

Together in Hope, Together in Action: What has changed in Health Visiting

ERIC Conference: Celebrating 35 Years
Bristol, October 2026

Alison Morton, CEO
Institute of Health Visiting

Our shared purpose – giving every child the best start in life



Thank you... it takes a village!

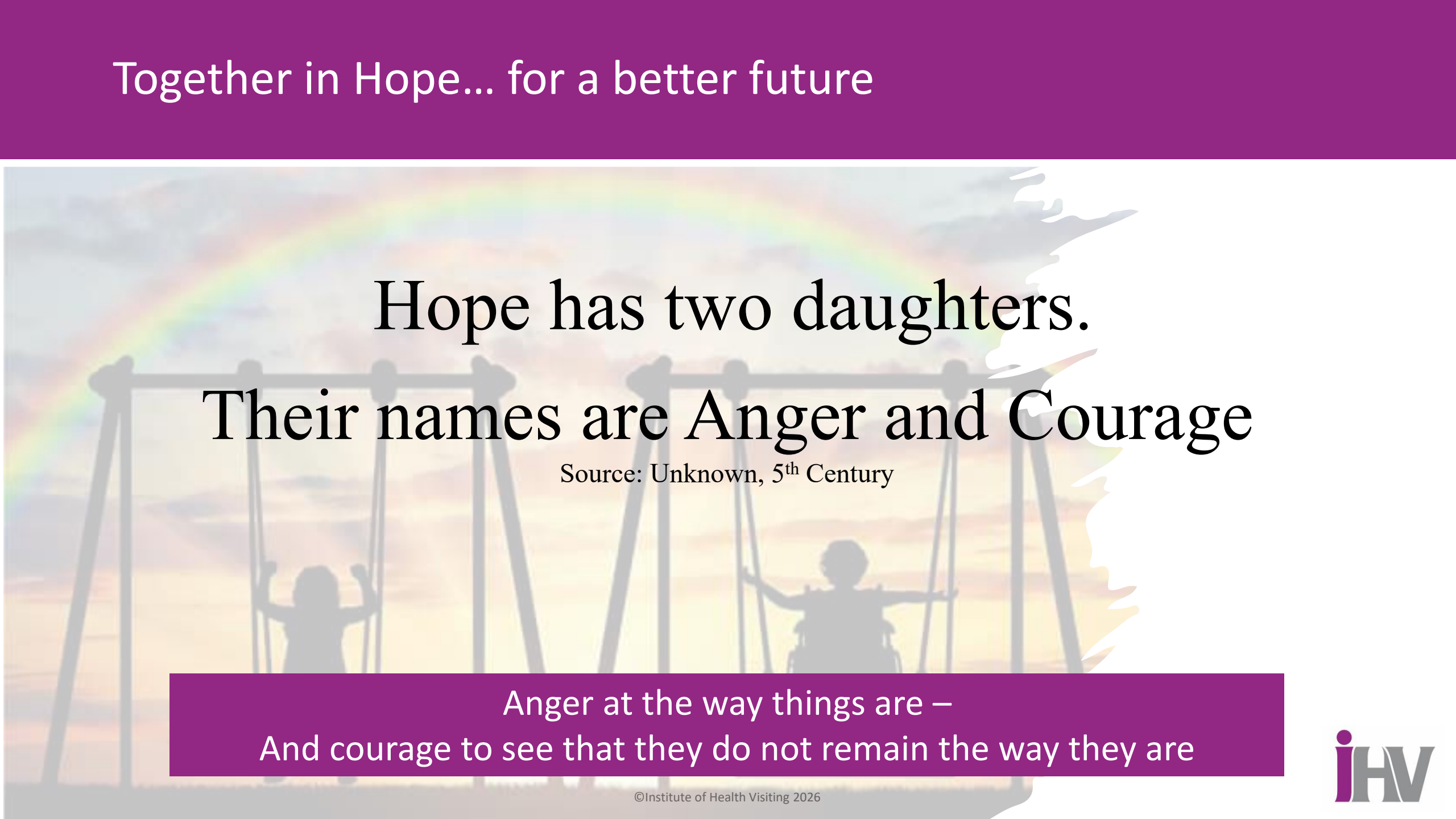


Together
in Hope...

Together
in Action



Together in Hope... for a better future



Hope has two daughters. Their names are Anger and Courage

Source: Unknown, 5th Century

Anger at the way things are –
And courage to see that they do not remain the way they are

Anger at the state of child health... rising levels of unmet need



Children in the UK are experiencing some of the worst health outcomes in Europe.

