



Smartbox



Smartbox and CareTech Children's Services deliver first of its kind '100 Voices' project

Assistive technology specialist Smartbox and CareTech, one of the UK's leading Children's Services provider, are collaborating on a major new project named '100 Voices'. The initiative will explore the relationship between access to Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) and the positive outcomes for children and young adults with communication difficulties in CareTech services across the UK.

Assistive technology specialist Smartbox and CareTech, one of the UK's leading Children's Services provider, are collaborating on a major new project named '100 Voices'. The initiative will explore the relationship between access to Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) and the positive outcomes for children and young adults with communication difficulties in CareTech services across the UK.

At the heart of the project are 100 people who are supported in CareTech settings. Fifty of these are children and young adults in Cambian Special Education schools and care homes and our Inspire care services. They have all been identified as people who have never used high tech communication aids before and could potentially benefit from access to this technology.

Everyone taking part in the project will receive a Smartbox communication device alongside training and support to help them achieve their individual goals. From having a voice for what may be the first time to improving their connections with the staff who support them, their family and friends and ultimately achieving greater independence. Over the next 12 months the 100 Voices project team will measure the participants' progress, gaining a deeper understanding of the potential AAC brings together with the challenges and benefits they experience from using their devices.

"Through the 100 Voices project, we hope to raise awareness and understanding of what assistive technology can do for people with communication difficulties and associated complex needs in care and special education settings. The profile and use of AAC remains relatively low in the UK at present, when you consider the huge difference communication makes to everyone's lives, from accurately and independently expressing needs or enjoying face-to-face connections, to accessing ever important digital communication channels. Our lives revolve around communication and it is critical for participation and independence in our society. We also see how self-advocacy supports person centred planning and through this project we can explore what impact the availability of AAC has on people's care and education outcomes."

said Hannah Church, Director of Customer Experience, Smartbox Assistive Technology.



"We are extremely excited by the 100 Voices project and the communication benefits of using Smartbox with some of our children and young adults. We will be adopting a whole school approach in two of our autism schools to fully understand how AAC can complement the care and support we provide. With Smartbox now becoming part of the CareTech group of companies we have the opportunity to blend care with technology and offer new possibilities towards greater independence for those in our care."
said Jeremy Wiles, Group Business Development Director, CareTech.

The 100 Voices project launched in early 2021 and will conclude in Spring 2022. This is the first joint initiative for Smartbox and CareTech, and the research will be led by an advisory panel including independent Speech and Language Therapists. As the project progresses the team will share case studies and findings as data and insight becomes available.

The participants receiving devices will be supported by Smartbox and the CareTech team throughout their journey with AAC, during the project and beyond.

For further information please visit: <https://thinksmartbox.com/news/100-voices/>

Notes to editors: Photography

Pictured is Sofia, 12, a 100 Voices project user and student at Cambian's Hill House School. Sofia is autistic and does not communicate verbally. She is using a Smartbox Talk Pad, a touch screen device. She absolutely loves music and making outfits for her Barbies.

For user stories and further information about the 100 Voices project please get in touch:

Mel Beeby Clarke PR

T: 07557 142440 (DD)

E: amanda.woollaston@thinksmartbox.com

Extraordinary days every day

Registered address: Metropolitan House 3 Darkes Lanes Potters Bar
Hertfordshire EN6 1AG Registered no. 02804415 info@caretech-uk.com

caretech-uk.com