



IMNDA WEBINAR: VOICE BANKING

Information session 8/11/23

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MIRANDA PhD Programme, AUoN, TCD



Outline (relevant slide number provided in brackets)

- Communication aids (3-6)
- What is Voice Banking and information/resources to help you (7-17)
- Voice Banking services and equipment you will need (18-25)
- Detailed step-by-step: how to provide a speech sample for processing by SpeakUnique (26-110)
 - Using the 'I Will Always Be Me' website including applying for the IMNDA voice banking grant (27-55, see also 108-110)
 - Using the 'SpeakUnique' website (56-110)
 - Making an account (56-68)
 - Using Voice Design i.e. Uploading old recordings or nominating people you know to record for you (69-78)
 - Making phrase recordings (79-99)
 - When your voice is ready, including applying for the IMNDA voice banking grant (100-110)
- Using your banked voice (111-129)
 - Downloading it into the SpeakUnique app (113-125)
 - Downloading it into the Predictable app (126-129)
- Other recording options e.g. Message banking (130-133)
- Summary (134)

These slides were prepared for the IMNDA webinar. I've added some explanatory notes in yellow boxes like this throughout the slides so they might also be a useful reference guide for all IMNDA clients. If you decide to bank your voice, I hope you enjoy the process and like the resulting voice. Lesley



Communication aids

Writing



Alphabet Chart

I will point to the first letter as I say the word

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0
Q	W	E	R	T	Y	U	I	O	P
A	S	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	
Z	X	C	V	B	N	M	Th	Ch	Sh

Who	And	Yes
What	You	No
When	Because	Maybe
Where	He/She	I don't know
How	The	Mistake
Why	They	Right/Wrong

UNWELL ANGRY SAD SHY FUNNY LOVE HAPPY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

A B C D E F G H I J

K L M N O P Q R S

T U V W X Y Z . ? !

AND YOU THE YES (SPACE) NO

YOU CAN USE THIS CARD WHEN YOUR LIGHTWRITER IS UNAVAILABLE. PERSONALISE THIS AREA WITH YOUR OWN WORDS...

A	B	C	D	YES	MAYBE	NO
E	F	G	H	PAIN	I don't know	ASK ME
I	J	K	L	M	N	HELLO
O	P	Q	R	S	T	GOODBYE
U	V	W	X	Y	Z	DON'T INTERRUPT
SPACE	ERROR	NEED	LEAVE ME	WHAT DO	START	PLEASE
DONE	IGNORE	HELP	ALONE	YOU THINK	OVER	GUESS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	
A	B	C	D							START AGAIN
E	F	G	H							END
I	J	K	L	M	N					
O	P	Q	R	S	T					
U	V	W	X	Y	Z					
YES			SPACE				NO			

