

Alternative & Augmentative Communication (AAC) in MND

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- What is AAC
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‘Communication is the process of transferring information from a sender to a receiver with the use of a medium in which the communicated information is understood by both sender and receiver.’

Wikipedia

- Speech
- Writing
- Gesture
- Facial expression
- Body language
- Eye contact
- Mouthing
- AAC (Alternative & Augmentative communication)

Communication difficulties in MND

- Slurring of speech due to weakness of tongue and lip muscles.
- *“People think I’m drunk”!*
- Changes in voice due to reduced breath support.
- Speech intelligibility will deteriorate – speed of decline varies.



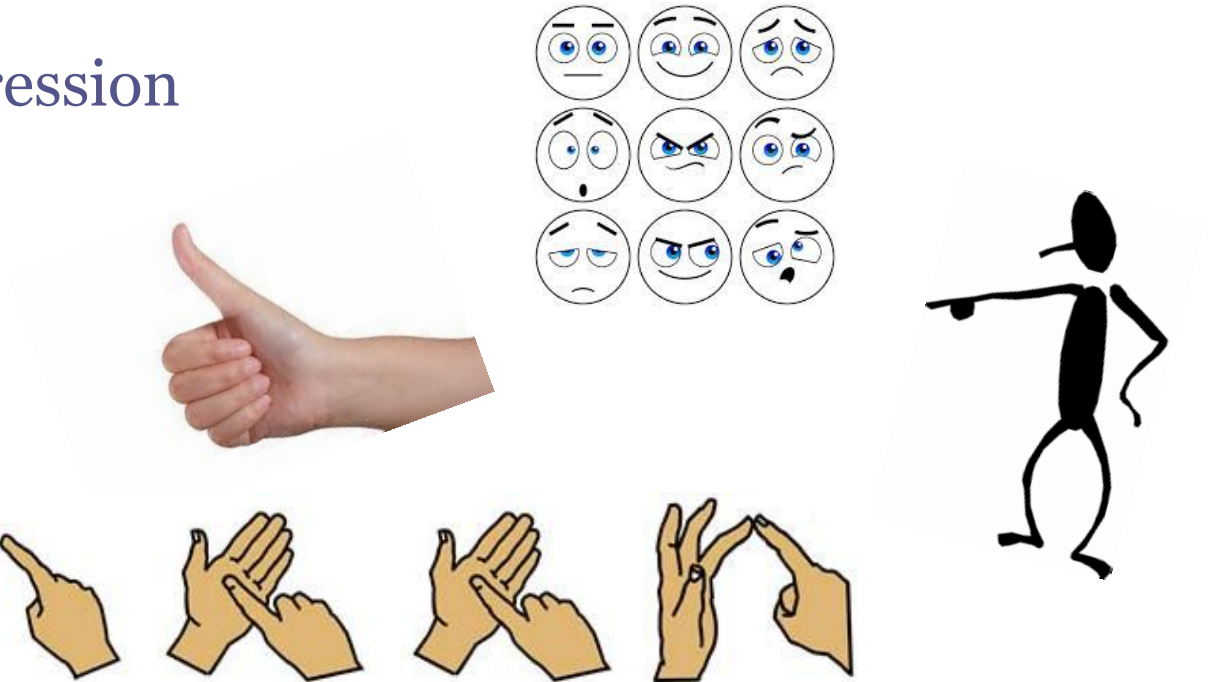
What is AAC?

- AAC is the term used to describe various methods of communication that can ‘add-on’ to speech and are used to get around problems with ordinary speech. AAC includes simple systems such as pictures, gestures and pointing, as well as more complex techniques involving powerful computer technology.

Communication Matters

No Tech AAC

- This doesn't involve any additional equipment.
 - Gesture
 - Facial expression
 - Pointing
 - Signing



Finger spelling video...



Low Tech AAC

- These do not require batteries.
 - Pen & Paper
 - Alphabet charts
 - Picture charts



High Tech

- Need power from a battery/mains.
- Most will produce a voice/text.
- As technology is advancing rapidly the equipment available is becoming more sophisticated.

Lightwriter

- SL35/SL40
- Available from the MNDA



Lightwriter video...



