



SERVICE SPECIFICATION

INTRODUCTION

We are a local multi-agency service working within the Liverpool City Council area. We work closely with and have received training from ACE Centre North.

The Liverpool CAAT team offers a range of assessment services, advice and training to support communication and learning through the use of Assistive Technology and Augmentative and Alternative Communication systems for learners with communication and physical difficulties.

All educational settings are able to refer children for an assessment in accordance with the CAAT Team criteria.

Any services offered outside the catchment area will be charged accordingly.

BACKGROUND

The CAAT Team was established in 2007 and work closely with the ACE Centre North who deliver the Specialised AAC Service for the North West region. The CAAT service is aimed at children and young people who may need additional support with their face-to-face communication or written communication.

ASSESSMENT TEAM

The Liverpool CAAT Team consists of staff from the following schools and services:

Team Co-ordinator: Mrs Chris Beacall

Core Team Representatives from:

- Springwood Heath Primary School
- Sandfield Park School
- Millstead Primary School
- Liverpool City Council Children's Occupational Therapy

Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust:

- Speech and Language Therapy
- Community Physiotherapy

ELIGIBILITY FOR CAAT TEAM SUPPORT WITHIN MAINSTREAM SETTINGS

- Is known to Speech and Language Therapy Service
- Have a successful method of initiation and shows communication intent.
- Is able to understand cause and effect- How to get people to do things for them.
- Shows communication intent, but is not making themselves understood
- Has experience of using some form of AAC- key words, signs, gestures, symbols or photographs.

Examples of what they might be using might include:

- Aided language boards/theme mats, use of visual symbols
- Communication Book
- Early PECS system
- E-Tran Frame
- Adapted communication resources for alternative access

Likely to require:

A larger amount of topic/activity boards and vocabulary

- Their own communication book for their expression & to demonstrate understanding
- Their own communication aid for their expression & to demonstrate understanding
- Ongoing support for their language development

ELIGIBILITY FOR CAAT TEAM SUPPORT WITHIN SPECIALIST PROVISION:

- Has been provided with AAC/AT support that is not meeting their needs
- Requires specialist advice to support the development of their communication, access to technology and curriculum access
- Ongoing support for their language development to evidence understanding of a range of communicative functions

HOW THE SERVICE OPERATES

The Service is open to all Liverpool children who meet the CAAT Team criteria for assessment. The 2 main areas of assessment are:

- **Assistive Technology (AT):-** A piece of equipment which is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability
- **Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC):-** The term AAC covers a huge range of strategies which support or replace spoken communication. These include gesture, signing, symbols, communication boards and books, as well as powered and computerised devices such as a voice output communication aid. (VOCA).

PRIOR TO THE ASSESSMENT:

No referral can be started without permission from those who have parental responsibility.

It is reasonable to expect an assessment from the CAAT Team within 18 weeks of the referral (NHS waiting time directive) However if the AT/AAC user has a degenerative progressive condition, the assessment will take place much sooner e.g. within 6 weeks of referral.

- Following receipt of the referral form, further information gathering may take place. This will involve contacting the other relevant professionals involved with the child where necessary and to make an observation of the child at home or in school.
- Discussions will take place to evaluate the information, gather a team together (this may only be 2 team members depending on need) with

a named lead, discuss/explore possible solutions, set an assessment date and following the assessment arrange for loan equipment if necessary.

THE ASSESSMENT:

Assessment for AT/AAC is not a one off event, it is a process. There will be an initial assessment, trial of equipment, reviews and further assessments/visits as required.

- Demonstration & exploration of possible AT and AAC equipment. The assessment will include staff from the child's educational establishment and parents/carers will be invited to attend.
- A draft report/observation report will be compiled by team members following the assessment.
- Assessment recommendations and/or strategies will be made which may not include provision for equipment. Any recommendations can only be effective if appropriately supported by the school staff and parents/ family.

REPORT:

- The report will give details on the individual's assessment process, the solutions explored and a list of recommendations with costing and sourcing/loaning of any equipment recommended. It will also include any training implications and a 6 month AAC/AT target element.

POST ASSESSMENT:

- The team will act as a 'link' professional with the child, parents/carers, school and liaise with the relevant agencies.
- The CAAT team offers a review of equipment at the request of the educational establishment and the needs of the child.
- A CAAT Team member will be available to attend multi-agency meetings when deemed appropriate by the CAAT Team lead if discussions are connected with the child's AT/AAC needs.
- The CAAT Team is available to edit the devices as vocabulary increases initially and training for staff and parents/carers will be organised.

- When a new need becomes apparent the team can arrange another full assessment or a referral to Ace Centre North for a specialist assessment.

MONITORING AND REVIEW:

- Children's AT/AAC reviews will normally take place every 6 months to review suitability of a device provided, monitor progress towards the set targets and to set new targets. The CAAT Team will arrange this review in liaison with the child's school, parents and relevant agencies. This review may be a face to face meeting, and may lead to alternative suggestions if sufficient progress is not being made.