Children's Hospital Boston

Commonly Used Communication Devices

Smartphone or Tablet

Dedicated Communication Device

Voice Amplifier



Devices compatible with voice banking



Ways to Operate Devices

Touch control

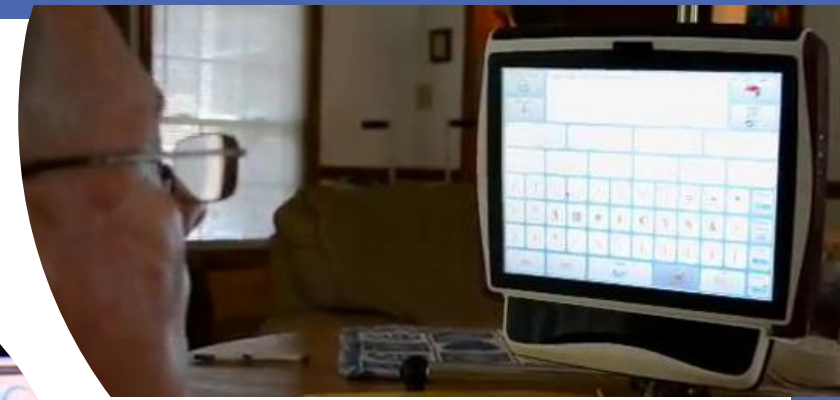
Stylus pen

Joystick

Switch button

Eye gaze reader

Head mouse



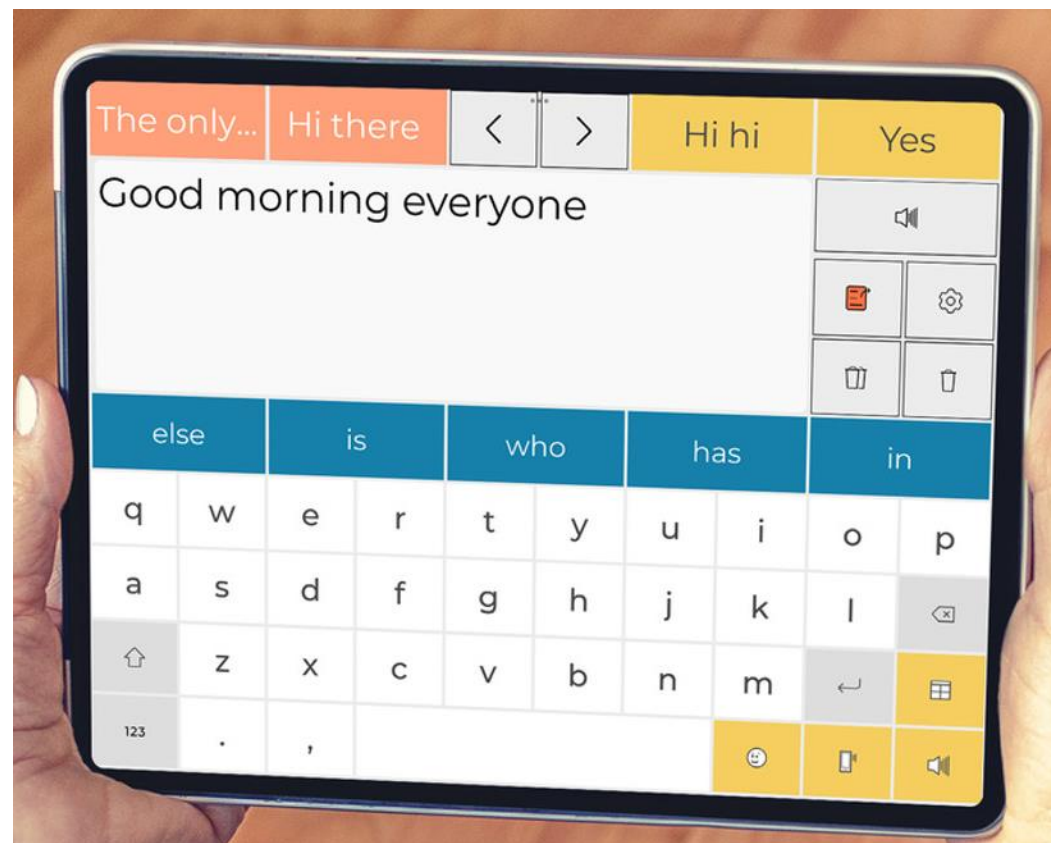
Not every device is compatible with voice banking or all types of control methods but Assistive Technology services such as the one in the Central Remedial Clinic help people with MND to find systems to suit their needs.

What is Voice Banking & Information/Resources to Help You

Voice Banking

Use a sample of recorded speech to make a personal synthesised voice.

If needed in the future, your personal synthesised voice can be used on an electronic communication device as the text-to-speech output instead of the built-in synthesised voice.



Communication aids have high quality (but not many options for an Irish accent) built-in synthesised voices so whatever you type in can be 'spoken out'. If you have previously completed voice banking, you can use your personal synthesised voice that sounds like you instead of one of the built-in options.

