

ASSESSMENT ROUTES

<https://communicationmatters.org.uk/what-is-aac/assessment-routes/>

Assessment

Assessment is where you meet with a professional to work out the best way to help you communicate better.

Assessments are carried out by your local speech and language therapy services.

Speech and language therapists are health professionals who have been trained to help people who have difficulty with communication.

AAC assessment services:

- Look at what you need
- Give you advice
- Suggest things that will help you

AAC is used to mean many different ways to help someone communicate. It could be simple things like pointing, signing, writing or drawing. It could also be using a special device like a machine that 'speaks' words for you.

Referral

Referral is when your local doctor, teacher or social worker gets you an appointment with a specialist. This might be a speech and language service.

You can refer yourself by contacting your local speech and language service.

Children and young people can get an assessment through their school.

You should try to get a referral as soon as possible.

It's best to get help with communication as soon as you can, before things get worse.

The speech and language service will need some information from you:

- How are you communicating now?
- Are you using any AAC systems now?
- How well do you understand words?
- Information from any previous assessments

Where should the assessment take place?

The assessment should take place in a quiet place.

The professional may want to see you in your own home.

Or you may be asked to travel to an assessment centre which has all the equipment you might need.

Who will be involved?

Usually you can expect to see:

- A speech and language therapist. They help people who have difficulty with communication
- An occupational therapist – they provide things that help people to be more independent
- Physiotherapist – they help people who have problems with moving around

You may also see:

- A teacher
- A rehabilitation engineer – they help people with the equipment they need to help them
- A clinical scientist – they know about your disability and technology and are able to use what they know to help you

You are central to the assessment process, along with your family and personal assistants.

What happens at the assessment

What happens depends on your situation.

You will be asked lots of questions about your needs.

You should have the chance to try out different ways of communicating.

At the end, the professional may suggest something that will help your communication.

You may need to be assessed again and again. This is because you may need different things as time goes on. Also, over time, there may be new ways to help you.

Types of assessment services

There are four main types of organisations that assess people.

Local (England)

Your local council, health services or community groups will be able to assess you and support you if you have difficulty with communication.

[View services](#)

Specialised (England)

The NHS in England has specialist speech and language therapists who work with the most complicated cases. They provide specialist assessment and can provide people with the equipment they need.

[View services](#)

Independent (England)

There are independent organisations and charities that provide private assessments. You normally have to pay for these services.

[View services](#)

Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland

This link takes you to lists of organisations that can assess you, and help you find the right equipment and support.

[View services](#)

Suppliers

Suppliers are companies that provide equipment and support. They usually only provide their own equipment.