



Funding Your Communication Aid

A guide to obtaining funding for electronic communication aids.

Introduction

We hope you find this brief guide helpful. It contains **three main types of information**:

1. **What to do and who to approach first:** local government agencies (e.g. your local education, health and social services providers). Details of charities that either fund-raise for communication aids or may be able to provide information and advice are also included, together with some private fundraising ideas.
2. **Supplementary information:** that may help if your funding application is initially rejected.
3. **Contact details:** for the main communication aid centres and other relevant organisations.

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- 2 Statutory funding from education, health and social services
- 3 Charities working in this area
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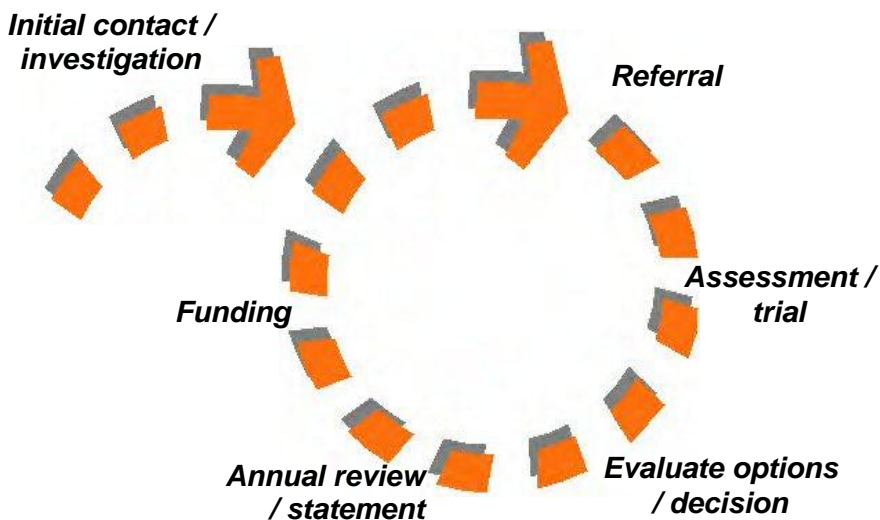
Appendices:

- I. Assessment centres and other useful contacts and information
- II. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (extracts)
- III. Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2000/1 (extracts)
- IV. Extract from Hansard House of Lords debate on communication aids, March 2006
- V. Letter from Lord Adonis about funding communication aids from April 2006

Disclaimer: the information in this guide is supplied in good faith and, whilst we believe it to be accurate, Liberator will not be held responsible for any errors or omissions. We hope you find it helpful, but strongly advise you to also make your own independent enquiries.

1 The *process* of obtaining funding

Obtaining funding for a communication aid may take several months, possibly longer, as you go through a process of contact / investigation (by you), referral, assessment & trial, decision, funding and purchase. The process may involve trialling different systems and approaches, from low-tech (usually low cost) communication aids to high-tech electronic speech output devices (costing several thousand pounds).



This guide focuses on *high-tech* communication aids and on *statutory* funding by government agencies, e.g. local authorities (LA), including education, health and social services, as this should be the first and only funding option for most people.

The voluntary sector may be able to offer some limited funding assistance and charities known to fund-raise for this type of equipment are listed in Section 3. Please do not contact these first. However, it may be worth you contacting relevant disability-specific charities for advice and information.

Costs

Costs (which are more likely to be met in full when you seek funding through the statutory agencies) will be incurred at various stages during the process of obtaining and supporting a communication aid:

- Assessment & evaluation of options
- Purchase of equipment
- Implementation, training and ongoing support
- Repairs & maintenance contract
- Eventual replacement

Ongoing support, for example, will require a multi-disciplinary approach and the people you should expect to be involved might include:

- Speech & language therapy
- Occupational therapy
- School / college teaching staff
- Parents
- Personal assistants / carers
- Equipment suppliers

Tip!

- You'll find the process of obtaining funding much easier if, at the earliest stage, you involve professionals e.g. your speech & language therapist or SENCO
- Where possible work with, and preferably through, them – don't forget, it's in your interest to support and encourage them!
- Your case may be straight forward, but do be prepared to contact a lot of people, use your existing contacts to help you do this – be persistent and don't take 'no' for an answer!
- If your application to government agencies is initially rejected you may find the information in Appendices 2 & 3 will help you challenge their decision.
- If you don't know who to contact, some of the organisations listed in Appendix i) may be able to provide advice to help you get started

2 Statutory funding for communication aids

The UK government has placed responsibility for funding communication aids with local health, education and social care agencies. Your Local Authority is responsible for meeting the needs of people who require a communication aid.

However, there is currently no statutory funding 'ring-fenced' specifically for communication aids, and there is no clearly defined or consistent process for obtaining funding.

The amount of funding available can vary from one local authority to another and may be influenced by the local authority's understanding of their responsibilities, other budget commitments and their commitment to meeting the needs of disabled people.

Where to start

For most people the following should be your first point of contact, but please also refer to the notes below for more detailed information:

- **Pre-school children** – contact your LA, which has responsibility for pre-school development of children who lack normal skills through its Portage services
- **School-age children & college students** – you **must** ensure that the need for a communication aid is included in your child's Statement. Discuss this with your school SEN coordinator (SENCO), who will liaise with the LA, or your speech and language therapist
- **Adults** – contact your local NHS or social services provider

Pre-school children

Contact your LA, which has responsibility, through its Portage services, for pre-school development of children who lack normal skills.

More information:

Portage is a home-visiting educational service for pre-school children with additional support needs and their families.

The aim of Portage is to support the development of young children's play, communication and relationships, and to encourage full participation in day-to-day life within the family and beyond the home.

There are 140 Portage services registered with the National Portage Association in Britain. The Portage website includes a list of local service contacts.

www.portage.org.uk

School age children & college students

1 Registering your child's need for a communication aid

Your starting point **must** be to ensure that your child's need for a communication aid is included in his/her Statement of Special Educational Needs. Discuss this with your school SEN coordinator or Local Authority, or your speech and language therapist.

The Statement of Special Educational Needs is the legal document that states the needs of your child. So, if your child is likely to need a communication aid during his/her education it is **essential** that this is included in his/her Statement. Funding is unlikely to be provided if the equipment is not included in the Statement, although funding is not guaranteed even when it is included.

Information will be available from your Local Authority, but a useful summary about Statements and related information is available from the Communications Forum website. (www.communicationsforum.org.uk)

The Statement has 6 parts, including:

Part 2, which is considered by the Courts to be equivalent to a medical diagnosis (see panel right) and should be used to describe all of your child's identified difficulties and needs.

Part 3, setting out all the special educational provisions needed to meet those needs. Objectives set out in Part 3 might include developing:

- an effective communication system to expand X's expressive language skills
- language comprehension
- literacy skills
- numeracy skills
- word processing skills
- general knowledge

Specifically relating to provision of a communication aid, avoiding wording in Part 3 that is vague and non-specific, you might include wording such as:

"X should be taught in an environment which:

1. *Recognizes that communication is the central component of X's Special Educational Needs; and*
2. *Provides an AAC (alternative and augmentative communication) device with electronic speech output and a vocabulary potential that will enable X to communicate effective expression of his / her needs and ideas at a level at least commensurate with his / her receptive language, and offers a flexible vocabulary that will enable X to create spontaneous and novel utterances; and*
3. *Provides an AAC device with electronic speech output that is consistently available and ready to use in all situations. [where appropriate also add ... "This requires the use of appropriate wheelchair mounting systems".]*

You may also wish to include additional wording, as appropriate, relating to the need for:

"We do not see how to teach a child to communicate by speech can be any different from teaching him to communicate by writing; both are clearly educational."

