

Guidelines for gathering vocabulary for AAC

This form can be used to gather the vocabulary and messages used by clients with communication needs. Clients will have their own method of communicating e.g. using single words to build a novel message and/or using pre-stored messages. Please be aware of the words we all use frequently on a day to day basis e.g. 'like', 'go', 'no/not', 'want' etc. Also, please include relevant vocabulary related to an event or topic e.g. wedding: bride, groom, ceremony, party etc.

These messages can be used to assist:

- KM CAT speech therapists when personalising the vocabulary on high tech communication devices.
- Local speech therapists who may also be involved in personalising clients' vocabulary on high tech communication devices.
- Local speech therapists when putting low tech communication resources together.

This form can be:

- Completed by therapists directly, but in discussion with the client and their family/carers (see below).
- Given to someone who knows the client well to complete, usually the client's carers/family.

When giving this form to somebody else to complete it might be helpful to remind them that:

- Wherever possible, they should try and complete this in liaison with the client and relevant others.
- They should consider how the client would like things to be said e.g. 'How's it going?' rather than 'How do you do?'
- If they are going to be taking any photographs of other people, consent should be obtained. The person taking the photograph(s) should liaise with the speech therapist involved about what happens next e.g. how to pass on the photographs.
- The information provided (messages and photographs) will be available on the communication device, where the client's conversation partners will be able to hear and see it. This information may also be stored in the speech therapists' records where it will be treated with confidentiality.

Selecting vocabulary

People & pets

Please state names and relationship e.g. names of family members, friends, neighbours, professionals involved in client care, other day centre attenders/nursing home residents, colleagues, relevant people in the community, pets, etc.

You may also want to include some further information related to a particular person.

Example: 'Judie (hairdresser) – she has been giving me my haircuts for over 30 years now at the local hairdresser's'.

Places

Please state the name of places the client regularly visits/visited in the past and/or enjoys talking about e.g. previous travel destinations, home town/village, nursing home, day centre, sports centre, supermarket, hairdresser's, GP practice, cinema etc.

Example: 'Ashwood House (nursing home in Southampton). Lived here for 5 years'.

Interests

Please state any particular interests the client might have including any relevant vocabulary e.g. activities, real/fiction characters, objects, science, art, food, spiritual etc.

Example: 'Horse riding at Bursted Manor Riding Centre – I usually ride 'Angel' but don't like 'Nelly' because she bites. I get involved in mucking out'. Relevant vocabulary for this topic: straw, wheelbarrow etc.

Routine

Please give an overview of the client's weekly routine e.g. when, where, how often, for how long, how you get there, who with etc.

Example: 'Mon/Wed/Thu at John Graham Centre (involved in sheep shearing, computer work and meal preparation), Tue/Fri/Sat spending time outdoors with PA George (going fishing and doing woodwork together). Spending Sundays at home (usually watching TV).'

Preferences

Please state any particular preferences the client may have including any dislikes e.g. food, drinks, appearance/style, light, temperature etc.

Example: 'Hot days make me feel unwell so I avoid going outdoors and I need a fan on to keep me cool when indoors.'

Health

Please state any specific medical or care needs the client may want to include e.g. messages relating to specific condition, medication, pain etc.

Example: 'I need my pain relief.'

Other useful information

Examples: 'I would like some time out now please' ... 'I have a great sense of humour - here is a joke!'

Also, you could include some messages for communication breakdown and repair e.g. *'You have misunderstood me'... I didn't mean that'...'I will give you a clue'* (specific message not on the device).

Interjections can be useful e.g. *'Great!' ... 'Absolute rubbish!'* (these can be used in many contexts e.g. politics, watching a rugby game etc.)

Please include any important memories and/or anticipated events in client's life e.g. previous job, people that may have passed away, important events coming up for client or for those close to client etc.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form 😊