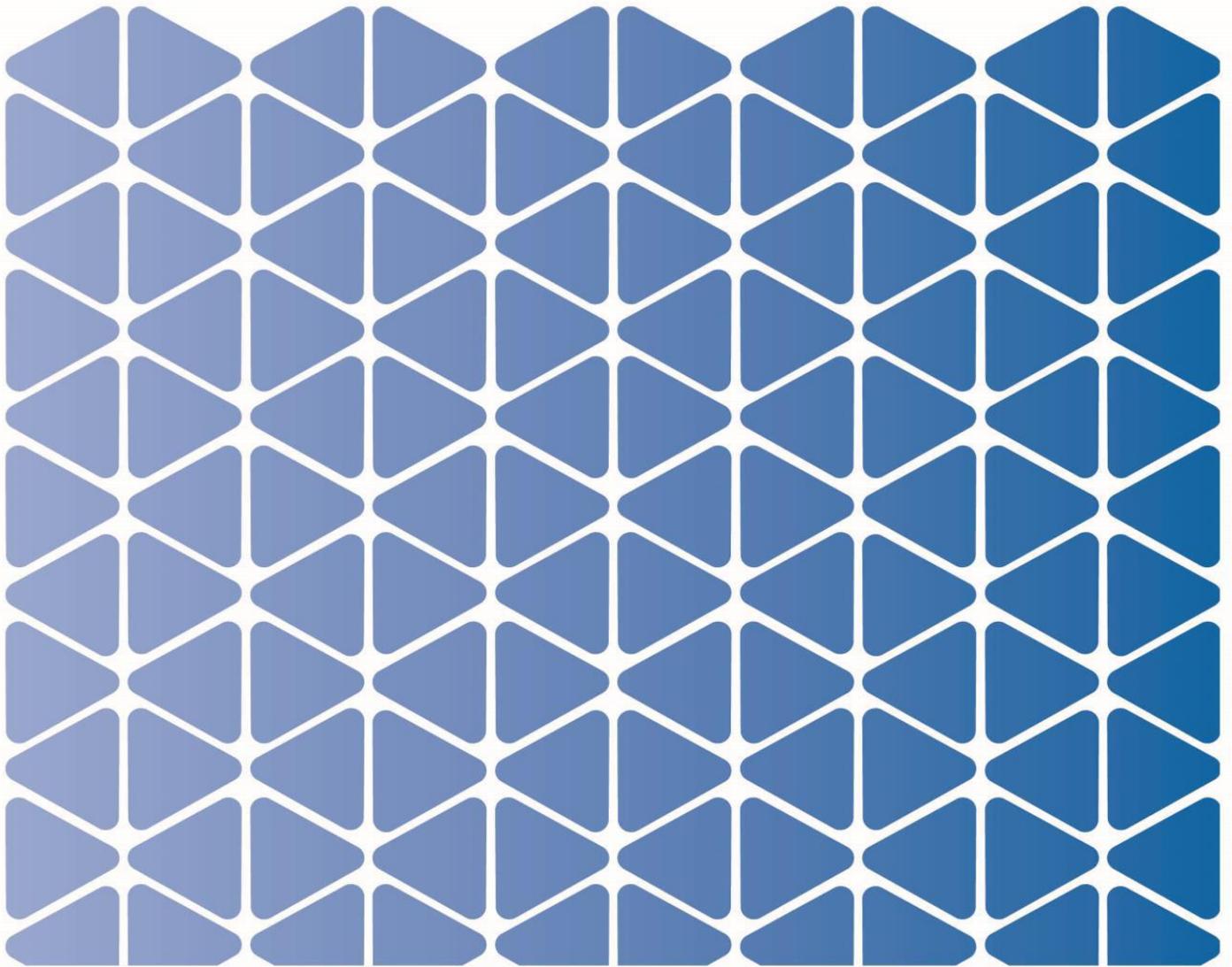




## PATIENT INFORMATION

# APHASIA

Information for patients, their relatives  
and carers



Aphasia is a communication disorder caused by damage to parts of the brain that control language. Aphasia is a difficulty in understanding speech or writing and/or being able to express what you want to say through speech or writing.

There may be problems with:

- Following conversation or understanding instructions.
- Understanding the written word.
- Finding the right words or saying things which are inappropriate or no one else can understand.
- Writing words or sentences.

Aphasia is most commonly caused by stroke but also head injury, infection on the brain and brain tumours.

The speech and language therapist will assess the individual's difficulties in various ways and devise a therapy plan. A joint session can be organised with their family so they can assist with therapy exercises and help them with communicating outside therapy sessions.

### **Helping someone with aphasia**

1. Keep a diary of activities, trips, meals and visitors etc., to help with recognition and time orientation.
2. Choose a few clear photographs of family members and close friends, home, pets etc. write in the names/words, to help with recognition and simple naming skills.
3. Avoid too many distractions e.g. switch off TV / radio.
4. Allow breaks from listening / speaking as it can be very tiring.
5. Encourage the use of gesture, writing and even drawing to help make meaning clear. Keep a pencil and paper nearby to make this easier.
6. Check there are not too many visitors at any one time. Following conversation in a group is more difficult than with one person.

### **General guidance for helping understanding and speaking during conversation:**

- Eliminate distractions and ensure a quiet setting.
- Face the person.
- Be patient, watch the individual's face and allow plenty of time for an answer.
- Make sure the person has a hearing aid and glasses if required.
- Use and encourage gesture, drawing, props such as calendars, newspapers, diaries.
- Have a pen and paper ready.

- Slow down your interaction.
- Clarify and summarise what you have understood.
- Don't pretend to have understood what the person with aphasia has said when you do not.
- Suggest taking a break and return to the subject later if you have not understood – but make sure you do go back.
- Ask the Speech and Language Therapist which strategies work best for an individual.

**Where can I find more information?**

Speakability is the national charity that supports and empowers people with Aphasia to overcome the barriers they face. Their website address is: **[www.speakability.org.uk](http://www.speakability.org.uk)**

The Stroke Association is the UK's Stroke charity. They support stroke survivor, families and carers. They also fund research into the prevention and treatment of stroke. Their website address is:  
**[www.stroke.org.uk](http://www.stroke.org.uk)**

The RCSLT is the professional body for speech and language therapists in the UK; providing leadership and setting professional standards. Their website address is:  
**[www.rcslt.co.uk](http://www.rcslt.co.uk)**

The NHS has a wealth of information on their website: **[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)**

**You can also ask your doctor or local speech and language therapy service for more information on Aphasia and support.**

REMEMBER – Each person will have individual and specific difficulties depending on the extent and the location of the damage in the brain.

Some people may have additional difficulties that can affect their ability to understand or to express their needs and wants.

Your speech and language therapies is: .....

Contact number: .....

If you have any questions please contact the speech therapy department on 01905 760475 or write to us at Worcester Royal Hospital, Charles Hastings Way, Worcester WR5 1DD.

**If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.**

## **Patient Experience**

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

## **Feedback**

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

## **How to contact PALS:**

**Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: [wah-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:wah-tr.PET@nhs.net)**

## **Opening times:**

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Thursday from 8.30am to 4.30pm and Friday: 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that a voicemail service is in use at busy times, but messages will be returned as quickly as possible.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.