



Children and Young People's Sleep Manifesto



Up to
40%
of infants and children
experience sleep problems¹

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



Introduction from Vicki Dawson CEO

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.² Sleep deprivation is also linked to obesity.³ Children's sleep problems are associated with high levels of parental stress and increase the risk of day time behaviour problems arising.⁴ 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."⁵ 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.⁶

We exist because sleep issues can have a devastating effect on family life.⁷ Many parents report feeling exhausted and isolated and sleep issues are unlikely to resolve without intervention.⁸ 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.



Vicki Dawson

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 ⁹



Relationship difficulties ¹⁰



Lower mood ¹¹



Increase in anxiety ¹²



Difficulties with siblings



Weight issues ¹³



Social isolation



Hyperactivity ¹⁴



Concentration difficulties



Parental stress ¹⁵



Attachment issues



Memory problems ¹⁶



Depression ¹⁷



Lowered immune system ¹⁸



Lost days at school/work ¹⁹



Safety issues ²⁰



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!"

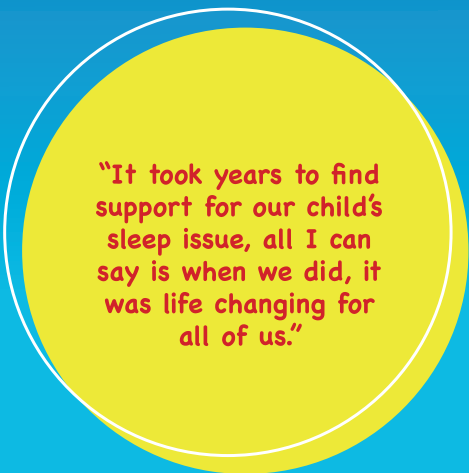


Quality Sleep Support Available to Families

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:



★ Pledges of Support ★

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REIGATE GRAMMAR SCHOOL





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
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Anne Cresswell
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