R v Lancashire County Council ex parte CM, 1989

The NHS has a primary responsibility to provide a speech and language therapy service to the Local Authority, but where a child's speech and language therapy provision is specified in Part 3 of their Statement the LA has ultimate responsibility to arrange this provision.

This was confirmed in R vs Harrow London Borough Council ex parte M (1996).

"The LA will be responsible for arranging all the special educational provision specified in (Part 3 of) the Statement". Code of Practice para 4:28.

(Information taken from the Communications Forum website)

1. *A speech and language therapist with specialist AAC knowledge to help deliver an agreed support package, including planning, staff training, one-to-one therapy, programming support and advice; additional input to IEP reviews and annual reviews (allowing time for attendance, reassessment and report writing)*
2. *Notebooks within the communication aid for work on academic tasks*
3. *Other features specific to your own child which are essential for his / her education*
4. *These needs might vary and change throughout X's school career"*

Strengthen the wording if you need to, e.g. if your child 'cannot function' without a communication aid then make sure it says this in the Statement.

If your child has a Statement that does *not* include provision for a communication aid, you can request an early annual review at any time on the basis of an assessment / evidence that your child is making more progress with a communication than without one. Obviously you will need to have gathered that evidence, or an assessment will have been completed, to support this request. The assessment process can be started by an LA or following a request from a school or parents.

Guidance is provided in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2001 (see extracts below and in the appendices).

2 Accessing funds to purchase a communication aid

Background

In April 2002 the government launched the communication aids project (CAP), which provided £5m pa funding for equipment and related services, and was administered by BECTa, part of the DFES. Prior to this equipment for children was mainly funded by LAs, NHS and voluntary sector. CAP was intended to 'top up' the existing local funding, but ended in March 2006 and this important source of funding has not been replaced.

Government has restated since April 2006 that local authorities have an obligation to fund communication aids. Many LAs are still not doing so, and those that are have often not set aside sufficient funds to meet the level of demand. Do not allow this to put you off though!

The basis of your application for funding

Important legislation outlines the rights of young people who are unable to speak naturally:

- 1 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
Appendix 2 lists the most relevant 'human rights' clauses
- 2 Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2001
Clause 3.2, 3.22, 3.25 covering pupil participation and a child's ability to express their own views and feelings
- 3 Disability Discrimination Act, which has now been extended to cover education

(see 'more information' below and appendices ii) & iii) for extracts from 1 & 2 above).

If your application for funding is initially rejected by your LA, and you decide to appeal against their decision, you may need to refer to these documents. ***We understand some LAs have responded positively to an appropriately worded letter from a solicitor citing failure to meet their child's needs and disability discrimination.***

More information

For the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2001, search on Google or go to <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DfES%200581%202001>

You may find it helpful to refer to:

1 Main document Page 102 Clause 8.35

*The Education (Special Educational Needs) (England) (Consolidation) Regulations 2001 say that a statement **must** specify:*

- (b) any appropriate facilities and equipment, staffing arrangements and curriculum*
- (c) any appropriate modifications to the application of the National Curriculum*
- (d) any appropriate exclusions from the application of the National Curriculum,
 - 1. in detail, and the provision which it is proposed to substitute for any such
 - 2. exclusions in order to maintain a balanced and broadly based curriculum;*
- (e) where residential accommodation is appropriate, that fact.*

2 Schedule 2 Page 40 Template Statement of SEN

3 Main document Page 27 Clauses 3.2 on Pupil Participation, plus 3.22 & 3.25

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
Extracts included in Appendix 2

Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education

Includes useful information about the assessment and statementing process
<http://www.csie.org.uk/>

Higher education students

Some grants and allowances may be available for students

– **Higher Education Grants**

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) are available to help you undertake a course if you have a disability or specific learning difficulty. The DSA will help with the extra costs you have as a direct result of your disability or specific learning difficulty. Brief details are set out below.

Full-time and part-time students, including distance-learning students, with disabilities are eligible. If the course is part-time, you must complete it in no longer than twice the time taken to complete an equivalent full-time course. Postgraduate students, including distance-learning students, are also eligible. You can apply at any time before or during your course.

The following help is available and **does not** depend on your income or that of your family:

- A specialist equipment allowance of up to £4,795 for the whole course.
- A non-medical helper's allowance of up to £12,135 each year. The maximum available is £9,105 if you are studying part-time.
- A general disabled students' allowance of up to £1,605 each year. The maximum available is £1,200 if you are studying part-time.
- Extra travel costs you have to pay to attend your university or college course as a result of your disability.

DSA is paid direct from the SLC to you or to the supplier of the specialist equipment or services. It does not have to be repaid.

For full-time undergraduate students or those on a teacher training course, you should contact your LA for further advice on making an application. If you are a part-time undergraduate student or a postgraduate student (other than a student on a PGCE course) you can apply for a DSA using the following application form: (DSA1/V4) found on the website or contact your LA.

More information

Department for Education & Skills has produced a guide called 'Bridging the Gap' which answers most of the questions commonly asked about DSAs. Request a copy from your local authority (or the SLC if you live in an area testing new student finance arrangements) or you can get one by ringing the Student Finance information line on 0800 731 9133. Bridging the Gap is also available on audio tape, in Braille and in large print. The guide is available from the Student Finance Direct website.

– Learning & Skills Council

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. Established in 2001, we work nationally, regionally and locally from a network of offices across the country

The Disability Discrimination Act was introduced in 2005 and has placed a general duty upon organisations such as the LSC to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people, be they employee or service user. The Disability Equality Duty is being introduced across the public sector in December 2006 and is a legal duty for organisations to actively promote equality of opportunity for disabled staff, students and service users.

The LSC is required to carry out its functions with 'due regard' to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful disability discrimination and disability-related harassment;
- promote equality of opportunity for disabled people
- promote positive attitudes to disabled people; and
- encourage disabled people to participate in public life

The LSC is additionally required to meet specific duties, to develop and publish a Disability Equality Scheme (DES) and associated SMART Action Plan with the involvement of disabled people (active participation rather than just consultation). The DES will describe how disabled people were involved and how evidence will be gathered and used; the plan will be outcome focussed and will address LSC functions, policies and practices which act as barriers for disabled people. We are required to publish our DES and action plan by 4 December 2006.

Contact: 0870 900 6800 www.lsc.gov.uk

– The Open University

There are several loans and allowances available to individuals with special needs who have registered for a course with the Open University and are not eligible for Disabled Students' Allowances. The university has an '**Access Technology Loan Scheme**' that you may be eligible for. This involves being assessed and subsequently being supplied with the appropriate equipment, which could range from a suitable computer software to a synthesised or digitised voice output unit. The equipment will only be lent to you for the duration of your course.

This scheme is limited by the funding available and not everyone that applies will be eligible. To know more about the Services the Open University offers to students with special needs contact the Study Support or Disability and Additional Requirements Team at your local Regional Centre, or view their website on www.open.ac.uk

Adults

Contact your local NHS or social services provider.

