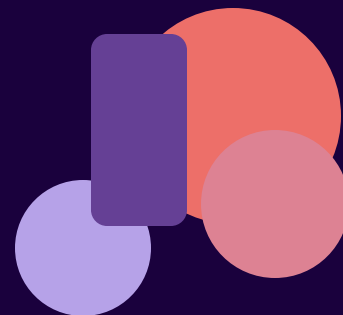


AAC provision in England

A user journey approach to access, funding and continuing support



Policy Connect is developing a policy paper on how people in England access and sustain augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). Following the user journey, it will identify where decisions, funding, or handovers help or obstruct access and develop practical, costable policy options.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

How can people get the AAC support they need and keep it working across the places and transitions that matter in their lives?

The user journey

1

Recognise and refer

Who notices a possible need and opens a route to help?

2

Assess and decide

Who assesses, arranges trials, and decides eligibility?

3

Fund and provide

Who funds the whole solution and resolves disputes?

4

Use in daily life

Who supports use at home, school, work, and in the community?

5

Sustain and adapt

Who reviews, repairs, and replaces support as needs change?

What the research will test

Access, funding, and accountability

- Funding routes and gaps across assessment, trials, equipment, software, mounting, training, repair, and replacement.
- What happens when specialist referrals are accepted, declined, returned, or redirected, including handover to local support.
- How commissioning, eligibility, and local capacity vary, and where responsibility is unclear.

Continuity across settings

- Whether AAC works across home, education, work, and community, with support for users and communication partners.
- The route from a concern in school to assessment and funded provision, with or without an Education, Health and Care Plan, and through transitions.
- How age, geography, setting, diagnosis, advocacy, and family resources affect access and outcomes.

Whose evidence we need

AAC users and families • schools and education services • local and specialised AAC services • NHS commissioners • local authorities, SEND, and social care • charities, user led organisations, suppliers and researchers

How the evidence will be used

1

Call for evidence

Gather experience, anonymised examples, service data, research, and practical proposals.

2

Stakeholder focus group

Test the journey map, differences between perspectives and possible remedies.

3

Analysis and recommendations

Check accounts against other evidence and develop feasible, costable options.