



# Introduction to Cleft Teams

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A little guide to understanding the roles  
within cleft teams.



# Cleft team job titles and what they mean

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## Paediatric or Paediatrician

- A doctor or nurse with 'Paediatric' in their title has trained to look after babies and children.
- For example, a 'Paediatric Surgeon' is a surgeon who has trained to operate on babies and children.



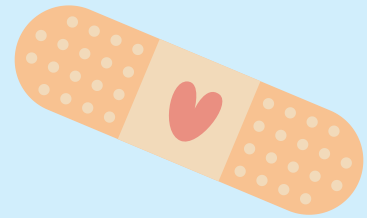
## Consultant

- Many doctors and nurses have 'consultant' as part of their title. This means that they've had extra training in a particular area of medicine or research and can offer expert help.
- For example, a 'Consultant Orthodontist' has all the same training as a regular orthodontist, but has also had extra training to become an expert in a particular condition like cleft.



# Clinical Nurse Specialist (sometimes called a 'Cleft Nurse')

- A Clinical Nurse Specialist is a nurse who knows all about cleft lip and palate.
- They help parents and carers when they find out their baby will have a cleft after the baby is born.
- These nurses teach parents and carers how to feed their babies and can help if they have any questions or worries, especially during the first year.



## Cleft Surgeon

- A cleft surgeon has done much training to operate on people born with a cleft.
- A cleft surgeon will have repaired your cleft when you were a baby.
- They go through the same training as a regular doctor and then have lots of extra training and experience to become a surgeon. Because of tradition, surgeons in the UK are called 'Mr., Mrs., or Ms.' instead of 'Dr.'



## Anesthetist

- ‘Anaesthetic’ is a kind of medicine that sends you into a deep sleep while you are having an operation and makes sure you don’t feel a thing.
- An Anaesthetist is a special doctor who gives you this medicine.
- They will check that you are fit and healthy and able to have the operation, and they will look after you during your operation.
- The Anaesthetist will also be able to give you medicine after the operation to help if you feel sore or have pain anywhere.



## The Dental Team

All patients born with a cleft should see a local general dentist for their routine dental care. You will also be seen by different members of the dental team within the cleft service at different time points.

## Specialist in Paediatric Dentistry

- This is a dentist who looks after children’s teeth.
- If this dentist is part of your Cleft Team, they’ll have special training in looking after children with a cleft lip and palate.



## Consultant Orthodontist

An orthodontist will look at the way your jaw grows, how your teeth develop, and how your teeth line up. Children born with a cleft may need a brace at different stages of their life:

- Orthodontists sometimes fit little plates to babies.
- They may use braces before alveolar bone graft surgery.
- Orthodontists may use braces alone for treatment.
- Some patients born with a cleft need a combination of braces and jaw surgery if their jaws are not well aligned when they have finished growing.



## Restorative Dentist

- A restorative dentist works mostly with adult patients to repair or replace damaged or missing teeth.
- They also help make a plate to help patients with their speech.



## Maxillofacial (Max Fax) Surgeon

- ‘Maxillofacial’ means to do with the face and jaws, so a ‘Maxillofacial Surgeon’ (or ‘Max Fax Surgeon’ for short) is a surgeon who specialises in operating on the face and jaws.
- You would meet a Max Fax surgeon if you needed a bone graft or jaw surgery.

# Speech and Language Therapist (SLT)

Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs) know about how we make different sounds with our mouths and nose when we talk. They can help people learn to make certain sounds or change how they are made.

- Specialist SLTs are trained to help people born with a cleft.
- A cleft can change the shape of your mouth and how you make sounds.
- A specialist SLT will check in while growing up to see if you need help speaking clearer.
- If you do, they will teach you different ways to make sounds, as well as some exercises to do at home which will help your speech.



# ENT (Ear, Nose and Throat) Specialist or Surgeon

An ENT Specialist is an expert in conditions and illnesses to do with the ears, nose and throat.

