

**Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS)**

# **Application Guidelines for Communication Software**

Version 1.00 December 2013

## Communication Software

Communication Software subsidised	Maximum MASS subsidy	May be subsidised when
Software that provides voice output using displays of symbols, words, a keyboard or combination of these items	\$750	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Severely restricted or non-verbal communication</li> <li>Software meets language, communication and access needs</li> <li>Software has capacity to meet developing/changing needs</li> <li>Dedicated and reliable computer/tablet is available for the sole use of the client</li> </ul> <p>Exclusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Software for the sole purpose of producing AAC resources</li> <li>Apps for mobile internet devices (e.g. Proloquo2Go for iPad)</li> </ul>
Accessories for Communication Software	Maximum MASS subsidy	May be subsidised when
Basic accessing devices/switches excluding a computer mouse x 2 (max)	\$160 each	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To allow alternative access to the software via a scanning display</li> </ul>

## Co-payment

Where Communication Software exceeds the maximum subsidy funding, a co-payment arrangement may be entered into with MASS. For further details, refer to following section of the MASS General Guidelines:

- SUBSIDY FUNDING

## Ownership, Repairs and Maintenance

Communication Software is offered to clients based on private ownership, with technical repairs and maintenance deemed the responsibility of the client. For further details, refer to following sections of the MASS General Guidelines:

- PERMANENT LOANS (Exceptions to Permanent Loan Arrangements)
- PERMANENT LOANS – REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

## How to Apply

Consult with an eligible prescriber to assist with assessment and selection of appropriate software and any required accessories. The prescriber will complete MASS 21 App CS Communication Software Application Form Appendix and any extra documentation required; then submit the complete application to MASS – please refer to the list of application forms and documents required below.

## Trial and follow up requirements

In addition to the information in the MASS General Guidelines (section, Prescriber Role), the following guidelines are provided specifically for the funding of Communication Software:

- Prescribers should ensure a team approach to assessment including the applicant, family/carer, speech pathologist prescriber and occupational therapist.
- Trials need to gather information that will demonstrate that the communication software (in combination with the clients own hardware) will accommodate the person's body structure and function, activities, participation, environmental and personal needs and can be adapted to suit their current life stage and future needs.
- Prescribers should adequately trial several communication software packages in the home environment, or it must be demonstrated that the software will be used functionally in the home. The minimum requirement is to trial two software packages for two weeks each.
- When comparing the features of software to speech generating devices, it is important to consider the following: durability of system; accessing issues; mounting and security of a computer/tablet; battery life; speaker volume; intelligibility of voice output; level of technical support needed.
- A MASS Communication Aids Trials Information and Proforma is available on the MASS website to assist and guide prescribers with documentation of the trial objectives / outcomes.
- A post delivery check to ensure all items are delivered as quoted.
- A post delivery follow up visit is to be provided by the prescriber, or this is referred on to another health professional, to ensure the client and carer are familiar with operation and effective use of the software (including upgrades, system locks etc) and is aware of their responsibilities with regards to technical issues and maintenance.

## Allocation of aids

- Prescribers and applicants will be notified of the outcome of the application.
- If approved, and the conditions for co-payment are met (e.g. statutory declaration is signed and returned to MASS) an order will be placed with the supplier/manufacturer for supply directly to the prescribing speech pathologist.

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## Eligible prescribers

Applicants wishing to apply must consult a:

- Speech Pathologist

## Application Forms and Documents required

### Communication Software

- MASS 21 Communication Aids Application Form
- MASS 21 App CS Communication Software Application Form Appendix
- Signed MASS 84 Proxy Access to Centrelink Information form or photocopy of both sides of the applicant's concession card
- Quote for software and any accessories
- MASS Communication Aids Trials Information and Proforma (optional)