Synthesised Speech Examples

Example of a standard built-in synthesised voice on a communication device



Example of the typical quality of a voice banking synthesised voice



Credit: YouTube video of Speech Synthesis Example upload by Panagiotis Matsinopoulos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lepZhBmLV-I>

Credit: Clip from YouTube video of Dr David Turner interviewed about voice banking by Richard Cave (SLT) of the Royal Hospital for Neuro-Disability

www.youtube.com/watch?v=eV46MRK2dJw

Pathway/Support Resources to Help You

Pathway

- Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) referral to HSE service or specialist MND clinic to help decision making
- SLT can support you through the recording process or you can complete recordings by yourself if you feel confident doing this
- For further support/complex assistive technology needs, SLT can make an onward referral for you to the Assistive Technology and Specialist Seating (ATSS) dept in Central Remedial Clinic (CRC) (www.crc.ie/services/specialist/referrals/atss/)
- SLT applies for funding for communication aids to your local HSE Resource Allocation Group / IMNDA

Support Resources

- Online overview animation video
- Online Irish-context handouts
- IMNDA can provide microphones from loan bank and offer a voice banking grant

Decision Making



Might be interested if...

- Want to maintain element of personality within own voice
- See as a positive project
- Want to be proactive
- Like to plan ahead
- Feel empowered by creating a future choice



Voice banking is optional. It can be a really positive thing to do if it is something that interests you. Many people who preserve their voices through voice banking never need to use it, but it gives them peace of mind to know it's there and ready 'just in case'. However, if you don't feel it's something you would like to do, if you hadn't banked your voice, it would not limit your options for communication aids should that ever be something you need to consider in the future because electronic communication apps and software come with built-in high quality synthesised voices that you could use instead.

Might not be interested if...

- Don't like how speech sounds
- Feel upset / pressured/ stressed by idea
- Prefer to focus on current symptoms only
- Other symptoms a priority
- Likely to use writing/pointing if needing a communication aid in the future

www.rmnm.ie/message-voice-banking

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the website www.rmnm.ie. The browser's address bar shows the URL. The website's header features the logo for 'rmnm Research Motor Neurone' on the left and a navigation menu on the right. The navigation menu includes 'Home', 'Clinic-related Support', 'Fundraising', 'Research', 'Clinical Trials', 'Contact Us', and 'Useful Links'. The 'Clinic-related Support' menu item is highlighted with a yellow box, and its dropdown menu is open, listing several options: 'The Beaumont MND Clinic', 'The Clinical Team', 'Telehealth in Motor Neurone Disease', 'Message & Voice Banking', 'FAQs', 'Glossary of Terms', and 'COVID-19 and MND'. The 'Message & Voice Banking' option is also highlighted with a yellow box. Below the navigation menu, there is a large banner image with text that reads 'Help us... ing your own event'. The banner image contains various smaller images related to research and clinical work. At the bottom left of the screenshot, there is a small text box containing the URL <https://rmnm.ie/message-voice-banking/>.

Research 0 Items

rmnm
Research Motor Neurone

Home Clinic-related Support Fundraising Research Clinical Trials Contact Us Useful Links

