

Amber's story

Amber is one of the babies referred to our specialist early intervention service 'Better Start, Better Future'. Below, her mother Ashleigh shares her story with us.

Amber's journey began far earlier than anyone expected, born prematurely at just 26 weeks she spent the first 12 weeks of her life in Singleton Hospital. Those early days were turbulent, overwhelming full of emotion, fear, and uncertainty. On day two we were told Amber had suffered a grade 4 bleed on the right side of her brain, the most severe level possible. Just ten days later, we were dealt another devastating blow that cysts had also formed on the left side of her brain.

We were told to prepare for a future shaped by cerebral palsy, one that might include walkers, wheelchairs, and many unknowns. It was the kind of news no parent is ever prepared to hear. We felt lost, scared, and desperate for reassurance that our little girl would be okay.

During our time in hospital, I found myself constantly searching for stories from other families walking a similar path, someone who could offer comfort and hope. It was then that a wonderful occupational therapist on the ward mentioned a local charity that supported babies likely to have cerebral palsy. Immediately I went online and filled out the referral form, I didn't know if there was a waiting list and I couldn't bear to waste a single moment.

To my surprise, I received a quick and warm email back, they had noted Amber's information and reassured us that once she was discharged, we could get in touch, and they would invite us to meet the team.

As soon as Amber left hospital, I sent that email and within days, I received a call from Natasha, Cerebral Palsy Cymru's Family Support Coordinator. I'll never forget that first conversation, Natasha spoke about her own daughter's journey with cerebral palsy, and hearing from someone who had walked the road we were about to begin brought a sense of comfort I had been searching for since Amber's birth. Even before meeting anyone in person, I knew we had found the right support, and I felt connected to the charity immediately.

Our first session took place when Amber was around four weeks corrected age, we met Gosia and our family coordinator at the time, Glenys. I remember arriving overwhelmed and exhausted, unsure of why Amber seemed so unsettled and uncomfortable. For the first time since she was born, I felt truly heard, Gosia carefully watched Amber and noticed her severe reflux, something we'd been struggling to understand. After this, we were able to speak with her consultant, and Amber was prescribed medication that made an incredible difference to her comfort and wellbeing.

'Better Start, Better Future' is currently 100% funded from our fundraising and retail activities. However, this is not sustainable in the face of rising costs and demand for our services. We would welcome your commitment to secure sustainable annual funding to restore our vital, highly specialist therapy and support to over 300 families free of charge every year across Wales.



For over a year, Gosia has been by our side, supporting Amber through every milestone, big and small. Everything she has achieved is thanks to the outstanding support of Cerebral Palsy Cymru. Gosia has taught us so much, always listening, always offering expert guidance, always going above and beyond for our family. We are forever grateful.

Through the Better Start Better Future programme, Amber has thrived. The therapy sessions have been invaluable. As a parent I often look ahead, hoping and pushing for the very best for Amber and I've never once been discouraged, only supported and empowered. Every interaction with Natasha brings joy and reassurance, her positivity, shared knowledge, and her lived experience as a parent of a child with cerebral palsy makes her support incredibly meaningful.

We've also had the chance to attend the monthly Better Start playgroup, a small nurturing space full of activities, ideas, and interaction for our babies. Most importantly, it's a place where we've met other families who understand the unique joys and challenges of raising a child with cerebral palsy. Those connections have brought us even more comfort and strength.

Amber's story is still unfolding, but because of the help and therapy from Cerebral Palsy Cymru, she's writing it with confidence, support, and endless love behind her. We are endlessly grateful for everything the charity has done and continues to do for our family.

Together, we can continue to make a positive difference to families like Amber and Ashleigh.



Stori Amber

Mae Amber yn un o'r babanod a gafodd ei chyfeirio at ein gwasanaeth ymyrraeth gynnar arbenigol, 'Dechrau Gwell, Dyfodol Gwell'. Mae ei mam, Ashleigh, yn rhannu ei stori â ni isod.

ADechreuodd taith Amber yn gynharach nag oedd unrhyw un yn disgwyl, cafodd ei geni'n gynamserol, ar ddim ond 26 wythnos, a threuliodd 12 wythnos gyntaf ei bywyd yn Ysbyty Singleton. Roedd y dyddiau cynnar hynny'n anodd, yn llawn emosiwn, ofn ac ansicrwydd. Ar ddiwrnod dau, dywedwyd wrthym fod Amber wedi dioddef gwaedlif gradd 4 ar ochr dde ei hymennydd, y lefel fwyaf difrifol bosibl. Ddeg diwrnod yn ddiweddarach, cawsom fwy o newyddion torcalonnus: roedd codennau hefyd wedi ffurfio ar ochr chwith ei hymennydd.

Dywedwyd wrthym i baratoi ar gyfer dyfodol a fyddai wedi'i ffurfio gan barlys yr ymennydd, un a allai gynnwys fframiau cerdded, cadeiriau olwyn, a chryn dipyn o ansicrwydd. Dyna oedd y math o newyddion na fydd unrhyw riant yn barod i'w glywed. Roedden ni'n teimlo ar goll, yn ofnus, ac yn ysu am sicrwydd y byddai ein merch fach yn iawn.