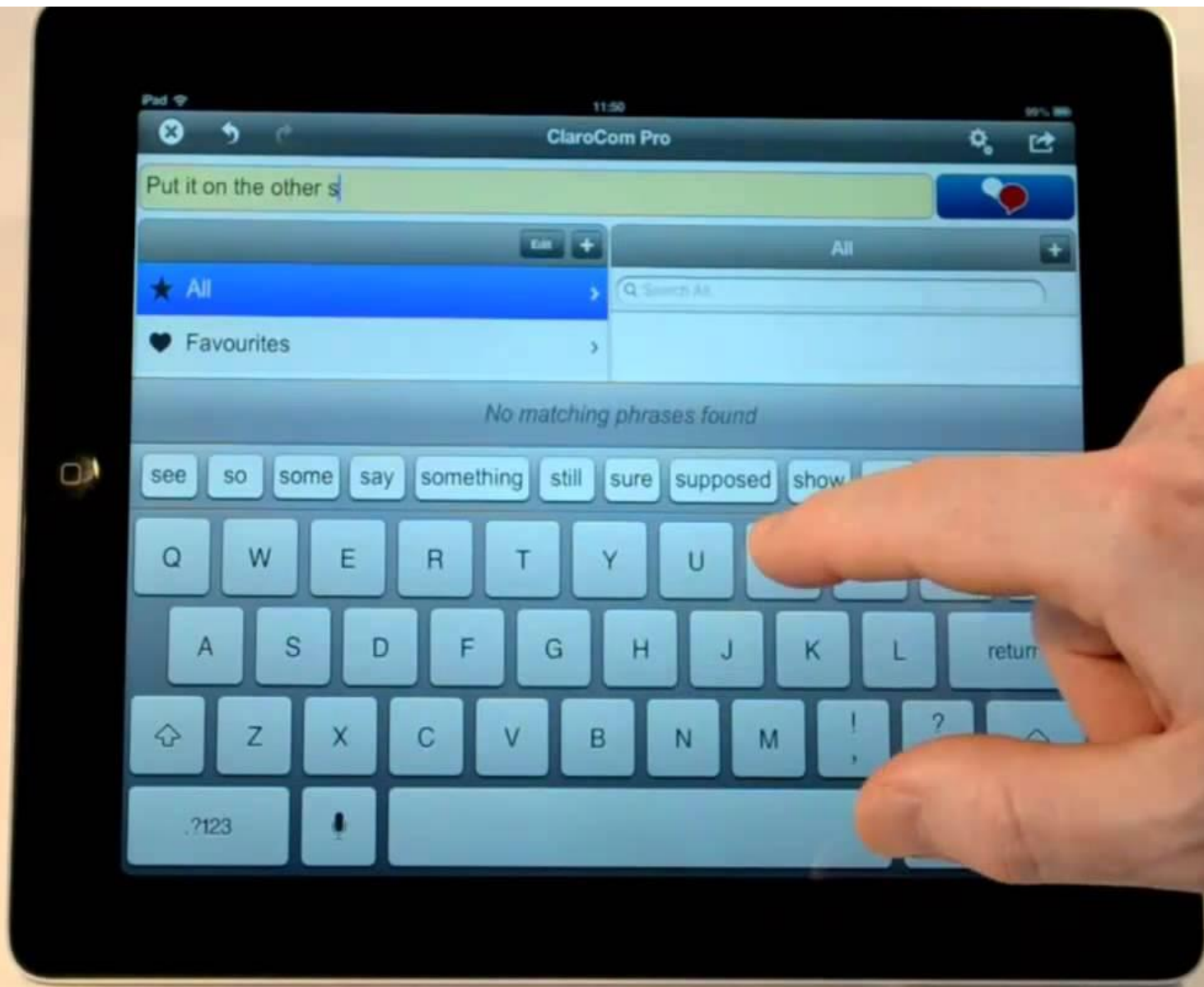
Tablet (Ipad/Android)

- Often already being used and familiar.
- Can be more cost effective.
- Portable.
- Have dual uses e.g. as your mobile phone and your communication aid.



Apps

- Ipad/Iphone
 - Claro com (£1.99)
 - Speak-it! (£1.49)
 - Predictable (£119.99)
 - Proloquo2go (£169.99)
- Android
 - Type & Speak
 - Speech Assistant
 - Let Me Talk



Ipad video...



