

# Communication Without Speech



HELLO

everyone! Hopefully by the time you are reading this, we will be having some better weather; I hope you have kept warm during the long winter! This edition of Wellspring has been a real eye-opener for me into all the different ways of communication without speaking! Find out about the work of the staff at QE11 School in Horsham who support pupils reach their potential on page 3 and read a parent's views on the importance of communication on page 4-5. The Reach Out/Communic8 website is a brilliant resource, not just for communication information but also for details of accessible events near you - more details on page 5. CBeebies is launching a new series called Magic Hands presented entirely in British Sign Language, find out more on page 14. Don't forget to contact Wellspring if you have been anywhere exciting, or found out something you can share with others! If you are a budding poet or story writer, we need your work for the next newsletter - Words in Action!

Lizzie Baily

[lizzie@wellspringwestsussex.org.uk](mailto:lizzie@wellspringwestsussex.org.uk)

## Let's All Communicate

27th June 9am - 2pm

The Charis Centre, Crawley

- A FREE Event for parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities aged 0 – 25 years.
- Communication workshops, opportunities to look at various communication devices, meet the professionals and wide range of information stands.
- If you are unable to come for the whole day, please do drop in to take advantage of the information stands/market place.

To book your place

Email: [Jane.Lewison-White@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Jane.Lewison-White@westsussex.gov.uk)

Tel: 01243 642469

Thank you to Awards for All for the funding for our project - Understanding Information Needs for young people with disabilities. This newsletter has been produced as part of that project.



**WELLSPRING  
WEST SUSSEX**  
- A regular newsletter  
for children and  
young people with  
disabilities, and their  
parents and carers  
across West Sussex

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# The Communication Trust

Many children in the UK have difficulties with speech, language and communication – in fact we know that around 1 million children have a speech, language and communication need which will affect them severely and for life.

Some children can be helped and supported to develop better communication skills, but what happens to those who cannot speak at all?

The Communication Trust has several publications that may be useful to download, including 'Other Ways of Speaking', which focuses on children and young people whose speech is difficult to understand or who have no speech.

The Communication Trust is a consortium of nearly 47 members with expertise in children's communication and, has several members that support children who have little or no speech and their families.

These include:

- **1 Voice** - [www.1voice.info](http://www.1voice.info) takes a family and social perspective on communication and recognises the great need for adult role models to inspire children and families alike. It promotes families supporting each other to overcome the isolation that being unable to speak can bring.

- **Afasic** - [www.afasicengland.org.uk](http://www.afasicengland.org.uk) is a parent-led organisation set up to help children and young people with speech and language impairments and their families. The voluntary organisation seeks to raise awareness and create

better services and provision for children and young people, and produces resources and publications for parents. They also provide local groups which meet throughout the UK

- **Communication Matters** - [www.communicationmatters.org.uk](http://www.communicationmatters.org.uk) see page 6
- **Cued Speech** - [www.cuedspeech.co.uk](http://www.cuedspeech.co.uk) see page 13
- **I CAN** - [www.ican.org.uk](http://www.ican.org.uk) see page 9  
Also manages **Talking Point** - [www.talkingpoint.org.uk/en/Parent.aspx](http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk/en/Parent.aspx), a website dedicated to speech and language, and I CAN's assessment services
- **The Makaton Charity** - [www.makaton.org](http://www.makaton.org) see page 8
- **The Paget Gorman Society** - [www.pagetgorman.org](http://www.pagetgorman.org) see page 7
- **Signalong** - [www.signalong.org.uk](http://www.signalong.org.uk) - see page 10

For more information about the Trust in general, and our work with the children's workforce, visit our website [www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk)



**The Communication Trust**  
Every child understood

# Communication at QEII School

What is communication? Easy. Communication is a meaningful interaction. Why do we communicate? Easy. We communicate because we desire or require an interaction for a specific reason. Who do we communicate with? Easy. We choose or connect with the recipient of our communication based on the desires or requirements of the communication we are making.

How do we communicate? Now that's a question that can open a can of worms, Pandora's box and a hornet's nest all in one go. Speech and the written word is the classic and most preferred communication avenue of the majority of the mainstream population with television, cinema, theatre, newspapers, magazines and computers adopting these approaches as their first port of call. They also incorporate signs, sign language, large print and hearing support as an optional extra – sometimes – for some things – when enough people challenge the accepted approach. However, what about all those other forms of communication that so many of the population require but are not so easily accessible? These are the communication avenues we are constantly exploring and developing at QEII school in order to address the myriad of communication needs of our pupils and students as fully as we possibly can.

