

Children's Speech and Language Therapy Supporting Children with Cerebral Palsy Communication Information

Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs) work with children and young people with cerebral palsy to:

- Support communication, including speech, language development, and alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) methods.
- Work closely with families, schools, and other professionals to ensure consistent support.

Communication

1 in 2 children with cerebral palsy experience communication difficulties. Communication difficulties are more common in children and young people with dyskinetic or severe bilateral spastic cerebral palsy.

Communication differences may include:

- Differences in speech production, articulation, and intelligibility (dysarthria)
- Difficulties with understanding language or using language. Some children and young people may have difficulties with social communication.

At least 1 in 10 children and young people with cerebral palsy need AAC such as signs, symbols, objects or power-based speech devices to support communication. Around 1 in 10 children and young people cannot use formal AAC because of cognitive, sensory and communication difficulties.

Children with cerebral palsy may also have additional needs which impact on their communication including:

- Hearing impairments
- Visual difficulties
- Learning disabilities
- Physical and sensory processing challenges.

These may affect both communication and how support may be accessed.

What therapy may look like

For children and young people with cerebral palsy, therapy may include:

- Early communication advice – to support the skills of the child
- Training to families, education and support staff - to help people support the young person and to make sure the environment is communication friendly.
- Therapy for speech, breath control, voice and rate of speech for young people who are able to engage with this intervention and who mainly communicate through speaking.

Telephone: 01226 644331 (answer machine available)

Email: barnsley.speechtherapy@swyt.nhs.uk

Website: www.barnsleyspeechtherapy.co.uk

Facebook: @Barnsley Specialist Children's health

Twitter: @BarnsleySCH

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/Barnsleyspeechandlanguage therapy>



With all of us in mind.

- Looking at AAC such as books, objects, symbols, signs when needed to support communication
- Power based AAC (speech generating devices) for some children and young people.

Some children and young people we see may need to access additional teams such as the Barnsley Assistive Technology Team to provide specialist support and assessment for accessing AAC.

We work alongside other services to ensure communication support is considered along with other needs such as:

- Visual and hearing impairment teams
- Physiotherapy
- Occupational therapy
- Educational psychology

Your journey with us

Our service works with families and young people to:

- Set meaningful goals
- Develop personalised strategies
- Share progress with family members and other professionals
- Provide support through episodes of care – we will set 1-2 goals at a time to work on and discharge children when people know how to help. For children who will need to see us again in future, we will tell people when to refer back to us.

How to refer to our service

A referral to our service can be made by people that know the child, including:

- GPs
- Health visitors
- Paediatricians or other professionals
- Schools or early years settings
- Parents/Carers – self referral options are available

Our referral form can be accessed via our website:

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Preparation for adulthood and transition to adult services

Our service can help support children and young people with preparing for adulthood by:

- Giving general information about preparation for adulthood and services available. Information about this can be found on our website: [supporting older children](#)
- Reviewing communication needs, including AAC
- Reviewing eating, drinking and swallowing needs
- Supporting independence and self advocacy
- Liaising with adult services if ongoing support is required

Further helpful information

[Cerebral Palsy in under 25s](#) – assessment and management (NICE guidelines)

[Barnsley Local Offer website](#)

[Barnsley Assistive Technology team](#) – AAC local specialist service, training and information

[Scope](#) – the cerebral palsy charity

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