



# Communication Aids



**This factsheet tells you about things that can help you to communicate.**

# How to use this factsheet



We are **AbilityNet**.



We help disabled people to use technology.

For example, computers and tablets.



This is an Easy Read factsheet.  
You may still need help to read it.  
Ask someone you know to help you.



For more information you can phone or email us.



Phone **0800 048 7642**



Email **enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk**

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# 1. What this factsheet is about



Millions of people have problems communicating.

For example, people with

- autism
- a brain injury
- learning disabilities.



You might find it hard to speak.

Or you might find it hard to understand what people are saying.



But there are lots of things to help you communicate more easily.

We call them **Communication Aids**.



This factsheet tells you about **electronic** Communication Aids that can help you.



A Communication Aid is **electronic** when it uses a battery or needs to be plugged in.



Choosing the right Communication Aid is important.

It will depend on

- what you need
- what you like
- what you can do.



We think it is important that you have an **assessment** with a **Speech and Language Therapist**.

Speech and Language Therapists help people to learn ways to communicate.



An assessment is when the Speech and Language Therapist meets you and finds out how they can help you.

They can help you choose what Communication Aids you need.



It is also important that your family and carers learn how to communicate with you.

You can ask them to come to your assessment with you.

## 2. Ways to help you communicate



If you find it hard to speak or write there are lots of Communication Aids to help you.



Communication Aids can be electronic.

This is when they use batteries or needs to be plugged in.



Communication Aids can be

- a device you can hold



- an app on a smartphone



- **software** on a tablet or computer.





**Software** is what makes a computer do useful things.

For example, if you want to type a letter on a computer, you can use Microsoft Word.



You might need Communication Aids for only a short time.

Or you might need them all of your life.



You can use Communication Aids on computers to help you speak and write.



For example, your computer could say a symbol or picture out loud to help you communicate and understand.

### 3. Communication Aids that speak out loud



You can get Communication Aids that can speak words or sentences out loud that you want to say.



The voice is a computer voice.

But it is easy to understand.



There are lots of different ways that you can control these Communication Aids.



For example you can

- press a button or use a touch screen
- flip a switch
- type text.



Some of these devices are light and you can hold them in your hand.



Others can go on a desk or on a wheelchair.

# Devices that use a button



Lots of devices are controlled by pressing symbols on buttons to make them talk.



Some devices can only say a few words.



Some devices can say lots of different things.



Here are some devices that you can hold in your hands

- The Quicktalker
- Gotalk.



Here are some devices that go on desks or wheelchairs

- Bigmack
- Gotalk 20 Plus.



Some devices are controlled by using a **touchscreen**.

A touchscreen is a screen on a device that you can control by touching it.

For example, tablets have touchscreens.



With devices that use a touchscreen you can change the screen display to what you want.



Here are some touchscreen devices that you can hold in your hand



- Gotalk Express 32
- Liberator Rugged 7.



Some touchscreen devices can help you do lots more things.

But these touchscreen devices cost more money.



For example, you can use them to

- send emails
- control your TV



- go on social media
- make phone calls
- listen to music.



Here are some touchscreen devices that can do these things

- Tellus Mobi 2
- Indi.

# Devices that use text



Some devices are controlled by typing text.



You do this by typing on a keyboard or touchscreen.

Here are some devices that are controlled by text



- TTS 100
- Allora 2.

## 4. Software and apps

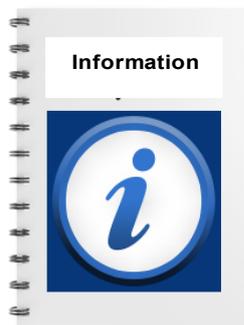


You can use special **software** on a computer to help you communicate more easily.

**Software** is what makes a computer do useful things.



You can also use special apps on your tablet or smartphone that help you to communicate.



We have another factsheet called **Keyboard and mouse alternatives and adaptations.**

This tells you how you can change your computer or tablet or smartphone to make them easier to use.

We also have a website called **My Computer My Way.**



This helps you if you have problems with

- your sight
- your hearing
- moving
- understanding.

# Software and apps for Communication Aids



There are lots of computer software and apps that can help you to communicate.

You can get them for all types of computers, tablets and smartphones.



Here are some software that use both symbols and text

- Grid
- Mind Express.



Here are some apps that use symbols

- GoTalk Pro for iPad
- Talking Mats for iPad.



Here are some software and apps that use text to help you

- Clarocom
- Predictable 5.

# Other useful apps



Some websites can help you find the right Communication Aid apps.

**For example,**



## **Aphasia Software Finder**

This website tells you about apps and software that can help you communicate.

**[www.aphasiasoftwarefinder.org](http://www.aphasiasoftwarefinder.org)**

## **CALL Scotland**

This website tells you about apps that can help you to communicate.

There is information for all types of smartphones.

**[www.callscotland.org.uk](http://www.callscotland.org.uk)**



## 5. Useful contacts



### **ACE Centre**

This charity supports people with communication difficulties in England.

[www.acecentre.org.uk](http://www.acecentre.org.uk)



### **Speech Bubble**

This website tells you about Communication Aids.

[www.speechbubble.org.uk](http://www.speechbubble.org.uk)



### **AAC Scotland**

This website tells you about all the Communication Aids that NHS Education for Scotland can give you.

[www.aacscotland.org.uk](http://www.aacscotland.org.uk)



### **Communication Matters**

This charity supports people with little or no clear speech.

[www.communicationmatters.org.uk](http://www.communicationmatters.org.uk)

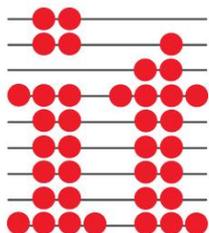


### **Living Made Easy**

This online guide has a helpful section on Communication Aids.

[www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk](http://www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk)

## 6. Where you can buy Communication Aids



### **Inclusive Technology**

Inclusive Technology sells Communication Aids.

**[www.inclusive.co.uk](http://www.inclusive.co.uk)**  
**Phone 01457 819790**



### **Jabbla**

Jabbla sells Communication Aids.

For example, Mind Express 4 and Allora 2.

**[www.jabbla.com](http://www.jabbla.com)**



### **Liberator**

Liberator sells Communication Aids.

For example, Rugged 7 and Accent.

**[www.liberator.co.uk](http://www.liberator.co.uk)**



### **Smartbox Assistive Technology**

Smartbox Assistive Technology sells Communication Aids.

For example Grid and the Power Pad.

**[www.thinksmartbox.com](http://www.thinksmartbox.com)**



### **Tobii Dynavox**

Tobii Dynavox sells Indi tablets and software.

**[www.tobiidynavox.com](http://www.tobiidynavox.com)**



### **Widgit**

Widgit Software makes software and apps.

It uses symbols that people use to communicate.

**[www.widgit.com](http://www.widgit.com)**

# 7. How AbilityNet can help you



## My Computer My Way

### My Computer My Way

The **My Computer My Way** website explains how to make your computer, tablet and smartphone accessible.

- Website [mcmw.abilitynet.org.uk](http://mcmw.abilitynet.org.uk)



### Advice and information

If you have any questions you can contact us at AbilityNet.

- Phone **0800 048 7642**
- Email [enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk)



### IT support at Home

AbilityNet volunteers can help you with your computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone.



If you need support at home, you can book an AbilityNet volunteer to visit you.

- [www.abilitynet.org.uk](http://www.abilitynet.org.uk)