How do we do this? We employ speech and language therapists to assist us to identify the communication needs of our pupils in addition to regular liaison with parents and carers and teacher assessment. Once communication needs are identified, pupils resources and equipment are put in place to support the need. For example, many of our pupils support their communication with Voice Output Communication Aids (VOCAS). These include Big Macks, Proxtalkers

and, most recently, iPads and we are developing both our provision and expertise with these so appropriate apps are adopted for the individual needs and age of pupils. We also use technology such as interactive whiteboards in the classroom and a 'Magic Carpet', an interactive whiteboard embedded in the floor to enhance communication opportunities. We are developing eye gaze as a means of communication and linking this to the magic carpet so eye gaze users can work alongside those adopting different communication approaches. Through the use of all these approaches pupils can communicate and have their needs met more effectively. In addition to these methods we also adopt PECS (picture exchange communication system), symbol timetables and signing to develop communication at QEII. Each of these approaches offers an alternative to speech yet promotes optimum communication opportunities for the pupil.

Beyond these approaches we have an ace up our sleeve – Performing Arts. At QEII all our pupils and students from the very first term they begin with us have a role in the performing arts. As a school with specialist status in this subject, a state of the art theatre and drama studio and a Theatrical Director who knows how to elicit an Oscar level performance from even nursery age pupils we really know how to push their communication buttons. Add to this iPads, PECS, Magic Carpets, Eye Gaze, signing and the expertise, positive encouragement and genuine enthusiasm of a dedicated staff team, it is no wonder that our pupils and students are such successful and outstanding communicators.

*Carol Willard  
Deputy Headteacher, QEII School*

# A Parent's Voice for a Child

Many people have plenty to say but have little or no voice and use different ways to communicate.

They can use systems such as pictures, signs, written words and technology to communicate. This is known as A.A.C. What is A.A.C? Augmentative and Alternative Communication. Augment means to add to or increase ...and alternative means available as another choice, unconventional or another option (according to my Oxford dictionary).

I would like to say communication speaks for itself, pardon the pun - but it doesn't as not everyone is given the right to have a voice and it is a RIGHT yet parents and A.A.C users consistently find they are without their "voices" due to numerous reasons including funding - or rather should I say lack of funding, equipment failing, red tape holding them back etc.

My glass is always half full and I am always forever hopeful for changes. All parents of A.A.C users or A.A.C users themselves have your say as the government want to improve services. The money that is being used needs to be the most productive, hence the research into services provided.

**SPECIALISED AND LOCAL AAC SERVICES**  
Taking into account the under provision of local and regional services and the need to build capacity with a specialised and local AAC Services. The Communication Matters website [www.communicationmatters.org.uk](http://www.communicationmatters.org.uk) has details of Lobbying, Service Delivery & National Standards as well as current research.

[www.AACknowledge.org.uk](http://www.AACknowledge.org.uk) brings together current knowledge, information, research and case studies on AAC in a variety of formats to make it clear and accessible to all. This website empowers AAC users, parents, carers and professionals to use cutting

edge evidence and information to improve support and services for people with speech difficulties.

If your child could choose anything in the world with no expense spared, what would their answer be?

Disneyworld? Latest gadget maybe? I would have thought that would have been my answer when I asked my child that same question but was not prepared for his answer many years ago. His response not only humbled me but made me realise how much I take things for granted without a second thought.



My son wanted to speak and talk....just like his brother, like me, like everyone else. He wanted to chat, join in conversations, have a joke and have a bit of a banter but he was unable to.

How do I know this? Jim eye-pointed to his brother when I asked the question. I then asked Jim questions where he could look up for Yes and down for no.....I started by asking:

Do you want to walk like him? (at that time his brother was in a walker for a minimum period of time per day). No, came the answer. Do you want to hold things? No. Do you want to draw or write like he does? No. Then, eventually I asked the correct question... Do you want to talk like him? A massive movement of the head upwards... YES We got there after some time. I have asked myself since then, why did I not think to ask Jim this question first?

I made a promise to him there and then I would not stop until I got that for him. By this time Jim was about 5 years old. It took me years before it happened with so many professionals, assessments, switches, machines, and the dreaded 'F' word.  
**FUNDING.**

I don't believe anyone myself included, can ever put the importance on communication until you don't have it, for whatever reason. Funding for Communication Aids is not a priority for Health - would you believe if I told you Health in West Sussex do not consider funding for Communication Aids AT ALL? I believe their policy is there is no money and Communication Aids are a responsibility of Social and Education funding. What a load of rubbish I say to that!

My son sees a Physio Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, an Asthma Nurse, The Child Development Centre Doctor, a Neurological Consultant, an Orthopaedic surgeon, an Orthodontist, wheelchair services, attends a school 13 miles away from home with a specialist unit to meet his additional needs and has hydrotherapy all due to his medical condition

of Cerebral Palsy. How is this not a health requirement?

I am always hopeful of change and who knows perhaps with the new Children's and Families Bill, soon to become white paper, I would really like to see a priority on A.A.C Users (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) acknowledging the fact everyone has a RIGHT to a voice, whether it be via a picture exchange card method (p.e.c.) or any low tech or high tech method.

YOU CAN MAKE CHANGES FOR THE BETTER BY SUPPORTING PEOPLE THAT HAVE DIFFICULTY DOING WHAT MOST OF US FIND AS EASY AS BREATHING... having a right to a voice.

