

## Speech and Language Therapy – What is Aphasia?

**Aphasia** is a complex disorder of language and communication resulting from damage to the parts of the brain that control language. This can occur following a stroke or head injury.

### **People with aphasia can have various problems, including:**

- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing
- Understanding
- Dealing with money
- Dealing with post
- Using the phone
- Telling the time

### **Aphasia often occurs alongside other impairments affecting:**

- Swallowing (dysphagia)
- Speech (dysarthria)
- Cognition (e.g. memory and attention)
- Vision
- Movement

**Aphasia in itself does not affect a person's intelligence.** People with aphasia still think in the same way but are unable to communicate their thoughts as easily.

Aphasia affects people differently – **no two people with aphasia have exactly the same difficulties.**

### **Recovery**

The amount of recovery that a person with aphasia will make is difficult to predict. The most rapid recovery usually occurs in the first few months, but many people continue to show improvement over a longer period of time.

### Recovery is dependent on:

- The extent and area of the brain that was damaged
- The age of the person
- The active involvement of the person with aphasia and their family/friends to work on communication goals
- How the person is coping with the effects of aphasia

It can be really helpful to take a **total communication approach** to support conversations; for example, use facial expression, gesture, pointing, drawing, photographs, rating scales, communication charts in addition to speech.

### Useful contacts

**The Stroke Association:** [www.stroke.org.uk](http://www.stroke.org.uk)

There are 3 local stroke groups in Belton, Lowestoft and Beccles.

**Headway:** [www.headway.org.uk](http://www.headway.org.uk)

Headway Norfolk and Waveney has groups in Gorleston and Norwich.

**Association for Speech and Language Therapists in Independent Practice-ASLTIP:** [www.asltip.com](http://www.asltip.com)

If searching for a private SLT, select 'Adult' for age range and 'Adult Language (including aphasia)' and 'Acquired brain injury (including stroke)'

### **For therapy apps/software:**

- Aphasia Therapy Online (free) [www.aphasiatherapyonline](http://www.aphasiatherapyonline)
- Aphasia software finder [www.aphasiasoftwarefinder.org](http://www.aphasiasoftwarefinder.org)
- Tactus Therapy [www.tactustherapy.com](http://www.tactustherapy.com)