”

Quality Improvement Officer, who attended our training course, *Listening as a way of life – an Introduction*



NCB works directly with early years practitioners to embed listening to young children's views and experiences into their practice



Why focus on children's services?

21% of children in Northern Ireland are living in poverty

Case study: Children in care Putting Corporate Parenting into Practice

During 2012/13 we developed new guidance to show how elected members and senior officers in local authorities can fulfil their duties as corporate parents to vulnerable children growing up in the care of local authorities.

The guidance, produced with support from the Department for Education and sent to every Director of Children's Services in the UK, started with the premise that local councils should really care about the children, not just for them, and goes on to explain how through good practice they can offer the same standards of support as would any parent.

I know – from personal experience – that giving children in care the right help and guidance means they can reach their full potential. Supporting their education is one of the most important, lasting contributions local authorities can make to their lives. We need local councillors to become champions for children in care. I hope this valuable guide encourages them to do this.]

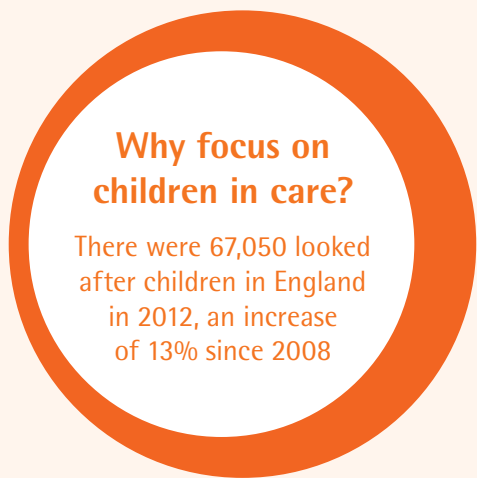
Edward Timpson,
Minister for Children and Families

Case study: Children's services Developing a performance management culture in a deprived community

NCB Northern Ireland is supporting the Colin Early Intervention Community to strategically review provision across the locality by examining gaps in children's services and suggesting new evidence based programmes to implement. In addition, we have devised a performance management framework with a set of indicators to enable Colin to understand the extent to which outcomes for the area as a whole are changing, and defined a set of performance measures for other funded programmes.

The report presents an opportunity for all stakeholders to consider ways in which a new approach can be adopted to improve the outcomes for children through the application of effective early intervention and prevention practice in the local area.]

Junior Ministers Jennifer McCann and Jonathan Bell from the OFMDFM (Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister)



Why focus on children in care?

There were 67,050 looked after children in England in 2012, an increase of 13% since 2008

Our participation work

NCB champions the meaningful involvement and participation of children and young people in all matters that affect their lives.

We actively try to engage young people in all areas of our work and even involve young people in the hiring of new staff, on our Board and in the majority of our project work. We also have a youth membership group, Young NCB, which we work with to speak out on the important issues and decisions that affect children and young people in society.

Every two years Young NCB members choose key subjects that they think are the big issues for children and young people and then find ways of tackling these issues through talking to the government, having events or doing activities that will raise awareness of these issues with other children and young people, adults and decision makers. The priorities for 2012 to 2014 are about challenging discrimination and getting children and young people to understand how decisions made by Government impact on their lives.

We actively engage children and young people in all areas of our work





I look forward to visiting the elderly every week. I wouldn't have done this before but now would be really hurt if I was told I couldn't do it anymore.

A student who took part in Luton Futures project



Why focus on community engagement?

There are 1.09 million young people in the UK who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)



Why focus on disability?

There are 800,000 disabled children in Great Britain

Case study: Empowering disabled young people
VIPERs – Voice, Inclusion, Participation, Empowerment and Research

VIPERs was a research project carried out by a group of 16 disabled young people, which looked at their participation and involvement in decision-making and the barriers that prevent them from having a say.

In their own words the VIPERs said: *'from our experience some projects say that they are involving disabled young people but when we looked into it, the young people were just there to tick a box. This needs to change and we hope that this project and our findings will help to create that change.'*

We want young disabled people to be empowered so that they understand what participation is and the change they can bring about and we want services to be open and include disabled young people in their decision-making. Young disabled people have views and opinions that should be included and taken seriously.'

The young researchers worked in partnership with the NCB Research Centre, CDC, the Alliance for Inclusive Education (ALLFIE), the Children's Society, and were funded by the Big Lottery Fund.