*Sharon Langton - a caring parent*

## Reach Out Communic8

The West Sussex Report 'Yes We Can!' (April 2009) - a consultation with disabled children and young people – and the Bercow Review (2008) which recognised "...a grossly inadequate recognition across society of the importance of communication development' ... identified the very real need for a dedicated resource about communication in West Sussex.

Following meetings in October/November 2009 with a wide range of people including speech and language therapists; the Head of Speech and Language Therapy Children's Services for West Sussex; teachers; experts in their fields; Playscheme Managers; disabled children

and young people themselves; the Disabled Young People's Forum, families; other local authorities and national organisations working on communication; the 'Communication Toolkit' (as it was initially known) was born. These initial meetings raised some interesting ideas and questions. What is the level of understanding about disability in our wider communities? Why not consider an identified 'lead runner' to take up the development of disability awareness and communication in organisations? Make Makaton and Picture Recognition available everywhere including our

shops, cafes, sports centres and anywhere there are people. Make sure the Resource is needs led, that it's about good communication, effective communication, 'wicked' communication!

Originally this was to be a 'stand alone' website but in May 2010 became a part of 'Reach Out', an Information Resource for the community of West Sussex. The philosophy and ethos of COMMUNIC8 is that it:

- is a 'living' and developing resource
- enables its content to be easily accessible and inclusive
- is child and young person centred
- is exciting and where appropriate challenging
- uses vehicles for communication which are 'of the moment'
- provides opportunities for anyone to share their own experiences ideas and dreams
- is a springboard where the wider community can celebrate the successes, achievements and shared contributions to 'COMMUNIC8' of disabled children and young people.

PARTICIPATE, CELEBRATE  
and COMMUNIC8 !!!

[www.reachoutwestsussex.org/communic8](http://www.reachoutwestsussex.org/communic8)

# Communication Matters

Imagine that you could not speak but you still have a lot to say. Communication Matters can help!

Communication Matters is an organisation supporting all aspects of AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) across the whole UK supporting this group of people. It is estimated that 0.5% of the population (approx. 260,000 children and adults may need AAC at some point in their lives) so we have a lot of work to do.

Communication Matters believes that all individuals have the right to a 'voice' through the provision of appropriate AAC equipment and services. We value people who use any form of alternative communication and promote the individual's right to participate in all aspects of life by using the most effective means of communication to express their thoughts, feelings, needs and desires.

Our core aims are:

- To raise awareness of AAC
- To provide education opportunities
- To promote research
- To lobby government for better AAC service provision

Our membership includes people of all ages who use AAC, their families and carers, the range of professionals who are involved with their communication and the suppliers of AAC solutions. Everybody who has an interest in AAC is welcome to join and participate.

Each year Communication Matters runs a 2 ½ day National AAC Conference bringing together our membership, to share information, listen, learn and have fun. A date for your diary - **September 15th-17th** at Leeds University.

Throughout the year we also have free regional Roadshows to keep everybody updated on the latest technology and new equipment. Additional Study Days focus on topical issues and special events for people who use AAC.

Visit our website to find out more about what we do and to get involved

[www.communicationmatters.org.uk](http://www.communicationmatters.org.uk)



## Find A Voice

More than a million people in the UK today have some kind of speech difficulty. Of these, around half a million have significant problems in speaking and communicating.

Find A Voice is a charity based in Ashford, Kent. We have been providing advice and support to people with speech and communication difficulties since 1996.

If you or someone you know is having difficulty communicating then Find A Voice may be able to help.

Find A Voice is not an assessment centre. Our aim is to work in partnership with professionals to assist you to reach the best possible outcome. We do this by providing advice and information about the forms of augmentative and alternative communication aids available; by providing access to the equipment on a loan basis to assess suitability; and by assisting with locating sources of funding once the appropriate course of action has been identified.

The Find A Voice resource library has a range of equipment and resources including basic communication aids, switch activated toys, switches, books, DVDs and Makaton Resources. These can be borrowed, free of charge for an agreed period. This gives you and any therapist supporting you, the opportunity to trial the equipment to see if it is suitable.

We also provide information regarding sources of funding and advocacy and support in making application for grants etc.

If you wish to see the equipment we have available please see our catalogue in the downloads section of our website at [www.findavoice.org.uk](http://www.findavoice.org.uk). We also have an outreach location in East Sussex please check the Outreach Diary page of our website for details of when and where we will be visiting.

For more information about our charity

Tel: **01233 640443**

[www.findavoice.org.uk](http://www.findavoice.org.uk)

# Paget Gorman Signed Speech

As a parent/carer, friend or teacher there is nothing worse than experiencing a child either struggling to understand what is going on or endeavouring to make themselves understood. The resulting frustration and feelings of despondency for all involved in the attempt at communication are damaging to future attempts and self esteem.

There are various methods of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) that use both signing and the spoken word to support a person's ability to communicate. The system most commonly used in specialist language units and schools as a learning tool for children with specific language impairments (SLI) is Paget Gorman Signed Speech (PGSS).