“Every system is perfectly designed to achieve the results it gets”

Independent report

Kingdon review of children's hearing services: final report

Published 10 November 2025

Press release: Early Help system in crisis

Children arriving at overstretched schools ‘still in nappies and using buggies’



Children paid 'huge price' in Covid pandemic, Johnson tells inquiry

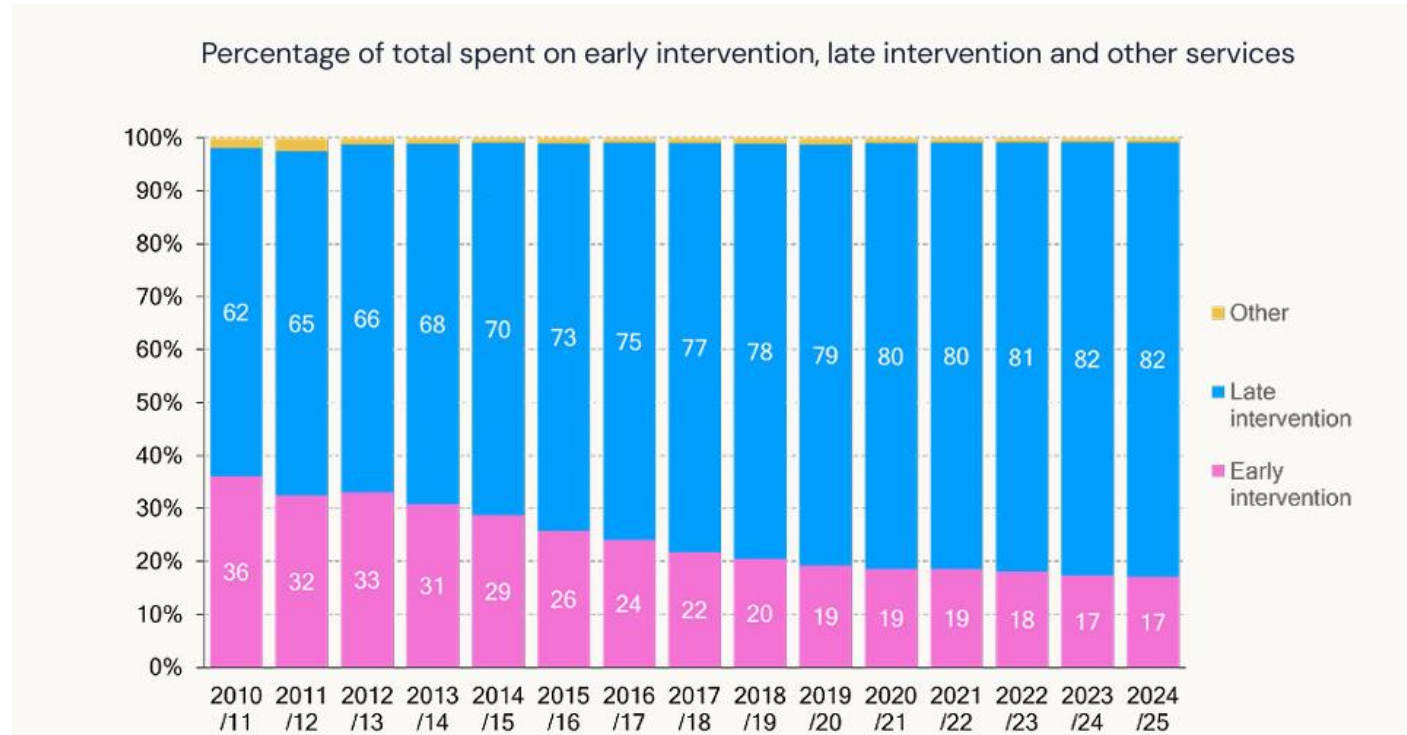


SEND crisis

Years of funding cuts leave council budgets buckling under soaring costs for children's social care

Financial driver: UK spending on health care is forecasted to double

A higher percentage of total spend on children is now being used for late intervention services



Rebalancing the system: Children's Services spending, 2011-25

Marie Horton and Jon Franklin
June 2026



June 2026

pbe.co.uk

A call to action

Doing nothing is not an option

**The greatest threats to global health and health care
are from conditions that are largely preventable.**

To avoid collapse,
we must shift 'upstream'

**Investing in prevention and early intervention in the earliest years of life
is not only the right thing to do –
it makes sound economic sense**

Courage to act: Government has a part to play... and so do we

Department of Health and Social Care



CYP Modern Service Framework – Health Bill
Coming soon

‘Putting the cradle back into the NHS...’

