



Access to Communication & Technology (ACT) Bulletin

June 2015

Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of the ACT bulletin. This will be a quarterly publication aimed at keeping you informed of our progress as we move towards building a better ACT service together with you, our stakeholders.

We are very keen to improve communication between ourselves and our users, so if you have any questions, comments or ideas for future developments, please get in touch.

Access to Communication and Technology

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Contract and Funding

Having successfully bid for convergence funding from NHS England, ACT agreed the contract with commissioners in December 2014 to provide enhanced specialist services for Assistive and Augmentative Communication (AAC), Environmental Controls (EC) and Computer Access across the West Midlands.

The NHS England Service specifications for AAC and EC can be accessed here:

www.communicationmatters.org.uk/page/assessment-services

Recruitment

ACT is currently midway through an extensive recruitment drive which will considerably increase service capacity.

Posts include:

- Project Manager - 2-year fixed term contract
- Speech and Language Therapists x2
- Occupational Therapists x2
- Clinical Scientists x2
- Technical /Workshop staff x4
- Rehabilitation Assistant x1
- Additional Administrative and Support staff

It is anticipated that the majority of new staff will be in post by the end of July 2015.



Referrals

Priority referrals requiring a specialist assessment are currently being offered an appointment within eight weeks. Standard referrals are added to the waiting list. The service is currently managing a waiting list for specialist assessment of over 100 people with the longest wait from September 2014.

ACT is currently undertaking a waiting list validation exercise by writing to everyone on the list to ask them to contact us if they wish to continue to remain to wait for an appointment.

ACT has undertaken an exercise to look at referrals received from outside of the West Midlands region at the request of the Specialist Commissioner. Those on the waiting list from outside of the West Midlands (4 in total) have been contacted and signposted to their local Hub service.

Those people who reside outside of the West Midlands that are currently receiving a service from ACT will be reviewed to establish if it would be appropriate to transfer them to a more local service.

Plans for the future

On the 30th April 2015, the ACT team took part in a facilitated Away Day to plan for the future.

Five areas of development work were identified.

Workforce Planning

This project group will identify the learning and development needs of new and existing ACT staff. The work will include developing a competency framework.

Referral to Provision Pathway

This project group will concentrate on improving the current pathway, identifying delays and inefficiencies in order to deliver the pathway from referral to provision in 18 weeks.

Management of Equipment

This project group will work on all areas of equipment management, including procurement, loan equipment, stock control, installation and innovation.

Planned Preventative Maintenance

This project group will be responsible for developing a programme of annual testing and maintenance for all equipment on issue.

Enabling Local Teams

This project group will have responsibility for engaging with local teams and other stakeholders; establishing their training and support needs and developing programmes to provide the necessary support.

It is anticipated that this development programme will take two years to achieve the final outcomes.

