

Finding a therapist

Most speech and language therapy services may be contacted directly by parents. Contact your local service when your child is stammering, or ask the school to do so, as soon as possible after you have noticed it happening regularly. The [BSA](#) can supply the contact details of your local service.

Recovery from stammering for a primary school child

This is always difficult to judge, but we do know that Early Intervention gives the best chance of recovery and that the longer the child has been stammering complete recovery may be less likely. Parents may understandably find this upsetting and worry about their child's future. Anxiety about fluency can be transferred to a child from a parent and make it more difficult for him to manage his speech, so it is important to discuss these fears with the therapist and people who understand, such as the [BSA:Helpline](#).

Once parents come to terms with the fact their child may continue to stammer they will find it easier to use the simple strategies in this resource to support their child in managing his speech. It is important to deal with your own anxiety if your child continues to stammer because as long as he receives support from a therapist, at home and in school he can achieve his potential even if his stammering persists.

Stammering need not hold you back

Parents can be reassured that stammering need not hold back a child's academic, personal and social development as long as he receives the support he needs from therapy, at home and in school. The BSA knows of people who stammer who have succeeded in every walk of life.

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The National Health Service (NHS)

Speech and language therapy for children who stammer is available under the NHS. In most parts of the UK, you can refer your child to the local speech and language therapy department yourself. The [BSA](#) can provide contact details. In some areas you may need your GP or Health Visitor to make the referral, or you can ask the school to do so.

Speech and language therapists are highly trained professionals who work with a variety of communication disorders. The majority are women, so for convenience therapists are referred to as she, although a number of men are now entering the profession.

If you are concerned about your child's dysfluency you should contact your local speech and language therapy service for advice as soon as possible, even if the stammer appears to be quite mild and does not trouble the child in any way. It used to be thought that it was best to wait and see how the child's speech developed before making this referral. We now know that a therapist should be consulted as soon as possible.

You may have to wait several weeks or longer in some areas before being seen, since most therapy departments have waiting lists. In the meantime use the [simple tips](#) in this resource.

Private therapy

Parents may choose to contact a speech and language therapist who works in private practice. Rates for private therapy vary widely depending on the service offered. However, the average fee for an initial,

straightforward assessment is in the region of £85 to £120 per session. On-going therapy sessions are likely to be in the region of £50 to £70 per session. When family members have private medical insurance it is worth contacting the company to enquire whether speech and language therapy may be funded. Should the company require further information about stammering, the information on the [BSA](#) web site may be printed and supplied to them.

The Association of Speech and Language Therapists in Independent Practice (ASLTIP) provides information about independent speech and language therapists throughout the UK. All therapists are Registered Members of The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists and registered with the Health Professions Council. You can search online for a therapist via the [Association's website](#), [email them](#) or phone on 01494 488306. This is an answer phone service and is not staffed by therapists. When contacting ASLTIP, you will need to specify that you are looking for a therapist who deals with fluency problems or stammering, as many therapists do not work in this area of expertise.

Whether you see an NHS or a private therapist, it is entirely acceptable for you to ask if the therapist specialises in stammering and what you can expect from therapy. It is important, if possible, to see a specialist who works regularly with stammering and keeps up to date with the latest approaches to therapy.

If there is no specialist available in your local NHS speech and language therapy department, it may be worth asking if you can be referred to another department nearby - or contact [BSA](#) for details of NHS regional centres of expertise.

Whatever the age of your child if you are told to wait and see, as your child will probably grow out of it, the person is unlikely to be experienced in stammering. It is true that the majority of very young children do recover naturally from stammering, but you should still be given guidance on how to support your child, and the dysfluency should be actively monitored.

When your child's stammer is first identified in the primary school the advice of a therapist is just as important. The older child who stammers needs that support so he has strategies to manage his speech and maintain his confidence and self-esteem. Support from a therapist will help him to avoid the hidden fears and anxieties that can come out in behaviour that may undermine his progress.

The Michael Palin Centre for Stammering Children (MPC)

Once you have made contact with a local NHS speech and language therapist, they may be able to refer your child to this specialist service in London. This may be appropriate either if there is no specialist service available in your area, or if a local therapist feels your child could benefit from extra help.

MPC is a 'tertiary' centre working within the NHS. They are unable to accept referrals direct from parents, a referral must be made by a therapist or a doctor and may be from any part of the UK where no specialist service exists. Parents living in the London Boroughs of Camden and Islington may refer direct. A free specialist assessment service for children is provided. Following the assessment, a programme of specialist therapy may be set up as appropriate, and may be carried out by the local speech and language therapist, with support from the Centre where necessary. Therapy may be offered at the Centre on an individual or group basis, where this is not available locally. Funding for this is usually obtained through the local Primary Care Trust.

If you choose a therapist working privately in your area MPC may be able to accept a referral from her. The therapist would need to discuss the procedures and any costs required for that referral with MPC in advance, and would need to ensure that on-going therapy support will be available for the child, after the completion of the course.

Contact:

The Michael Palin Centre for Stammering Children
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