scope

FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

<u>COMMUNITY REQUEST CARDS</u>

(Also known as Community Passports)

*For people who want to request items and services
in the community.*

Why use a Communication Request Card?

We use cards every day to access community and leisure activities, for example, using public transport, or discount cards in shops. The use of cards for people with limited literacy and numeracy skills can help them be more independent in community activities. Community Request Cards have been developed to address some of these issues. They are designed to assist with more independent participation in community activities

What is a Community Request Card?

A Community Request Card is a card designed to help a person with limited or no speech to access services in the community. Ideally it should be able to fit in the person's wallet.

The information written on a Community Request Card is primarily for the person they come into contact with in the community. The person using the Community Request Card does not necessarily need to be able to read or understand exactly what is printed on the card. The use of Community Request Cards encourages people in the community (eg people in shops, cafés etc) to speak directly to the person and involve them in the conversation rather than always interacting with their support worker.

John is a 46 year old man who goes ten pin bowling once a week. When John goes to the bowling alley, he waits at the counter while his support worker, Georgina tells the bowling alley attendant how many games John wants to play and his shoe size. Georgina then pays for John. She would like John to be able to ask for what he wants and to pay for the games himself, but it just seems to be "too hard" to organise.

A community request card:-
•   allows John to independently organise his bowling.
•   has a small picture at the top, of a bowling ball (as John associates this with bowling)
•   has a written message for the bowling alley attendant.

Who benefits from Community Request Cards?

The use of a request card encourages independent communication. Some people may only be able to manage one card at a time while other people will carry a number of cards for a range of different situations.
The card also benefits people in the community. It helps the person who receives the card to know exactly what is wanted and how they need to respond to the request.
It lets new communication partners learn about different ways of communicating and helps them to remember that it's important to address the person with the disability rather than the support worker all the time.

When would you use a community request card?

I'd like to play 2 games.

I need size 9 shoes.

Please take my money. Hand me back my change, my shoes and this card. Thank you!

- When a person wants to interact and participate with people in their local community.
- When a person is unable to effectively communicate with others using speech alone
- When the person has the ability to hand over or co-actively pass a card to another person.

How to make a community request card

1. First of all, decide what activity to start with. Choose something that the person does regularly and enjoys.
2. Decide on the size of the card. Some people may need large cards in order to hold them. Some people may need the card small enough to go in their wallet.
3. Decide on the message / request to be made.
4. Clearly write the request out on a card. Make sure you use large print that is easy to read.
5. Decide on how to best represent the request so that it is meaningful for the individual, for example, object symbols, photos, line drawings.
6. Laminate the card to make it stronger or put it in a small plastic pouch.

How to introduce a community request card

1. Start with an activity that has a quick and tangible result, for instance, buying a cup of coffee or ordering a donut.
2. Practice the activity in the real situation.
3. Accompany the person to the counter, desk or wherever the request usually takes place.
4. Model handing the card over and waiting for the item being requested.
5. Co-actively assist the person to hand over the card.\
6. Practice the activity gradually reducing the support needed for a successful exchange.

Use of multiple community request cards

Some people learn to use a range of Community Request Cards. Sarah, a 27 year old woman, with no speech uses a series of cards to meet her needs. She can't read, however she does recognise photos and pictures. She quickly understood the idea of using a card to order an item or a service. She now has Community Request Cards for McDonalds, buying a milkshake or a cappuccino from her local café, going swimming, going to the movies and catching a train. She identifies which Community Request Card to use in each situation, by recognising the pictures on the cards.

Storage

The person can keep single cards in their wallet. If there are a number of them it is best to laminate them and put them on a key ring or in a small business card holder.

How to adapt a Community Request Card for people with different levels of communication

A person whose communication is at an unintentional level
- Will benefit from the social contact involved in interacting with people in the community.
- The support person will need to assist with handing the card to the communication partner.

A person whose communication is at an intentional informal level
- May benefit from an object or object symbol firmly attached to the card. The printed message is still needed for the communication partner.
- Will benefit from co-active assistance and modeling.

A person whose communication is at a symbolic (basic) level
- May benefit from specific Community Request Cards with a photograph, logo or line drawing for preferred events and activities.
- Will benefit from co-active assistance and modeling.

A person whose communication is at a symbolic (established) level
- May use multiple Community Request cards with photographs, logos or line drawings for a range of community based activities.
- May need some support initially in learning to use the Community Request Cards.