- **ICES (Integrated Community Equipment Services)**

ICES, part of the Care Services Improvement Partnership, is a Department of Health funded initiative bringing together the NHS and Social Services to develop and consolidate the provision of community equipment services (including communication aids) in England into a single integrated service. If your ICES partnership board has included communication aids in the pooled funding, then it will be part and parcel of the service specification. However, if the decision was made to exclude them, then your normal funding route applies. To find out more about the ICES contact for your region and how you go about applying for funding, please search on Google for Integrated Community Equipment Services.

- **National Health Service (NHS)**

In January 2001 the NHS published a document (Ref: HSC 2001/008:LAC(2201)13) on modernising service delivery by combining health and social care provision into single, integrated community equipment services by 2004. Community equipment covers a range of equipments and services such as shower chairs, listening devices, grab rails, **communication aids**, etc. For the NHS £11.7M was included in 2001/02 and around £28m and £64m in 2002/03 and 2003/04 respectively. For more information on the Department of Health's plans for community equipment, visit the website www.doh.gov.uk/. Please note that the NHS is not under a statutory duty to provide SLT even if specified in a statement. One of the first steps for attaining funding via the NHS is obtaining a referral from your local GP, teacher, parents, carer, or the local SLT Department for assessment.

These departments could be based at your local hospital, could be the specialist Speech Therapy unit for the area, or one of the specialist regional and national NHS communication aids centres that assess people of all ages unless otherwise indicated. The communication aid centres identify the most suitable aid and if the funds are available, purchase the aid and loan it on a long-term basis or as long as is required, to the individual. Below are these centres:

- **Access to Work**

As well as giving advice and information to disabled people and employers, Jobcentre Plus pays a grant, through AtW, towards any extra employment costs that result from a person's disability. For people who are starting a job, the grant is up to 100% of the 'approved' costs. For those who already work, the grant is up to 80% of the approved costs over the first £300. Employers who have a disabled employee or want to recruit someone with a disability, should contact their local Disability Employment Adviser (DEA) through the nearest Jobcentre Plus Office or Jobcentre. The DEA will refer you to an Access to Work Adviser who will discuss your particular circumstances with you.

AtW can help in a number of ways. For example, it can help pay for:

- communicator support at interview (CSI) which meets the full cost of hiring an interpreter to remove barriers to communication at interview;
- a support worker, which allows the applicant to use the services of a helper. Types of support might include reading to a visually impaired person, communicating for a hearing impaired person via sign language (other than at interview which is covered by CSI), providing specialist coaching for a person with learning difficulties or help with care needs;
- special aids equipment to help a disabled person function in the work place;
- adaptation to premises or to existing equipment;
- help with additional costs of travel to, or in, work for people unable to use public transport.

More information

Search for 'Access to Work' in Google or use these links:

http://www.direct.gov.uk/DisabledPeople/Employment/WorkSchemesAndProgrammes/WorkSchemesArticles/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4000347&chk=Pq8ETE

<http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Customers/HelpForDisabledPeople/AccessToWork/>

3 Charities working in this area

There are many charities that may be able to assist you with advice, support and possibly financially towards the cost of your communication aid. Below is a list of some of these organisations, but we recommend that you search locally and nationally, as well as contacting those mentioned below. Most charities would require a referral from your Speech & Language Therapist (SLT), your GP or a social worker in-order to consider any application made to them.

– **The Sequal Trust**

Small Registered Charity. Operates nationally and provides communication aids on a permanent free loan basis. You would first need to enrol as a member of the Trust. You would then be assessed by one of their officers and once this is complete, fundraising begins. The Trust writes to organisations in your area and any other organisations you are connected to requesting donations. The Sequal Trust will maintain the equipment and meet the cost of any repairs, but will not insure the device.

Contact: 01691 624 222 www.thesequaltrust.org.uk
The Sequal Trust, 3 Ploughman's Corner, Wharf Road, Ellesmere, Shropshire, SY12 0EJ

– **The Aidis Trust**

Charity that provides electronic communications aids and specialised computer equipment to people with disabilities, of all ages, to aid their communication. This is done throughout the United Kingdom and is achieved through charitably raised funding. The equipment is purchased specifically for the individual, adapted to meet their needs and is offered as a gift. The item then becomes the user's property.

Contact: 0845 235 0641 www.aidis.org
The Aidis Trust, Floor 7, 3 London Wall, London Wall Buildings, London, EC2M 5PD

– **Family Action**

This association gives one-off grants mainly to families and individuals with low incomes, particularly those living on benefits. They provide families with essential needs such as beds, cookers, transport, electronic aids, etc. A professional such as a Social Worker or Speech Therapist should make the application. If the funds are available and an application can be accepted, an application form will be sent to the referrer. FWA's Grants Panel, at the next available meeting, will consider the fully completed application form. The Grants Panel meets 46 weeks per year. All grant payments are made to the referring agency or service/utilities provider. FWA will require you to give a lot of information about your finances, but I'm sure you will agree that it could be worth it

Contact: 0207 241 7459 www.family-action.org.uk
Grants Service, Family Action, 501-505 Kingsland Road, London E8 4AU

– **Find a Voice**

This charity offers help and advice to parents and carers of individuals with severe communication difficulties. Although the organisation does not fund devices, it will provide help for individuals who desperately need equipment and are being denied it by the statutory authorities. They will help with letters of request for equipment or arrange and go to meetings regarding funding for your device, or just give advice on how to obtain the best help available.

Contact: 01233 640 443 www.findavoice.org.uk
Find a Voice, 49 Beaver Lane, Ashford, Kent, TN23 5NU

– **Ability Net**

This is a charity formed by the Computability Centre and the Foundation for Communication for the Disabled that provides information and advice on computer access at home and at work, assesses individual needs, adapts and provides computer equipment for the disabled. AbilityNet conducts assessments all over the United Kingdom, some of which will have been requested and paid for by an employer or other organisation. For individuals who have no means of funding, AbilityNet will carry out a free assessment and with the aim of supplying the necessary equipment. The equipment may or may not be supplied.

Contact: 0800 269 545 www.abilitynet.org.uk
AbilityNet, PO Box 94, Warwick, CV34 5WS

– **Cerebra**

Every year in the UK there are approximately 650,000 new babies born and The Decade of the Brain research suggests that one in four will, at some point in their life, develop a neurological problem. These problems manifest themselves in conditions such as cerebral palsy, epilepsy, learning difficulties, attention deficit, behavioural and emotional problems or developmental delay. In the UK it is known that one in forty children is severely disabled for life.

Cerebra works to ensure that up-to-date, evidence-based knowledge is available and applied for the prevention of brain damage and for proven treatments. All our babies are precious and we do not promote abortion or euthanasia as credible solutions. In addition to the programme of research carried out at UK hospitals, universities and Cerebra's centre, we co-ordinate a 'Parent Support' department providing support, information and research. We also organise a wide range of training seminars, workshops and projects for parents, professionals and children themselves

A small grant scheme to offer direct and practical assistance to improve the quality of life of children and young people affected by neurological conditions. Cerebra grants are to help children who have disabilities because of a brain related condition or injury. The condition may be of a physical nature, a learning disability or both

Contact: 01267 244 200 www.cerebra.org.uk
Cerebra, 2nd Floor Offices, Lyric Buildings, Kings Street, Camarthen, SA31 1BD

– **Speakeasier**

This charity funds the purchase of Communication Aids for people with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) who have not been able to obtain funding by other means. They also encourage people with MS to learn how to use communication aids at an early stage. Upon assessment by an SLT, any patient who is unable to fund a communication aid by other means will qualify for funding through Speakeasier. There are two stages involved in acquiring a speech aid. Initially, an application form is completed by the SLT and then the potential recipient signs a loan agreement. Speakeasier will order (as long as the funds are available) the prescribed aid for delivery to the SLT. The user owns the device for as long as is required.