The Beaumont MND Clinic

The Clinical Team

Telehealth in Motor Neurone Disease

Message & Voice Banking

FAQs

Glossary of Terms

COVID-19 and MND

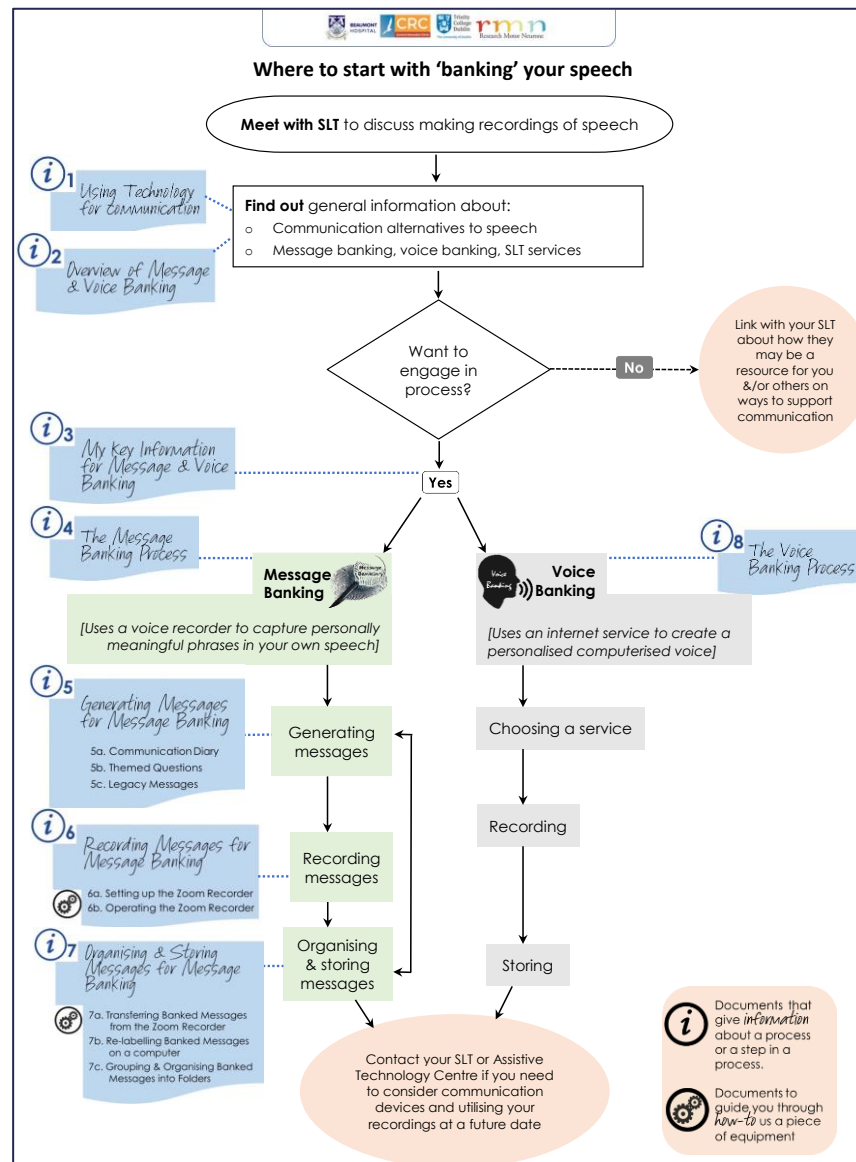
Help us... ing your own event



Research Motor Neurone


<https://rmnm.ie/message-voice-banking/>

See this website for handouts about making voice recordings to preserve your voice. These handouts were prepared by a team of SLTs from the MND service in Beaumont Hospital, the ATSS service in the CRC and the Clinical Speech and Language Studies department in TCD.

All leaflets can be download in PDF format for free.



 **The Irish Message Banking Toolkit** 



Using Technology for Communication

Communication

We all use a wide variety of methods to communicate across our day. For example:

- speech
- writing
- body language
- facial expression
- gesture
- tone of voice

Instinctively we choose what works best within a particular situation, depending on the circumstances and how well we know the person we are talking with. People who experience difficulties with their speech or movement can find it challenging to communicate clearly with others; this is known as a communication difficulty.

What causes a communication difficulty?

A communication difficulty can happen for a variety of reasons including:

- speech muscle weakness or tightness
- breathing difficulties
- problems with the vocal cords
- fatigue
- structural differences following head & neck surgery

Depending on the cause, it might become harder to pronounce speech sounds clearly or the voice might become strained, very quiet or breathless.

What can help if I develop difficulty with my speech?

The use of simple speech strategies can help (e.g. slowing down the rate of speech, taking more frequent breaths). If your speech becomes very difficult to understand, alternative forms of communication can be used alongside, or instead of, talking. This is often referred to as **augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)**. Alternative ways to get a message across include:

- writing
- pointing to letters on an alphabet board
- using a picture chart
- using an electronic communication device



Speech & language therapists (SLTs) can help you to explore these options.


How can technology help me with my communication?

Technology for communication can vary from using a simple piece of equipment (e.g. a voice amplifier to help make your voice louder) to using a complex system with many functions.

There is a wide range of software available for communication. This software can be installed on specialised electronic communication devices or on a computer. Software that allows you:

- To type messages as you think of what you want to say.
- To select from lists of pre-saved, frequently-used messages. You don't have to type them each time you use them. This can be helpful if you have a communication device that you would use frequently.

 *Overview of Message & Voice Banking cont./...* 

What is right for me: message banking or voice banking? 

You can do both message and voice banking but most people have a preference for one over the other. This section of the document poses some questions to help you to decide what is right for you.

When do I need to think about this?