Yn ystod ein hamser yn yr ysbyty, roeddwn i bob amser yn chwilio am straeon gan deuluoedd eraill a oedd yn cerdded llwybr tebyg; rhywun a allai gynnig cysur a gobaith. Dyna pryd soniodd therapydd galwedigaethol ar y ward am elusen leol a oedd yn cefnogi babanod a oedd yn debygol o gael parlys yr ymennydd. Es i ar-lein yn syth i lenwi'r ffurflen atgyfeirio, doeddwn i ddim yn gwybod a oedd rhestr aros ac allwn i ddim goddef gwastraffu eiliad.

Er mawr syndod i mi, cefais neges e-bost gyflym a chynnes yn ôl, roedd yr elusen wedi nodi gwybodaeth Amber ac wedi rhoi gwybod y gallem gysylltu pan fyddai hi'n cael ei rhyddhau, a byddem yn cael gwahoddiad i gwrdd â'r tîm.

Anfonais y neges e-bost honno yn syth ar ôl i Amber adael yr ysbyty, ac o fewn dyddiau cefais alwad gan Natasha, Cydlynnydd Cymorth i Deuluoedd Cerebral Palsy Cymru. Wna i fyth yn anghofio'r sgwrs gyntaf honno; siaradodd Natasha am daith ei merch ei hun gyda pharlys yr ymennydd, ac roedd clywed gan rywun a oedd wedi cerdded y ffordd roeddem ar fin dechrau arni wedi rhoi'r cysur i mi roeddwn i wedi bod yn chwilio amdano ers i Amber gael ei geni. Hyd yn oed cyn cwrdd ag unrhyw un wyneb yn wyneb, roeddwn i'n gwybod ein bod wedi dod o hyd i'r cymorth cywir, ac roedd gen i gysylltiad â'r elusen ar unwaith.

Cafodd ein sesiwn gyntaf ei chynnal pan oedd Amber tua phedair wythnos oed wedi'i gywiro, gwnaethom gwrdd â Gosia a'n cydlynnydd teulu ar y pryd, Glenys. Rwy'n cofio cyrraedd wedi fy llethu ac wedi blino'n lân, ddim yn deall pam roedd Amber yn ymddangos mor aflonydd ac anghyfforddus. Am y tro cyntaf ers iddi gael ei geni, roeddwn i'n teimlo fy mod i wir yn cael fy nghlywed.

Ar hyn o bryd, caiff rhaglen 'Dechrau Gwell, Dyfodol Gwell' ei hariannu'n gyfan gwbl drwy ein gweithgareddau codi arian a manwerthu. Fodd bynnag, nid yw hyn yn gynaliadwy yn wyneb cynnydd mewn costau a'r galw am ein gwasanaethau. Byddem yn croesawu eich ymrwymiad i sicrhau cyllid blynyddol cynaliadwy i adfer ein therapi a'n cymorth hanfodol, arbenigol iawn i dros 300 o deuluoedd yn rhad ac am ddim bob blwyddyn ledled Cymru.

Gyda'n gilydd, gallwn barhau i wneud gwahaniaeth cadarnhaol i deuluoedd fel un Amber ac Ashleigh.

Gwylodd Gosia Amber yn ofalus a gwelodd ei hadlif difrifol - rhywbeth roedden ni wedi bod yn cael trafferth yn ei ddeall. Ar ôl hyn, roedden ni'n gallu siarad â'i meddyg ymgynghorol, a rhagnodwyd meddyginiaeth i Amber a wnaeth wahaniaeth anhygoel i'w chysur a'i lles.

Ers dros flwyddyn mae Gosia wedi bod wrth ein hochr, yn cefnogi Amber drwy bob carreg filltir, mawr a bach. Mae popeth mae hi wedi'i gyflawni o ganlyniad i gymorth rhagorol Cerebral Palsy Cymru. Mae Gosia wedi dysgu cymaint i ni, mae bob amser yn gwrandao, yn cynnig arweiniad arbenigol, ac yn mynd yr ail filltir i'n teulu. Byddwn yn ddiolchgar am byth.

Drwy raglen Dechrau Gwell, Dyfodol Gwell, mae Amber wedi ffynnu. Mae'r sesiynau therapi wedi bod yn amhrisiadwy. Fel rhiant rwy'n aml yn edrych ymlaen, gan obeithio a gwithio am y gorau i Amber, ac nid wyf erioed wedi cael ymateb siomedig. Rwyf bob amser yn cael fy nghefnogi a'm grymuso. Mae rhyngweithio â Natasha bob amser yn dod â llawenydd a sicrwydd. Mae ei hagwedd gadarnhaol, y wybodaeth y mae'n ei rhannu a'i phrofiad bywyd fel rhiant plentyn sydd â pharlys yr ymennydd yn golygu bod ei chymorth yn hynod ystyrlon.

Rydyn ni hefyd wedi cael y cyfle i fynychu grŵp chwarae misol Dechrau Gwell - lle bach a meithringar sy'n llawn gweithgareddau, syniadau a rhyngweithio i'n babanod. Yn bwysicaf oll, rydyn ni wedi cwrdd â theuluoedd eraill yno sy'n deall yr agweddau cadarnhaol a heriol unigryw ar fagu plentyn sydd â pharlys yr ymennydd. Mae'r cysylltiadau hynny wedi rhoi hyd yn oed mwy o gysur a chryfder inni.

Mae stori Amber yn dal i ddatblygu, ond oherwydd y cymorth a'r therapi gan Cerebral Palsy Cymru, mae'n ei hysgrifennu â hyder, cymorth a chariad diddiwedd y tu ôl iddi. Rydyn ni'n ddiolchgar dros ben am bopeth mae'r elusen wedi'i wneud ac yn parhau i'w wneud i'n teulu.