PGSS was devised by Sir Richard Paget whose studies were largely concerned with the origin and development of human speech and communication. It was revised and modified by the late Lady Paget and Dr Pierre Gorman who standardised the signs. In its current version it incorporates many features suggested and requested by teachers, speech therapists and others who are in daily contact with speech and language impaired children. It is printed in full in a manual, CD rom and Internet. There are instructions for making over 4,000 signs.

Recent research (Diana James) outlines the unique function of PGSS in providing opportunities to support the learning and the use of new vocabulary. Children with SLI may experience problems learning new words and/or difficulties when attempting to use those words. If we liken the brain to an intricate computer system, if the word is not correctly organised and stored in specific files and folders then not only is it

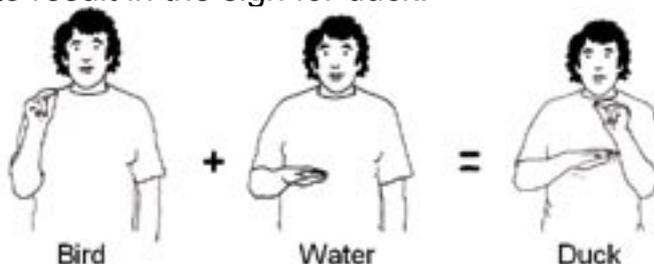
very difficult to find, it doesn't actually make sense.



Cat

In PGSS there are standard hand postures and basic signs which can be manipulated and/or combined in order to represent each word. In addition, the basic signs represent groups of words with a common concept, such as time, position and animal life. For example, the sign for animal is manipulated or added to in different ways in order to refer to a specific animal.

Furthermore, separate signs illustrating the concepts of animal and water can be produced together to result in the sign for duck:



Hence the understanding and learning of new concept vocabulary is supported by being pre-organised into the correct content folder. Conversely it can act as the key that unlocks that same folder when the word needs to be retrieved and used.

Some comments from children using P.G.S.S:

- It helps me
- My hands help me think it in my brain
- Mummy understands me,
- If you sign it helps you say words

This is a very brief introduction into PGSS. For further information please contact the Paget Gorman Society.

Tel: **01252 621183**

**[www.pagetgorman.org](http://www.pagetgorman.org)**

Find us on Facebook and Twitter

*Jude Rimell*

# Makaton

Makaton is a language programme using signs and symbols to help people communicate. It is designed to support spoken language and the signs and symbols are used with speech in spoken word order.

With Makaton, children and adults can communicate straight away using the signs and symbols. Many then drop the signs or symbols naturally at their own pace, as they develop speech.



Being able to communicate eases frustration and gives the person confidence and independence while developing communication and language skills.

Makaton is a visual way to develop communication skills which helps stimulate sounds and words. This visual way of communicating encourages language development, such as putting words together. Makaton helps understanding, giving an extra visual cue to help people understand.

## Who uses Makaton?

Today over 100,000 children and adults, use Makaton symbols and signs, either as their main method of communication or as a way to support speech. It can help people to:

- Share thoughts, choices and emotions
- Label real objects, pictures, photos + places
- Take part in games and songs
- Listen to, read and tell stories
- Create recipes, menus and shopping lists
- Write letters and messages
- Help people find their way around public buildings

Makaton is the UK's leading language programme for adults and children with learning or communication difficulties.

It is also used by everyone who shares their lives for example, parents and other family members, friends and carers, education and health professionals. Makaton is regularly used in mainstream schools, to support all children to develop communication, language and literacy skills. Using Makaton across a setting supports integration, as children with and without language difficulties can communicate, learn and play together more easily.



## Have you seen Mr Tumble?

The BBC's award-winning Something Special children's television features Mr Tumble and friends, played by Justin Fletcher. They use Makaton symbols and signs to support speech throughout each programme. The programmes use a simple repetitive format, making it easy to learn the Makaton symbols and signs used in each episode. Everyone is encouraged to join in using songs and games.

## Top tips for signing

- Use the signs whenever you talk about the action. eg eating and drinking happens many times day and by using the sign and saying the word each time it will help to reinforce it in your child's mind
- Always say the word while making the sign
- Try to make eye contact and use facial expression
- Use clear, short sentences
- You can guide your child's hands to help them sign
- If your child tries to sign, encourage their attempts; use the sign for 'Good' and say 'Well done!'
- Encourage friends and relatives to use the signs too
- Have fun!

## What does The Makaton Charity do?

The Makaton Charity exists to ensure that everyone living with learning or communication difficulties has the tools and resources they need to communicate. We:

- Provide training to 30,000 parents, carers and professionals each year
- Develop and produce a wide range of printed and electronic resources
- Work with others to make information accessible using Makaton symbols
- Offer advice and support to families and professionals
- Work in partnership with organisations such as The National Portrait Gallery, Her Majesty's Court Service and the BBC.

## Want to know more?

Tel: **01276 606760**

**www.makaton.org**

**MAKATON**<sup>®</sup>

The Makaton Charity

You can also follow us on Twitter or join us on Facebook.

