

Service:
Bristol Centre For Enablement

The Bristol Communication Aid Service (BCAS) Emergency Appointments



The Bristol Communication Aid Service (BCAS) is an NHS department that assesses individuals with communication difficulties for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices.

Please see our Bristol Communication aid service leaflet for a full description of the service BCAS offer. This leaflet describes one specific aspect of the BCAS service, Emergency Appointments, and should be read alongside the standard leaflet.

Who are emergency appointments for?

Emergency appointments are offered to patients living with a diagnosis of Motor Neurone Disease (MND) who need to be seen as a priority, at short notice due to the nature of their progressive medical condition. They are for patients with MND who meet the following criteria:

- Are deteriorating rapidly.
- Are no longer able to rely on their speech.
- Hand function has deteriorated to the extent that they would find it difficult to use communication equipment that is accessed by touch e.g. tablets, Lightwriters.

Who can refer?

As with all referrals to BCAS, the referral must be supported by the local Speech and Language therapist (LSLT), the LSLT must also be available to attend all appointments in the pathway. If the referring LSLT feels their client is eligible and suitable for an emergency appointment then the a referral form should be completed, clearly recording the requirement for an emergency appointment. Referral forms can be found on our webpages: www.nbt.nhs.uk/bristol-centre-enablement/referral-centre/bristol-communication-aid-service-referral

Appointment series

Emergency appointments are always planned at short notice to accommodate the changing needs of the patient. Following initial referral, a series of three appointments will be made:

- An **initial appointment** where BCAS will assess the patient and provide equipment that will be left for a trial period at that appointment
- A **review appointment** that will take place four to six weeks later.
- A **second review appointment** that will be scheduled six weeks after the first review appointment. This appointment may not always be needed if everything is agreed to be working well at the first review.

The patient, LSLT and support team need to sign up to being involved with all of these appointments, and the associated trial of equipment in between.

Where will the appointment take place?

- The appointment will usually take place in the patient's home.
- Depending on circumstances, appointments can also take place in other locations, e.g. in a hospice, care home or in respite accommodation.

Who will be at the appointment?

- The person with MND.
- Any significant family member, carer or friend who plays a key role in supporting them.
- The local Speech and Language Therapist (LSLT).
- Other key local professionals who would like to attend e.g. physiotherapist, occupational therapist or carer (at the invitation of the client or the LSLT).
- The BCAS team: this usually comprises of an occupational therapist and an assistant practitioner (sometimes additional staff will attend e.g. for training purposes).
- The number of people present will depend on practical issues such as the space available.

What happens during an initial appointment?

Basic information will be gathered to confirm:

- Current levels of communication.
- How often communication breaks down and what strategies and/or low tech methods of communication are used to manage this.
- Where a communication aid would be used (at home, out and about, day centre etc.) and who with (friends, family etc.)
- What the person's most reliable and consistent movement is.
- The level of support is available to set up and manage any equipment.

The person will then be assessed with different devices and access methods depending on their needs. For this reason an initial assessment can be quite lengthy (two to three hours as tolerated). Regular breaks will be offered and appointments can finish sooner if the person becomes too tired.

Mounting

Mounting systems for any device prescribed will be considered at the initial appointment. A rolling floor mount or desk stand may be provided at this appointment for speed and ease of set-up. Fitting of a mounting system to the person's manual or powered wheelchair will be considered at the review appointments, as required.

Equipment

- As far as possible, equipment will be left for the person with MND to trial at the end of the initial appointment.
- A basic handover of equipment will be given at the appointment.
- Where possible the device will be linked to the person's wifi (details and passwords will need to be available for this to happen) and remote access set-up.
- Support will also be offered in terms of remote access as well as a practical training session for carers in the person's home environment, as required.
- With shorter periods between appointments, it is hoped equipment can be set-up and finalised within a reasonable time frame.

**PATIENT
APPROVED** 

How to contact us:

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(Sat Nav postcode is BS34 5SP)**

 **0117 414 5850**

 **email: cacadmin@nbt.nhs.uk
www.nbt.nhs.uk/bcas**

If you or the individual you are caring for need support reading this leaflet please ask a member of staff for advice.

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