

FOI REF: 21/666

4th January 2022

Tel: 0300 131 4500

Website: www.esht.nhs.uk

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

I am responding to your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act. The answers to your specific questions are as follows:

- 1. Do you have a budget for providing low and mid tech communication aid devices for adults (18 or over) with speech difficulties (e.g. iPads and tablets, text to speech apps, keyboard based communication aids), and if yes how much was this budget for this and the last two financial years (2021, 2020, 2019)?**

No, East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust does not have a budget for communication aids.

- 2. If yes, how many adults (18 or over) with speech difficulties were provided with a low or mid tech communication aid (e.g. iPads and tablets, text to speech apps, keyboard based communication aids) that was funded or provided by your Trust in this and the last two financial years (2021, 2020, 2019), and what devices were provided?**

Not applicable.

- 3. If yes, how many adults (18 or over) with a diagnosis of motor neurone disease were provided with a low or mid tech communication aid (e.g. iPads and tablets, text to speech apps, keyboard based communication aids) that was funded or provided by your Trust in this and the last two financial years (2021, 2020, 2019), and what devices were provided?**

Not applicable.

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4. **If you do not have a budget for providing low and mid tech communication aid devices (e.g. iPads and tablets, text to speech apps, keyboard based communication aids) how should a local, community or acute based speech and language therapist working for your organisation make available assessment and provision of these devices for adults (18 or over) living with speech difficulties?**

We seek advice from the Chailey Communication Aids Centre [Chailey Communication Aid Service \(sussexcommunity.nhs.uk\)](http://ChaileyCommunicationAidService(sussexcommunity.nhs.uk)) for this support. For low tech aids such as communication books, we would work with the client to identify their needs and our Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) assistant would make up a communication chart. For some clients who are keen to use text to speech apps which are available in android or apple, the SLT will work with them to identify appropriate apps, this would be down to the patients to provide the hardware and fund the cost of any apps. Where funding is not possible by the patient, the SLT will support the patient or carer wherever possible to look for alternative funding streams such as charities. This support is available in our community team. Our acute team is not able to provide this support with the capacity we have, and due to the time taken to set this up, this is best conducted in their home environment where assessment of needs can be made more appropriately. Staff (non SLT) working in ICU have been provided with generic communication books to support communication with patients who have a tracheostomy and unable to use their voice.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Should you be dissatisfied with the Trust's response to your request, please write to the Freedom of Information Department (esh-tr.foi@nhs.net), quoting the above reference.

Yours sincerely

Linda Thornhill (Mrs)
Corporate Governance Manager
esh-tr.foi@nhs.net