# I CAN

Learning to talk is the number one life skill for the 21st century. It's as simple as that. The ability to talk, understand what other people are saying and build relationships is hugely important. Without these skills we would struggle to make friends, stay safe, let other people know what we want and how we feel. Children need good communication skills to be able to learn in school, know how to behave and to enjoy life to the full. We often take these skills for granted, but children need our help to make it all happen.

So what happens for children that may not find learning to speak, listen and understand easy? Over one million children in the UK today have a long-term communication difficulty. Children with communication difficulties might find it hard to express themselves, understand words, speak in sentences and understand simple instructions. Daily life for these children can be distressing and frustrating. They can struggle to read, learn, join in, make friends and achieve. I CAN, the children's communication charity, are the experts in helping children with communication difficulties. If we find and help these children and their families, we can unlock their potential.

SLCN is often called a 'hidden difficulty'. Many children with SLCN look just like other children, and can be just as clever. This means that instead of communication difficulties people may see children struggling to learn to read, showing poor behaviour, having difficulties learning or socialising with others. Some children may become withdrawn or isolated. Their needs are often misinterpreted, misdiagnosed or missed altogether.

What happens if a child's difficulties with speaking, listening and understanding are not spotted?

You may not realise, but for children with SLCN who do not get their needs identified and offered timely support, their outlook may be bleak. Just 15% of children with SLCN achieve 5 GCSE A\*-C or equivalent compared to 57% of all young people. These young people may find it hard to get

a job and are at risk of a future being Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) or worse, offending. A significant proportion of these young people have low levels of language for their age, limited vocabulary, as well as inability to interact effectively with a range of people in varied situations. These are precisely the language and communication skills needed for work and life. Research shows that at least 60% of young people in the youth justice system have speech, language and communication needs (within the general population this is around 10% of children and young people). Additionally, if children's needs are not identified and supported, around one-third of children and young people with SLCN will go on to require treatment for mental health problems.

I CAN produce a range of books, DVDs and games that parents, carers and family members can use to help develop all children's communication skills from birth onwards. These are all available to order online at [www.ican.org.uk/bookshop](http://www.ican.org.uk/bookshop)

However, if you have any questions or worries about children's communication development, need information on specific difficulties or where to get help, you can contact I CAN Help. This free, confidential email and call-back service puts you in touch with an I CAN Speech and Language Therapist - whether you are a parent, teacher or anyone who is concerned about children's communication. To book a call back from a speech and language therapist, call **020 7843 2544** Email [enquiries@ican.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ican.org.uk)

For more information on I CAN, in our 125th Anniversary year, please go to [www.ican.org.uk](http://www.ican.org.uk)



# Signalong

## What is Signalong?

It is a communication system based on signs adapted from British Sign Language. It helps with whatever language can be spoken or understood, and it is together with speech, not instead of it. Sign-supported communication can be used by children with a very wide range of difficulties and disabilities. It may help children with language delay or autistic spectrum disorder to overcome the block to speech. Using a visual method may relieve the tension caused by the failure to meet expectations of language development. It can also help children with glue ear – common in Downs Syndrome – to keep in contact with what is being said when their hearing fades.

Signing builds on the natural instinct to gesture when speaking. As visual communication, it operates on a different part of the brain to the sound of speech and can help the child to make sense of the words he hears. There is also the kinaesthetic aspect of moving hands and body which helps to stimulate a response in the brain.

Signalong is made accessible to parents, professionals and carers through its consistent approach to describing how the signs are

performed. They are analysed for handshape, orientation (the way the hands are held), position and movement. The descriptions are supported by line drawings which will show facial expression where appropriate. This enables users to produce accurate signs, but children with communication difficulties should not be expected to do the same. We should be prepared to accept and praise any effort by the child, and to exercise our imagination to understand poorly-performed signs.

The charity publishes manuals which all include the key to understanding the instructions, and cover needs ranging from pre-school and pre-language right up to life skills and preparation for work. Signalong has been used in West Sussex from its beginnings in 1992, and speech therapists from the area were among the first Signalong tutors to be trained in 1995.

For more information about Signalong, please go to our website at [www.signalong.org.uk](http://www.signalong.org.uk)  
Tel: **0845 450 8422**

For local information, please contact Pat Broughton Tel: **01903 530816**  
Email: [p.broughton@easytalk2me.com](mailto:p.broughton@easytalk2me.com)

# Sequal Trust

The Sequal Trust is a national charity which fundraises to provide communication aids for disabled people, of all ages, throughout the U.K., with speech, movement or severe learning difficulties. These disabilities include Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Downs Syndrome, Muscular Dystrophy, Motor Neurone Disease, Stroke, Cancer or Road Traffic accident victims, to name but a few. Sequal aims to provide speech aids to those people who cannot afford to purchase such very vital equipment, to allow them to lead more independent lives and especially when Local Health Authorities are unable to help.