Action to address the
wider determinants of
health

Mission:
Healthiest
generation
of children
ever

Department for Education



‘Babies Bill’
private members bill
led by Sir Desmond Swayne MP

We are all leaders of change for the better

- *“Get people who know what they are doing to work together better”*
- *“Dream big... start small”*
- *“People before projects – put babies, children and families at the centre of our work”*
- *“Drive change –do it with the evidence”*



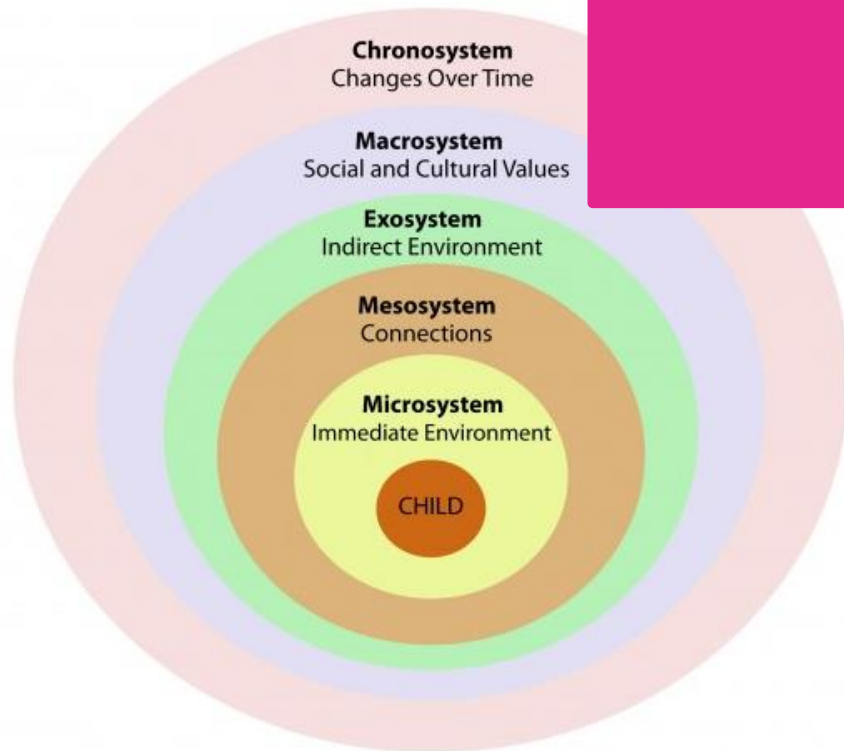
Quality Improvement – spreading excellence – shaping our future

Knowing OUR purpose ... collaboration is key



Only a small percentage (10-20%) of health is determined by factors like hospital access, with the majority determined by economic, social, and environmental conditions.

What part do you play in an integrated system of support?



Why health visiting? More than an intervention – our USP: Reach – Range – Response

Reach: Health visitors systematically and proactively reach all babies and children (from pregnancy to age 5)

Range of skills: To address a breadth of need/ complexity:

- Child health – physical health and mental health
- Adult health – mothers, fathers, co-parents, carers
- Child development (including SEND)
- Social needs
- Safeguarding

Response: A vital infrastructure across pathways – providing targeted support/ connecting to other services:

Prevention

Early
identification

Engaging
families

Personalised
care planning -
collaboration

“f
ye



NEWS

17 September

Fewer health visitors,
soaring caseloads and a
postcode lottery of
support

early
safety

Creating conditions for success: People matter!



Relational care - continuity of carer; seamless personalised care



Proportionate universalism: High quality universal & targeted support



Accessible – importance of home visiting
Responsive to changing needs (individual/ community)



