

Connect's manifesto for the  
UK general election 2010

How you can support  
the UK's hidden disability



## What is aphasia?

Aphasia is a communication disability that occurs when the communication centres of the brain are damaged. It is usually caused by stroke – the biggest cause of disability in the UK – and sometimes by brain haemorrhage, head injury or tumours.

Everyone experiences aphasia differently. Some people manage a few words. Some cannot speak at all. Many find reading and writing difficult. All share similar feelings of frustration and isolation.

Every 11 minutes in the UK, three people have a stroke.



One of them loses the ability to communicate. This is called aphasia.

### How many people are affected?

Aphasia is not a word people are familiar with, but with **50,000 new cases each year** in the UK, it is more common than breast cancer and multiple sclerosis.

There are **250,000 people living with aphasia** in the UK. And in the average **parliamentary constituency nearly 400 people will have aphasia**. They need **your support** in Parliament.

## Life after stroke

Stroke is the biggest cause of adult disability, costing the NHS £7 billion every year. In December 2007, the National Stroke Strategy was launched with cross-party support. This has led to vast improvements in hospital emergency and acute care.

However, people with stroke spend only a short time in acute care. But they will **live the rest of their lives with aphasia**.

If the needs of people with aphasia are to be met, the Life after Stroke recommendations of the National Stroke Strategy **must** be fully implemented.

### The National Stroke Strategy outlines the features of good post-stroke services. Here are some examples:

- High quality support and information in hospital, after hospital and for **as long as people with stroke and aphasia need it**
- A range of **easy-to-access services** for people with stroke and aphasia and their carers
- **Dedicated support** for people with stroke and aphasia and their carers, to lead a **full life** in the community
- **Appropriate support** for people with aphasia to **return to work**.

Connect supported people with aphasia to develop and contribute to the National Stroke Strategy. Read the Strategy at: [http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyandGuidance/DH\\_081062](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyandGuidance/DH_081062)



## How Connect helps

We help people with aphasia by:

- Delivering and developing services they **need** and **want**
- Providing tailored training and consultancy services to health and social care providers
- Delivering information and support to help **everyone understand aphasia** and its **impact**.

Our **pioneering research** and pilot studies have shaped the development of our simple, **cost-effective** ways of helping people with aphasia and their carers to **reconnect with life**.

People with aphasia are **active collaborators** and fundamental to our work – informing, driving and improving everything we do.

## Our call for action

We **urge** all candidates to support the **continued implementation** of the National Stroke Strategy, particularly the Life After Stroke chapter. This is the **driving force** for **improving services** for people living with aphasia.

We invite you to become an 'Ambassador for Aphasia', representing people with aphasia in Parliament by **championing their rights** and raising awareness of this hidden disability.



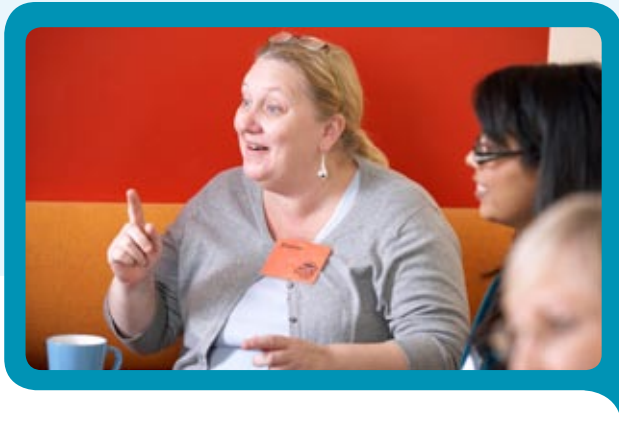
**One million people in England alone find it difficult to communicate effectively without support. About 20% of these people are living with aphasia.**

**Please contact us if you would like to get involved or find out more:**

Phyllis Campbell-McRae, Chief Executive  
Connect, 16-18 Marshalsea Road, London SE1 1HL  
Email: [phylliscampbellmcr@ukconnect.org](mailto:phylliscampbellmcr@ukconnect.org)  
Tel: 020 7367 0853 Fax: 020 7367 0841

# Communication tips – how we can help you and your campaigning

Communication is vital for all candidates. To help get your message across, here are some communication tips developed by people with aphasia. They will help you **communicate better** – not only with people with aphasia but with everyone else too.



## In conversation

- **Slow down** and be patient
- Say **one thing** at a time
- Use pen and paper
- **Write down key words**
- **Draw** diagrams or pictures
- Reduce background noise
- **Ask what helps to support better conversation**
- Recap: check you both **understand**
- **Don't pretend** you understand
- Relax: be natural.

## Writing documents

Some **people with aphasia find reading and writing hard**. The following tips can help with written information you might provide:

- **Don't use jargon** or acronyms
- Use large fonts (14 or bigger)
- Use sans serif fonts e.g. Arial
- **Bold headings** help
- Use bullet points
- Make **key words** bold
- Use images (but not too many)
- **Highlight key messages**
- State who the document is for.

## Our vision

A world where people living with aphasia and communication disability find opportunity and fulfilment.

## Our mission

To improve the lives of people living with aphasia and communication disability, equipping them to reconnect with life.

## We will continue to:

- Support people with aphasia to develop and deliver services that they need and want
- Provide training and consultancy to a wide range of service providers
- Provide information and support to help everyone understand aphasia and its impact
- Champion the rights of people with aphasia and communication disability.



## Want to help us make sense of aphasia?

Contact: Phyllis Campbell-McRae, Chief Executive, Connect, 16-18 Marshalsea Road, London SE1 1HL

Tel: 020 7367 0853 Fax: 020 7367 0841 Web: [www.ukconnect.org](http://www.ukconnect.org) Email: [phylliscampbellmcr@ukconnect.org](mailto:phylliscampbellmcr@ukconnect.org)