

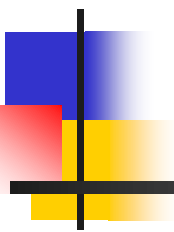
Alexis Egerton.

Glyndwr University in Wrexham.

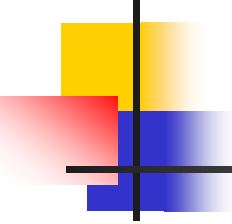


**The Funding of Electronic Communication Aids
or Augmentative Alternative Communication
Equipment.**

The terms Electronic Communication Aids and Augmentative Alternative Communication



are devices that facilitate the act
and/or process of communication for
those individuals whose speech is
impaired.



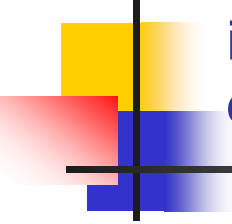
The preliminary findings suggest that,

- there is currently a fractured policy in the area of funding for Augmentative Alternative Communication Equipment.



Historically the responsibility for securing funding for this type of equipment has been left up to

- Education, Social Services, Health Departments to organise and left to the voluntary sector to make up the short-falls.



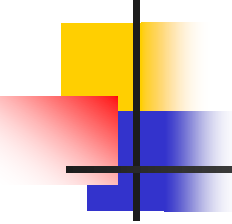
The literature of Scope (2007), Communication Matters (2008) and John Bercow's Review (2008) indicate a large variety of problems in the funding of augmentative alternative communication equipment with no one area taking responsibility.

- There is evidence in the literature of much dissatisfaction in the way augmentative alternative communication equipment funding assessments are carried out at present.



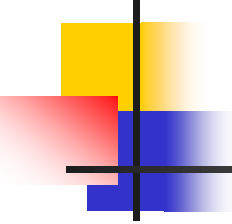
Many areas of funding are operated on an individual basis i.e. each person requiring augmentative alternative communication funding

- would need to apply separately to each area of funding be it; Local Education Authority, the Health Service, Social Services or Charities.



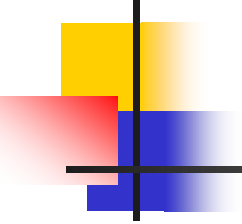
DeRuyter, McNaughton, Caves, Bryen and Williams (2007) in their article Enhancing Augmentative Alternative Communication Connection with the World stated;

- the availability of new technology has changed how the Augmentative Alternative Communication end users exchange information and communicate with others.

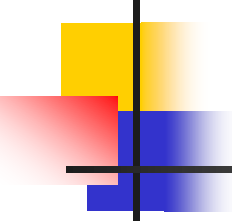


Scope (2007) a briefing on the No Voice, No Choice campaign which was launched at The Eisteddfod in Wales focusing specifically on the current state provision in Wales to make recommendations for future Welsh Assembly.

These recommendations should make the present situation easier but in their paper they stated that Wales has no statutory provision for the funding of Augmentative Alternative Communication.

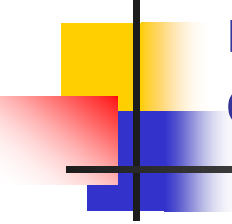


The weakness with the Special Education Needs Act (2001) is the exemption from having to provide assistive technology for education services as a reasonable adjustment. It is hoped that the new Equality Bill (2009) will put this right but lobbying will be required.



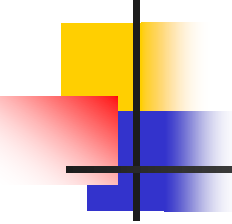
There is no doubt that offering a cradle to grave solution is going to be a strain on budgetary allocations.

- However with some creative and careful planning some of the expenses can be offset by standardizing switches, wheelchair mounting and keeping all equipment supplied within common parameters. By good quality recycling and refurbishing equipment can be passed on from one end user to another so effectively someone needing an update or more powerful machine can be supplied with a recycled one.



An end user suffering from a broken or outdated machine could be supplied out of a central store and with a refurbished system that would allow every communication device to fit onto every mounting system.

- It is worth noting that geographically England is small enough to get this type of equipment to all its communication aid users in 24 hours from one central store.



The United Kingdom has ratified the United Nations Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the 8th June (2009) only time will tell whether or not this makes any difference to the funding of Augmentative Alternative Communication Equipment.

- To have a practical working system in place for the provision of communication aid equipment and set of standards already in place to secure a smooth running system instead of a hastily enforced one.