

# Providing Enhanced Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) Using Computer Technology

## Strap line

Using computers and software to provide greater access to speech and language therapy post-stroke.

### a. Summary

The use of computer technology will provide enhanced speech and language therapy access to people with communication difficulties following a stroke. Using this new system, patients can take more control over their therapy and the amount they practice, plus be able to monitor their success using computer software systems.

### b. What is the issue?

The National Stroke Strategy states that ongoing SLT ('in excess of two hours per week') is necessary for the recovery of stroke patients. Additionally, services need to keep abreast of technological developments. SLTs in North Lancashire are keen to remove barriers to patient recovery using 21st Century technology.

### c. The Innovation Solution

To use computer software therapy to increase access to therapy for people needing more SLT than can be provided on a 1:1 basis. Computer therapy will be offered to patients in the acute stage of stroke (involving staff from the acute hospitals and be built into the patient's recovery programme), whilst resident in hospital. This will maximise their recovery at the crucial initial stage and offer them intensity of treatment. Groups of out patients will attend therapy opportunities in groups where they will have access to therapy software-loaded laptops – individual therapy 'prescriptions' having been written by SLTs (these groups will be based at hospital settings but may also be run in conjunction with groups held by The Stroke Association). Patients will also have access to three month home licences. This method of service delivery improves the amount of therapy the patient obtains and thereby increases their recovery potential.

### d. Partnerships and Delivery Team

The Speech and Language Therapy Department at NHS North Lancashire; the local Stroke Association Communication Support Co-ordinator and volunteers; staff from Blackpool Hospital Trust's Stroke Ward

### e. Key Benefits

Benefits to patients: enhanced access to therapy; choice of when, where and how to access therapy; reassurance that they are receiving up-to-date, individually-focused therapy; benefits to NHS: NHS SLTs adhering to Healthier Horizon's guidelines to 'raise their game' in clinical management; the provision of first-class innovative, patient-centred treatment; SLTs as clinical leaders in innovating 21st century therapy (Transforming Community Services); patients accessing more SLT-prescribed therapy via computers; SLTs accessing new patients quicker as long-standing patients will be helped and monitored via computer rather than in a 1:1 setting; adhering to and exceeding nationally recognised guidelines for duration and intensity of treatment.

### f. Funding/Return on Investment/Savings

£50,000 to fund the purchase of hardware and software, training, promoting the programme and evaluation.

It is expected that the evaluation will show increased productivity for the Band 3 SLT Assistant who will be running the computer therapy groups and a speedier recovery time for patients with aphasia post-stroke.

#### **g. Potential to Scale and Strategy for Sustainability**

Once developed and evaluated, this method of providing enhanced speech and language therapy (SLT) using computer technology can easily be used in mainstream SLT provision.

Learning from the programme will be shared throughout the SLT community and beyond through presentations and articles in relevant publications.

#### **h. Name and Contact Details**

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