The devices required are many and varied, ranging from computer or laptop systems up to digitised/ synthesised speech aids, page-turners or Eye scanners, at costs of up to £12,000. Any individual with disabilities within this remit, solely in receipt of benefits or on a low income and



requiring a communication aid, can apply to us for assistance either personally, through a friend or family member or by referral from their Speech and Language or Occupational Therapists; these healthcare professionals will then be asked to supply us with an assessment of need.

Once a fundraising campaign has been launched for an individual and proved successful, the equipment is provided with Sequal remaining responsible for all necessary repairs and upgrades for the life of each particular device. If and

when an item becomes out dated or no longer repairable, we will then campaign again to provide a replacement aid.

Sequal does not receive any statutory funding, so in order to supply these aids we rely on donations. If any individual or organisation is interested in supporting our work by way of a gift of money, please call our office or visit our website [www.thesequaltrust.org.uk](http://www.thesequaltrust.org.uk).

# British Sign Language

Sign Language is a visual means of communicating using gestures, facial expression, and body language. Sign Language is used mainly by people who are Deaf or have hearing impairments.

Within Britain the most common form of Sign Language is called British Sign Language (BSL). BSL has its own grammatical structure and syntax, as a language it is not dependant nor is it strongly related to spoken English. BSL is the preferred language of between 50,000 – 70,000 people within the UK. Another form of sign language used in Britain is known as Sign Supported English (SSE). SSE is not a language in itself. SSE uses the same signs as BSL but they are used in the same order as spoken English. SSE is used to support spoken English, especially within schools where children with hearing impairments are learning English grammar along side their signing, or by people who mix mainly with hearing people.

Many hearing people have the false impression that Sign Language is a worldwide universal language, but this however is far from the truth. Because of the isolated nature of Sign Language there is even significant variation from city to city within Britain, this is known as regional variation and can be thought

of as being similar to regional accents and colloquialisms found in spoken languages. Other countries have their own sign language, many of which are completely unrelated to BSL.

After a big campaign BSL was finally recognised by the UK government as an official minority language in 2003. This has led to increased funding for the needs of the communication of people who are Deaf, and an increased awareness of the language which now has a similar status to that of other minority national languages such as Gaelic and Welsh.

By far the quickest and easiest way to begin learning British Sign Language is by taking an online course. This option gives you the flexibility to study sign language in your own time and at your own pace. For just £15 we offer a course that will teach you all you need to know to begin communicating and holding conversations in BSL. Sign language evening classes are offered all around the country. A beginner's evening class course usually costs around £160. You can find a course near you through the Signature website:

[www.signature.org.uk](http://www.signature.org.uk)

Email: [info@british-sign.co.uk](mailto:info@british-sign.co.uk)

[www.british-sign.co.uk](http://www.british-sign.co.uk)



## SENSE

Sense is a national charity that supports and campaigns for children and adults who are deafblind. Deafblindness refers to a combination of sight and hearing impairment which causes difficulties in a range of areas including communication, access to information and mobility.

At Sense we offer high-quality, flexible services across the UK, using skilled staff and a dedicated network of volunteers. We work with

a wide range of deafblind and multi-sensory impaired people, as well as those who have a single-sensory impairment with additional needs. We take pride in offering specialist services built around the wishes of each

person we support and enabling them to be as independent as possible.

We work with children, young people, adults and older people with a progressive sight and hearing loss, offering a range of housing, educational and leisure opportunities. We also offer support to all deafblind people in both the congenital and acquired deafblind communities, not just those who receive direct support and services from us.

For friendly and accessible information and advice about deafblindness, and a chance to discuss the support or services you need please contact us:

Tel: **0845 127 0066** or **020 7520 0972**

Email: [info@sense.org.uk](mailto:info@sense.org.uk)

[www.sense.org.uk](http://www.sense.org.uk)



# PECS & Portage

## What is PECS?

- PECS stands for **The Picture Exchange Communication System**
- PECS teaches children to exchange a symbol for something they like and want and
- PECS teaches children to initiate interaction.

## How does PECS work?

- PECS is broken down into six clear phases.
- It begins by finding items which a child likes or is interested in. These may be food, drinks, toys or books: the preference will depend on the individual child.
- A symbol (or picture; or object representation) is made for each chosen item.
- An adult offers one chosen item (silently) to the child, holding it in sight but out of reach, whilst offering an open-hand prompt. (The appropriate symbol has been placed close to the child.)
- The child is first physically prompted (by a second adult standing behind the child) to pick up the symbol representing the desired item and to put the symbol into the open hand of the adult offering the chosen item.
- The adult then says, for example, "Raisin! Want raisin!" and the desired item is exchanged for its symbol (or picture).
- The child is not told what to do; not asked what he/she wants; not told to pick up the symbol. All prompting is physical or visual. The adult only speaks when exchanging the desired item for the symbol, to name the item.
- The child learns to initiate the exchange of a symbol for the desired item.
- The physical prompt (from the second adult) is gradually faded, as is the open-hand prompt.
- The child gradually becomes independent of adult prompting and learns that communication is a two-way process: an important skill, which can be built upon!

