

Cerebral Palsy in Northern Ireland

Cerebral Palsy (CP) is the term for a range of movement difficulties. It is caused when parts of the brain that control movement and posture are damaged during pregnancy or shortly after birth. The changes in the brain are permanent but how the body is affected can change as the child grows and develops. The impact of cerebral palsy can vary greatly, from mild activity limitations to severe restrictions of activity and participation.

Prevalence of CP in Northern Ireland is **2.29/1,000 live births**. Every year there are **55 children** born with CP in Northern Ireland.

CP is the commonest cause of physical disability in early childhood.

CP is classified depending on the type of movement disorder and the parts of the body affected.

Movement disorder

Dyskinetic: 5%

Disorganised movement patterns with varying muscle tone

Ataxic: 2.5%

Low muscle tone associated with short and jerky movements

Spastic: 92%

Increase in muscle tone related to speed of movement

Unclassified: 0.5%

Bilateral Spastic CP: 52%



Quadriplegia



Diplegia

Unilateral Spastic CP: 40%



Hemiplegia

2 in 5

Children with CP are born prematurely

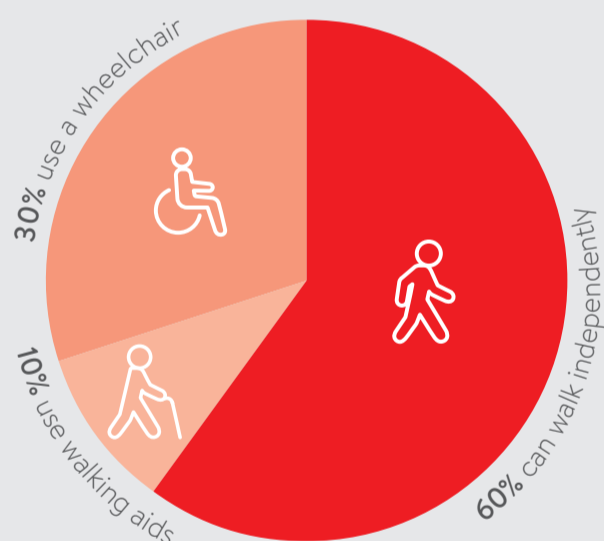


3 in 5

children with CP are born at normal birthweight (2,500g or more)



Gross Motor Function



Epilepsy

1 in 2 have had seizures at some stage



Visual impairment

1 in 3 have visual impairment



Hearing impairment

1 in 10 have hearing impairment



Communication impairment

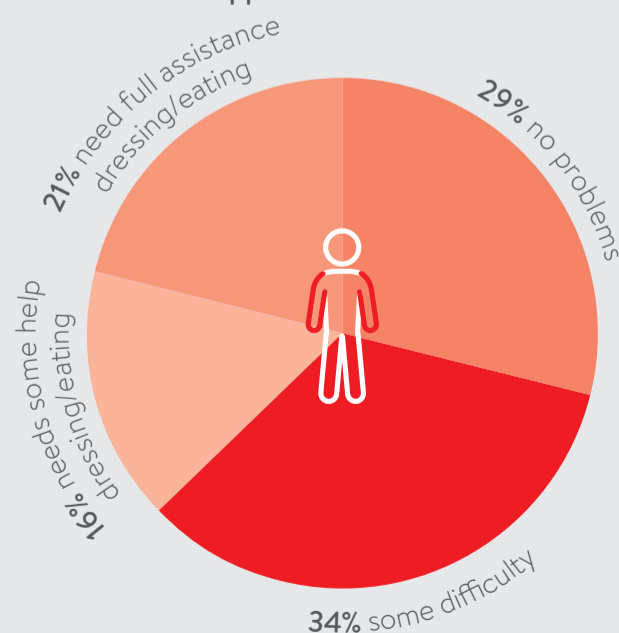
1 in 2 have problems with communication



Feeding problems

1 in 4 have feeding problems

Upper Limb Function



The Northern Ireland Cerebral Palsy Register:

- is a confidential record of children with cerebral palsy in Northern Ireland
- has collected data on CP for 40 birth years (1977–2017)
- has the support of 110 clinicians across Northern Ireland who report cases of CP
- is held at the School of Nursing and Midwifery, Queen's University Belfast
- is one of 24 active registers in Europe that contribute information to the Surveillance of Cerebral Palsy in Europe collaboration

Aims of the NICPR:

- to establish a systematic approach to the surveillance of CP among children in NI
- to support research and audits into the condition; covering causes, treatment, assessment and health and social care service provision

For more information please visit:

www.qub.ac.uk/research-centres/nicpr

References: SCPE. Dev Med Child Neurol 42 (2000) 816–824. NICPR Annual Report 2016

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The Northern Ireland
Cerebral Palsy Register



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