

DATE: 10/07/2018, no embargo



Press release: You are more than good enough!

We are delighted to bring the **British Stammering Association's National Conference 2018** to the beautiful city of **Cardiff** at the lovely Cyncoed Campus of Cardiff Metropolitan University from **Friday 31st August – Sunday 2nd September**.

We have put together one of the most exciting conference line-ups ever, in part to celebrate the **40th Anniversary of the BSA** with:

Owen Sheers- BAFTA nominated Welsh poet, author, playwright, person who stammers (PWS) and formerly the Artist in Residence for the Welsh Rugby Union Team. Owen's many achievements include winning the Somerset Maugham Award and he has recently been announced the winner of the Wilfred Owen Poetry Award 2018. He has featured in several BBC television programmes including 'The Greatest Poem of World War One' and 'A Poet's Guide to Britain'. He is also Professor of Creativity at Swansea University. His film poem with a stellar cast for the NHS's 70th birthday *The NHS: to Provide all People* aired on BBC 2 on 30.06.18

Grant Meredith- Associate Dean of Student Retention and Success and Lecturer in **Multimedia and Computer Games at the Federation University, Australia**. Grant is the programme leader for the Technologies for Empowering People for Participation in Society (TEPPS) Programme and is an active researcher in the use of health simulations and virtual worlds concepts. Grant also researches within areas associated with social anxiety and stuttering where he is completing a PhD investigating the experiences of students who stutter within the Australian higher education sector. Grant is a member of the Speech pathology Australia's Ethics Board and co-chairs his university Human Ethics and Research Committee.

Abed Ahmed- Teacher and PWS who runs Stammer Support Sessions for students who stammer involving the use of drama, role-play and interview practice. Abed has been outspoken about stammering and has featured on several BBC television and radio programmes, including most recently Saturday Live on BBC Radio 4 and was short-listed for a Pearson Teaching Award 2018.

Rhodri Guyatt- Surveyor, person who stammers (PWS) and President of Cardiff Mixed Speakers Club will talk about his experiences with stammering and how he has come to terms with it and used public speaking as an opportunity to develop his confidence and speaking abilities.

A rapid-fire session of short talks from a host of speakers who themselves stammer and have been successful in a wide range of careers and life paths. We aim to show that there really is nothing you cannot do if you put your mind to it- find out how others have succeeded!

A chance to hear from the new BSA CEO, Jane Powell, about her vision for the BSA- Jane was Chief Executive of the charity CALM, which she founded in 2006 and ran until the start of 2017, making male suicide a recognised public health issue. She mobilised the support of Topman and Lynx behind the issue and landed the charity as a founding partner of the Royal Foundation's Heads Together campaign.

The BSA National Conference is hosting an **Open Art Exhibition**, with works being directly relating to stammering, running for two days. A people's prize will also be awarded. Artistic practice and stammering are crucial elements in raising awareness of stammering in an accessible form, so this exhibition hopes to showcase some of that amazing work.

News about the **exciting and innovative work of the Employers Stammering Network (ESN) for PWS** with a session involving ESN founder, Iain Wilkie, former Partner at Ernst and Young and Chief Executive of Pathmaker Consultancy Ltd along with Sam Simpson, Speech and Language Therapist and Helen Carpenter, ESN Membership Manager.

We can offer **5 free and 10 ½ price residential places** at the conference for people on a low income. Please see our conference website for further details and eligibility

Separate **Young Adult and Children's programmes** in dedicated spaces with interactive workshops to help children/young people who stammer and parents/professionals who support them to further understand stammering, realise they are not alone, and feel empowered and confident now and in the future.

So far, the youth programme includes the following:

- creative and engaging workshops, such as improv, singing and non-verbal communication
- designated cafe area where you can meet with other young adults and share your experiences
- support to help you navigate the conference and get the most out of it
- and much more!

There will be a **free Saturday afternoon programme for children and their families**, to provide the opportunity to meet and make friends with other children who

stammer, while having fun. There will be a variety of activities from team games to circus skills! Full details will be announced soon.

For more information please visit www.stammering.org/conference

Or follow us on Facebook at [@stammeringbsa](https://www.facebook.com/stammeringbsa) or on Twitter at [stammer@bsa](https://twitter.com/stammerbsa) or [#BSAConference2018](https://twitter.com/BSAConference2018).



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Contacts

For further information or to arrange interviews: Tel during office hours: 020 8983 1003 Jane Powell: ceo@stammering.org

About the British Stammering Association

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.

Stammering helpline

Contact us for any issue where you require confidential advice or support. 020 8880 6590 or info@stammering.org

Interviewees

People who stammer can make excellent interviewees. We can put you in touch with people who stammer and others who are happy to be interviewed. We can usually find someone locally where that is required. Please contact Jane Powell as above.

What is stammering or stuttering?

Stammering is a complex neurological condition that occurs in 1% of the adult population across the world. Men are four times more likely to stammer than women. People who stammer may feel more anxious or nervous about speaking because of their stammer, but this is not the cause of their stammering. However, they often have qualities that employers rate highly, such as resilience, empathy, listening skills and creativity. There is a huge stigma surrounds stammering as people inadvertently put a premium on smooth or 'fluent' speech.

What causes stammering?

Research using brain imaging techniques (MRI) clearly shows that people who stammer have brain anatomy and function that is different from people who don't stammer. Speech production is a hugely complex system of connections within the brain and, in people who stammer, the connections are arranged in a slightly less

efficient way. These differences only affect fluency of speech, but no other cognitive function. People who stammer have normal intelligence, competence and ability.

Stammering can be audible or hidden, but both types can have an enormous effect on the individual’s personal and professional life. Most people develop stammering in early childhood as they learn to speak. However, some people develop a stammer in later life through a brain injury such as a stroke.

Talking about Stammering

How we talk about stammering is important to people who stammer. There is still a stigma surrounding stammering, as well as many prejudices and misconceptions. All are exacerbated through the language we use to describe the condition and the people affected by it.

- Stammering affects 5% of all children and 1% of all adults across all cultures.
- Stammering affects many more males than females.
- Stammering is a neurodevelopmental disorder - latest research shows differences in brain structure and brain function in people who stammer. Its cause is not linked to temperament, personality, or intelligence.
- Stammering often disappears spontaneously in early childhood.
- Stammering in adulthood generally continues throughout life; there is no known ‘cure’ for stammering. We hope you will find these suggestions helpful when writing or speaking about stammering:

Instead of:	consider:
sufferer. suffers from stammering	Person who stammers, stammerer, child who stammers, people affected by stammering etc
‘overcoming’ stammering, conquer stammering	Finding his voice, learning to live successfully with stammering, learning to overcome the barriers
‘curing’ stammering	there is no ‘cure’ for stammering and BSA doesn’t use this term as it relates to a medicalised model of the condition. As a neurodevelopmental condition, stammering is not susceptible to a cure
Struggle with a stammer	living with the negative impact of stammering
bad/debilitating stammer	severe stammer
recover	Is very medicalised, consider instead “regain

	fluent speech”
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