

PRESS RELEASE

Walk and Talk – in the footsteps of famous stammerers

If you are out and about in London on Saturday 23rd you may be puzzled by the sight of a thirty strong group in identical tee-shirts. They will be celebrating the lives of certain famous Londoners with a guided tour of their haunts. King George VI, Winston Churchill and Francis Bacon share a characteristic with many of the group: they were stammerers. For those with a stammer the eminence and success of these historic figures are proof that people who stammer can succeed and achieve.

The 2010 “Walk and Talk” is timed to coincide with International Stammering Awareness Day and has been organised by the British Stammering Association and Talkcoach Ltd. The aim is to raise awareness of this condition (which affects about 720,000 people in the UK), and to raise funds for the much needed work of the Association.

Shadow Home Secretary Ed Balls, who has recently become a Patron of the BSA, said, “I have had a stammer all of my life but with support and the understanding of those around you people who stammer can become whatever they want to become – even a politician who gives speeches in front of hundreds of people!.”

Anne Ayre Director of Talkcoach Ltd, a training and consultancy business with special expertise in communication disability that is sponsoring the Walk and Talk explained “Stammering is a complex condition that often runs in families. There is no known cure and not enough specialist NHS help available. Yet stammering can have a significant impact on an individual’s quality of life and their ability to fulfil their potential in education and work.” Anne is looking forward to joining the walk with the rest of the volunteers.

Leys Geddes, Chair of the BSA, who stammers himself, said “In many ways to have a difficulty talking is just as life changing as having a difficulty walking...possibly more so because we are increasingly defined by how we talk and how we communicate.”

Other famous Londoners that the tour will celebrate as it makes its way from Tower Hill to Westminster include King Charles I, Aneurin Bevan and Charles Lamb.

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Contacts

Richard Ayre Talkcoach Ltd 01837 658959, 07967 400880,
richard.ayre@talkcoach.co.uk

Norbert Lieckfeldt (Chief Executive BSA), 020-8983 1003,
nl@stammering.org.

Information for editors:

Talkcoach Ltd is a training and consultancy business focused on communication within organisations. It has particular expertise in the area of communication disability. 1 in 10 of the UK population has a communication disability and as employees or customers are covered by the Equality Act 2010. Organisations have a legal obligation deal fairly with these individuals. Talkcoach argues that there is a strong business case for taking a positive attitude to the issue, and has worked with organisations as diverse as BAe Systems and the Devon and Cornwall Police. The founders of the business Louise Wright and Anne Ayre are specialist speech and language therapists in the field of stammering.

The British Stammering Association (BSA), established in 1978, is a national registered charity. It is the only UK-wide charity which helps both adults and children who stammer. The BSA provides information, help and support to all whose lives are affected by stammering.