

Communicating with Colleagues Who Have Speech Difficulties

A one-page practical guide for teams

Do

Speak to the person, not their companion. Give them time to complete their message. Ask politely for clarification when needed. Reduce background noise where possible. Offer writing, typing or other communication methods as options. Confirm important names, numbers and decisions. Respect privacy.

Avoid

Do not assume reduced intelligence or understanding. Do not imitate, mock or correct speech unnecessarily. Do not finish sentences without permission. Do not pretend to understand when you have not. Do not require telephone-only communication when accessible alternatives are workable.

Useful phrases

"Would you like more time?" "Could you repeat the last part?" "Would it help to write that down?" "What communication approach works best for you?"

Remember

Communication accessibility is a shared responsibility. Ask the individual what they prefer rather than applying a standard approach to everyone.

Personal notes / action worksheet

One change I can make in my next meeting:

A respectful question I could ask a colleague:

Further information

ACAS - Reasonable adjustments (<https://www.acas.org.uk/reasonable-adjustments>)

Information only. This resource is not a substitute for individual speech and language therapy, employment or legal advice.