

Wolverhampton AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) Service



Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) is a method of communicating that supplements or replaces speech. Some children are not able to use speech and rely on other forms of communication to make a positive contribution to society; independently express their decisions about care and form social relationships. AAC includes high technology voice output communication aids- electronic aids that even children who can only move their eyes/head can access, use of symbols or signs.

The multi-agency Wolverhampton AAC Coordinating group offers assessment, equipment, training and advice to children and families needing AAC. This group consists of members from Wolverhampton City Council and is led by Speech and Language Therapy department, Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS trust.

The aim has been to develop:

- Liaison and training of carers and professionals.
- Individualised equipment /person centred planning.
- Breaking down barriers to integration of children with severe communication difficulties/lifelong conditions into the community.
- Less purchasing of expensive inappropriate equipment by Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS trust and City Council.
- Careful assessment of needs. Short term loan of equipment prior to purchase.

100% of children offered the service have taken up service.

Communication is a basic human right

Where people lack an adequate communication system, they deserve the right to communicate. No person should have this right denied because they have been diagnosed as having a particular disability.

Access to effective means of communication is a free speech issue.

Access the World with AAC is a communication package that encourages a child to develop their communication skills beyond requesting objects and actions and responding to direct questions.

We target developing the skills of advocacy and independence in decision making which is vital skill for children with long term conditions.

Within this communication package we target:

- Problem solving everyday situations.
- Directing others to help appropriately.
- Maintaining conversations.
- Repairing communication breakdowns.
- Negotiating.
- Telephone and letter skills.
- Organising appointments and transport.
- Requesting information.
- Involvement in decision making.
- Expressing preferences opinions and feelings.
- Initiating and closing conversations.

'He is less frustrated and his quality of life has been enhanced'

Parent

'A lot of families will benefit from this service. They won't feel so isolated. Help is at hand'

Parent