



The Michael Palin Centre for Stammering
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www.stammeringcentre.org



The Michael Palin Centre has an international reputation as a centre of excellence for therapy, research and training in stammering.

INFORMATION FOR COMMISSIONERS

Background

Stammering is a severe communication disability which impairs social, emotional and educational development. While stammering is outwardly characterised by repetitions, prolongations and blocking of sounds, these behaviours can be accompanied by feelings of isolation, frustration, embarrassment, reduced self worth and poor self image.

Stammering conceals intellectual ability, affects educational choices and attainment, results in impaired communication skills and frequently becomes a focus for teasing and bullying. In chronic cases, it may play a significant part in a person's ability to achieve their potential and to make their full contribution to society.

The Michael Palin Centre for Stammering

There has been a specialist service for stammering in Camden and Islington since the 1970s. As the reputation and the demand for services grew nationally, the Michael Palin Centre (MPC) was established in 1993 as a national specialist Centre offering advice, assessment in individual cases, specialist therapy for complex clients and professional training. There is an active research programme to investigate, support and develop the services offered at the Centre.

The Michael Palin Centre is run by NHS Whittington Health with the support of a charity Action for Stammering Children (ASC).

Evidence based practice

The Michael Palin Centre is committed to ensuring that assessment protocols and treatment programmes are conducted in collaboration with clients, with ethical consideration, and according to principles of evidence based practice and clinical governance. Standards of best practice are reviewed and maintained through the

monitoring systems of Whittington Health's clinical and research governance policies and procedures and according to the requirements of the Health Professions Council and the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT).

The Centre uses a range of sensitive measurement tools at prescribed intervals to determine an individual's progress through therapy. These measures are accepted as best practice (see Clinical Guidelines, RCSLT¹). Progress is closely monitored and disseminated through clinical reports to families and, with consent, to involved professionals.

Therapy packages are developed and implemented based on available research evidence and clinical expertise. The Centre has an active research programme exploring the efficacy of the therapy packages offered. Levels of evidence are detailed for each programme on the accompanying documentation. Further details are available on the website www.stammeringcentre.org or will be sent on request.

Clinical Services

a) Specialist consultation and assessment – *charitably funded advisory service*

This individual **assessment** and **advisory** service is for children and young people with severe and complex disorders of fluency who may be referred from any part of the UK.

Criteria for referral for consultation and assessment include:

- Second opinion for specialist speech and language therapists (SLTs), parents or other professionals
- Expert opinion for non-specialist SLTs

We provide:

- detailed therapy recommendations;
- a full and detailed clinical report with evidence based recommendations;
- on-going support for referring therapists;
- confidential telephone and email support; and
- 6 month follow up review if required.

b) Specialist therapy packages may be commissioned on a cost-per-case basis, or via service level agreements.

Therapy programmes developed at the Centre are widely used and have been disseminated through textbooks, chapters, academic papers, and training in the UK and internationally. The expert team of SLTs is fully trained in a range of therapy programmes and clinical recommendations are made for each child/young person and family based on the detailed assessment of the individual's needs and with the agreement of main carers.

It should be noted that specialist services for stammering are rare across the UK. It has a relatively low incidence in comparison to other speech, language and communication problems, and therefore the recommended care pathway (see RCSLT CQ3²) includes access to specialist advice and therapy where necessary. While many SLT services provide some level of therapy for stammering, these are often limited to younger children. Current evidence confirms that SLTs generally

¹ Royal College of Speech Language Therapists. *Clinical Guidelines*

² *Communicating Quality 3: Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists' guidance on best practice in service organisation and provision*

consider stammering to be a very difficult disorder to manage (Crichton-Smith et al. 2003).

Wherever possible, recommendations will be made for children to attend their local SLT services to access the support that they require. However, there will be occasions when it is recommended that the child and family access therapy services at the MPC:

Criteria for referral for therapy at the MPC include:

- **Lack** of local resources
 - Client's therapy needs cannot be met (e.g. group therapy unavailable or not feasible due to small numbers)
 - No service available (e.g. secondary school pupils)
 - No specialist expertise available
 - Parental choice

- **Complex** cases requiring additional qualifications or expertise from specialists
 - Lack of progress
 - Co-occurring disorders (e.g. Down syndrome, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Autistic Spectrum Disorder)
 - Family problems requiring additional specialist expertise
 - Related mental health issues (social anxiety, low self esteem, depression)

Therapy Packages

Four alternative therapy packages are described below. The aim of all therapy is to reduce the short and long-term impact of stammering on daily functioning and well-being. This is achieved by focusing on the development of communication skills, direct speech management and on the cognitive and affective aspects of the disorder. Therapy is undertaken collaboratively, with an emphasis on helping clients to identify personal goals, increase their understanding of and responses to stammering, and develop effective self-help strategies in order to maximise long-term effectiveness of therapy. With young children, the emphasis is on working with parents to achieve these goals. Parental involvement decreases gradually as the child becomes more able to take on responsibility for the therapy for themselves.