Contact: 01242 705 681 www.speakeasier.org
Speakeasier, PO Box 410, Cheltenham, Gloucester, GL52 9GH

– **Newlife**

Newlife nurses are the initial access point to finding out more about our equipment grants but in summary the grants are open to benefit all seriously disabled and terminally ill children that are permanently resident in the UK and who are 18 years or under. If you want to know if the type of equipment you need could be funded by Newlife. Application forms are simple and can be downloaded or posted to a family or supporting professional. There's no means test but due to limited funds the whole circumstances of the family are taken in to consideration. The equipment applied for must be essential and disability relevant. All applications need to be supported by professionals who can specify the particular type of equipment needed in the interest of the children's welfare, safety and benefit.

Contact: 0800 902 0095 www.newlifecharity.co.uk
Newlife, Hemlock Way, Cannock, Staffordshire, WS11 7GF

– **Caudwell Children**

Caudwell Children are a national charity that exists to transform the lives of disabled children and their families across the UK. The cornerstone of their work is acting as a safety net for families who are unable to gain the help they need, by providing non-statutory specialist equipment, innovative and pioneering therapy programmes and life changing treatments.

Contact: 01782 600 608 www.caudwellchildren.com
Caudwell Children, Minton Hollins Building, Shelton Old Road, Stoke on Trent, ST4 7RY

Other useful charities worth contacting might include your local rotary club, golf clubs, etc. If you belong to a union or other trade body it may also be worth contacting them to enquire whether they would fund all or part of this type of equipment.

4 Disability-specific charities

The following organisations may be a good source of information and advice:

– **Scope**

Disability organisation in England and Wales whose focus is people with cerebral palsy. Its aim is that disabled people achieve equality: a society in which they are as valued and have the same human and civil rights as everyone else.

Contact: 0808 800 3333 www.scope.org.uk

– **Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Association**

Independent charity devoted to the support of sufferers of MND and their carers. The association has an Equipment Bank from which they will loan equipment, including communication aids to those affected by MND. For equipment not available from the loan bank, the association may make a grant towards the purchase of the equipment. All equipment offered on loan will be for as long as required and for items for which a grant has been awarded, the equipment becomes the property of the user. Funding applications should be made by a health or social care professional to the Regional Care Adviser. You would then be required to complete an application form, which is assessed and processed.

Contact: 01604 250505 / 08457 626262 www.mndassociation.org
Motor Neurone Disease Association, PO Box 246, Northampton NN1 2PR.

– **Stroke Association**

The Stroke Association is the only national charity solely concerned with combating stroke in people of all ages. It funds research into prevention, treatment and better methods of rehabilitation, and helps stroke patients and their families directly through its community services. These include dysphasia support, family support, information services and welfare grants. We also campaign, educate and inform to increase knowledge of stroke at all levels of society and we act as a voice for everyone affected by stroke.

The Stroke Association produces a number of publications including patient leaflets, Stroke News (a quarterly magazine) and information for health professionals

Contact: 0845 3033 100 www.stroke.org.uk

– **Muscular Dystrophy Campaign**

The only UK charity focussing on all muscular dystrophies and allied disorders. We have pioneered the search for treatments and cures for over 40 years. We also provide practical, medical and emotional support for people affected by the conditions. As a charity, we provide people who have neuromuscular conditions, and their families, with information and advice about their condition and ways in which living with it can be made easier. We fund (with some contribution from the NHS) 13 MDC Care Advisors who are based in clinics around the country. They are on hand to give advice and support to people who are affected by neuromuscular conditions.

The Joseph Patrick Trust, which is part of the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign, provides part funding towards the cost of equipment.

Contact: 020 7720 8055 www.muscular-dystrophy.org

– **MS Society**

The MS Society is the UK's largest charity for people affected by Multiple Sclerosis (MS) - about 85,000 people in the UK. Across the UK information and support is available to anyone affected by MS from a network of over 350 local branches.

Contact: 020 8438 0700 www.mssociety.org.uk
MS Society, MS National Centre, 372 Edgware Road, London, NW2 6ND

5 Private fundraising ideas

You can raise money yourself by organising sponsored events such as fun runs, swimathons, parachute jumps, abseils, walks, quizzes, benefit concerts, telethons, fashion shows, talent shows, etc. For the less energetic, why not organise raffles, book sales, boot sales, garage sales, etc. Some people have been successful in raising funds simply by writing to their local newspaper, and by contacting large and / or local businesses.

Fundraising can be fun and extremely rewarding, but it might also seem like hard work and can be very time consuming! So it's nice to know that there is lots of useful information and plenty of fundraising ideas on the internet. Your own web search will no doubt produce some good results, but please do check out the following links:

www.fundraising.co.uk

This very useful website has lots of information about fundraising, including ideas and tips.

Fundraising UK Ltd is the UK's leading Internet fundraising consultancy. Founded in 1996 by Howard Lake, it helps charities in the UK and internationally to use the Internet as a fundraising tool to enhance and extend their existing fundraising activities.

www.charitycommission.gov.uk/Publications/cc20.aspx

This guidance explains the statutory controls regulating fund-raising and provides:

- general advice on effective fund-raising;
- an explanation of charity trustees' legal responsibilities in relation to fund-raising;
- information about the tax implications of fund-raising; and
- a list of useful sources of information.

Effective charitable work depends on securing adequate resources. In many cases this depends on effective fund-raising. As fund-raising is one of the principal influences on the public's perception of charity, the methods used and the integrity of the fund-raisers are crucial to public confidence. It is very important that trustees manage and control fund-raising effectively, efficiently, and economically. The highest standards need to be adopted and systems for protecting the money raised need to be put into place

www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk

There is some useful information under the 'Information about Fundraising' tab. Established in 1983, the Institute of Fundraising is the professional body for fundraising, working to develop, promote and champion excellence in fundraising.

6 Rental and 'Funding' Gap Rental option

We also offer rental and 'funding gap' rental arrangements, the latter designed to bridge the gap between you needing the equipment and funding being available to pay for it. There is effectively no charge for using this facility, as the cost of the rental is deducted from the equipment price when you purchase.

Please contact Liberator Sales Team for further details on 0845 226 1144.

Appendix 1: Assessment Centres, other contacts and information

Below are the main communication aid centres in the UK, which may be able to provide advice, information and possibly assessment support.