## What's next?

- In the next phases, PECS teaches the child in a carefully structured way:
  - a) To actively find someone to give the symbol to.
  - b) To discriminate between several symbols.
  - c) To create simple sentences to expand the

number of concepts about which he/she can communicate.

- PECS is easy to use by parents, teachers and support staff. It does not involve expensive equipment or testing. A two-day basic training workshop is sufficient to begin implementing PECS.

## What's different?

- Children using PECS are highly motivated to learn to get what they want. Children with autism disorder are often motivated by concrete rewards like food or favourite toys.
- PECS uses visual materials to teach children that communication is rewarding.

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West Sussex Portage Teams were at the forefront of PECS development in the UK, with several current members of the existing Portage teams on the organising committee of the first ever UK PECS conference in 1997. The lead figure in bringing PECS to the UK was Sue Baker who, at the time, was a Portage Supervisor/Educational Psychologist working for West Sussex. Sue enthused her fellow Portage colleagues which led to early success in adopting the approach with young children and their families in their homes.

Sue went on to work with Andrew Bondy and Lorrie Frost (the US originators of the PECS approach) to establish Pyramid Educational Consultants as the training and development base for PECS in the UK. West Sussex Portage Service staff have now included the PECS approach in their everyday repertoire of skills for many years. We often work in collaboration with Speech and Language Therapists and continue to offer this effective strategy for helping children communicate with their parents and others who know them. Over the past 15 years a huge number of families have found the approach empowering and the West Sussex Portage Service continues to include PECS training as an essential part of their induction for staff members working mainly with children on the autistic spectrum.

# Cued Speech Association

Without hearing or with imperfect hearing it is hard to understand spoken language – even with modern hearing aids or cochlear implants. It is estimated that people lipread as little as 30% of what is said – the rest is guesswork.

This makes it very difficult for born-deaf children to understand or think in English. With an incomplete understanding of spoken language it is hard for them to use spoken language, lipread, or read and write. Also when a deaf child is born into a hearing family there is no easy, everyday method of communication.

The Cued Speech Association UK is working to eliminate this tragedy of many deaf children being virtually excluded from family life because they can't communicate and often leave school with a reading age of 9.

Cued Speech completely clarifies the lip-patterns of normal speech so that deaf children can learn and understand English. It can be learnt in only 20 hours. Research shows that with Cued Speech, lip reading levels increase from around 35% to 96%. Thus it enables deaf children to access and understand complete spoken language through vision – in a similar way and at the same speed as hearing children. Not only does this mean that full communication is possible in the home, but also that the child can then think in English and use this internal language to learn to read and write.

It is no exaggeration to say that its use can totally transform the lives of deaf babies

and children and their families. It can also help deaf and deafened adults to access and use English.

## Training

It takes about 20 hours to learn the basics of Cued Speech, after which students should be able to cue any word in the English language and have an understanding of the theory and uses of Cued Speech. We aim to provide Cued Speech tuition when and where needed throughout the UK.



*Our tutor, Cate, voluntarily working with a totally deaf boy at our summer weekend*

We run courses in different formats, all explained on our website, including a day-long workshop which covers all the basics and is the perfect introduction to our free e-learning website:

**[www.learntocue.co.uk](http://www.learntocue.co.uk)**

We can also offer the option of training remotely using Skype. This works very well,

with our tutors arranging the most convenient times for children and families to take part.

Our low-cost training can also be tailored to your family or professional group. We have a bursary scheme to support families who might struggle to fund the training themselves.

Our website has much more information - **[www.cuedspeech.org.uk](http://www.cuedspeech.org.uk)**

Workshops, Skype training or bespoke training for your group can be arranged by talking to Debbie – **01803 832784**. She can also discuss the possibility of a bursary.



# Magic Hands



A new children's TV series featuring poetry performed entirely in British Sign Language (BSL) is to be broadcast on the CBeebies channel in the spring.

Magic Hands will star presenters who have been profoundly deaf since birth.

It will feature modern and classic poetry ranging from Shakespeare to Maya Angelou, plus music and animation.

"Translating modern and traditional poems for children into British Sign Language on such a scale is a first," series producer Judith Bunting said.

"We are delighted that CBeebies has recognised this gap," said Lucy Read, head of Children and Young People's Participation at NDCS, "We hope other major broadcasters will now follow suit."

**LOOK OUT FOR MAGIC HANDS ON CBEEBIES!**

## Discovery Swimming Lessons

### New Swimming Lessons

We are pleased to announce the introduction of Swimming Lessons for disabled children at Steyning Leisure Centre.

Tuesdays - 6.15pm - 6.45pm

- Build water confidence
- Have fun
- Learn basic techniques
- Progress to more advance swimming

Each child is allocated a support worker in the water and the lesson is coordinated by a fully qualified swimming teacher.

### Upgraded Changing Facilities

To support the swimming lessons we have also upgraded the changing facilities to include a height adjustable changing bed and a specially adapted pool chair to support children.

### Inclusive Splash Session

We have made our Sunday morning floats session into an inclusive session for families. Please come along and try the session and our new changing facilities.