TRAINING

- Schools should be aware that training will focus on accessing and using the device. A training session can be allocated for any paper based equipment.
- The CAAT Team can arrange training for high tech AAC equipment with the relevant company Reps e.g Tobii Dynavox, Smartbox.
- The CAAT Team is able to provide staff meeting/twilights on request for an additional cost. Please contact the Team Coordinator for costs.

LOAN EQUIPMENT

- The CAAT team has provision of a short term loan service for low and light tech systems for communication aids/ the loan will only last for the agreed time between the CAAT Team and the loan school usually 6 weeks unless a new agreement is negotiated.
- Ace Centre North has a range of publications, information sheets and charts. There is a range of free resources to download and purchasable publications to support AAC.
- The school must request a loan of any equipment by email to Julie Pendleton (AAC) or Alan Holland (AT)
j.pendleton@springwoodheath.co.uk,
a.holland@springwoodheath.co.uk with a named person responsible for the AAC / AT equipment. A loan agreement will be completed between school and the CAAT Team. The equipment will be delivered

to school and installed/ demonstrated. The loan school will be responsible for the equipment from date of receipt until they return it to Springwood Heath Primary School. The equipment is loaned only for use by the child. There will be no charge for the loan, on the understanding that the loan is being made to support the assessment of the child. The equipment must be returned by the school in a good condition, suitable for similar use by another child. The school will be invoiced for a replacement item if it is considered at the point of return, to be unusual or in need of repair. If equipment is damaged during the loan period, the school must contact Springwood Heath as soon as possible. The loan school should not undertake any repair itself. The loan school must agree to return the equipment on the agreed date

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR PURCHASE OF EQUIPMENT

Communication aids will be purchased for children and young people between the ages of 4 and 18 years, or up to 25 years if still attending an educational establishment.

Communication aids will be purchased for children and young people who are resident in Liverpool and registered with a Liverpool GP.

Where a child or young person is resident in Liverpool but registered with a GP responsible to a neighbouring CCG or GP-registered in Liverpool but resident outside the county, the case will require further consideration in consultation with the relevant LA/CCG.

Where children attend school in Liverpool but live outside the county and are registered with a GP outside of Liverpool, the home LA and CCG will be approached to fund the equipment and the specialist support required.

Communication aids will only be purchased for children who have been through the agreed assessment pathway. This will be co-ordinated by a CAAT team member with contributions from a Speech and Language Therapist, the class teacher, the parent, child and additional outside agencies/Outreach if the child attends a mainstream school.

There should be a written joint agreement that the permanent provision of a communication aid will help the child to access the curriculum (targets to be set in their Individual Plans) and to socialise with their peers relevant to their age

EQUIPMENT AND COSTS

Special schools will generally have specialist equipment for general communications skill development with more than one child. Where a child needs a specific tailored piece of high cost communication equipment, funds can be accessed under the terms of this specification.

It is important to consider and agree associated funding implications of a communication aid, for example, warranty arrangements and additional costs such as wheelchair mounts, cable links to computers, software upgrades and also delivery charges.

Schools will be expected to pay for any equipment less than £1,000 through their SEND budget allowance.

When it has been identified a child requires a personalised specific piece of equipment to enable them to access their learning, to communicate and to be able to socialise with family and friends which amounts to under £1,000, this will be passed to the Steering Group as a request alongside evidence of CAAT Multi Team Assessments for consideration.

FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

The CAAT Team is funded through the Liverpool Local Authority and Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group and monitored through the Steering Group.

There will be Steering Group meetings three times a year between a Panel of representatives of the relevant statutory agencies to consider requests for funding for communication aids and to monitor the joint fund. Funding requests will also be agreed through the CCG and LA Commissioners.

For the Panel to be effective, all representatives need to be present at meetings.

PROCESS WHEN FUNDING AGREED:

If, after time, the aid is no longer required or considered inappropriate, it should be returned to the loan bank for reallocation to another child.

The Steering Group has authority to determine when an aid is not worth further investment in terms of repair or warranty maintenance.

If a child with a communication aid either leaves a Liverpool school then every effort will be made to either secure return of the aid or recoup its value.

INSURANCE

- No equipment will be provided for home use unless parents / carers have provided confirmation that the device is adequately insured against damage, theft or loss. (Usually standard household insurance). Where a parent cannot or will not insure the item there will be a written undertaking by the parent/ carers that they will replace or repair items at their own cost should loss, theft or damage fall outside the terms of the warranty agreement.
- The schools will insure their device as part of its own school insurance for use within school or educational visits.

REPAIR

The AAC equipment will be repaired through its own warranty, through the relevant device company or through the primary care Trust`s own technical support staff

WARRANTY

An initial warranty is purchased with the AAC / AT equipment. Schools and parents will be contacted when the warranty is due to expire with the option for school, parents/carers to extend the warranty.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CAAT TEAM

- To raise awareness about AAC & AT.
- To provide information.
- To provide support to the child.
- To support school to school and transition to other settings.

- To offer a multi-disciplinary assessment of AAC and AT needs with family.
- To provide training on supportive software and liaise with relevant companies
- CAAT Team to make referrals to NHS England Specialised Service Assessment or Equipment only requests at Ace Centre.