# Audiological Physician, Paediatric Audiologist

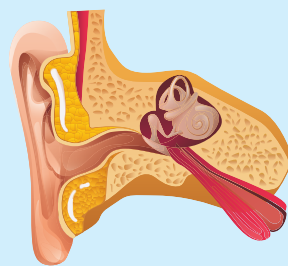
‘Audiological’ means something to do with hearing, and an ‘Audiologist’ is a kind of doctor who diagnoses and treats hearing issues. If your cleft affects your hearing, any of these doctors might test and treat you when necessary.



## Hearing

If you have a cleft palate, you will be seen for hearing tests by the Audiologist or Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) consultant with the Cleft Team.

- Glue Ear is a common condition in children with a cleft palate. It happens when the Eustachian tube (which connects the middle ear to the back of the throat) becomes blocked, making it hard to hear and causing earaches.
- Grommets are tiny plastic tubes placed in the eardrum. Other people can't see them and can help stop earaches. Sometimes this is done at the same time as cleft palate repair surgery. Grommets often fall out as the eardrum heals (after around six months).
- Hearing aids come in several different kinds, and an Audiologist or ENT consultant will give you the most suitable one. These are more long-term solutions to hearing issues. They don't stop earaches, and you can see them.
- Other treatments can include using decongestants or nasal sprays to clear out the middle ears.



# Cleft Coordinator and Cleft Administration (Admin) Team

The Cleft Co-ordinator works with all the different people in the Cleft team to make sure you are seen at the right time and by the right people.

- The Cleft Co-ordinator is there to speak to you or your parent/guardian if you have any questions about what to expect with appointments and/or surgeries you have coming up



## Clinical Psychologist

A Clinical Psychologist helps people talk through their worries and use their training to help them feel better. They might do this in many different ways, depending on what someone needs.

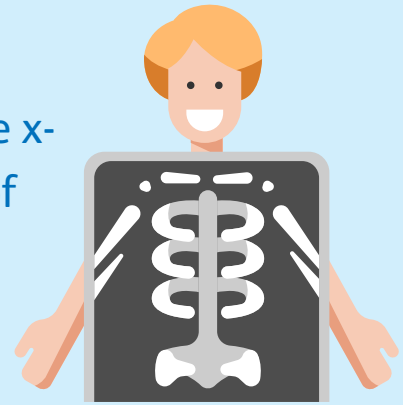
- A Clinical Psychologist can help you talk through your worries, feelings, and questions and help you to make decisions.
- They also work with families and new parents to help them adjust to having a new baby with a cleft, including helping them cope with worries about surgery for their baby.





## Radiologist

A radiologist is a doctor trained to give people x-rays. These are special pictures of the inside of your body. You may have a few x-rays throughout your cleft treatment.



## Medical Photography

Medical photography is a way of taking pictures that will be useful to your doctors.

- At the dentist, they will put little plastic discs inside your cheeks before the X-ray starts. They are called bitewings and PA holders - keeping the mouth in place for the photos.
- If you're born with a cleft, your Cleft Team will take pictures before and after surgery and also when you're 5, 10, 15, and 20 years old. They may also need to take pictures at other times during your treatment.



## Clinical Geneticist

- 'Genes' are traits that are passed on ('inherited') from our parents, such as the colour of our eyes. The causes of cleft are very complicated, but 'genes' are often part of it.
- 'Genetics' is the study of genes and how they're passed on, and a 'Clinical Geneticist' is a kind of doctor who specialises in this area.
- As part of the Cleft Team, they can help people affected by cleft understand a bit more about the chances of having children with a cleft.

## How to pronounce these job titles

Anaesthetist (uh-nees-tha-tist)  
Anaesthetic (ah-nuss-thet-ick)  
Audiologist (aw-dee-ol-uh-jist)  
Audiological (aw-dee-ol-uh-jee-kul)  
Consultant (kon-sull-tant)  
Geneticist (jen-eh-teh-sist)  
Maxillofacial (max-ill-oh-fay-shul)  
Orthodontist (orth-oh-don-tist)  
Paediatric (pee-dee-ah-trick)  
Paediatrician (pee-dee-ah-trish-un)  
Physician (fizz-ish-an)  
Radiologist (ray-dee-oll-owe-jist)



*Good luck on your journey from all at  
team CLAPA!*

**Good!  
Luck!**