

# THE INCREASING NUMBER OF CHILDREN WITH LIFE-LIMITING CONDITIONS IN THE UK

# MARTIN HOUSE RESEARCH CENTRE

## The issue

Previous research has shown that the number of children and young people with life-limiting conditions in the UK is increasing. Children's palliative care healthcare funders and providers use this information to understand what care is needed and where.

However, current estimates are outdated and there are no forecasts available of future numbers. Without this information, healthcare funders may not provide the correct mix of services for current and future needs.

## The research

This study used healthcare records in England to update estimates of children and young people, aged between 0 and 19, with life-limiting conditions. It did this by counting the number of children with relevant diagnoses in hospital records. Projections of future numbers were produced by looking at trends in past numbers and potential future changes to the population in England. The results were combined with information about the other countries in the UK to provide estimates for Northern Ireland, Wales, and Scotland.

## The outcome

The number of children and young people aged 0 to 19 years with a life-limiting condition increased between 2002 and 2018, which may, in part, be due to the young people living longer. In 2002, there were 31,000 children and young people, which means that 27 out of every 10,000 children and young people in the UK had a life-limiting condition. In 2017, this had increased to 87,000 children and young people, or 66 per 10,000 in the population. This number is expected to continue to rise to around 116,000 in 2030, indicating an increased need for children's palliative care services in all parts of the UK.

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## Published paper

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