

# About Cleft Lip & Palate

In early pregnancy, different parts of a baby's face develop separately and then join together at the roof of the mouth and the top lip. If some parts do not join properly, the baby is born with a cleft. A **cleft lip** is a notch or gap in the upper lip which can extend into the gum or up into the nose. A **cleft palate** is a gap in the roof of the mouth. A baby can have one or both.

A cleft can cause problems with feeding as a baby, and ongoing issues with hearing, speech, placement of teeth, and general oral health. With the right treatment and support, babies born with a cleft can grow up to be just as happy, healthy and successful as other children.

Oscar at 1 week old  
and at 10 months



How  
can you  
help?

CLAPA is a small charity with no government funding. We count on fundraising and donations from people like you to continue our work all around the UK.



**CLAPA**  
Cleft Lip & Palate Association

## What causes a cleft?

Usually, a cleft is caused by a mix of many different factors that can't be predicted or prevented. Sometimes there is a clear genetic link, sometimes it appears as a 'one-off' in families. It's very unlikely that a child's cleft was caused by something the parents did or didn't do.

**In the UK alone, around 1,200 babies are born with a cleft each year.** A clinical geneticist may be able to help families or adults find out more about what caused someone to be born with a cleft and how likely it is to happen again.

## How is it treated?

Babies will need one or more surgeries to close the gap left by the cleft. These are usually carried out before a baby's first birthday, but other surgeries may be needed as they grow up.

People born with a cleft are assessed and treated by specialists in the **NHS Cleft Teams** around the UK. These teams include surgeons, nurses, psychologists, paediatric dentists, and more. Children will be monitored from birth so any problems can be treated, and as adults they can return to the service at any age.

[www.clapa.com/donate](http://www.clapa.com/donate)

## Get in Touch



[www.clapa.com](http://www.clapa.com)



020 7833 4883



[info@clapa.com](mailto:info@clapa.com)



CLAPA  
332B Goswell Road  
LONDON EC1V 7LQ



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**1 in 700  
babies are born  
with a cleft  
in the UK**

# About CLAPA

The Cleft Lip and Palate Association (CLAPA) is a national charity working to improve the lives of people born with a cleft and their families in the United Kingdom.

Our vision is of a society where everyone affected by cleft feels supported, connected and empowered to take control wherever they are on their cleft journey.

Whatever your connection to cleft, we're here to make sure you don't face any part of your journey alone.

## For Parents & Carers

[www.clapa.com/parents](http://www.clapa.com/parents)

From the moment of diagnosis, through treatment and beyond, CLAPA aims to be there for parents and carers with tailored support services, accessible information, and a welcoming community of others in the same situation.

### Our Services Include

- Providing specialist [bottles and teats](#) for babies with a cleft.
- [One-to-one support](#) from trained volunteers.
- A network of local '[Happy Faces](#)' support groups.
- Online [support groups](#), including a national Facebook Group with 10,000 other parents and carers.
- [Information](#) about all stages of growing up with a cleft, with advice and stories from other parents about coping with treatment.
- [Local events](#) like Christmas parties, summer picnics, family fun days, and much more!



Check out our photo gallery by visiting our website at [www.clapa.com](http://www.clapa.com)!



## In Your Area

We think everyone affected by cleft should have the chance to meet others like them locally. That's why we're committed to supporting volunteer groups and putting on events all around the UK!

Visit our website to find out what's on in your area, or to find your local CLAPA contact: [www.clapa.com/in-your-area/](http://www.clapa.com/in-your-area/)

## For Young People

[www.clapa.com/young-people](http://www.clapa.com/young-people)

CLAPA aims to give young people born with a cleft the chance to connect with each other, and a safe, supportive space to share their thoughts and feelings.

Key services include our [Youth Forward](#) community for under-18s, [Residential Weekends](#) and [Adventure Days](#) to help young people make friends and build confidence, and an online [Facebook support group](#) monitored by trained staff.

Our [Children and Young People's Council \(CYPC\)](#) help CLAPA make sure we're doing everything we can to support under-18s.



## For Adults

[www.clapa.com/adults](http://www.clapa.com/adults)

Adults of all ages born with a cleft can connect with others through CLAPA, and [find information](#) on all aspects of cleft lip and palate which puts their experiences front and centre.

CLAPA's online Facebook support group has over 2,000 UK adults swapping stories and advice on everything from coping with stares to getting back into treatment.

Our [trained volunteers](#) are also available to support adults one-to-one.

Our exciting [Adult Services Project](#) kicked off in early 2018 and with new events and opportunities all over the UK, there's never been a better time to get involved!



## Join the CLAPA Community

We have events and opportunities for people affected by cleft all around the UK.

Don't miss out - join the CLAPA community to get email alerts about what matters to you, as well as our regular newsletters with stories and updates from the UK cleft community, invitations from researchers, volunteering opportunities, and more!

Visit [www.clapa.com/community](http://www.clapa.com/community) or call 020 7833 4883 to sign up.

