# FIRST EVER WEBCHAT SERVICE LAUNCHED FOR PEOPLE WHO STAMMER AS DYSFLUENCY INCREASES UNDER LOCKDOWN

Stamma launched its new webchat, believed to be the first such service in the world exclusively for people who stammer, on 15th May. This comes at a time when the charity’s services are needed more than ever, as Stamma’s research shows that lockdown has resulted in increased dysfluency in 38% of its members, with 58% of parents reporting that their child is stammering more.

Stamma’s new webchat has been introduced in recognition of the difficulties faced by people who stammer when using the phone. A survey of members aged under 25 conducted in 2019 showed that 43% would prefer to use webchat as a means of seeking support, followed by email (27%) and video (17%), with phone a distant last at 13%. Even among older members, 31% said they’d prefer a webchat service.

The investment required for the new webchat service was made possible by grants from the Grocers’ Charity, the David Brooke Charity, the Schroder Charity Trust and the National Lottery Community Fund. The virtual call centre means that volunteers from across the UK can respond to webchats from their homes, with remote support and supervision from staff.

Over the last 18 months, Stamma has invested in online and virtual technologies enabling them to reach more people who stammer. CEO Jane Powell said that:

*“Whilst we have had to cut costs to survive the impact of Covid-19, the charity is benefitting from our prior investment in IT and infrastructure. Without this we would not have been able to sustain, let alone expand, our services in these challenging times.*

*‘We’re delighted to be launching webchat. We know that using the phone can be hard for those who stammer, and with social distancing forcing people to use it more to stay in touch with family, friends and colleagues, this is a timely and much needed service.”*

Ends

**NOTES**

**Parents survey**Conducted via Survey Monkey between 6 May-12 May 2020, 53 respondents.

“Is your child stammering more under lockdown?”   
Yes=58% (N30) No=37%(N19) Don’t Know=6%(N3)

**Survey of Stamma members**

Conducted via Survey Monkey between 1 May-12 May 2020, 114 respondents.  
Multiple choice, “How has the crisis in general impacted your fluency?” Those ticking

I’m stammering more 38% (N34)

I’m stammering less 6% (N5)

It has made no difference 44% (N40)

Other text responses 12% (11)

*“I feel more tense and frustrated. Feel overwhelmed with work and the heaviness of life at the moment. Stammer therefore feels more tense a lot of the time.”*

**Channel preferences re help:**Conducted via Survey Monkey between 8 March-15 June 2019.   
196 adults over 25 completed survey, 60 aged under 25 completed survey.  
“How would you most like to access our helpline?”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | under 25 | |  | over 25 | |
| phone | 13% | 8 |  | 39% | 77 |
| webchat | 43% | 26 |  | 31% | 61 |
| email | 27% | 16 |  | 23% | 46 |
| video | 17% | 10 |  | 6% | 11 |

Trading as Stamma, the British Stammering Association is a registered charity with a history stretching back over 40 years and is dedicated to supporting those who stammer.

Research suggests that 8% of people will stammer at some point in their lives with up to 3% of UK adults describing themselves as currently having a stammer.

The British Stammering Association seeks to create a society where people who stammer can fulfill their potential and enjoy respect and consideration. The charity offers support, information, advice and resources to those who stammer and their families as well as educators, employers and speech and language therapists.

Founded in 1978, The British Stammering Association began trading as Stamma in 2019. For more information visit [Stamma.org](https://stamma.org/index.html).. Registered Charity Numbers 1089967 / SC038866*.*

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