Switch access

- Scanning method.
- Use it on the Ipad with the Predictable app
- Can connect a switch to a lap top/ desk top with a joy cable
- You can activate a switch with your hand/feet/head/knee/face....
- *Much slower than typing!



Scanning video



Eye gaze

- Speak book
<http://www.speakbook.org/>



- Megabee



E-Tran frame

Eye gaze

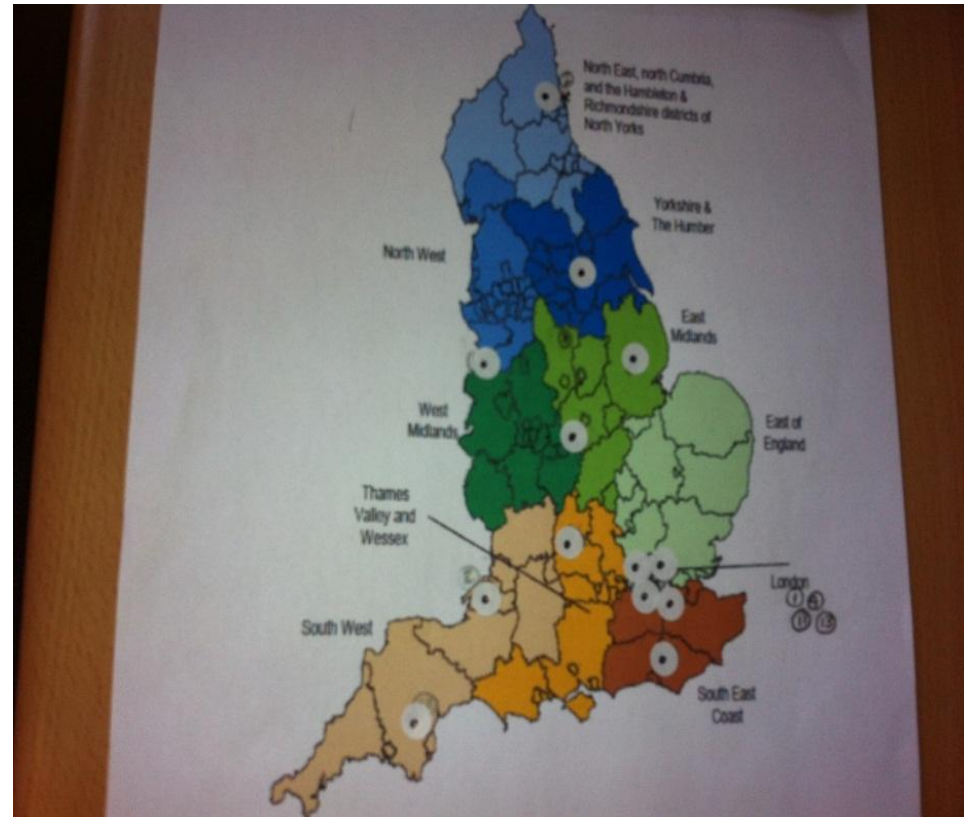


£10,500 approx.

- There are a number of different devices.
- It can be tiring.
- High costs involved

Current Provision

- Provision was inconsistent so NHS England provided £15,000,000 for AAC
 - (£7,500,000 for environmental controls)
- There was no specialised service already in existence in the East of England.
- Addenbrooke's have submitted a business case to act as the specialist hub.
- Representatives from all 6 counties have attended meetings at Addenbrooke's and are in support.



Specialist AAC Hubs

- The proposed service is a hub and spoke model.
- The service will consist of a multi-disciplinary team which will include staff from most or all of the following professions:
 - Speech and Language Therapists (SLT)
 - Clinical Scientists
 - Clinical Technologists
 - Occupational Therapists
 - Specialist teachers
 - Have access to Physiotherapists and Psychologists where necessary

Of the 100% needing AAC only the complex top 10% will be assessed by the specialist centres and they will fund the equipment.

The other 90% will still be assessed by their local therapist and funding for equipment should ideally come from the CCGs.

What is the top 10%?

