



Total Communication Services CIC
Social Impact Report
October 2018- 31st October 2019

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Fiona Kevan

Director of Undergraduate Studies in SLT & Audiology
University of Manchester

Foreword

‘I’ve been delighted to witness the development of Total Communication Services CIC as it evolves year on year.

Responsive to the needs of the communities it serves, this small community interest company has big, innovative ideas and is clearly making an impact.

There is vision here, and a passion to make a difference, listening to people with communication support needs and working with them to find solutions.

Their work is truly inspirational and they deserve continued success.’



About Us

Total Communication Services is a Community Interest Company providing a range of services for people with learning disabilities. We are able to provide Speech and Language Therapy, Music Therapy, Dance Movement Therapy, Dramatherapy and some Social Work roles such as assessment, co-production and person centred planning.

Work this year has focussed on developing the roles of the Speech and Language Therapists. We offer therapeutic support and well-being interventions such as Mindfulness for support staff and families.

We are able to offer bilingual assessments and therapy in Mirpuri, Punjabi, Urdu and Bangla.

We have a wide range of training, therapy, accessible information and support for families and staff. Our graphic artist is able to provide bespoke images, specialist resources and teaching packs.

Training courses

Working with people with communication needs inevitably requires the involvement of communication partners such as support staff and families.

Some of the training courses:

From October 2018 to October 2019 we have provided a variety of courses on different aspects of communication.

One day course on person centred communication for a mental health service:

This course was commissioned by a service in the south of the UK who were due to open a ward for people with learning disabilities and mental health conditions.

The staff wanted to focus on their communication and to consider a range of tools which may be of use on the ward and in therapeutic settings.

The topics covered included adapting ward round, comic strip conversations and talking mats.

The course led on to further joint working in-house and a Talking Mats Foundation course.

“ It was really useful to have an insight into the variety of communication tools available to people with communication difficulties. The course has helped my confidence in finding the most appropriate and beneficial ways to communicate with the people I work with.

Developing staff confidence in communication skills will enhance the care of the service users. ”

Staff member who attended
the one day Person Centred
Tools and Techniques Course,
August 2019

Feedback from the staff who attended the 1 day Person Centred Communication Tools and Techniques Course, August 2019

Staff reported the impact on the service users was:

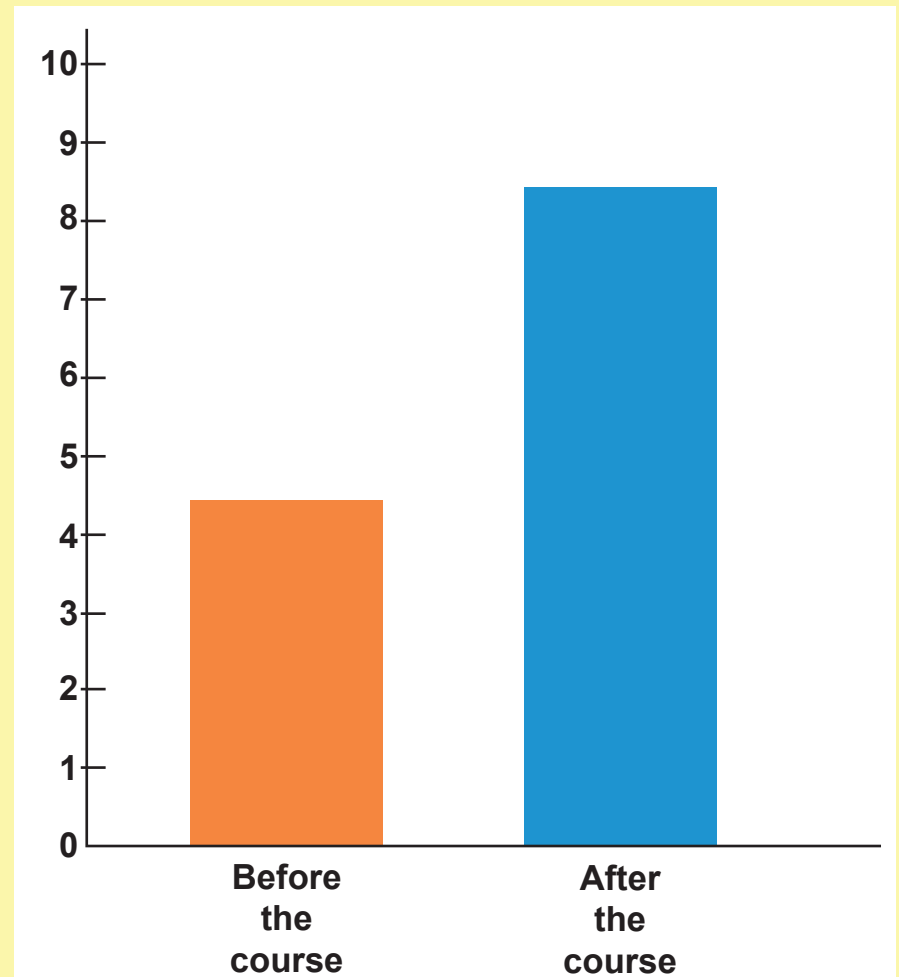
- Less feelings of isolation
 - Reduced anxieties
 - Less frustration
- Service users feel more supported
- A happier and safer environment
- Service users are able to feel more involved in their care

