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## Communication Matters

### News Release – Essential research into communication needs

### The AAC Evidence Base project

Naidex, 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011

It is believed that at least 365,000 people in the UK<sup>i</sup> have complex communication needs and could benefit from using communication aids (AAC<sup>ii</sup>). Enabling people to use their own communication abilities significantly improves their quality of life and empowers them to participate more fully in their local communities. Yet many disabled adults and children are left without a voice because they cannot get access to the AAC services and support they need.

The Government-commissioned Bercow Report (2008)<sup>iii</sup> on services for children and young people with speech language and communication needs identified an urgent need for more “*research to enhance the evidence base and inform the delivery of better outcomes*”.

Communication Matters<sup>iv</sup> is leading a groundbreaking project that will produce fundamental evidence of the need for, and provision of, AAC which can be used to improve services across the UK. Communication Matters’ research partners are: the University of Sheffield, Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and Manchester Metropolitan University. The three-year project started in 2010 and is funded by The National Lottery through Big Lottery Fund. The first part of the research has been completed and information about the research findings will be published later in 2011.

The project will create an online AAC Evidence Base which will make current knowledge about AAC available to all, by presenting it in a variety of accessible formats. The AAC Evidence Base will go live in autumn 2012.

The researchers are looking for practitioners and people who use communication aids to participate in the research project. To find out more:  
[www.communicationmatters.org.uk/research](http://www.communicationmatters.org.uk/research)

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## Communication Matters – Research Matters: An AAC evidence base

### Notes

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<sup>i</sup> This is a widely accepted estimate based on 0.6% of the population.

<sup>ii</sup> Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) is the term used to describe methods of communication which can be used to add to the more usual methods of speech and writing when these are impaired. AAC includes unaided systems such as signing and gesture, as well as aided techniques ranging from picture charts to the most sophisticated computer technology.

<sup>iii</sup> Bercow Report (2008):

<http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DCSF-00632-2008>

<sup>iv</sup> Communication Matters is the UK charity for people of all ages and abilities who need to use AAC. [www.communicationmatters.org.uk](http://www.communicationmatters.org.uk)

### For further information:

Contact Katie Holmes, Research Manager, Communication Matters:

[katieholmes@communicationmatters.org.uk](mailto:katieholmes@communicationmatters.org.uk)

Tel: 0115 878 1305

*(Wednesdays to Fridays only)*

Or: [admin@communicationmatters.org.uk](mailto:admin@communicationmatters.org.uk)

Tel: 0845 456 8211

*(Mondays to Fridays)*