

**Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS)**  
**Communication Aids**  
*Frequently Asked Questions*

**Q1. What does MASS do?**

- MASS provides access to subsidy funding for the provision of MASS endorsed aids and equipment to eligible Queensland residents with permanent and stabilised conditions or disabilities.
- The range of MASS aids and equipment is selected to assist people to live at home and avoid premature or inappropriate residential care or hospitalisation.

**Q2. Does MASS provide subsidy funding assistance towards communication aids?**

- Yes, MASS provides assistance towards communication aids to allow eligible people to communicate within their own home.

**Q3. What type of communication aids does MASS provide?**

- MASS provides subsidised assistance towards artificial larynges, speech generating devices and voice amplification devices.
- MASS is currently trialling provision of subsidised assistance towards specialised communication software, which is available until further advised.. Please note that this funding is intended to subsidise software programs that allow a client to communicate with voice output using displays of symbols, words, a keyboard or a combination of these items. MASS will not subsidise software programs for the sole purpose of producing AAC resources e.g. Boardmaker
- MASS does not subsidy fund laptop computers, desktop computers, voice prostheses or low-tech communication aids.

**Q4. What type of communication device accessories does MASS provide?**

- MASS provides subsidised assistance towards approved accessories for communication aids such as batteries, charger, carry case, switchskins/moisture guards, basic accessing devices/switches, microphones.
- MASS is currently trialling provision of subsidy funding for keyguards, wheelchair mounting systems, switch mounts, and specialised switches/accessing devices. An Occupational Therapist must be involved in the trial process and clinical justification provided in the relevant section of the application form.

**Q5. Am I eligible for MASS subsidy funding assistance for communication aids?**

- You may be eligible for assistance if you are a permanent resident of Queensland, have a permanent and stabilised condition or disability and hold a pensioner concession card, health care card or Queensland Government Seniors Card in your own right.
- You will also need to meet the MASS clinical eligibility criteria for communication aids.
- Your speech pathologist can advise whether you are eligible to apply for MASS subsidised assistance for communication aids.

**Q6. Who can clinically assess me for MASS subsidised communication aids?**

- To apply for MASS subsidised communication aids, you must be clinically assessed by a speech pathologist who can apply to MASS on your behalf.
- Your speech pathologist will assist you in trialling a range of devices and can apply to MASS for the most appropriate device for your needs and circumstances.
- If you require specialised wheelchair or switch mounting systems, or specialised switches/accessing devices, you must be clinically assessed by an Occupational Therapist.
- There may be costs involved with trialling some devices.

**Q7. Do I have to contribute towards the cost of my MASS subsidised communication aid?**

- MASS contributes a subsidy amount towards the communication aid and you will be required to contribute the balance of the cost of the communication aid above the MASS subsidy. Your payment is made direct to the supplier. In some cases, the MASS subsidy may cover the total cost of the communication aid.
- The subsidy amounts that MASS will contribute towards communication aids are:
  - Artificial larynges \$1,200
  - Speech generating devices \$5,000
  - Voice amplification devices \$475
  - Communication software \$750 *(available until further advised)*

**Q8. What form do I need to apply for MASS subsidised communication aids?**

- The MASS 21 application form is used for all applications for communication aids.
- The MASS 21 application form needs to be submitted to MASS along with a photocopy of both sides of your eligibility/concession card.
- An itemised quotation for the cost of the device for which you are applying may also need to be submitted with your application.

**Q9. Who can fill out my application form?**

- You need to read, understand and retain Part A of the MASS 21 application form.
- You need to complete Parts B to F of the MASS 21 application form.
- Your prescribing speech pathologist needs to complete one of the four MASS 21 appendix forms, depending on the type of communication aid you are applying for.
- An Occupational Therapist needs to complete the appropriate section of the MASS appendix forms, if you require subsidy funding towards a wheelchair or switch mounting system, or specialised switch/accessing device.

**Q10. How will I know if my MASS application has been approved?**

- If your application is complete and MASS requires no further information from you or your prescriber, you will receive a letter advising you of the outcome within a few weeks of submitting your application to MASS.
- If approved and you are required to pay a contribution towards the cost of the aid, the letter will also have attached to it a statutory declaration which you need to sign and return to MASS as soon as possible.
- The signed statutory declaration indicates your legal intention to pay the supplier the amount of the client co-contribution.

**Q11. If my application is approved, when will an order be sent to the supplier?**

- MASS will send a purchase order to the supplier of the communication aid as soon as the signed statutory declaration is received by MASS from you.

**Q12. How long will it take for the communication aid to be supplied after MASS issues the supplier a purchase order?**

- Delivery times can vary depending on whether the item is held in stock.
- You may contact the supplier for an approximate delivery time.
- When ready, the supplier will send the completed communication device directly to your speech pathologist prescriber for adjustment and programming. Your speech pathologist prescriber will contact you when the device is ready to be supplied.

**Q13. Who owns my MASS subsidised communication aid?**

- If you have an artificial larynx, MASS owns the device and has provided it to you on permanent loan.
- If you have a speech generating device, at the time of application you may be offered the choice of either owning the device yourself or MASS retaining ownership of the device.
- If you have a voice amplification device or communication software, MASS has deemed ownership of the device to you.

**Q14. What do I do if the communication aid supplied to me is unsuitable?**

- Contact your speech pathologist as soon as possible if the communication device is unsuitable for any reason.

**Q15. Who is responsible for repairs and maintenance to my MASS subsidised communication aid?**

- If MASS owns the device and has provided it to you on permanent loan, then MASS will be responsible for all reasonable repairs to the device.
- If the device is owned by you, then you are responsible for repairing and maintaining the device.
- MASS provides all new clients of artificial larynges, speech generating devices and voice amplification devices with maintenance and care information to assist them with their care responsibilities.
- The manufacturer and/or supplier of your communication aid should also provide you with information instructing you on how to care for the device.

**Q16. What do I do if my communication aid needs repairs?**

- You should contact the Brisbane or Mackay MASS service centres immediately whenever your communication aid needs repairs or you require replacement rechargeable batteries.
- MASS will not fund any repairs to your MASS subsidised communication aid for which prior approval has not been obtained.

**Q17. Should I still be using a low-tech communication system once I receive my MASS subsidised communication aid (e.g. speech generating device or communication software)?**

- It is strongly recommended that you maintain a low-tech communication system as a foundation and a back-up for your MASS subsidised communication aid (high-tech

system). There are many situations where a low-tech communication system is a more effective and/or appropriate option to use, for instance, in areas where the high-tech system may be damaged, such as around swimming pools, etc. It is also important to maintain the low-tech communication system for when the high-tech system is not available (e.g. when it is being charged or repaired).

**Q18. When can I reapply to MASS to replace my communication aid?**

- MASS expects that your communication aid will last a minimum of five years. You should not need to replace the device within this time unless your condition changes and you need a different device.

**Q19. What do I do with my old device when it is replaced or no longer required?**

- If MASS owns the device, it must be returned to MASS when it is replaced or no longer required. MASS can then reallocate the device to someone else in need.

**Q20. What do I do if my condition worsens or improves?**

- If your condition changes for any reason, you must consult your speech pathologist as your communication needs may also have changed.

**Q21. How do I find out more about my communication aid?**

- For further information, consult your speech pathologist.

**Q22. How do I find out more about MASS?**

- For further information about MASS, you can visit the MASS website at [www.health.qld.gov.au/mass](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/mass) or contact your nearest MASS office in Brisbane or Mackay.