- Ideally, the sooner the better. If your voice is strong and clear, you are more likely to achieve good results from both message and voice banking.
- If you start when you have noticed changes in your speech, the recording process can become more effortful over time.
- The actual process of recording requires a time commitment, so you need to consider when is the *right time* for you, bearing in mind all the other demands on your time, as well as your current priorities.

What if my voice has started to change?

Message Banking

- You can record even if:
 - There has been significant change in your speech as long as it is easy to understand.
 - Your speech is slurred, breathless or quiet though it may help to use speech strategies – your SLT can help you to practise these.
- The most important consideration is that **you** are happy with how your speech sounds at the time when you make the recordings.

Voice Banking

- Voice Banking software requires a large sample of strong, **clear and consistent speech** to make a useful computerised version of your voice.
- If your speech has changed a little bit you could record at times of the day when it tends to be strong.
- Voice banking is not suitable if your speech is consistently very slurred, very quiet, or clear at the beginning but unclear by the end of a phrase.

Do I need to know a lot about technology?

Message Banking

You need:

- A dictaphone-style voice recorder.

You do not need:

- Any specific skills in using computers and/or tablets.
- Access to a computer to record messages.

Voice Banking

You need:

- A reliable internet connection.
- An email account.
- Access to a computer to set up an account, to follow instructions about sound settings and make recordings.
- A high quality headset microphone.

If you do not feel confident with this, a member or friend who is familiar with using a computer could help you.

...communication device that you would use frequently. [which deteriorates.]

Toolkit 3/4

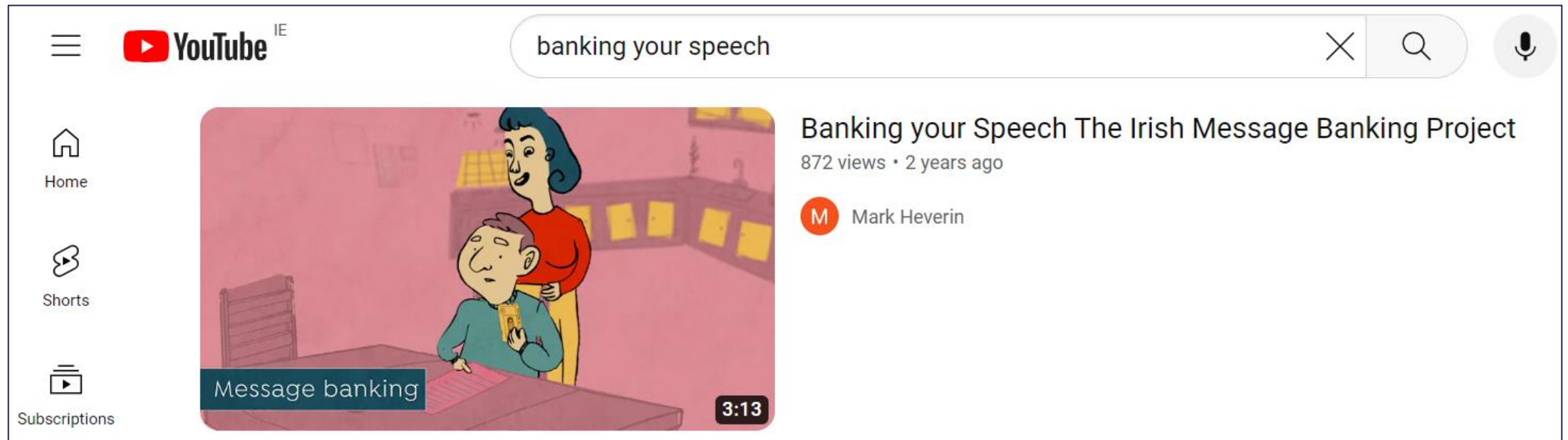
Information leaflets include one about using technology for communication and an overview handout about message and voice banking.

