

AAC User Profile

Name: John
Age: 24 years old
Location: Isle of Wight



John is a proficient AAC user, and so he should be! John received his first communication aid when he was 5 years old. John remembers going to Great Ormond Street Hospital for his very first AAC assessment when he was 4 years old. "I went to the Great Ormond Street Hospital and I met 2 neurological consultants, 1 of them observing because he had some free time." John was seen by a leading professor of neurology who happened to spot him whilst he was having an assessment for AAC, and so got a diagnosis on the same day. As John's mum says, "that day we killed 2 birds with one stone!!" John says of the experience, "that was the first time that I had a proper diagnosis." He was prescribed a TouchTalker with a Minspeak programme.

The talker was brought to John at his school and he was told it would say anything he wanted it to! He used his ABC spelling board. "Apparently I tried to make a TouchTalker say 'Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious' in nursery, but I cannot remember this." The talker opened up John's world to him, but was also frustrating at the same time. Whilst being assessed for AAC, it was also found that John is above average intelligence. He could not learn his Minspeak programme fast enough!

When he was 8 years old, John attended a residential school where he continued to use his new talker, and this is where he flew with it! John credits the support he received alongside the Minspeak programme he was using with his success in communicating with his talker whilst at school. John was the only student allowed to input his own vocabulary into his TouchTalker, Liberator and then his Pathfinder as he was so proficient with it.

At 9 years old, John did a speech at The Lord Mayor's dinner. He was chosen to present to a room full of dignitaries as he was extremely proficient and didn't get nervous! He continued at college and completed a City and Guilds course in AAC, and then attended a residential college.

John now lives on the Isle of Wight. He is an avid reader of 'The Economist' and spends his time on the island productively, in his words, "70% of the time on the internet reading, watching movies and playing games." John is able to independently use his talker when he is out in the community, chatting to people he knows in the local area and to total strangers, who take an interest in how he communicates! John uses his Liberator-14 daily, using his Minspeak programme enables him to functionally communicate, although John puts it as: "Nothing grandiose just informing people what I want."



On John's hopes for the future he states: "I don't have any hopes or desires for the future as I've been there and done it all, Disney twice, Eiffel tower, Lourdes, now very tired with spasms. All done when younger, internet is my world now." When asking John how he feels Minspeak has helped him through his life, his response is: "I think that my having procured an AAC device helped everything." When asked what life would be like without a talker, John says, "I don't like to answer hypothetical questions but I think that my life would be greatly different. You can't imagine it."