Staff reported the impact on their own practice:

- More opportunities created to engage with service users
 - More compassion and understanding for those with communication difficulties
 - A useful insight into the variety of tools available to support communication, particularly non verbal people
- Increased confidence in ability to support people's communication

Staff rated their knowledge of 'Person Centred Tools and Techniques' before and after the course:

15 staff attended the course. The graph to the right shows the average progress made.



Talking Mats in a mental health setting

The one day Talking Mats foundation course was well received with a range of staff attending, including Psychology team members, an Occupational Therapist, mental health nurses and health care assistants. The approach was enthusiastically received and staff were keen to begin to incorporate the approach into the care they provide.



“Attending the Talking Mats Foundation Course has helped me immensely in my role as a Mental Health Nurse.

I have been able to develop an effective therapeutic relationship with the Service Users and involve them directly in their own care”

Staff member from Elyisium who attended the Talking Mats Foundation Course August 2019

SignAlong with Funky fitness CIC in Greenfield

This course was part funded by an Oldham Fast Track Grant.

The course for self-advocates was provided for customers at Funky Fitness CIC in Greenfield on 22nd May.

18 customers and 3 staff attended the workshop.

We learned signs, played games, sang songs with signs and had a ball!

Carita Smith is the Director of funky Fitness and she made the following comments about the course:

- **Enhanced existing skills and built good memory bank for new vocabulary**
- **Very well delivered and content enabled all members to engage at their level as it was very well differentiated**
- **Members concentration levels were high during the session as it was fun and very stimulating**
- **The pace was very tailored to our group with opportunity for our members to showcase their own existing signing and signing skills.**



Person Centred Communication Course, Potens in Dorset

This summer saw Alison working in the south of the UK with Potens who commissioned a 3 day Person Centred Workshop for their communication leads.



Dorset 2019



Work as a Registered Intermediary



During 2019 Alison completed training as a Registered Intermediary which enables her to work with the police and courts to support vulnerable witnesses.

Many people attending court as victims or witnesses have difficulties understanding the questions that they are asked by lawyers.

Registered Intermediaries have professional backgrounds in areas such as speech and language therapy, nursing, occupational therapy, education, or psychology.

They are also available to assist police officers who are interviewing vulnerable witnesses.

In all cases, the intermediary completes a comprehensive assessment of the vulnerable person's communication needs and makes recommendations in a written report of how the person should be questioned.



Due to the highly confidential nature of the work it is not possible to give further details for this report.

Accessible Information Training for 1st year Speech & Language Therapy Students

Accessible information has been at the forefront of many service providers minds since the introduction of the NHS Accessible Information standard in 2015. Put simply accessible information is often simplified text supported by images which add meaning to enable people with communication and literacy difficulties to better understand. It can also be about adapting environments to make it easier for disabled people to use the service.