If you would like to discuss your child's needs or find out more about the lessons please contact Paul Blyth.

Tel: **01903 879666**

Free: **01903 879666**

[www.steyningleisurecentre.co.uk](http://www.steyningleisurecentre.co.uk)



## Bridges Support Group

Bridges is a group for children with disabilities and their families. Run by parents/volunteers and facilitated by the Children's Centre, we aim to support children with disabilities, with an emphasis on physical disabilities and multiple/complex needs.

The sessions are an opportunity for you to come and meet other parents, to share play experiences with your children and to obtain information and advice. Our hope is that it will be somewhere you feel comfortable, and a relaxed environment for you and your child/ren.

Parents whose children are in childcare or at school and siblings are very welcome to attend.

- Creative Experiences
- Singing & Stories
- Sensory Play
- Information & Advice
- Peer support



Every other Friday  
Drop in 10.00am - 12.00pm  
Sidney West Children & Family Centre  
Leylands Road, Burgess Hill, RH15 8HS



For more information please contact Sidney West Children & Family Centre  
**01444 255493**

# Role Models Inspire

In February I was very surprised to receive an email from the Department of Work and Pensions, inviting me to be involved in a video campaign called Role Models Inspire. I then found out that one of my childhood friends who works for the government, had suggested me! The aim of the campaign is to raise the aspirations of young disabled people and to give them encouragement to fulfil their ambitions. I was sent a list of questions and asked to answer them on film which I then sent to the DWP to upload to YouTube.

These were the questions I had to answer with my replies:

## **Do you work? What do you do?**

I have 3 jobs. My paid job is as a Learning Support Assistant at a local primary school three afternoons a week. Another job I have is as the chairman and editor of Wellspring and my third job is running my craft club in my art studio on Saturday afternoons for children aged 4-11.

## **What barriers have you had to overcome in your life to achieve your aspirations?**

The main barriers that I had to overcome were at the time when I was looking at which course I wanted to study for my degree. I looked at several universities and had to overcome members of staff telling me that certain courses weren't right because of my disability. Once I had found the course I wanted to do at the University of Chichester, I stuck with my decision and with the support of the staff and my personal assistant, I was able to achieve what I wanted.

Luckily in my job at school, I don't have any barriers because the children I work with accept me for who I am and I feel that I am able to effectively communicate and encourage them through my voice.

## **What do you think is your greatest achievement?**

My greatest achievement is that I am in the job that I always wanted to do; ever since I was a child I wanted to be a teacher! I'm also extremely proud that I have set up my own craft club and am able to share my love of art and craft with children. I am so pleased that I have been able to offer free places to children with special needs and their brothers and sisters over the past few years and hope that I can continue to offer these places in the future.



*Lizzie at work in Craft Club*

## **What advice would you give to young disabled people who are thinking about what they want to do in the future?**

My advice is Go For It! Don't let anybody hold you back because of what they think isn't possible. (At this point in the video I was thinking of bursting into song with a

mash-up of Climb Every Mountain and an old favourite from my teen years, S Club 7's Bring It all Back, which has a chorus of Don't Stop Never Give Up !!!) Anything is possible with the right help, use of the internet and technology!

There are now over 50 videos on the Role Models Inspire channel on YouTube with contributions from students, paralympians, journalists and my personal heroine Baroness Jane Campbell who says "in order to get your dream, you have to put the work in"! You can also find the campaign on Facebook and Twitter #rolemodelsinspire. I'm very proud that my video has been viewed over 700 times! If you would like to watch an extended version of my campaign film on YouTube with footage of me at work, search for 'Lizzie Baily'.

*Lizzie Baily*

*[lizzie@wellspringwestsussex.org.uk](mailto:lizzie@wellspringwestsussex.org.uk)*

# Advertisements

## R2R Tuition

Private Individual Social Skills Tuition for Children and Young People

Practical advice at your home for your child and support for you too. I believe I offer a unique and special service to parents and families at home. By using play based games, pictures and stories to demonstrate to children what is good social etiquette and behaviour. I am able to break down barriers that exist to a child with an autistic spectrum condition, allowing him or her to integrate more easily into school and everyday family life. (Confidentiality Assured)



Corrine Gould  
Tel: 01444 459380  
Email: [info@r2rtuition.co.uk](mailto:info@r2rtuition.co.uk)  
[www.r2rtuition.co.uk](http://www.r2rtuition.co.uk)



## Private Physiotherapy treatment in your own home or clinic sessions

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Charges apply. See website for details.

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- Muscle or Joint Pains also treated
- Please to call to discuss having blocks of physiotherapy during school holidays
- I have invested in a LiteGait Trainer in order to provide my patients with the opportunity to access this type of equipment. Patients can use the LiteGait during treatment appointments with me, and I also offer the option to hire it for short periods of time for home use.



Please write to us at:

Wellspring West Sussex,  
c/o 26 Goldsmith Road,  
Worthing  
West Sussex  
BN14 8ER

[info@wellspringwestsussex.org.uk](mailto:info@wellspringwestsussex.org.uk)



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