



**coram**

better chances  
for children  
since 1739

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## Charter for Children

A Call for Change for the  
next generation



# “THE TRUE CHARACTER OF A SOCIETY IS REVEALED IN THE WAY IT TREATS ITS CHILDREN”

NELSON MANDELA

Children’s lives are significantly better than when Thomas Coram set up this charity in 1739.

However, after decades of progress, it is clear that, on a range of metrics, life is no longer getting better for all our children and young people.

Too many young lives are blighted by poverty and, every day, there are children and young people not getting the love, security, education and opportunity they need to thrive.


The pandemic and cost of living crisis have worsened existing trends and we need to turn the tide.

The Institute of Fiscal Studies\* has reported the reduction in real value in the areas of public expenditure on which children depend over the last 20 years.

The triple lock on pensions introduced in 2010 has built economic security into the system for older people. We now need to give the youngest in society similar levels of security.

It is time for change – for our society to act as the parent it needs to be and ensure a just settlement for all generations.

Together we can create better chances for children, now and forever.

**2.3M CHILDREN LIVING WITH RISK** 

(Vulnerability Index, OCC)

\*Source: [childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/resource/public-spending-on-children/](https://childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/resource/public-spending-on-children/)

# A triple key for children

Coram presents the **Charter for Children** as a route map for the coming decade and beyond, calling for a realignment of the social contract between society and children backed by three key principles – **A fair share, A secure future and An equal chance.**

## A triple key to unlock the future

A triple key of financial commitments prioritising children and young people will both deliver a more just society and unlock the potential of the next generation

Taken together, the estimated cost of the triple key by the end of the decade is between £16.2 billion and £17.7 billion per annum at current prices, between 0.6 and 0.7% of our joint national income, significantly **less than a penny in the pound.**

The Charter's calls depend on a new funding settlement, additional to existing expenditure as well as commitments not yet fully enacted, such as funding of childcare reform and implementation of the recommendations of the independent review of children's social care.

The total cost would build up progressively over time so the average annual increase in public spending would be in the region of £2 billion per annum.

We could of course go further and faster, but this is what it would take to provide what we believe are the fundamentals needed to ensure we nourish, educate and provide stability for our children, upholding children's rights in our society.

**“TO BRING ABOUT THE CHANGE WE NEED WILL TAKE MORE THAN ONE PARLIAMENT, MORE THAN ONE SECTOR AND MORE THAN ONE GENERATION.”**

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## A fair share

... of the nation's resources so all children and young people can develop skills for the future, built on:

- **A Guarantee** that per-pupil in school and early education spending rises in line with the size of the economy;
- **Reform of childcare**, implementing current commitments and enabling all children to access high quality early education targeting areas of shortage;
- **Fair and timely** access to high quality and consistent special educational needs (SEND) and mental health support no matter where.

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## A secure future

Ensuring all children have a loving home, with the stability, resources and support they need to be healthy and happy:

- **Automatic Increase** in child-related benefits in line with earnings or prices, whichever is higher;
- **Extension** of free school meals as a minimum to all primary school children and all secondary pupils on Universal Credit;
- **Focus on what matters most for children** – timely decisions, making them safe and settled where they live, and enjoying trusting relationships;

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## An equal chance

Irrespective of age or background children and young people deserve access to justice and to have their voice heard:

- Raising the **Early Years Pupil Premium** so it matches the per-hour rate of the Pupil Premium for school-aged children and benefits for young people leaving care to match over 25s;
- **All children** in any family **to be eligible** for receipt of benefits with no child left without recourse to public funds;
- Free **legal advice** and representation for all children where it is needed.

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## What it will take

It means undertaking **Child Impact Assessments** to check the consequences for children and young people of any government policies.


A **Cabinet Minister for Children** leading and measuring this cross-government commitment would ensure successive governments are held to account.

Our own commitment to bringing about this change is by establishing the **Coram Institute for Children** as the first Think and Do centre dedicated to fulfilling the vision set out in this Charter, working with partners to achieve it.

To find out more how you can help make change happen, visit [coram.org.uk/institute](https://coram.org.uk/institute) or contact [institute@coram.org.uk](mailto:institute@coram.org.uk)




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**“WE HONOUR THOSE WHO  
WALKED SO WE COULD  
RUN. WE MUST RUN SO  
OUR CHILDREN SOAR.”**

PRESIDENT OBAMA