

Patient information

Integrated Community Paediatric Services

Suffolk Communication Aids Resource Centre (SCARC)

SCARC is a communication aids service for young people

SCARC is a multidisciplinary team comprising of a service lead, speech and language therapists (SLTs), an occupational therapist (OT), a communication aids practitioner (CAP), a communication aids assistant (CAA) and an administrator.

What is Suffolk Communication Aids Resource Centre (SCARC)?

SCARC is a countywide assessment, support, training, and advice service for young people up to age 25 to consider use of a Voice Output Communication Aid (VOCA).

This includes maintenance and repairs of SCARC VOCA. We also provide specialist Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) advice training for our Multi-Disciplinary (MD) health colleagues and other settings, supporting young people using AAC.

What is an AAC?

AAC is an umbrella term to include communication that isn't speaking. This can include:

- Paper based such as a communication book.
- Battery powered such as switches or communicators (BIG/ LITTLE mack)
- VOCA which produces speech output such as a Talkpad.

Communication aids are operated by pointing to or pressing a button with a picture, symbol, word, or letter. People who have very little movement may access a communication aid using a switch with any part of their body.

Who does SCARC see?

Children and young people can be referred to SCARC if they:

- Reside with a Suffolk postcode.
- Are aged 0-25.

- Have a significant communication need that could potentially require the support/introduction of AAC (in line with SCARC criteria)

Referral

You can refer into our service by filling out our referral form and e-mailing it directly to us. It is always helpful to discuss referrals with us prior to filling in the referral form.

- Children up to 18 years old require consent from a parent or legal guardian for the referral.
- Young people post 18 years old must consent or if not able to do so, will be supported with a Mental Capacity Assessment (MCA).

To assist with communicating with you we have a SMS Text Messaging and Email service available. To use this, we require your consent. Please ensure that we always have your correct contact details.

Assessment/Review

This appointment will be at the most appropriate setting for the young person, depending on their needs. These are mostly face to face, but virtual appointments can be considered. All persons (including family, professionals, and settings) supporting the child or young person are invited to attend the assessment or be involved in providing information to support the assessment.

During the assessment all forms of AAC are considered (see 'what is a communication aid') to find a system that best supports the young person's needs.

Students may be working in the department, fully supervised by SCARC staff. Consent will always be sought in advance if a student will be involved in a young person.

Reports

Post assessment or review, a report is written describing the assessment and any equipment that would be helpful. These reports are shared with those people supporting the young person.

Funding

If AAC is recommended, SCARC will provide the funding and the equipment will be loaned to the young person. We are supported by Suffolk County Council (SCC), local Integrated Care Boards (ICB) and hosted by West Suffolk Foundation Trust (WSFT).

Training/Technical Support

Training and technical support is also provided post assessment and prior to provision of communication aid.

Onward referrals

SCARC will consider any onward referrals to other agencies as result of supporting/interacting with service users. SCARC may consider if a referral is best met by the National AAC commissioning criteria via the Communication Aids Service for the East of England (CASEE).

Discharge

Service users are discharged from SCARC in the summer of the academic year in which they turn 25 years old. A discharge visit is completed with the service user and their support team to help support this.

If still useful, SCARC will gift SCARC AAC equipment to a service user. Maintenance and repair responsibilities are handed over to those supporting the young person at this stage. The above will also apply if a service user moves out of area (Suffolk). If SCARC AAC equipment is no longer required, the equipment should be returned to SCARC.

Contact information

Suffolk Communication Aids Resource Centre (SCARC), West Suffolk Foundation Trust, Thomas Wolsey Ormiston Academy (TWOA), Defoe Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 6SG

Tel: 01473 744223 Email: scarc@wsh.nhs.uk

Further information on our services can be found on our website:

www.wsh.nhs.uk/icps

If you have any queries or concerns with any aspect of your care, please contact **Della Chubb, Service Lead** on: 01473 744223

[If you feel unable to discuss your concerns in this way please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service \(PALS\).](#)

Email: PALS@wsh.nhs.uk Tel: 0800 917 9673 or 01284 712555 (24 hr answerphone)

Clinical research

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust is actively involved in clinical research. Your doctor, clinical team or the research and development department may contact you regarding specific clinical research studies that you might be interested in participating in. If you do not wish to be contacted for these purposes, please email info.gov@wsh.nsh.uk. This will in no way affect the care or treatment you receive.

Accessibility

If you require this leaflet in a different format, please contact the patient advice and liaison service on 01284 712555 or email PALS@wsh.nhs.uk

If you would like any information regarding access to our Trust services and facilities, please visit the website for Accessible: <https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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