Communication Aid Centres England & Wales	Phone
ACE Centre-North: Oldham www.ace-north.org.uk	01457 829 444
ACE Centre: Oxford www.ace-centre.org.uk	01865 759 800
Barnsley: Assistive Technology Team www.barnsleyrd.nhs.uk	01226 432 159
Birmingham: Access to Communication and Technology (adults) www.wmrc.nhs.uk/act	0121 627 8235
Bristol: Frenchay Communication Aids Centre, (adolescents & adults). www.cacfrenchay.nhs.uk	0117 975 3946
Bristol: PCAS Paediatric Communication Aids Centre (children) www.pcas.claremont.bristol.sch.uk	0117 924 7527
Cardiff: Rookwood Communication Aids Centre, Cardiff (adults)	02920 566 281
East Sussex: Chailey Heritage Clinical Services	01825 722 112
Kent: Kent and Canterbury Hospital	01227 864 083
Leeds: St Mary's Hospital SLT department	0113 305 5187
Lincoln: Speech & language Therapy Department	01522 514 814
London: The Wolfson Centre Augmentative Communication Service,	0207 405 9200 x 1146
London: CENMAC www.cenmac.com	0208 854 1019
London: ACS Assistive Communication Service	0208 846 6626
Newcastle: Regional Communication Aid Service,	0191 287 5240
Oxford: Centre for Enablement Posture, Independence and Mobility Service	01865 737 445
Sheffield: Speech and Language Therapy Agency, Centenary House, Heritage Park, Albert Terrace Road, Sheffield S6 3BR	0114 226 1782
Southampton: Communication Aids Centre, Southampton General Hospital	02380 796 455
Suffolk: Communication Aids Resource Centre	01449 776 030
Truro: Communication Aids Centre (limited range of equipment), Cornwall	01872 742 42
Northern Ireland	
Belfast: Communication Advice Centre	028 9066 9501
Scotland	
Edinburgh: Keycomm - Lothian Communication Technology Service	0131 443 6775
Glasgow: Scottish Centre of Technology for Communication Impaired (SCTCI)	0141 201 6425 / 6426
Edinburgh: CALL Centre	0131 651 6236
Cardenden, Fife: FACCT	01592 414 730
Aberdeen: TASSCC Special Needs Computer Base	01224 346 127

Communication Matters

The UK Chapter of the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication ([ISAAC](http://www.isaac.org.uk)) which focuses on the needs of people with complex communication needs who may benefit from AAC systems to maximise their opportunities and enhance their life. Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems include eye pointing, gesture, signing, using symbol/word boards, and electronic speech devices. Worldwide, there are 14 national chapters of ISAAC, co-ordinated by a Secretariat based in Canada.

www.communicationmatters.org.uk

Appendix 2: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 12

States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

Article 13

The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art or through any other media of the child's voice.

The exercise of this right may be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:

- a) for the respect or reputations of others; or
- b) for the protection of national security or of public order, or public health or morals

Article 23

States Parties recognize that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community

States Parties recognise the right of the disabled child to special care and shall encourage and ensure the extension, subject to available resources, to the eligible child and those responsible for his or her care, of assistance for which application is made and which is appropriate to the child's condition and to the circumstances of the parents or others caring for the child.

Recognising the special needs of a disabled child, assistance extended in accordance with paragraph 2 of the present article shall be provided free of charge, whenever possible, taking into account the financial resources of the parents or others caring for the child, and shall be designed to ensure that the disabled child has effective access to and receives education, training, health care services, rehabilitation services, preparation for employment and recreation opportunities in a manner conducive to the child's achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development, including his or her cultural and spiritual development.

States Parties shall promote, in the spirit of international cooperation, the exchange of appropriate information in the field of preventive health care and of medical, psychological and functional treatment of disabled children, including dissemination of and access to information concerning methods of rehabilitation, education and vocational services, with the aim of enabling State Parties to improve their capabilities and skills and to widen their experience in the areas. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

Article 29

States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

- a) the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential
- b) the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;
- c) the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which her or she may originate, and for civilizations different to his or her own;
- d) the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;
- e) the development of respect for the natural environment

No part of the present article or Article 28 shall be construed so as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject always to the observance of the principles set forth in paragraph 1 of the present article and to the requirements that the education given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State

International human rights instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols are negotiated among United Nations Member States and are legally binding on the individual States that become parties to the instrument.

The full text of the UN Rights of the Child can be downloaded at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm>

The more relevant extracts from the code are provided below (most relevant in bold) but other sections may also be considered relevant to your child's communication needs and you are strongly advised to refer to the full text of the Code.

3:3 Ascertaining the child's views may not always be easy. Very young children and those with severe communication difficulties, for example, may present a significant challenge for education, health and other professionals. But the principle of seeking and taking account of the ascertainable views of the child or young person is an important one. Their perceptions & experiences can be invaluable to professionals in reaching decisions. LAs, schools & early education settings should make arrangements to enable this to happen.

3:7 Practitioners should ensure that where an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed the child is involved at an appropriate level. Consultation with young children will necessitate a range of communication strategies, including the use of play, art, audio and video as well as verbal communication. Child development centres, therapy services, social services family centres, day care or other non-educational provision will already know many young children with special educational needs. Partnership between providers will be important in ensuring that the child is encouraged to share their views through the most appropriate adult, and to address any special communication needs.

3:22 Both school and LA staff will need information and training on consulting children and young people with communication difficulties. LAs may wish to develop training options to build the confidence and competence of all staff in working with children, however complex their needs. Learning support staff have a critical role in supporting many children and their training should include an element on pupil participation and the development of communication skills.

3:23 Participation of pupils will be facilitated if the LA works with all concerned, including schools, pupils and parents, in order to develop user-friendly information for children and young people. Such information may take the form of printed, video or taped information and may be provided in alternative and augmentative communication systems.

Providing special support

3:25 It is important to avoid making assumptions about levels of understanding, particularly amongst very young children and older children with learning, communication or sensory difficulties. These children may need additional help to be able to make their views and wishes known and efforts should be made to arrange for this help to be provided where it is needed.

Communication and interaction

7:55 Most children with special educational needs have strengths and difficulties in one, some or all of the areas of speech, language and communication. Their

communication needs may be both diverse and complex. They will need to continue to develop their linguistic competence in order to support their thinking as well as their communication. The range of difficulties will encompass children and young people with speech and language delay, impairments or disorders, specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia and dyspraxia, hearing impairment and those who demonstrate features within the autistic spectrum; they may also apply to some children and young people with moderate, severe or profound learning difficulties. The range of need will include those for whom language and communication difficulties are the result of permanent sensory or physical impairment.

7:56 These children may require some, or all, of the following:

- flexible teaching arrangements
- help in acquiring, comprehending & using language
- help in articulation
- help in acquiring literacy skills
- **help in using augmentative and alternative means of communication**
- **help to use different means of communication confidently and competently for a range of purposes, including formal situations**
- help in organising & coordinating oral & written language
- support to compensate for the impact of a communication difficulty on learning in English as an additional language
- help in expressing, comprehending & using their own language, where English is not the first language.

7:57 If the LA considers that some or all of these programmes could be provided for a child by the school in collaboration with LA or external support services, then the LA may conclude that intervention should be provided at *School Action Plus* and monitored to see if the action was effective. It would then be appropriate for the LA to conclude that a statutory assessment was not necessary. If, on the other hand, the school and support services had already provided these interventions through *School Action Plus* and the child had not made acceptable progress, then a statutory assessment should be considered.