On the 22 October the First year Speech and Language therapy students at the University of Manchester attended our lecture on accessible information. Over 40 students took part in the discussions and activities. They were encouraged to make links with their current studies and to apply the learning to other groups, as accessible information can be of benefit to a range of people with communication impairments.

The group were asked how the training would help them:

- The course will help me when I'm on placement
- Understand sensory overload
- Make sure information is user friendly
- Understand the difficulties surrounding accessible information
- Know that I will potentially be able to recognise people with specific requirements on placement
- Understand an additional role of the Speech & Language therapist I knew little about.
- Look at information in a more person centred way
- Have an interesting insight and deeper understanding
- Gave me a better understanding of how to use understandable language
- Knowing to use more simple words and not to over-complicate so that the service user understands
- I won't understand somebody understands everything they are able to read. Being able to implement strategies to empower people I work with
- Be aware of the work I produce in a more 'people centred way'

They were asked to consider how the information on the course might help make a difference to the people they work with in the future.

The students said:

- They will be able to understand better
- I can make my communication clearer
- I can offer better communication tool
- I can help people make more informed choices about services/care
- I'll have a greater understanding of communication needs and available pictures
- Empowering them and helping them to understand the world around them
- Being able to understand a bit through their perspective



RCSLT



On 4th October 2019, Alison represented the Independent Network of Speech & Language therapists at the Royal College of Speech & Language therapists Adult Learning disability National Leads Network.

She presented an overview of the Communication dictionary which she developed and compared this approach to Communication Passports and profiles. She will co-chair a follow up meeting with the aim of developing some agreed guidance on approaches.



Working in mental health

Working in a mental health setting provides some real challenges in adapting communication in order to discuss difficult and often painful topics.

There are risks associated with this and care and sensitivity are required in developing resources which support communication but which hopefully do not trigger ideas or thoughts. We have worked closely with multi-disciplinary teams to develop vocabulary sets which can be used to support these difficult conversations.



Grant funding to develop resources:

Vocabulary – self harm

One of the topics which was difficult to design using symbol software was vocabulary around self-harm behaviours.

We were able to work closely with our graphic artist in order to refine the designs and were successful in a bid to the Auto Trader community fund to develop images to support discussions about self-harm.

We also worked with some members of Bury People First and took guidance from them about the designs, as well as consulting with a range of mental health professionals.

Promoting Equality and Diversity – Same Sex Relationships

Grants funding has enabled the development of new resources.

We were recently awarded a grant from Tesco to help people understand that being married isn't just about a fancy wedding but that it is a long term commitment. Using the funding we have co-produced with our Communication Advocates a set of coloured line drawings (A4), each drawing depicts a different scene showing a different same sex at different stages of a relationship.

This was to help illustrate that relationships and marriage can be long term and hopefully much longer than just the wedding ceremony.

We consulted with people, male and female, who identify as Homosexual as part of the process as well as people with learning disabilities. Some of the feedback presented us with challenges as some of the people with learning disabilities were not understand that the images conveyed women who dressed in a more gender neutral style. Because of this, we had to make the images slightly stereotypical than we had first intended, to help with understanding.

The aim is that the pictures can be used as a tool for discussions around relationships or discrimination. The pictures also help people with learning disabilities, speakers of other languages, people with limited understanding or those who have other communication difficulties to understand and/or express their views or experiences. Having a picture to support understanding can make it easier for people of all abilities to communicate more openly.

We have already donated a set of the images each to a couple of local organisations and the images will soon be available to purchase on our website.

As we are a not for profit organisation we have deliberately kept the cost of the images to a minimum, to allow as many people as possible to have access and use them as needed.



We are happy to have achieved both our aim to co-produce the images from the point of view of a group of people who identify as gay and people with learning disabilities. If you would like to purchase a set of images, they will be available as a download under the 'Online store' tab on our website <https://www.totalcommunication.org>

Hate Crime Images

We were recently awarded a grant from Oldham Council to help raise awareness of hate crime and encourage reporting.

During our work we have found that people with learning disabilities often have been a victim of hate crime or hate incidents. Through discussion with our Communication Advocates,

(you can read more about the group here <https://www.totalcommunication.org/single-post/2018/07/21/Introducing-our-Communication-Advocates>),

we realised that everyone in the group had experienced some form of hate incident in the past and wanted to contribute toward raising awareness.