Message And Voice Banking Animation

Available from:

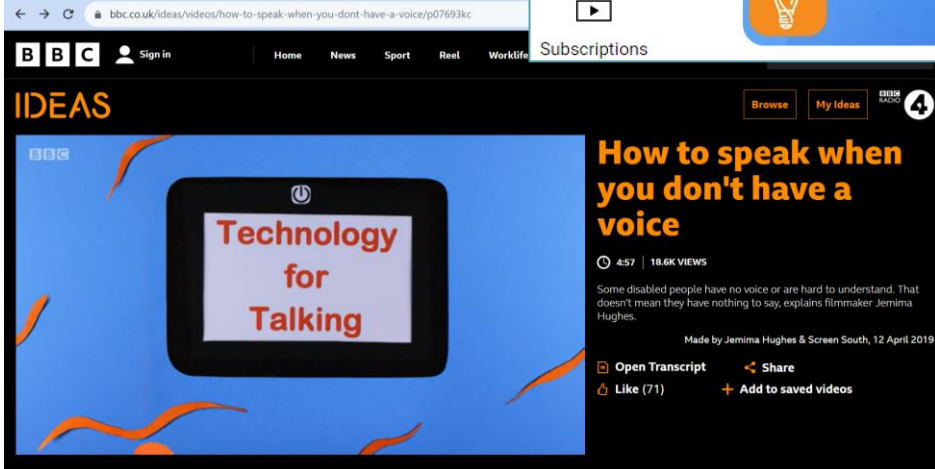
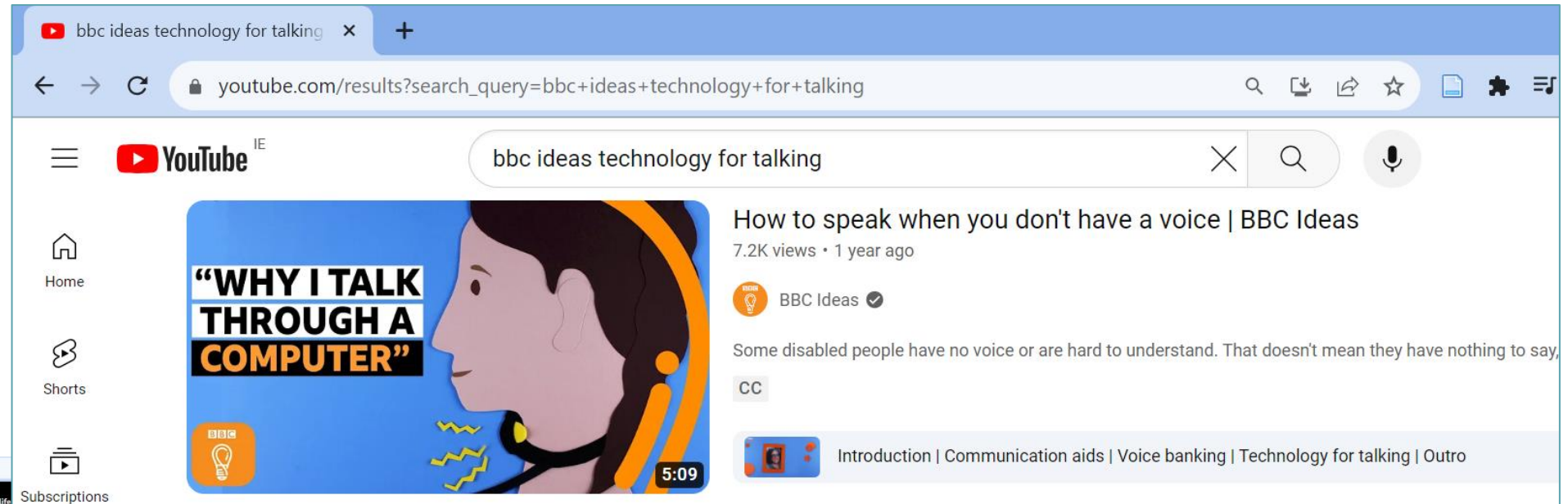
- <https://rmn.ie/message-voice-banking/>
- <https://www.imnda.ie/living-with-mnd/mnd-and-communicatio>
- YouTube: search 'banking your speech'

This video was designed as a simple overview if you are considering recording your speech or would like to show it to someone else to explain about these options.



This video was created by an animator who uses an electronic communication device herself and gives a simple introduction to how technology can be used for 'talking' – voice banking would be used within an electronic communication device.

