

AAC implementation and strategy

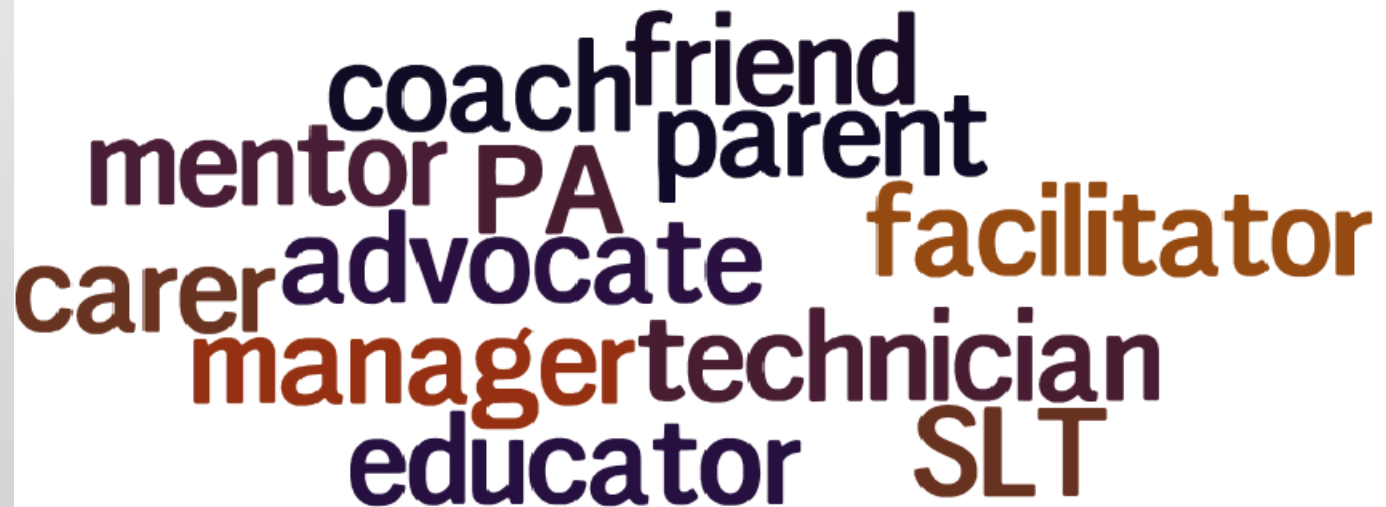
Or lack of!

Eliane Mackintosh
Angie McCormack

Who we are ...

Eliane Mackintosh

Angie McCormack

A word cloud containing various roles and titles. The words are arranged in a roughly rectangular shape, with some overlapping. The colors of the words range from dark purple to brown. The roles listed are: coach, friend, mentor, PA, parent, carer, advocate, facilitator, manager, technician, educator, and SLT.

coach friend
mentor PA parent
carer advocate facilitator
manager technician
educator SLT

The premise

- Provision of AAC services/equipment - postcode lottery
- AAC expertise in (lifelong) education - postcode lottery
- Strategic approach to implementation - postcode lottery
- 2014 - NHS England funding for specialized AAC =
Equitable provision – AAC equipment and service



Purpose of the session

- Highlight this issue common to many AAC users and families - and professionals.
- Put across the issue from a user and parent perspective
- Suggest what the gaps are and what might be done about it
- Look at how this sits in the new AAC playing field –
NHS funding, hub/spoke model
- Ask for your views, your suggestions, your help
- Start a drive towards improving the situation

Saskia's story

(The bad, the good and the ugly)

- Early years word book
- Age 10- 12 – had AAC device at school, SLT input

Progress since then –

- No road map for future AAC provision and use
- Progress/victories fragile, finite, entirely depending on individual professionals' goodwill
and parent's determination
- Patchwork of light and black holes.
- No continuity, no joint working
- But progress nevertheless ...

Rebecca's story

3 months – SLT input – buy why?

18 months – Child Devp Centre – PCS symbols, cause and effect, single switch

Age 4, mainstream school - Cause and effect, choices, switches, “looking”

Parents discovered specialist assessment centre (not NHS) - school not interested

Mum makes category based PCS symbol book to develop communication

Age 5 – parents look into funding for communication aid – no support from services

Age 7 – PCT bought communication aid. Used in school once a week!

Age 8 - move to special school, communication aid service out of area

Age 13 – New device – internet, phone, etc, new symbol based vocabulary

Literacy skills?

Age 16 – move to placement with mainstream high school – Post 16 curriculum

Loan device to trial eye gaze

Age 19 – specialist residential college – NO DEVICE!

Experiences of other families

Gaps Appropriate training.
 Assessments.
 Equipment
 Progression
 roadmap for future use.
 Access methods
 Support – user groups
 Software management

Other comments –

SLT expectations not very high vs parents expectations to be on same level as peer group

Initial support until up and running and then dropped off

Funding for device, insurance, training, SLT input, programming, updates, need to be in SSEN part 3

Negative Drivers

- Recognition
- Urgency
- Appreciation
- Qualifications
- Difficulties
- Disability
- Support
- Training
- SLT resources
- Specialism
- AAC resources
- Professional boundaries

Positive experiences from families

Any examples where implementation and on-going support worked well

- Supplier phone support
- Communication aid user group
- Local authority good support
- Communication Matters (resources, AAC forum).
- 1Voice support, advice
- Support from local ACE Centre on AAC and literacy

Pockets of good practice

- CART Team North Lincolnshire (CM3Vol27 Nov 13p.31)
- Poster presentation CM 2014 (Janice Murray et al)
- Bradford NHS/LA – CM 2014 (Shelagh Crossley et al)
- Vocabulary workbooks
- QA of assessment services
- Individual schools/colleges

Summary

Communication – not just about system/equipment

Learning to use language – to express, comment, discuss
(ie, not just wants and needs)

Recommendations

- NHS pathway to provision widely disseminated
- AAC should underpin an AAC user's **whole life** at all ages, for life (AAC roadmap for life)
- Recognition of AAC as a key skill, progression, qualification
- Over-arching management at key levels
- Planning, strategy, joint working
- Raised expectations
- AAC champion – but who?



Over to you ...

Your comments, questions, please!