

# Inspiring New Ways of Thinking About Access to Technology for People with Intellectual Disability

## Study Day

Friday, 21 November 2025  
Irwin Mitchell Offices, Temple, London



Communication  
**Matters**

### Summary

Offering delegates a range of plenaries and workshops to explore the state of play around existing technology for people with intellectual disability as well as the opportunity to (re)consider how to activate current and future technologies in creative and innovative ways.

### Learning Objectives

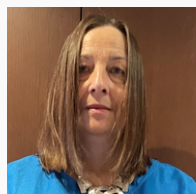
- Review the history of access to independent control and communication through electronic assistive technologies (EAT) for people with intellectual disabilities to provide the background and context for the day
- Learn from the lived experience around independent/inter-dependent control and communication for people with intellectual disabilities about the challenges and benefits to accessing EAT
- Raise awareness of aspects of agency, autonomy, and communication that can inform EAT development and practice
- Share ideas about how the rapid advancement in technology can offer opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities
- Emphasise the importance of people being able to explore technology in order for EAT to evolve to meet their use and/or needs
- Identify novel EAT goals for people with intellectual disability and consider the role of technology in achieving these
- Influence a shift in practice with this cohort of people – moving beyond traditional EAT concepts

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### Agenda

09:30 - 10:00 Registration  
10:00 - 10:10 Introduction  
10:10 - 10:50 Then and now: the technology journey - Annalu Waller  
10:50 - 11:30 Personhood and agency: rethinking the role of AT - Ben Simmons  
11:30 - 11:50 Break  
11:50 - 12:10 Technology developments - Tom Griffiths, Katherine Broomfield & Zoë Clarke  
12:10 - 12:45 Personal experiences and perspectives - Ruth Williams & collaborators  
12:45 - 13:45 Lunch  
13:45 - 14:15 Interaction and interdependence - Jill Bradshaw  
14:15 - 15:00 Workshop - New roles for technology - Katherine Broomfield & Ruth Williams  
15:00 - 15:45 Workshop - Influencing local decision making- Sally Darley & Zoë Clarke  
15:45 - 16:00 Next steps and close

Communication Matters are delighted to partner with a range of leading academic and clinical experts in intellectual disability to host this exciting event.



**Professor Jill Bradshaw**  
**University of Birmingham**

Jill is a Consultant SLT and Professor of Communication, Health and Social Care at the Intellectual Disabilities Research Institute (IDRIS) at Birmingham University. Jill's research is broadly focused on supporting communication partnerships between paid carers and people with intellectual disabilities who have complex communication challenges.



**Dr. Katherine Broomfield**  
**Cardiff Metropolitan University & North Bristol NHS Trust**

Katherine is a SLT and researcher with a background in local rehab and AAC services. Her doctorate was concerned with understanding more about the experiences of people who use AAC to develop the content for a person-centred outcome measure. Her research interests include: accessible and creative qualitative methods for inclusive research, person-centred care and outcomes, and AAC and AT innovation.



**Zoë Clarke**  
**Barnsley Hospital Assistive Technology Team**

Zoë is Clinical Scientist and EC Service lead for Barnsley AT Team. She has undertaken research work, being involved in a number of projects, publishing in national and international journals and having been an honorary researcher at the University of Sheffield. She has also been Deputy Theme Lead in the NIHR Healthcare Technology Co-operative 'Devices for Dignity'.



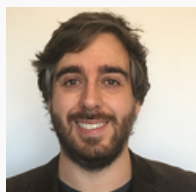
**Sally Darley**  
**Barnsley Hospital Assistive Technology Team**

Sally is a Specialist Speech and Language Therapist with the Barnsley AT team since 2014. Previously she worked for more than 15 years with young children who had significant communication difficulties due to a variety of genetic, developmental and acquired conditions



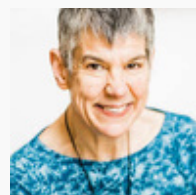
**Dr. Tom Griffiths**  
**Department of Computing, School of Science & Engineering at the University of Dundee**

Tom is a Lecturer in Assistive Technology at the University of Dundee and a Clinical Scientist, with around 20 years of experience as a clinician and researcher in AAC and assistive technology. Tom's research interests include the use of eye-gaze technology by children with cerebral palsy and the intersection of disability and human-computer interaction, in particular the impact of AI on AAC and the identity of AAC users.



**Dr. Ben Simmons**  
**School of Education, Bath Spa University**

Dr Ben Simons is a Reader in Inclusive Education and Disability Research at Bath Spa University. He is currently involved in a range of research projects that seek to develop understandings about the meaning and practice of 'inclusion', particularly in relation to research methodology and educational provision.



**Professor Annalu Waller**  
**Department of Computing, School of Science & Engineering at the University of Dundee**

Annalu Waller PhD is Professor of Human Communication Technologies at the University of Dundee. She directs the Dundee Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Research Group and has worked in the field of AAC since 1985, designing communication systems for and with nonspeaking individuals.



**Ruth Williams**  
**Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Trust Adult with Learning Disabilities Team**

Ruth is a SLT with experience across paediatric and adult settings, including special needs schools, care homes, and AAC hubs. Passionate about AAC, she currently works in the NHS with adults with learning disabilities, co-chairs an AAC Special Interest Group, and stays active in the field through conferences and professional networks.

**Attendance: £100 for non-members, £90 for members, £75 for AAC users/PAs/family members.**  
**Lunch and refreshments included.**



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For more info and to sign up use the QR code  
or go to **[communicationmatters.org.uk/diary](https://communicationmatters.org.uk/diary)**

