



Barnsley Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

Barnsley Assistive Technology Team

A specialised service that can help with technology for communication and control



A Guide for Professionals



What Assistive Technology (AT) Does The Team Work With?

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

AAC aims to assist people who have difficulty speaking to communicate effectively, by supporting or replacing spoken communication. AAC includes Voice Output Communication Aids, electronic devices that produce a computer generated voice based on what the user enters.



Environmental Control (EC)

EC systems enable independence by giving people control of their home environment. EC systems can aid people who have problems accessing things like computers, TVs, phones, doors and in calling for attention.



Access

Access methods are the ways in which people control equipment using any repeatable, reliable movement.

Access to electronic assistive technology is key and can be very specific if a person has limited mobility or complex physical difficulties. Access methods can include customised or specialist switches, joysticks, mice or keyboards and can vary from a single switch controlled by a slight movement to cursor movement using eye gaze.



Who Are Barnsley Assistive Technology?

We are a specialised NHS service made up of: Occupational Therapists, Speech & Language Therapists, Clinical Scientists, Technologists, Engineers and Assistants.

What Do We Do?

- Barnsley Assistive Technology work alongside local teams and professionals (for example Occupational Therapists and Speech & Language Therapists) in **Yorkshire and Humber** to **assess** a person's AT needs and help to identify the most appropriate solution to enhance their quality of life and independence.
- Where appropriate, we **provide** specialised communication aids and environmental controls. We support and **maintain** the equipment provided.
- When final **recommendations** have been made, we pass care back to local professionals to support long-term implementation of the recommended system.
- We offer advice and **support** to local professionals and others supporting those with the potential to use this equipment.
- We deliver AT **training** and education to local professionals in the region.
- We publish **resources** and information to support local teams and those using AT.

Who do we work with?

Barnsley Assistive Technology work with a wide range of individuals with severe disabilities. In general, to be referred to Barnsley Assistive Technology Team for assessment, an individual:

- Would have a severe or complex difficulty associated with a range of physical, cognitive, learning or sensory deficits (where sensory deficit is not their only difficulty).
- Would have developed beyond cause-and-effect understanding and beyond pre-verbal communication skills.
- Would be able to understand the purpose of a communication aid and/or environmental control and be motivated to use one.
- Would not have impaired cognitive abilities that would prevent them from learning how to use our equipment.
- May have experience of low-tech or non-specialised AAC or EC systems which are insufficient to enable them to realise their potential. (It is very helpful if you are able to demonstrate this at referral.)

For AAC specifically:

- Would have a clear discrepancy between level of understanding and ability to speak. *More detailed criteria can be found on our website.*

Who do we provide equipment to?

- Barnsley Assistive Technology provide equipment to people who are assessed as needing specialised, high-tech communication aids and/or environmental controls.

- If an assistive technology assessment indicates that a non-specialised system will meet a person's needs (direct access, text-based or simple symbol-based AAC; simpler and cheaper non-customised EC), this should be provided by the local health or social care team. Local teams should contact Barnsley Assistive Technology if they need advice about this.

What else can we do?

- Barnsley Assistive Technology can integrate multiple control functions into a single means of access if multiple devices are not appropriate. This includes the potential for integrating functions for communication, environmental control, computer access and/ or powered wheelchair control.
- We can also customise access methods and mounts to facilitate use of the device being provided, for example keyguards, wheelchair mounts.

What happens during an assessment?

- We try to visit within 6 weeks of receiving a referral.
- We visit clients at home or any other community venue that suits them.
- We visit with a local Speech & Language and/or Occupational Therapist.
- A visit could last 1-2 hours and we may ask to visit on more than one occasion to get a detailed picture of the client's needs.

- We work with the client and the people who know them to set goals for them.
- We may lend them some equipment to try between visits and ask you to feedback on these trials.

How can you contact us?

- If you would like to refer a client and are confident that they meet the referral criteria, then you can find the referral form on our website: **<http://www.barnsleyhospital.nhs.uk/assistive-technology/contact-assistive-technology/referrals/>**
- If you are unsure if someone is appropriate for a referral to our service then please get in touch to discuss before filling in a referral form. Please note that clients are not able to refer themselves.
- If you would like any other advice, please contact the team using the email address or telephone number overleaf.

To learn more about the service we provide, please refer to our website and the following national guidelines:

- NHS England (2016) Guidance for Commissioning AAC Services and Equipment.
- NHS England (2016) Complex Disability Equipment: Communication Aids. (*Specialised Augmentative and Alternative and Communication (AAC) Services.*)
- NHS England (Interim for Adoption from 2013) *Complex Disability Equipment: Environmental Controls (All Ages).*

Contact details

Email: barnsley.at@nhs.net

Telephone: 01226 432159

Website: www.barnsleyhospital.nhs.uk/at

Mailing List: <http://eepurl.com/bqoNTX>

Blog: <https://barnsleyat.wordpress.com/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/barnsleyat>

Training for Professionals: <http://www.barnsleyhospital.nhs.uk/assistive-technology/services/training-courses/>

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If you require this information in alternative format, please contact the **Patient Advice and Complaints Team on 01226 432330**.

Если Вы хотели бы эту информацию на другом языке или другом формате, типа большой печати, пожалуйста звоните 01226 432330

Jeśli potrzebujesz te informacje w innym języku czy w innej postaci, na przykład dużym drukiem, proszę dzwonić na numer 01226 432330

如果您想索取這些資料的中文譯本或以其他形式編制的版本（如大字體），請 致電01226 432330


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