

Message from Sean Abbott, CEO

I wish to thank most sincerely the members of Cope Golf Alliance for raising €37,500 for the Foundation during 2017. This money will be spent providing additional **Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ACC) devices, training and support** across all areas of the Foundation's work.

Communication is a human right but a significant proportion of people with an intellectual disability experience difficulties with communication.

What is Cope Foundation doing to support people with Intellectual Disabilities and communication difficulties?

- We employ a team of Speech and Language Therapists who work with Children and Adults across the Foundation by providing a range of interventions to enable people we support to communicate in the most effective way for each individual.
- One of the interventions used is **Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)** strategies.

WHAT IS AAC?

- Communication methods that supplement speech or writing.
- Some examples of AAC: sign language, picture communication boards and voice output devices.
- Individuals with communication challenges use AAC to supplement their existing speech or replace speech that is not functional.
- The primary goal of using AAC strategies is to enhance communication, not to replace or inhibit the existing communication skills of the individual. Most AAC users continue to use their existing communication skills (e.g. verbalisations, facial expressions, gestures, etc.) in addition to an AAC device.

WHO CAN USE AAC?

- Any individual who is nonverbal or who has limited speech can benefit from the use of AAC.
- It is never too early or too late to introduce AAC.
- AAC is often considered for children with intellectual disability who do not develop speech in the traditional way, or experience significant delay in their communication development.
- AAC is often a consideration for adults with intellectual disability who need a way to express themselves more independently.

With AAC, individuals with intellectual disabilities can:

- Develop language skills, both expressive and receptive.
- Have more opportunities for communication.
- Actively engage in communication.

AAC devices can give individuals a voice and provide them with the tools they need to communicate with the world around them.