

Fast Track to Assistive Technologies?

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Chair - Assistive Technology Forum

AT Forum - what is it?

- The Assistive Technology (AT) Forum brings together service users and carers, professional bodies, service providers and industry to work at a strategic level to improve services.
- The Forum provides a free monthly email bulletin. To subscribe, email *atforum@fastuk.org*

Membership

- Membership of the Forum is open to national organisations whose members have a interest in assistive technology
- Currently 47 organisations
- Executive committee to support work of AT Forum drawn from member organisations, DH associates and FAST secretariat

Current work

- Standards for Assistive Technology Services
- Involving users in Planning Assistive Technology Services
- Education & training in Assistive Technology
- Information about assistive technology which should be available to people in the UK

Standards

- Initial mapping exercise to index/review all identified standards
- Intention to establish a method of endorsement and monitoring
- Attempt to promote development of standards to fill any identified gaps
- 90+ standards/guidelines identified

Involving Users

- Promote the inclusion of service users in the design, development and delivery of services
- Initially this involved promoting further user involvement within AT Forum
- Vice Chair of Forum leads on this work

Education & training

- Recognition of the need to support training and development of professionals
- Attempt to map existing training programmes
- Promote development of NOS with Sector Skills Council
- www.fastuk.org/atforum-educationNOSlatest.php

So what next?

- *AT services overview*
- *What's missing*
- *How can we help?*

AT - what is it?

- "Assistive Technology (AT) is any product or service designed to enable independence for disabled and older people." (*King's Fund Consultation, 14th March 2001*)

AT - what is it?

- Prosthetics
- Orthotics
- Mobility and special seating services
- Community Equipment
- Walking aids
- Pressure care equipment
- Electronic assistive technology (environmental controls)
- Communication aids
- Telecare equipment

So what's missing?

- Focus
- Profile
- Recognition
- Importance

National initiatives

- *Modernisation Agency*
- *CSIP*
- *But how to build on the work?*

Focus/Profile

- Need to find a way to feature in planning process
- Used to be Star ratings
- Now HCSU
- But how do we become a meaningful part?

Standards

- Need agreed standards for service provision
- Need to be underwritten by commissioning organisations
- Designated lead at SHA level for AT services
- Need national agreement to standards to end regional variation

Targets

- Need to link to Trust/NHS priorities
 - Beds
 - Length of stay
 - Delayed discharges
 - Prevention of admissions
- "18 week patient pathway"
- Be part of annual health check audit

Faster access?

- Promote services from within SHAs
- Focus on posture and mobility services
 - Consider opportunities to remodel
 - Embrace positive opportunities for change
 - Preserve the strengths
 - Link to targets
- Raise the profile