

Re: Your request made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

Under the Freedom of Information Act, I would like to request the following information:

1) the total number of children under the age of 5 (Compulsory School Age) on your waiting list for speech therapy (including all of those who are yet to receive more than one individual Speech and Lanugage therapy session/assessment)

As of 5th July 2024, we have 225 children under the age of 5 on our waiting list for initial appointment. We are unable to provide data for those that are yet to receive more than one individual speech and language therapy session/assessment.

2) what parents are required to do before receiving a block of speech therapy sessions (attend a course, etc.)

It can vary depending on the child's need. The parents may be given advice and activities to practise at home, before receiving a block of speech therapy sessions. Parents might be signposted to attention and listening activities to support their child's attention development, before accessing speech therapy sessions. However, they might not be required to do anything before receiving a block of speech therapy sessions.

3) what support you provide for children for whom an AAC device is deemed appropriate

This depends on several factors:

1. Person deeming AAC appropriate
2. Type of equipment
3. Location

1.

If a regular communication partner (e.g. parent/carer, educational/childcare setting staff member, another professional involved) suggests that a child or young person requires AAC equipment, we provide assessment and intervention in line with our clinical pathways. If our assessment indicates a clinical need for the child or young person to access some form of AAC, the next steps would depend on the type of system required.

2.

DBTH is one of the local SLT teams under the Barnsley Assistive Technology Team (BATT). Specialised AAC and EC (Environmental Control) services in England are nationally commissioned by NHS England, with 10 regional 'hubs' providing specialist assessment and, if a patient meets their criteria, equipment. Their website [Assistive Technology \(barnsleyhospital.nhs.uk\)](https://www.barnsleyhospital.nhs.uk/assisted-technology) provides more details. BATT only provides 'specialised' AAC equipment. If our assessment indicates that a child or young person could meet the criteria for further assessment by BATT, we gather evidence and complete their referral form. If the referral is accepted, we are involved in their assessment process and any trial of equipment that they deem appropriate. If equipment is provided by BATT on a long-term basis we continue to support the child or young person's regular communication partners in line with our clinical pathways. The equipment is maintained by BATT.

Our Ref: 429
June 2024

We can support families to access AAC equipment through alternative funding streams (e.g. individual funding request, application for charitable funding, private purchase) if:

- a) a referral to BATT is rejected, or
- b) a referral to BATT is accepted but then the specialised assessment indicates that the child or young person does not meet their criteria and therefore equipment is not provided on a long-term basis (this could be following a trial loan period), or
- c) our assessment indicates that a child or young person could benefit from AAC equipment which does not fall under the BATT remit.

We can provide paper-based AAC systems locally, along with support to regular communication partners in helping the child or young person develop their use of a customised symbol-based system.

3.

For children and young people with a Bassetlaw address/GP, we can request AAC equipment from the Nottinghamshire Communication Aids Panel, which is provided and maintained via the Lincolnshire Electronic Assistive Technology Service (EATS). Reasonable requests are usually granted but this is at the discretion of the Panel. When the young person leaves paediatric services they can keep any Panel-funded equipment they have at that point, but there would be no further maintenance or replacements.

For children and young people with a Doncaster address/GP, there is no equivalent to the Panel. BATT are currently piloting a Loan Bank of less specialised AAC equipment which can be requested for a period of up to 3 months in order to trial equipment to see if it is suitable, and gather evidence to support funding applications. This does not include the specialised AAC equipment BATT would otherwise provide where appropriate.

4) how many speech and language therapists (full time equivalent) and how many young people under the age of 18 under your service

As of 5th July 2024, we have funding for 18.22WTE Speech and Language Therapists and are supporting 2,405 children and young people under 18 years old.