Using the funding from Oldham Council, we have co-produced with our Communication Advocates a set of 10 coloured A4 line drawings, each drawing depicting a different scene illustrating some form of hate crime or discrimination.

Each picture represents something that one or more of the group have experienced or an idea of hate crime that they wanted to highlight. These pictures can be used as a tool for discussions around hate crime and discrimination. The images also help people with learning disabilities, speakers of other languages, people with limited understanding or those who have other communication difficulties to understand and/or express their views or experiences.

Having a picture to support understanding can make it easier for people of all abilities to communicate more openly when reporting or discussing hate crime. We have created other resources using this format and they have always been very well received.

This project has allowed us to create a valuable resource that can be used by adults with learning disabilities, children, day centres, schools, charities, social workers, police, counsellors or anyone else who supports people around hate crime.

We have donated a set of the images each to two charities, POINT and OPAL (1 children's and 1 adults), in Oldham and made the images available from our website in an electronic format for ease of use.

As we are a not for profit organisation we have kept the cost of the images minimal to allow as many people as possible to have access and use them as needed. We hope our work may help increase awareness and acceptance of the diverse community we live in and in a small way may contribute to reducing discrimination.



**Service users and staff at OPAL Advocacy
receiving their free set of images**

SignAlong Tutors

Alison and Shahnaz travelled down to Norfolk in November 2018 to attend the 3 day SignAlong Tutor training course.

We are very pleased to have achieved our Tutor status and thoroughly enjoyed the course and our time in Norfolk. We have both delivered various SignAlong courses throughout the year. These have included both Foundation level workshops and taster sessions.

We have delivered sessions in a wide range of settings including day services, a primary school and even a nursery.

Below are some useful tips about SignAlong and if you would like to book a course then please do get in touch.



- Signs should always be accompanied by speech.
- Signing is an excellent way of supporting and developing a person's understanding of language.
- It is important to accept a person's attempt at a sign and then model back the correct sign.
- Choose signs which are relevant, functional, and interesting for each individual.
- Signing should not stop a person talking. Accompanying speech with sign gives the listener visual information that can help the person be understood.

SignAlong Board Member

SignAlong, The Communication Charity is based in Norfolk.

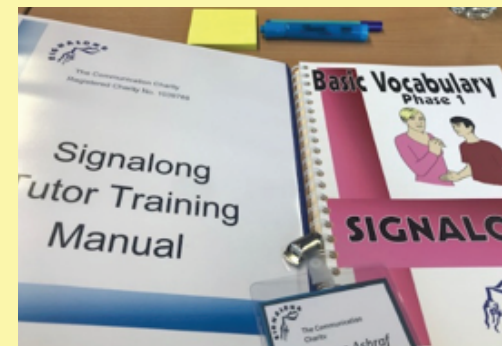
They are a not for profit organisation who use a sign supported system designed to assist communication difficulties associated with Learning Disabilities in children and adults. It is based on British Sign Language (BSL) with the most iconic signs being selected where a choice exists.

Some signs have been adapted for ease of use whilst others have been invented where no appropriate BSL sign could be found.

Shahnaz feels very privileged to be asked to become a trustee/ board member for this fantastic charity.

"This is my first time as a board member after being director for Total Communication. It has been interesting and informative being involved 'from the other side'.

The charity has this year relocated, refreshed their logo with a modern new look and added 'Communication Charity' to their name to reflect their charitable status. We are developing some exciting new resources and I look forward to continuing to support their work".