- An individual for whom a specialist AAC service is needed would have/be
 - In need of a **complex assessment** (but not necessarily complex equipment)
 - Able to **understand the purpose** of a communication aid.
 - Developed beyond cause and effect understanding.
 - Communication technology **needs beyond the competence of the local AAC service**
- In addition they may have / be some or all of the following:
 - Severe **physical disability** especially of the **upper limbs**.
 - Additional sensory impairment to the communication impairment.
 - In need of specialist **switch access**, which may need to be bespoke.
 - In need of a device that **integrates** spoken and written communication, as well as **environment control**.
 - **Multiple disabilities** which in combination impact on the individual's ability to communicate.
 - Experience of using **low tech AAC which is insufficient** to enable them to realise their communicative potential.

The Process..

- Referral made by the local therapist to the specialist hub.
- Referral acknowledged with 10 days of receiving it.
- Assessments should be carried out typically within 6 weeks.
- Equipment will be available for use within 12 weeks of the assessment.
- There may be potential to have a loan of the equipment whilst waiting.
- The local therapist will support the on-going use of the equipment.

Prioritisation...

- Prioritisation criteria will be applied as follows:
- - Priority will be given to referrals received for assessments / reviews / QA of patients' resident within the specialised commissioning region of the service
- - **Priority will also be given to patients with a rapidly degenerative condition, e.g. MND and efforts will be made to ensure these patients are assessed and / or provided with equipment as soon as is practically possible.**
- - Priority will be given to patients who have communication aid equipment currently but that has ceased to be functional or is significantly unreliable, in order to meet their communication needs.
- - Priority will be given to patients facing a transition to a new sector / school / college / workplace environment or currently in rehabilitation provision.
- - Priority will be given to patients who are at risk of developing significant psychological / challenging behaviour as a consequence of their inability to communicate without a communication aid.

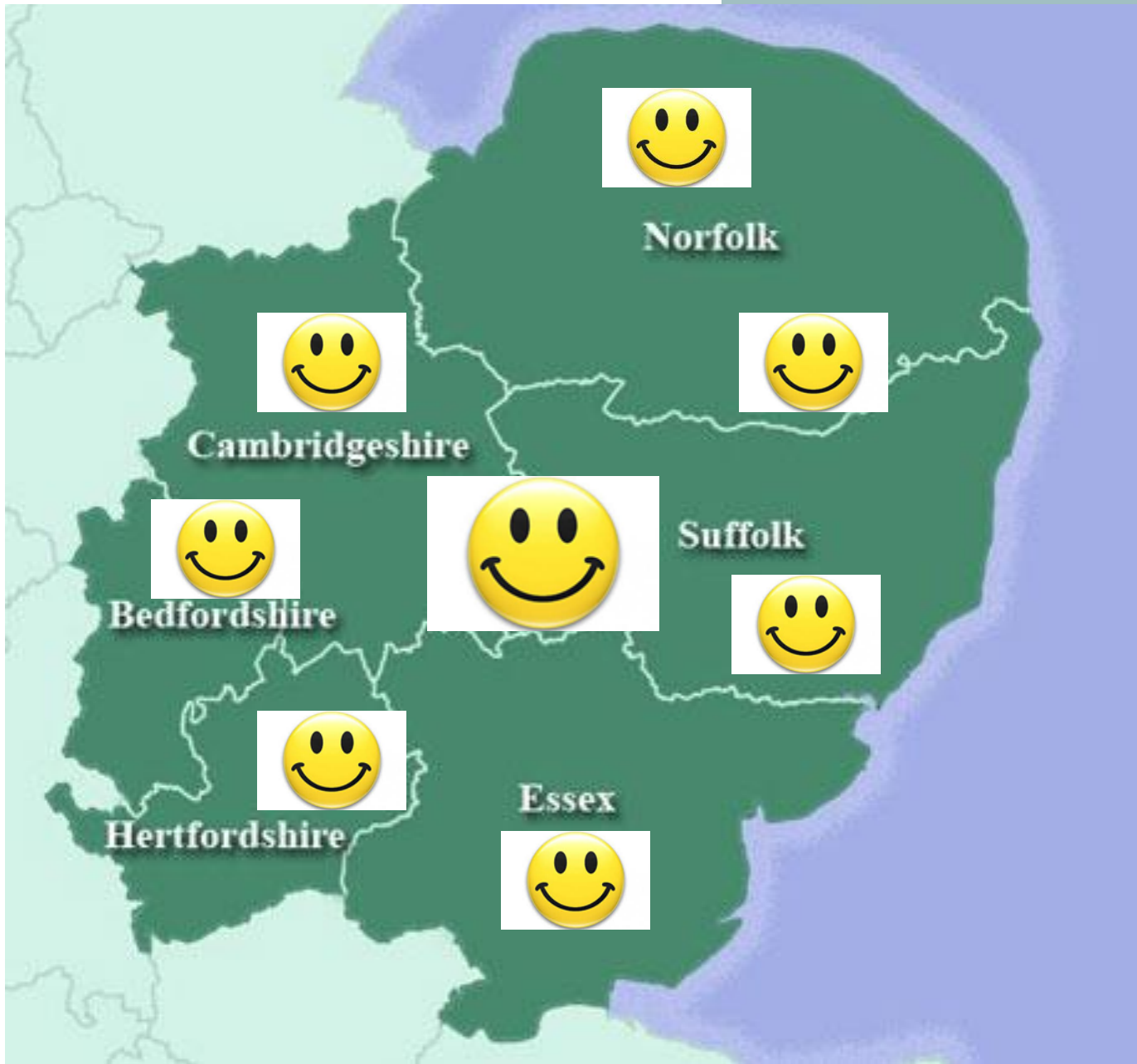
Training...