Band One Package (up to 20 hours of individual face-to-face specialist therapy sessions) Cost: £2,000

This banding provides up to 20 one-hour therapy sessions and is mostly suited to younger children who stammer who require Palin Parent Child Interaction Therapy. This approach involves both parents attending weekly therapy sessions where they explore strategies to support their child's fluency, using video feedback and home practice sessions. Some children also receive a small component of direct therapy to develop their use of specific fluency techniques when needed or the Lidcombe Program may be offered as appropriate. The Band 1 funding may also be used for older children who have a milder form of stammering or who require fewer therapy sessions.

Band Two Package (up to 30 hours of individual face-to-face specialist therapy sessions) Cost: £3,000

This banding provides up to 30 one-hour sessions for school-age children who require a combined indirect and direct therapy programme, which incorporates video feedback sessions with parents and direct therapy sessions aimed at developing social skills, fluency strategies and exploring ways to manage the emotional aspects of stammering more successfully.

Parents will be involved in the therapy at each stage until the child reaches approximately 15 years of age. Therapy may be delivered during individual or weekly group sessions, or a combination of both. This banding does not include attendance on the intensive courses (See Bands 3+4).

Band Three Package (intensive group therapy, follow up and individual therapy as required for 1 year) Cost £3,600

This banding provides a one-year programme of therapy for young people aged 15 and above who stammer. The programme starts with a two-week intensive course, when the young people attend in a group for 5 to 6 hours every day for two weeks. Activities focus on fluency techniques, confidence building, developing social communication skills and ways to manage the emotional aspects of stammering more successfully. Following the two-week course, regular group follow-up days are arranged throughout the year and additional individual therapy sessions are arranged as necessary.

Band Four Package (intensive group therapy, follow up and individual therapy as required for 1 year) Cost: £4,500

This banding provides a one-year programme of therapy for children aged 10 to 14 who stammer. These cases are often more complex and some of the children have co-occurring conditions, such as Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Some families attend an initial individual programme of Family Communication Skills Therapy or the child may receive some individual direct fluency before attending the intensive course. Up to 10 children attend the two-week intensive course in a group and their parents attend in a separate parents' group, both of which are for 5 to 6 hours every day for two weeks. The children's group activities focus on fluency techniques, confidence building and developing social communication skills. The parents' group explores how the parents and the wider family can support the changes that the children are making. Following the two-week course, regular group follow-up days are arranged for both parents and children throughout the year and additional individual therapy sessions are arranged as necessary.



Funding arrangements

Currently some NHS trusts have agreed a block arrangement with the MPC, whilst others consider applications for funding on a cost per case basis. The charity ASC funds 50% of MPC activity.

NHS trusts can consider two funding options to ensure that this specialist service is available for local families in need.

- Option 1 - Block funding

NHS trusts which take up this option secure activity at a reduced cost, as well as free places for SLTs on the Centre's internationally renowned training courses.

e.g. £15,000 per annum would provide:

5 X Band 1 packages of care (£10,000)

1 X Band 2 package of care (£3,600)

1 X Band 3 package of care (£4,500)

4 training places for SLTs (£600)

Total value: **£18700**

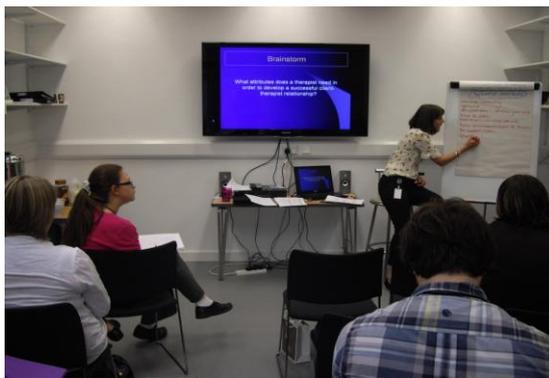
- Option 2 - Cost per case funding

Schedules are agreed with NHS trusts whereby children are funded on a cost-per-case basis, having undergone a charitably funded assessment to determine the appropriate therapy and Banding for the funding sought.

The MPC has a website with detailed information and the evidence base for its assessment and therapy services, as well as details of its training programme.

Teaching and Training Programme

The Michael Palin Centre is committed to the development and training of SLTs. There are a wide range of charitably-subsidised training activities on offer, with courses aimed at therapists who are less experienced in working with children who stammer, as well as courses that are aimed at more experienced and specialist therapists. There are also opportunities for observational training and clinical supervision. Details of these are available on the website.



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