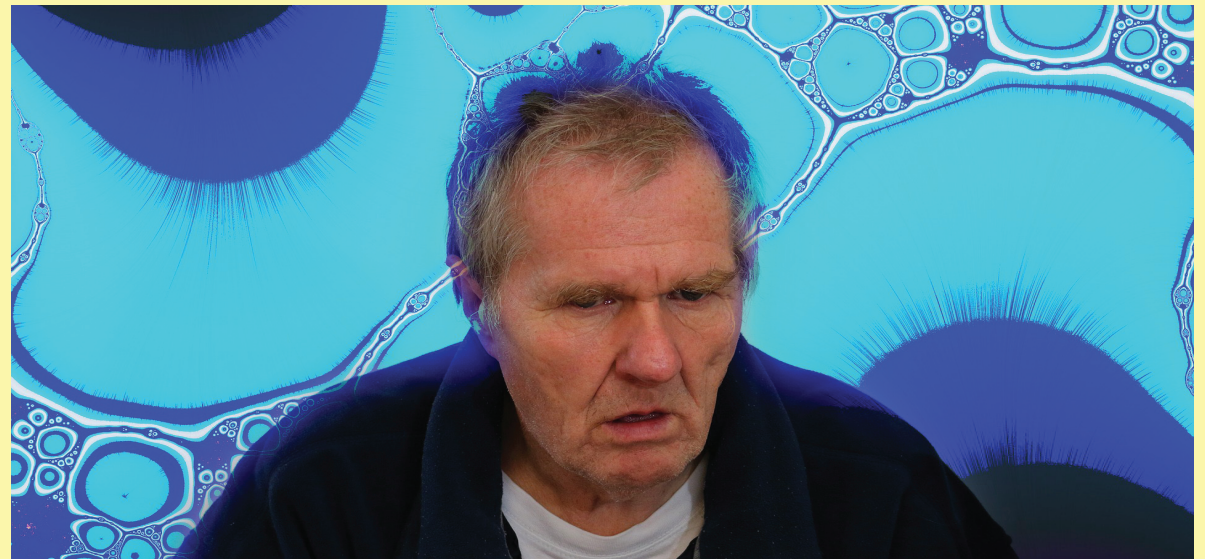
Dementia

In January we decided to further increase our knowledge around Dementia. We were already Dementia friends and wanted to volunteer and become Dementia Champions. Dementia friends is part of a programme led by the Alzheimer's society. It supports communities to become 'Dementia Friendly' by encouraging people to become more understanding and inclusive of people living with Dementia.

Being a Dementia friend means that we understood the key message and had committed to making one change or doing one thing differently that may help people living with Dementia. Becoming a Dementia champion means that we attended a full day information session on how to increase awareness around Dementia by hosting information sessions ourselves in our local area.

We would like to briefly share the five key messages below.

- Dementia is not a natural part of ageing. Not everyone who grows old will develop Dementia
- Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain. Certain diseases can physically damage the brain, the same as any organ in the body.
- Dementia is not just about losing your memory. Other functions are also affected such as Communication, Motor skills, Vision etc.
- It is possible to live well with Dementia. A person may still be able to drive and work etc. depending on their circumstances
- There is more to the person than the Dementia. A person with dementia is just like me and you.



We have already delivered training to some nursing homes who care for people living with Dementia in the Northwest.

For more information you can look up 'Dementia Friends' online



L&M Health Care

L&M Health care have commissioned some Speech and Language Therapy consultancy for their 5 nursing homes. Initial projects were identified including reviewing of care plans and the provision of support for the activities.

Work on supporting staff to meet the requirements of regulation 11 of the Health and Social Care Act was identified as a priority.

The Care Quality Commission states that the “intention of this regulation is to make sure that all people using the service, and those lawfully acting on their behalf, have given consent before any care or treatment is provided. Providers must make sure that they obtain the consent lawfully and that the person who obtains the consent has the necessary knowledge and understanding of the care and/or treatment that they are asking consent for.”

Some key tasks requiring consent were identified and key rings made, which are used by staff when asking a resident to consent to treatment. The key rings have been introduced across all 5 sites



Work with a North West Charity

Kathy Mc Iver Manager at North West charity Ordinary Lifestyles commissioned Alison to provide a 12-month project , starting from March 2019.