Case study: Community engagement
Luton Futures – Get Involved

We worked with schools, pupils and local voluntary and statutory networks in Luton to identify and develop their local volunteering projects that would shape and change the community, break down social and generational barriers and cultivate a culture of engagement and social action.

One group decided that they would make soup for older members of the local community whom they invited for lunch at their school. Support from senior staff, the high profile of the activity, confidence building, and skills training at the outset helped to maintain the young volunteers' input.

Challenging behaviour demonstrated at school was not replicated on the project and attitudes to volunteering changed radically as a result. Having initially thought that volunteering would make you look 'weak' or 'like a mug', at the end of the project the young volunteers described feelings of pride and increased confidence. Another positive outcome was the strengthening of intergenerational links in the local community.

Our partnerships

Partnership is at the heart of everything we do.

As well as effective partnership with children and young people, we work within and between statutory, private and voluntary agencies. We do this in many ways – by establishing special interest groups, bringing together new partnerships, hosting existing and developing new agencies, as well as sharing core services with other charities.



Highlights from our main specialist membership groups:



The Anti-Bullying Alliance published a new book *Perspectives on Bullying and Difference: Supporting young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities in schools* and have now secured funding to put that work into practice.

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk



The Childhood Bereavement Network consulted with children, young people and parents on its new tool for measuring the effectiveness of services, and gathered a coalition of organisations to lobby on changes to Widowed Parents' Allowance.

www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk



The Children and Young People HIV Network produced resources for teenagers and young adults with HIV, covering topics such as transition to adult services, work, studying, independent living, sharing HIV information, and their rights.

www.ncb.org.uk/hiv

Our funders and supporters 2012/2013

We would like to thank all those who have funded and supported our work on behalf of children and young people



The Council for Disabled Children developed a vibrant, national young people's group for the Department for Education, working with ministers and young people with a range of impairments across the country.

www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk



Play England, through Playday 2012 and working with locally based play organisations across England, got over 40,000 people involved in getting more than half a million kids outside playing, being active, making friends, enjoying their freedom to play, in dedicated adventure playgrounds, parks and green spaces and on their streets.

www.playengland.org.uk



The Sex Education Forum celebrated 25 years of campaigning for better sex and relationships education.

www.sexeducationforum.org.uk

Arts Council England

Atlantic Philanthropies

Big Lottery Fund

Cabinet Office/Social Investment Business

Children's Trust, Tadworth

Creativity, Culture & Education

Department for Education

Department for Education (NI)

Department of Health

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

European Commission

Family Fund

Institute of Child Health

JP Morgan

Luton Borough Council

Medici Choir

Mishcon de Reya

Morrisons

Natural England

Nuffield Foundation

Pears Foundation

Prince's Trust

Public Health Research Consortium

Royal College of Paediatrics & Child Health

True Colours Trust

University of Liverpool

Vodafone

Financial review of the year

Against a background of the continuing financial and economic downturn and the imposition of further and greater cuts to central and local government funding, NCB's total income grew from £8.9m in 2011/12 to £11.5m in 2012/13, with almost all of the growth coming from an increase in unrestricted income.

Though total expenditure increased by only £0.4m, unrestricted expenditure increased by £2.9m as NCB supplied a higher level of support than its delivery units could afford. One of the benefits of being part of the NCB family is the ability to access a range of support services, the level of which is based on a unit's need rather than its ability to pay and this year NCB has particularly invested in business development in order to provide greater support to delivery units seeking to improve their financial sustainability. This has had a negative impact on the current year, but will bear fruit in future years as NCB moves away from a predominantly grant funded model to a mixed economy of grants, contracts and traded activities. Despite this the total deficit for 2012/13 was just under £0.4m, a £2.2m improvement on the total deficit for 2011/12.

This result is all the more creditable because it was depressed by a number of one-off events.

C4EO

Grant funding for the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes (C4EO), which had been established in 2008 with funding the Department for Children, Schools and Families, came to an end in October 2011. NCB remained committed to C4EO and agreed to underwrite its costs while its management team sought to reposition it as a trading vehicle. Though C4EO has attracted a number of new commissions, it became clear in the course of 2012/13 that it would never generate the size of turnover necessary to support an independent management team and, in the fourth quarter of the year, C4EO's activities were integrated into NCB's programmes directorate. The trading and redundancy costs of C4EO in 2012/13 amounted to £459k.

