

Children First: Reforming Paediatric Oncology Through National Strategies and International Perspectives

Cancer affects around 400,000 children every year.¹

Because it cannot be prevented, every moment counts from accurate diagnosis, effective treatment and support for families.

We know what's possible: sustained investment and collaboration have transformed outcomes in adult oncology. **Children deserve the same focus and ambition.**

Today, scientific advances, international collaboration, and stronger advocacy are creating real momentum. Governments have begun to respond, introducing new policies and showing early leadership in childhood cancer. This leadership must be strengthened and sustained across the whole system.

Across three chapters: ***National Leadership, Investment in Research and Innovation, and Holistic Family Support***, this white paper calls on governments and system leaders to build on the progress made and act now. Grounded in international patient perspectives, it outlines practical steps to transform the future of childhood cancer care.

¹ World Health Organization. Cancer in children [Internet]. Geneva: WHO; 2023 [cited 2026 Feb 11]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/cancer-in-children>

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Commissioned by



National Leadership:



Explicitly include paediatric oncology in national cancer plans



Engage advocacy groups in policy design and monitoring



Benchmark progress using global tools

Investment in Research and Innovation:



Invest in the next generation of researchers



Introduce clinician-scientists where not yet standard, and enable them to lead innovation



Embed paediatric research in national plans



Establish national paediatric trial coordination hubs



Accelerate paediatric trial set-up and delivery

Holistic Family Support:



Integrate wrap-around care into national cancer plans



Establish and sustainably fund national travel and accommodation support funds



Formally recognise and resource patient organisations



Strengthen and sustain caregiver advisory councils and feedback mechanisms