

Easy Read

A Right to Speak

Supporting Individuals who use Augmentative and Alternative Communication



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Communication**



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Introduction

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) is all types of communication, not just of speech and writing.

Everyone should be included in society. This document describes how we can achieve this.

We have four aims and we have nine recommendations on how we will meet these.

Who is the document for?

This document is for

- People who use AAC, their families and carers.
- Staff in Health Boards, Social Work and Education Departments
- The voluntary sector
- Speech and language therapists

This document does not include:

- People who use technical support to communicate
- People for whom English is not their first language



The Background

Communication is key to an individual's ability to make choices and decisions. Communication has an impact on a person's mental health.

The most common form of communication is speaking and writing.

AAC refers to other methods where an individual cannot communicate by speaking or writing.

The Cost

More people than ever will need AAC services.

The cost of providing these services can sometimes be high. However if the services are not provided it can have a negative impact on an individual's life, such as not being able to work.

The Future

We have consulted with people who use AAC services. They felt that it is important to provide AAC services. However it is also important that people and the community understand individuals' needs. This would promote equality.

Children, adults and carers took part in the consultation. It highlighted key areas which then produced aims.

These areas are our four aims:

Aim 1: We are aware of the communication needs of people who require AAC services.

Aim 2. Individuals who require AAC have equal access to quality AAC Services. These should match the level of need at any point in their life.

Aim 3. Individuals who require AAC should have these services at the correct time. There should not be a delay.

Aim 4. Services supporting people who use AAC should collect evidence to show it is cost effective.

What needs to be done?

There are nine recommendations to take these aims forward



Recommendations

1. AAC services should show they are effective by evaluating the benefits of AAC services and equipment.
2. Agencies should gather figures to show AAC is cost effective. This will maintain funding of AAC services.
3. AAC services should provide support to service users. They should promote universal support so everyone is aware of and understands AAC.
4. People who require AAC services should have access to high quality assessment and support.
5. The Scottish Government will look at the best way to deliver AAC services. This may move from the NHS to the National Services Division.



6. Health Boards and Councils should work together to provide the best AAC service.
7. AAC Services will provide advice to agencies on equipment. This will support planning and providing AAC.
8. AAC services will follow National Guidance. However they will apply this at a Local level. This will provide the best service for people who require equipment and support.
9. Scottish Government to provide funding to support this guidance.

Evaluation

The Scottish Government will make sure that these recommendations are taken forward. They will evaluate their impact.



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