Freehold property

Over the past three years NCB has significantly reduced its FTE headcount (down from 230 in 2010 to 132 in 2013) but, because most of its property is freehold, it has proved difficult to reduce the size of its office and the cost of carrying unoccupied space in 2012/13 amounted to £101k. As NCB repositions itself for the future it has become increasingly clear that it no longer needs an office as large as the one it presently has and needs to operate at levels of efficiency and collaboration that its present building makes impossible. Trustees have therefore approved the sale and redevelopment of the site and commissioned a

market valuation, which resulted in a vacant possession value of £4.1m. This has been included in the balance sheet as at March 2013.

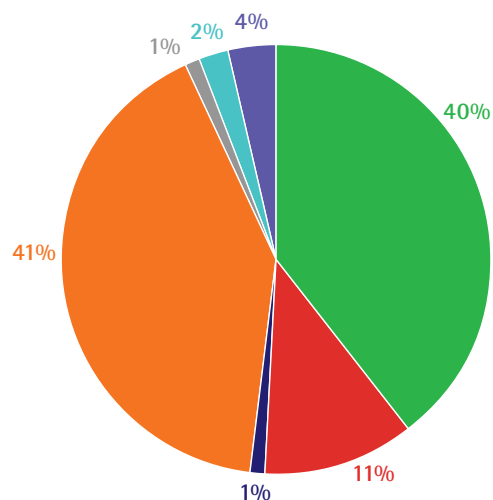
Pension deficit

NCB's net reserves have also been affected by a significant increase in the deficit on NCB's defined benefit pension scheme, which (following FRS17 principles) has increased from £2.5m to £4.1m. The size of the pension deficit and its volatility is determined largely by factors outside of NCB's control and NCB's trustees have decided with reluctance that they have no alternative but to close the scheme to new entrants. NCB's defined benefit pension scheme was closed to new entrants on 1st December 2012 and a defined contribution scheme for new staff offered in its place. NCB has agreed a course of action with its pension provider to eliminate the residual deficit over the next twenty years.

Without the previously mentioned costs of repositioning C4EO and the costs of carrying unoccupied space, the total deficit for 2012/13 would have been a surplus.

While the future remains challenging, trustees believe that the past few years have demonstrated NCB's ability to react to anticipated and unforeseen events. In developing the 2014 to 2017 Strategic Plan, a key objective for trustees is to restore unrestricted funds to prior levels.

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2013

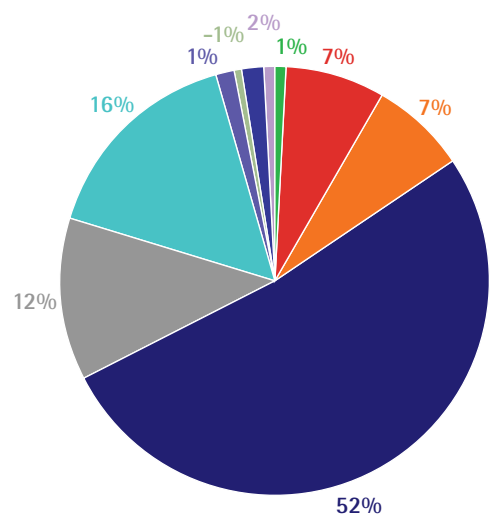


Income

	2013 £'000	2012 £'000
Restricted Income		
Government project grants 40%	4,572	4,407
Other project grants 11%	1,310	1,250
Unrestricted Income		
Voluntary income 1%	115	126
Contracts, unrestricted grants and fees 41%	4,745	2,096
Membership subscriptions 1%	112	239
Publications and conferences 2%	264	331
Shared services and other income 4%	403	434
Total Income	11,520	8,883

Expenditure

	2013 £'000	2012 £'000
Fundraising 1%	129	109
Evidence and Impact 7%	892	1,089
NCB Northern Ireland 7%	850	458
NCB Partnerships 52%	6,254	4,789
NCB Programmes 12%	1,483	1,808
Sector Improvement 16%	1,890	3,022
Shared services 1%	163	138
Pension scheme movements -1%	(69)	(5)
Other costs (including restructuring) 2%	206	13
Governance 1%	82	46
Total Expenditure	11,880	11,467
Other recognised gains/(losses)	1,809	(18)
Net Movement In Funds	1,449	(2,602)