Kathy described the input so far:

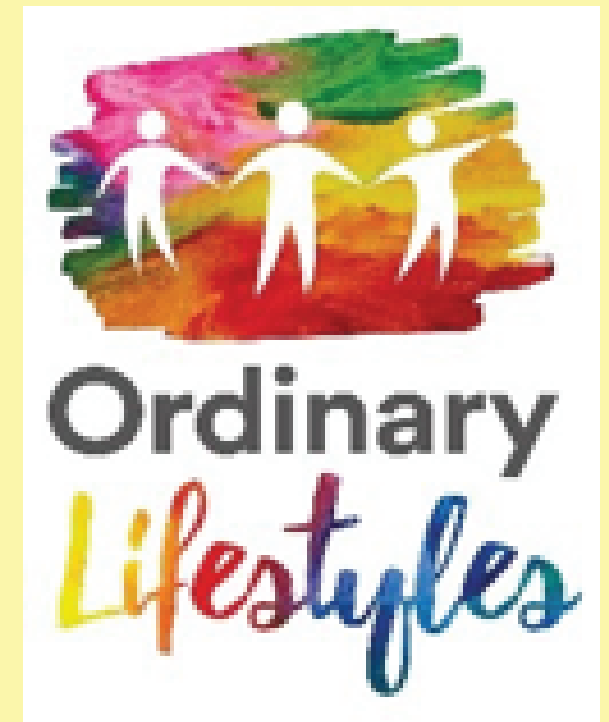
‘This followed on from the successful delivery of a National-Lottery funded project in 2017/18, whereby 4 individuals supported by Ordinary Lifestyles had been provided with Communication Dictionaries, and staff employed by the organisation had benefitted from the 3-day Total Communication training, and other targeted training.

The 12-month commissioned project has enabled a further individual to have a Communication Dictionary developed for her. Communication Dictionaries for the previous 4 individuals have been reviewed, and further staff training (Intensive Interaction, Talking Mats, and Signalong) has either taken place, or is planned. In addition, communication audits are in the process of being completed with approx. 9 staff teams who support individuals.

These individuals have a wide range of different communication needs. It is hoped the audits will give the organisation a clearer picture of what work still needs to be done, to meet the communication needs of everyone it supports.

Feedback from Support Workers has been very positive. One team who support a lady with profound disabilities, feel that her daily quality of life has been transformed, by the techniques of intensive interaction used by the staff, and her own increased communication. Her mood levels and active enjoyment of activities have improved noticeably.

The Communication Dictionaries which are now in place for 5 individuals have enabled greater consistency of support, particularly when shift cover is provided from staff who know them less well’.



Crompton Primary School

Shahnaz was asked to deliver a SignAlong workshop to teaching staff at a local Primary school. This was completed over 3 after school sessions to suit the needs of the school.

The school are working toward becoming a 'Communication Friendly' school. There has been increase in children of mixed abilities entering the school. We concentrated on Phase 1 and the Topic Vocabulary manuals as these were most relevant to a school setting.

Below is some of the lovely feedback received from staff:

The staff at Crompton Primary School have recently participated in a series of sessions which introduced sign-a-long. All staff thoroughly enjoyed the course, led by Shanaz and are now confident to use aspects of sign-a-long with their classes. Shanaz was able to set the pace of the sessions so that staff were able to practice what they had learned then revisit it at the next session.

Shanaz is an excellent facilitator, she provided school with the necessary resources for certification and was realistic about which of the equipment was most useful for our setting. Shanaz is very knowledgeable and was able to answer any questions from our staff, she gave us top tips to recall signs and ideas of how best to begin using signs within school. Our children are already benefiting from the experience.

SignAlong with Selecta Daycare (Oldham), women only support for Adults with Learning Disability

This course was funded by Oldham council to help service users who speak little English. The main language spoken by service users at Selecta is Mirpuri.

SignAlong has not been previously available in this language, thus this course allowed access to a group of ladies who were able to engage in their mother tongue.

SignAlong can be used by anyone, whatever language they speak. The difficulty arises when the course is only delivered in English.

The course was adapted and delivered in a very practical way without any powerpoint slides etc. The vocabulary was chosen to reflect activities at the centre eg crafts, baking etc.

Service users engaged well and came up with words they wanted to learn signs for.

Shagufta, who is a Director at Selecta Day Service said the following:

'Staff and service users enjoyed the session and learnt signs that we can use every day in the service.'

Shahnaz was very flexible and allowed service users to choose signs they wanted to learn.



Learning the sign for 'Rabbit'

Thank you for a great session'