



What is Cleft Lip and Palate?

Parts of the face develop separately and then come together in the womb. If they don't come together all the way, the result is a gap (a 'cleft') in the upper lip, the roof of the mouth (palate), or both. There's no single cause; it can happen in any pregnancy.

One in 700 babies is born with a cleft. That's around three every day in the UK. It's more common than Down's Syndrome. People born with a cleft can face a number of challenges:

- Difficulties with feeding (*The gap in their mouth makes it hard to form a vacuum*)
- Surgeries starting at just 3 months old (*Some will have 20+ surgeries*)
- Issues with hearing and speech (*Half of children with cleft palate need ongoing speech therapy; 40% will have significantly different speech to peers by the time they start school*)
- Ongoing concerns with appearance, self-esteem, dental issues and more.

What is CLAPA?

The Cleft Lip and Palate Association (CLAPA) is a small charity supporting people and families in the UK affected by cleft. The charity:

- Manufactures and supplies special **bottles and teats** for babies with a cleft, used by families as well as NHS Cleft Nurses
- Hosts online **support groups** and regular **events** so people can share their experiences
- Trains volunteers to give **one-to-one support** to people in need, especially new families
- Creates **information resources** led by the needs and experiences of patients and families
- Runs **adventure weekends** for young people so they can make friends and grow in confidence
- Does much more, including working with researchers and the NHS, advocacy, and promoting patient voices

Your Connection

If you have a personal connection to cleft, share this by explaining how you were affected and how CLAPA helped. E.G. *"My daughter Jane was born with a cleft. It was a big shock and we were so worried; we didn't know how we were going to feed her. CLAPA gave us some special bottles so we could feed her at home, and since then they've connected us with so many other families and have been a real source of support."*

About the Appeal

CLAPA is a small charity with a shoestring budget. They have no government or NHS funding and rely on fundraising from the community to fund their services. This fundraising was severely impacted by the pandemic and has not bounced back. They urgently need help to avoid cutting back on services.

You can find resources and make a donation at www.clapa.com/saveclapa

How you can help:

- CLAPA needs 250 new regular donors by Christmas. **Make a donation** at clapa.com/saveclapa.
- **Fundraise at work.** This can be anything from a dress-down day to a full Corporate Social Responsibility initiative. CLAPA can't compete with bigger charities to win support like this on our own, but your personal story can make all the difference.
- Talk about CLAPA to **local fundraising groups** such as Rotary Clubs, Freemasons, sports clubs, or even grant-makers like Trusts. What the charity needs most is general, unrestricted funding, but there are also a number of projects and initiatives that groups like this could contribute towards.
- **Share your story** with your network on social media (including LinkedIn) and ask for support. As a small charity, every donation can make a big difference. Visit clapa.com/yourstory for resources.