Cognition and learning

7:58 Children who demonstrate features of moderate, severe or profound learning difficulties or specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia or dyspraxia, require specific programmes to aid progress in cognition and learning. Such requirements may also apply to some extent to children with physical and sensory impairments and those on the autistic spectrum. Some of these children may have associated sensory, physical and behavioural difficulties that compound their needs. These children may require some, or all, of the following:

- flexible teaching arrangements
- help with processing language, memory and reasoning skills
- help & support in acquiring literacy skills
- help in organising & coordinating spoken and written English to aid cognition
- help with sequencing & organisational skills

- help with problem solving & developing concepts
- programmes to aid improvement of fine and motor competencies
- support in use of technical terms & abstract ideas
- help in understanding ideas, concepts and experiences when information cannot be gained through first hand sensory or physical experiences.

7:59 As indicated in paragraphs 7:46 and 7:47, the LA will need to consider on an individual basis, whether these programmes can be provided through intervention at *School Action Plus* or whether the LA should undertake a statutory assessment. The decision may depend on the severity of the child's cognitive ability and any associated needs that compound the child's difficulties in accessing the curriculum. If solutions for a child have moved beyond ordinary differentiation to a solution where specific input is necessary not just to provide access to learning but more importantly to secure learning or to develop strategies to overcome particular areas of weakness, then an assessment may be necessary.

Sensory and/or physical needs

7:62 There is a wide spectrum of sensory, multi-sensory and physical difficulties. The sensory range extends from profound and permanent deafness or visual impairment through to lesser levels of loss, which may only be temporary. Physical impairments may arise from physical, neurological or metabolic causes that only require appropriate access to educational facilities and equipment; others may lead to more complex learning and social needs; a few children will have multi-sensory difficulties some with associated physical difficulties. For some children the inability to take part fully in school life causes significant emotional stress or physical fatigue. Many of these children and young people will require some of the following:

- flexible teaching arrangements
- appropriate seating, acoustic conditioning and lighting
- adaptations to the physical environment of the school
- adaptations to school policies and procedures
- **access to alternative or augmented forms of communication**
- provision of tactile & kinaesthetic materials
- access to different amplification systems
- access to low vision aids
- **access in all areas of the curriculum through specialist aids, equipment or furniture regular and frequent access to specialist support.**

7:63 For the children with the most complex physical needs and the most severe sensory losses it is likely that the LA will consider a statutory assessment to be necessary. The governing factors are probably the extent of specialist teaching or aids and adaptations which are required. However, for many children with a lesser level of sensory or physical needs, intervention at *School Action Plus* will be appropriate

Where an LA, having made an assessment of a child, decide to make a statement, they shall serve a copy of a proposed statement and a written notice on the child's parent within two weeks of the date on which the assessment was completed. See Schedule 27, Education Act 1996 and the Education (Special

Educational Needs) (England) (Consolidation) Regulations 2001

Chapter 8: Statements of Special Educational Needs

Part 3 Special Educational Provision: The special educational provision that the LA consider necessary to meet the child's special educational needs.

- The *objectives* that the special educational provision should aim to meet.
- The *special educational provision* which the LA consider appropriate to meet the needs set out in Part 2 and to meet the objectives.
- The arrangements to be made for monitoring progress in meeting those objectives, particularly for setting short-term targets for the child's progress and for reviewing his or her progress on a regular basis.

Part 4 Placement: The type and name of school where the special educational provision set out in Part 3 is to be made or the LA's arrangements for provision to be made otherwise than in school.

Part 5 Non-Educational Needs: All relevant non-educational needs of the child as agreed between the health services, social services or other agencies and the LA.

Part 6 Non-Educational Provision: Details of relevant non-educational provision required to meet the non-educational needs of the child as agreed between the health services and/or social services and the LA, including the agreed arrangements for its provision. Signature and date

8:30 All the advice obtained and taken into consideration during the assessment process must be attached as appendices to the statement. The advice appended to the statement must include:

- A Parental evidence
- B Educational advice
- C Medical advice
- D Psychological advice
- E Social services advice

F Any other advice, such as the views of the child, which the LA or any other body from whom advice is sought consider desirable. In particular, where the child's parent is a serving member of the armed forces, advice from Service Children's Education (SCE).

Parental evidence will include parental representations presented to the LA when considering the need for an assessment, and parental views and evidence submitted as part of the assessment and, when the statement is finalised, any parental representations made in response to the proposed statement.

8:31 LAs should draft clear, unambiguous statements. Where diagnostic or technical terms are necessary or helpful, for example in referring to specific disabilities, their meaning should be explained in terms that parents and other non-professionals will readily understand. LAs should take particular care to ensure that the text is placed in the correct part, so as to correspond with the form set out in Schedule 2 to the Education (Special Educational Needs) (England) Regulations 2001. Further detailed advice is provided in the SEN Toolkit.

Part 2: Special educational needs (learning difficulties)

8:32 Part 2 of the statement should describe all the child's learning difficulties identified during the statutory assessment. It should also include a description of the child's current functioning – what the child can and cannot do. The description in Part 2 should draw on and may refer to the professional advice attached in the appendices. Where the LA adopt that advice in their description of the child's learning difficulties, they should say that they have done so. But merely stating that they are adopting the advice in the appendices is not sufficient. The advice received may contain conflicting opinions or opinions open to interpretation, which the LA must resolve, giving reasons for the conclusions they have reached. All advice must be considered and appended to the statement. Part 2 should be set out in a fashion which can relate directly to the description of provision set out in Part 3 (b).

Part 3: Special educational provision

8:33 Once a child's special educational needs have been assessed and set out in full in part 2, the LA must specify, in Part 3, the special educational provision to meet those needs. The key objective in specifying provision is to help the child to learn and develop.

8:34 Part 3 of the statement is divided into three sub-sections:

- a. the first sub-section should set out the main objectives which the provision aims to meet. These objectives should directly relate to the needs set out in Part 2 and should be described in terms that will allow the LA and the school to monitor and review the child's progress over time. They should generally be of a longer-term nature than the more specific, short-term targets in the child's Individual Education Plan.
- b. the second sub-section should specify all of the special educational provision the LA consider appropriate for all the learning difficulties in Part 2, even where some of the provision will be made by direct intervention on the part of the authority, some will be made by the child's school from within its own resources, and some may be made by the health authority. It is the LA that is responsible for arranging the provision in the statement, irrespective of who actually delivers it, unless the LA is satisfied that the child's parents have themselves made suitable arrangements.

8:35 The Education (Special Educational Needs) (England) (Consolidation) Regulations 2001 say that a statement must specify:

- (a) any appropriate facilities and equipment, staffing arrangements and curriculum
- (b) any appropriate modifications to the application of the National Curriculum
- (c) any appropriate exclusions from the application of the National Curriculum, in detail, and the provision which it is proposed to substitute for any such exclusions in order to maintain a balanced and broadly based curriculum; and
- (d) where residential accommodation is appropriate, that fact.

8:36 A statement should specify clearly the provision necessary to meet the needs of the child. It should detail appropriate provision to meet each

identified need. It will be helpful to the child's parents and teachers if the provision in this sub-section is set out in the same order as the description of needs in Part 2.

8:37 LAs must make decisions about which actions and provision are appropriate for which pupils on an individual basis. This can only be done by a careful assessment of the pupils' difficulties and consideration of the educational setting in which they may be educated. Provision should normally be quantified (e.g. in terms of hours of provision, staffing arrangements) although there will be cases where some flexibility should be retained in order to meet the changing special educational needs of the child concerned. It will always be necessary for LAs to monitor, with the school or other setting, the child's progress towards identified outcomes, however provision is described. LAs must not, in any circumstances, have blanket policies not to quantify provision.