- It will be the role of the specialist hub to up-skill and educate local therapists.
- Ensuring therapists know the referral criteria so that there are no inappropriate referrals.
- We will be providing various training days.
- As a new hub we will also need training and support from the hubs already in existence.

East of England Hub

- At the moment we are waiting to hear back from NHS England.
- Addenbrooke's will host the hub.
- Plan is for a sub-hub somewhere else in the region once the main one is established.
- Staff will have to be recruited and trained.
- The service will be for both children and adults.
- There will be a waiting list!!

The changes to AAC provision in the region will mean a significant improvement on what is currently in existencethey won't solve everything!



Norfolk



Cambridgeshire



Suffolk



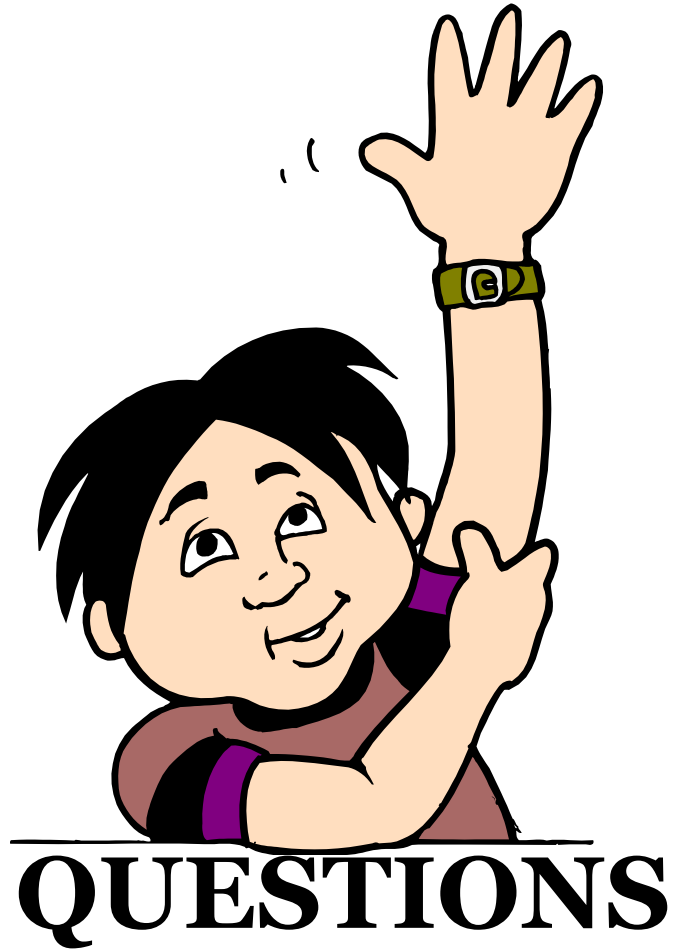
Bedfordshire



Hertfordshire

Essex





QUESTIONS