Leadership, collaboration and accountability within integrated systems



A skilled and resourced workforce: Right skills, right place, right time



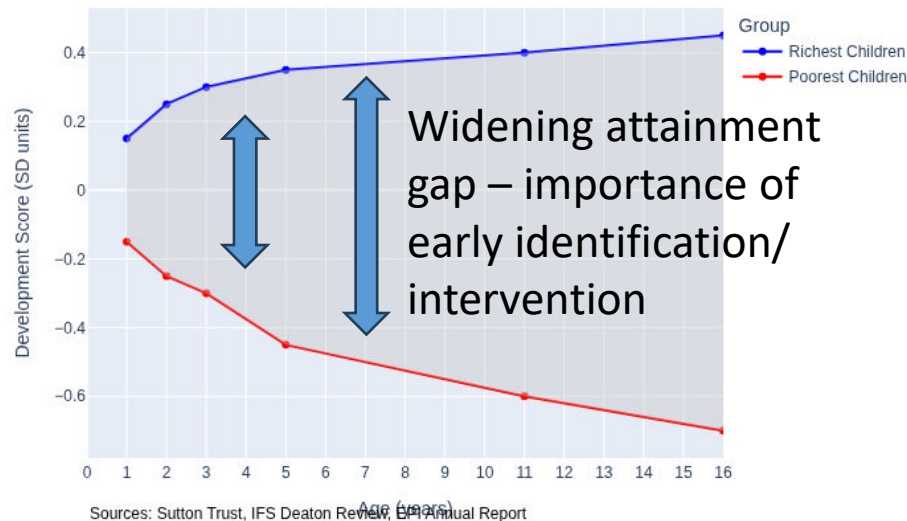
Focus on quality: evaluation, quality improvement, safe & effective digital transformation



Mission Target: Good level of development

National Mission Target:
75% of 5-year-olds to reach a
Good Level of Development
by 2028
(↑ in England from 67.7% =
40-45K more children)

UK Child Development Scores by Age (Richest vs Poorest)

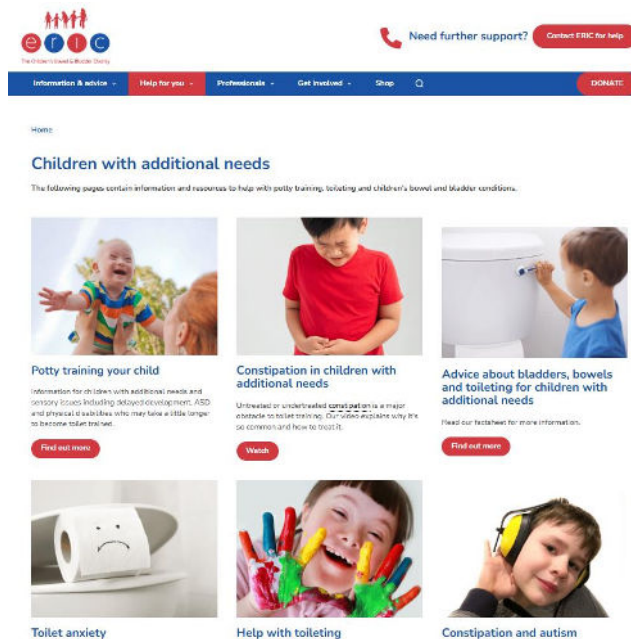


Children arriving at overstretched schools 'still in nappies and using buggies'

Focus on improving quality (what we do – what we measure):

- **Did we reach all children?** Access
- **Did we find those in need?** Assessment quality – limitations of ASQ
- **What next?**
 - Engagement/ uptake of trusted targeted support
- **Was it effective?**
 - Outcomes (including EYFS goal: 'Managing self' – use of toilet)
 - Reduced inequalities
 - Experience outcomes – 'time well spent'
- **Services designed around 'conditions for success'**

Collaboration - integration: the power of partnerships



Excellence in
practice

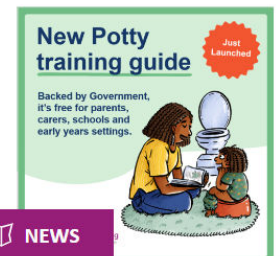


#iHVInsights

20 April 2023



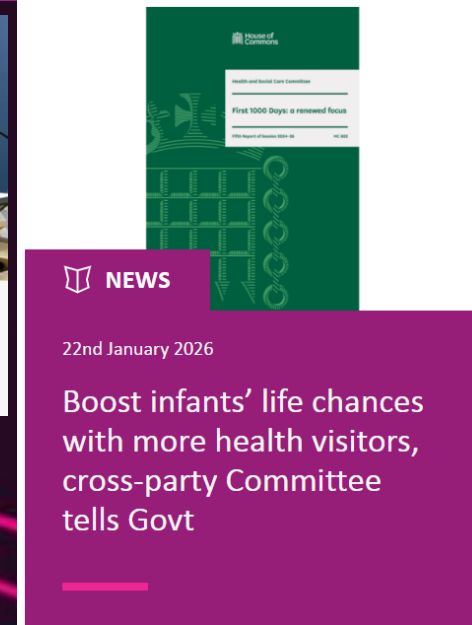
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Tackling key public
health priorities
together



Keep speaking up for babies, children and families – no child left behind!



Excellence in policy

Thank you for all that you're doing for babies, children and families



“Courage calls to courage everywhere”
Dame Millicent Fawcett

The future is ours...
but we need to shape it, together!