8:38 LAs should also set out, in accordance with section 364 of the Education Act 1996, any disapplications or modifications of the provisions of the National Curriculum (in terms of attainment targets, programmes of study and assessment arrangements) which they consider necessary to meet the child's special educational needs, together with details as to how a broad and balanced curriculum is to be maintained. It is not necessary to modify National Curriculum provisions to enable a child to study at a lower level than applies to most of the pupils working within the same key stage. Where pupils are educated at home by their parents there is no requirement to deliver the National Curriculum. Where pupils are at the foundation stage this section should set out how the special educational provision will enable the child to access the curriculum with reference to the early learning goals.

8:39 For pupils whose assessment is close to their preparation for GCSEs or vocational examinations, the LA should indicate any special examination provision recommended to enable the pupil to have full access to the examination and demonstrate their attainment. In some cases, approval may be needed in advance from Awarding Bodies. This is rarely a complex process and is handled by the centre where the pupil takes their examinations, usually their school.

A pupil does not require a statement in order to benefit from any concessions that an Examination Group might grant to a pupil with special educational needs.

c the third sub-section should describe the arrangements to be made for setting shorter-term educational and developmental targets for the child. The targets themselves should not be part of the statement but should form an integral part of their IEP. By their nature such targets will require regular review and revision while the longer-term objectives in sub-section 1 will not. The child's school should devise the first IEP, in consultation with their parents and, where appropriate the child, within two months of placement at a different school, or immediately the statement is finalised if the child remains in the same school. The child's achievements, in the light of the IEP, should be reviewed at least twice a year by the school, and fully

considered at the first annual review of the statement when further targets can be set.

8:40 This sub-section should also identify any special arrangements for the annual review of the statement and recognise the need for the school to monitor and evaluate the child's progress during the course of the year. LAs must review a child's statement at least once a year. The review should consider the child's progress towards the objectives in sub section 1 and in relation to the shorter-term objectives and targets set out by the school in the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP). It should also consider whether any changes are needed to the provision with reference to the child's progress.

8:41 *All the information in Part 3 should be written so as to be easily understood by all those involved in the child's education, including their parents.*

Part 4: Placement

8:42 In the final statement, Part 4 will set out the type of school and any particular school which the LA consider appropriate for the child, or the LA's arrangements for the provision for education otherwise than at school which the LA consider appropriate. But this Part must be left blank when the proposed statement is issued, so that the LA do not pre-empt consideration of any preference for a maintained school which the parents may state, or any representation the parents may make in favour of a non-maintained special or independent school (see Glossary).

Part 5: Non-educational needs

8:43 Part 5 should set out any non-educational needs of the child which the LA either propose to meet or are satisfied will be met, by arrangement or otherwise, by the health services, social services department or some other body.

Part 6: Non-educational provision

8:44 Part 6 should set out the non-educational provision which is required to meet the needs identified in Part 5 and which the LA either propose to make available or are satisfied will be provided by the social services department commissioned by the health authority in discussion with the Primary Care Group or Primary Care Trust for the area, or by other providers. The designated officer for social services should work with the LA to confirm social services provision and the medical officer for special educational needs should liaise as necessary to ensure that the health service contribution has been confirmed.

8:45 Part 6 should also state the objectives to be achieved by such non-educational provision and should set out such arrangements as have been agreed by the LA and the providing body for its delivery.

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8:46 When describing a child's educational and non-educational needs and provision, the LA should ensure that the needs are clearly and accurately described and that there is full agreement on the nature of the provision necessary to meet those needs, consulting the relevant responsible professionals as necessary.

8:47 LAs should explain to parents that whilst Parts 2, 3 and 4 of the statement are legally binding on the LA, Parts 5 and 6 are not and that there is no right of appeal to the SEN Tribunal about these sections.

8:48 Further suggestions on writing statements can be found in the SEN Toolkit.

Speech and language therapy

8:49 Case law has established that speech and language therapy can be regarded as either educational or non-educational provision, or both, depending upon the health or developmental history of each child. It could therefore appear in either Part 3 or Part 6 of the statement or in both. However, since communication is so fundamental in learning and progression, addressing speech and language impairment should normally be recorded as educational provision unless there are exceptional reasons for not doing so.

8:50 Prime responsibility for the provision of speech and language therapy services to children rests with the NHS. This applies generally and also to any specification of such services in a statement of special educational needs, whether in Part 3 as educational provision or in Part 6 as non-educational provision, or in both parts. Health authorities are responsible for purchasing therapy services through the contracts they make with providers of health care (NHS Trusts). The NHS provides a professionally managed speech and language therapy service covering pre-school, school-age and adult age groups, which has close links with the other child health services.

8:51 Where the NHS does not provide speech and language therapy for a child whose statement specifies such therapy as educational provision, ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the provision is made rests with the LA, unless the child's parents have made appropriate alternative arrangements. Schools, LAs and the NHS should cooperate closely in meeting the needs of children with communication difficulties.

8:52 It is important that the nature and extent of provision required for individual children should be examined very carefully and that full consideration is given as to how such provision can best be delivered. In some cases, for example, children may need regular and continuing help from a speech therapist, either individually or in a group. In other cases, it may be appropriate for staff at the child's school to deliver a regular and discrete programme of intervention under the guidance and supervision of a speech and language therapist.

8:53 For some children a language programme that is an integral part of the whole school day is more appropriate. Such language programmes will be delivered by school staff but may require regular monitoring and evaluation by a speech and language therapist. It is good practice for education professionals who have received sufficient and appropriate professional development in the field of speech and language difficulties to support and assist the work of speech and language therapists in educational settings. Collaborative

This reflects a recommendation of the DH/DfEE working group on the provision of speech and language therapy services to children with special educational needs. DfEE document 0319/2000.

Practice is essential for successful intervention with children and young people with speech and language difficulties. The operational flexibilities introduced under

the Health Act 1999 for health services and local authorities will help to promote greater collaboration.

The proposed statement

8:54 The LA must draw up a proposed statement, completing all Parts except Part 4. The proposed statement must not contain any details relating to where the proposed special educational provision should be made. The LA must send the proposed statement and copies of the advice that has been submitted during the assessment to the child's parents; copies of the proposed statement should also be sent to all those who submitted advice.

8:55 At the same time, the LA must send the parents a notice which sets out the procedures to be followed,

including setting out the arrangements for the choice of school, the parents' right to make representations about the content of the statement, their right to appeal to the SEN Tribunal against the contents of the final statement and the time limits for appeal. The notice must correspond substantially with that set out in Part A of Schedule 1 to the Regulations.

NOTE: These extracts only provide guidance in a few key areas and you are strongly urged to refer to the full text of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2001, which can be downloaded from: www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=3724

The following two documents are provided because, whilst not legally binding, they may have enough persuasive value for your local authority to agree to fund the communication aid, and thereby avoid the cost and inconvenience of you instructing a solicitor.

The documents are, we believe, indicative / evidential of the intentions of government and policy makers.

House of Lords - Monday, 27 March 2006.

Disability: Communication Aids

Whether they will commission research into how many disabled people who are without speech have an unmet need for a communication aid.