Balance sheet as at 31 March 2013

	2013 £'000	2012 £'000
Fixed Assets		
Tangible assets	4,166	727
Investments	10	10
	4,176	737
Current Assets		
Stocks	13	17
Debtors	2,416	2,217
Cash on deposit	2,215	1,106
Cash at bank and in hand	832	2,356
	5,476	5,696
Less		
Creditors falling due within one year	(2,644)	(2,406)
Net Current Assets	2,832	3,290
Net Assets excluding pension liability	7,008	4,027
Pensions scheme liability	(4,057)	(2,525)
Net Assets including pension liability	2,951	1,502
Funds		
Restricted funds	1,687	1,132
Unrestricted other funds	5,321	2,895
Unrestricted pension reserve	(4,057)	(2,525)
Total Funds	2,951	1,502

This information contained in this summary has been extracted from the Annual Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2013 on which our auditor, Crowe Clark Whitehill LLP, has given an unqualified opinion. A full copy of the financial statements is available at www.ncb.org.uk or on request from the Company Secretary.

Celebrating 50 years

In 2013/14 NCB will be proudly celebrating 50 years of working to improve the experiences and life chances of children, with a series of events and publications throughout the year.

Times are increasingly tough for too many of our children and young people and it is vital that we continue to champion their needs and make sure their voices are heard.

In the past 50 years we have achieved many things that have improved the lives of children and young people, especially the most vulnerable.

1963

We were born. Originally called the National Bureau for Co-operation in Childcare, we changed our name to the National Children's Bureau (NCB) in 1970.



1973

We published *Born to Fail*, a groundbreaking study that questioned the priorities and perspectives of British society after exploring the impact of inequality on 'disadvantaged' children.



1984

We established the All Party Parliamentary Group for Children, a group of around 100 MPs and peers interested in issues affecting children and young people.



1989

We played a key role in shaping the Children's Act. Intensive lobbying from NCB and the Council for Disabled Children transferred responsibility for disabled children from the NHS to their local authority and led to the closure of long-stay hospital wards for children with learning disabilities.



1993

We consulted on the 1993 Education Act, particularly around children with special needs, and many of our recommendations on school exclusions were incorporated in government guidelines.

1991

Diana, Princess of Wales made her first public speech about AIDS at an NCB conference on children and HIV and AIDS.



1997

We kick-started policy thinking around children's centres with the publication of *Not Just a Nursery*, which showcased early years centres that provided a more complete service for families.



2012

Our 'Making it REAL' literacy project wins award for radically improving the life chances of babies and young children.

1990

We published the report *Child Poverty and Deprivation in the UK*, which resulted in the unfreezing of Child Benefit allowances.



1998

We began work to promote the active participation of children and young people with the publication of *Young Opinions*, *Great Ideas* and later established our youth membership group, Young NCB, in 1999.



2010

The Child Poverty Act came into force after years of lobbying by End Child Poverty campaign, of which NCB is a founding member. The Act places a duty on the Secretary of State to meet UK-wide poverty targets by the end of the 2020 financial year.



2004

We played a pivotal role in establishing the first ever Children's Commissioner for England.

2006

We contributed significantly to the legislation of the 2006 Childcare Act, to ensure high quality early learning and care, better access to early childhood services for all children under five, and the duty to listen to views of young children.

Celebrating **50** Years

Stay in touch

Join NCB

NCB is the largest multi-agency membership network for the children's sector in the country, offering practical and valuable resources for everyone working with children and young people. Become a member and get the facts on the changes in policy and practice in the children and young people's sector – and receive exclusive NCB Member discounts.

✉ membership@ncb.org.uk

👉 www.ncb.org.uk/membership

Publications

NCB is a leading publisher across the children's sector. Written by experts, our books and digital resources ensure that our experience and knowledge supports professionals, academics, students, parents and children to access research, policy and best practice.

👉 www.ncb.org.uk/books

Information Centre

The UK's most comprehensive collection of resources on children and young people, the information centre has an extensive range of up-to-date resources and essential services available at your fingertips.

👉 www.ncb.org.uk/information-centre

Keep in touch

NCB works closely with the media to promote positive stories about children and young people, disseminate best practice to professionals and engage the wider public on children's issues.

✉ media@ncb.org.uk

🐦 www.twitter.com/ncbtweets

📘 www.facebook.com/ncbfb

Support NCB

All our work and our successes – campaigning for equal rights for disabled children, improving children's literacy, supporting bereaved children and young people and eradicating the fear of bullying – are only possible with your support. For more information on how you can be part of our work visit www.ncb.org.uk/support-us



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for children

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www.ncb.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 258825.