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Lord Warner): My Lords, my department has commissioned research on communication therapy and aids. **Responsibility for assessing people's individual communication aids needs rests with local health and social care agencies.** They are in the best position to determine local service priorities, using the increasing resources that the Government have made available. We will continue with stakeholders to consider this area as we take forward the implementation of the White Paper, *Our health, our care, our say*.

Baroness Wilkins: My Lords, I thank the Minister for that Answer. Does he agree that being deprived of speech is probably the most disabling condition and that our ignorance of the extent of the need for communication aids makes it unlikely that sufficient provision will be made at local level amid all the other competing needs? The Minister will be aware that the only ring-fenced funding for the aids—the communication aids project—ends this week. What assurance can he give the House that reliable arrangements will be put in place to ensure statutory funding for this extremely vulnerable group of children and adults, so that they do not remain largely dependent on charitable sources to have their needs met?

Lord Warner: My Lords, on the general point, we believe that, **despite the difficulties, it is right that people at the local level should assess the needs required and use the resources available to them to meet the priorities that are established.** The communication aids project was always intended to be a time-limited project that would cease on 31 March. Important lessons have been learnt by those in other parts of the country from that project.

Baroness Darcy de Knayth: My Lords, does the Minister agree that communication is a fundamental human right? It is essential in education and employment and for social inclusion. I know that the Government are to undertake research but, if the project is to cease, can the Minister ensure that such a basic human right will be met?

Lord Warner: My Lords, I certainly agree that this is an important issue in enabling people to participate fully in our society. That is why it is **important that local health and social care agencies address the issues raised by this set of needs and, in the light of local priorities, respond to them.**

Lord Addington: My Lords, does the Minister accept that the idea of reasonableness is something to which the Government agreed in the Disability Discrimination Act and in the follow-up legislation last year? How could it be reasonable to deny someone the support that allows them to talk?

Lord Warner: My Lords, I am not sure in how many more ways I can say this: we accept that it is an important issue. It is important that people have assistance with communication where they need it, so that they can participate in society. **I repeat the point that I was making: it is down to people at the local level to assess those needs and to meet them when they need to do so. In relation to children, if there are special educational needs and an assessment is made, there is then an obligation on a local authority to respond to that assessment appropriately.**

Lord Ashley of Stoke: My Lords, does my noble friend agree that people without speech and communication, especially children, suffer horrendous difficulties, compounded by loneliness? The Government gave £21 million in the past five years to help such people. That was regarded as a vital supplement. What is the difference between the past five years and the next five years? Why has the supplement now become not so vital?

Lord Warner: My Lords, it was always intended that the programme would be time-limited. We now know from the experience of that programme that a lot of work has been done with local authorities to enable them to learn lessons from it. There is a good stock of CAP case studies showing how agencies have worked together in support of children with significant communication difficulties. All local authorities can learn from that experience.

Earl Howe: My Lords, the Minister has made it clear that, so far as the Government are concerned, ensuring that those in need receive the help that they require is down to decision-making at a local level. Am I right in thinking

that there are no nationally agreed criteria or systems for providing communication aids and that even now there is considerable variation in provision between different sectors, which results in major problems? Will the end of the communication aids project not mean a postcode lottery appearing in this area?

Lord Warner: My Lords, guidance has been given in *The National Service Framework for Long-term Conditions*. The function on communication is central to themes in our document *Improving the life chances of disabled people*. We take the issue very seriously. **We have allocated increasingly large resources to local authorities for social services and to the NHS in relation to health needs. We expect people to use the national service frameworks and guidance to meet the needs in their local communities.**

Lord Morris of Manchester: My Lords, can the Minister tell the House what assessments the Government have made of the number of people on incapacity benefit who could undertake work if they were provided with adequate communication equipment?

Lord Warner: My Lords, I do not have that information immediately to hand, but I shall look into the matter and write to my noble friend.

Lord Laming: My Lords, does the Minister agree that this would be a good topic on which to invite the health inspectorate and the social care inspectorate to do a joint inspection to see how well the systems are working at local level? As the noble Lord indicated, it is a matter for local services, and it would be helpful if the inspectorate could assess how well they were working.

Lord Warner: My Lords, I am certainly willing to look into the issue with my colleagues. I remind the noble Lord that in our White Paper, *Our health, our care, our say*, the new director of adult social services and the directors of public health were identified as key in advising on how local authorities and PCTs would promote the health and well-being of their local communities. This is one of the issues that we would expect them to pay attention to.

Lord Avebury: My Lords, is the Minister aware that, according to research conducted by the Chief Inspector of Prisons, a significant proportion of young people coming into the criminal justice system has significant communication difficulties but that the sample work conducted in a particular institution has not been rolled out throughout the prison system? Does he think that it is important to measure the communication difficulties of people in the criminal justice system and to do something about it?

Lord Warner: My Lords, I am aware of the general problem, and I will certainly draw the points that the noble Lord has made to my colleagues' attention.

Lord Skelmersdale: My Lords, I accept that the Minister is absolutely right to say that this is a problem with a local solution, but the Government have none the less taken on board the need for numbers of doctors, nurses and therapists—in this case, speech therapists. What assessment have the Government made of the need for speech therapists, and are they up to strength?

Lord Warner: My Lords, I am delighted to tell the House that between December 1997 and 2004, the number of speech and language therapists employed in the NHS increased by 1,684, or 35 per cent.

Lord Ramsbotham: My Lords, I draw the Minister's attention to the fact that for two years, until last July, a trial pilot of speech and language therapists, funded by the Helen Hamlyn Trust, was run in two young offender establishments with the plea that the Government should pick up that bill because of the enormous good work that they would do. Since then, there has been nothing but silence because neither the Home Office nor the National Health Service has been able to agree who might pay for the vital people to do that vital work.

Lord Warner: My Lords, I would be delighted to look into the communications issues and get someone to reply to the noble Lord.

Appendix 5: Response from Lord Adonis concerning post-CAP funding



2006/0212714POAA

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Andrew Adonis
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools

Shailesh Vara MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

28 March 2006

To Shailesh,

Thank you for your letter of 8 March 2006 to Ruth Kelly enclosing correspondence from your constituent, Mr David Weatherburn, of [redacted] about the Communications Aids Project, or CAP for short. I am replying as the Minister with responsibility for special educational needs issues.

We recognise that CAP was an important project and we have been pleased to have had the support of communication aid suppliers. However, it was always a time-limited initiative and it is already clear that we cannot sustain funding for CAP at the current level (£5 million a year) beyond the existing cut-off point of March 2006. That said, we are keen to maintain the momentum generated by CAP in some form and officials are actively exploring options with the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency.

It is important to see the project in context. We have always made it clear that CAP was there to supplement, not replace, provision made locally by schools, local authorities and health authorities. The fact that there has been a CAP has not relieved these local agencies of their responsibilities for helping children with significant communication difficulties. In short, we have never suggested that all roads begin and end with CAP.

I can understand why centrally funded initiatives like CAP are attractive but we must be careful not to create a dependency culture. Our key mission must be to ensure that local agencies recognise needs and address them. Where children in England are concerned, we would certainly be looking to children's services, through children's trusts, to provide appropriate support and equipment to all disabled children. This is all the more important given the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

Yours,

Andrew Adonis

ANDREW ADONIS

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