Communication Technology Animation



Available from:

- www.bbc.co.uk/ideas/videos
- YouTube: search 'BBC ideas technology for talking'

Voice Banking Handout

- Handout about the process of voice banking
- Comparison table on selection of services

The table will be updated with new information including adding in I Will Always Be Me which was recently made available by the IMNDA for their clients.

The Voice Banking Process cont./...

Some voice banking services

This selection of services is not exhaustive and is for guidance only. All have sample voices on their websites for you and the people close to you to listen to.

Service Name	ModelTalker <small>(by Nemours Speech Research Laboratory)</small>	CereVoice Me by CereProc	myOWN-voice <small>(by Acapela Group)</small>	SpeakUnique Voice Build
Website	www.modeltalker.org	www.cereproc.com/ cerevoice-me	https://mov.acapela-group.com/	www.speakunique.co.uk
Based in	Delaware, USA	Edinburgh, Scotland	Belgium/france/Sweden	Edinburgh, Scotland
Price	\$100 (~€85)	£499 (~€600)	€99 per year (or once off purchase €999)	£175 (~€10)
Additional Equipment needed	Own computer Chrome internet access A high quality headset microphone with USB connection (model recommended on their website)	Own computer running Windows 7 or newer, or a Mac running Leopard or newer Firefox, Chrome or Opera internet access Microphone posted out by company after registration	Own computer Internet access A high quality headset microphone, or can use previously recorded messages in .wav format	Own computer Internet access A high quality headset microphone with USB or headphone jack connection
Average recording time	7 hours (the full inventory is 3,155 phrases, approx. 16 hours, but you can build a usable voice from 1,200 phrases on)	500-620 phrases depending on language	1.5-2 hours (Record 350 sentences of text or message bank recordings covering all sound combinations)	Up to 300 script phrases (minimum 150)
Languages available	English	English, French, Spanish, Italian, Swedish and Romanian	English, Arabic, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Norwegian, Swedish	English
Assistance available	FAQs & problem solving suggestions in the Help Center section of website Email support	Instruction kit sent by post UK telephone support line	A general contact form available on website	Website FAQ Email support
Partnered with <small>(though not exclusive to)</small>	PredictAble app (iOS & Android)	SmartBox AT GridPad tablets & Grid 3 software	SmartBox AT GridPad tablets & Grid 3 Software Tabl Dynavox Prولو4text/ Prولو2Go (iPad apps PredictAble app (iOS & Android)	SpeakUnique app (iOS and Android, (iOS 11 or higher needed. See website for Android model compatibility) Grid for iPad Predictable (iOS app only) On Windows devices, compatible with Grid 3 and Communicator 5 software or any SAPI 5 software package
Refund policy	Free to register, record phrases & listen to voice created. Once off payment required to download & use completed voice	Pay in advance. Test phrases reviewed by company who will refund if a good result is unlikely. No refund on full recording phase begins	Free to register & record phrases. Payment required to download & use the completed voice	Free to register, record phrases & listen to options of created voice. Once off payment required to download & use completed voice.

The Irish Message Banking Toolkit 4/4

The Irish Message Banking Toolkit

The Voice Banking Process

Voice banking is the process of creating a personal computerised voice that is representative of your own voice. If you create a customised 'text-to-speech' computerised voice, anything you type on an electronic communication device can be spoken out using this computerised version of your voice rather than the device's built-in one. The quality can vary between people. For the best result, you need to do voice banking when your speech quality is very clear.

A computerised voice created using voice banking will never sound exactly like your own speech because it is electronic. It will sound:

- o More robotic than natural speech and with less intonation.
- o 'Choppier' than the built-in voice on an electronic communication device.

Voice banking computerised voices are compatible with some, but not all, electronic communication devices. Before starting the process it is a good idea to discuss your specific needs with your speech & language therapist (SLT) and/or assistive technology (AT) service.

How is voice banking done?

Voice banking is done using a commercial service, which involves payment.

- o All voice banking services require many recordings of your speech.
- o Most voice banking services prompt you to read set lines of text so that the software can capture you saying all the speech sounds in different places in a word and in different combinations with other speech sounds.



How do I know if voice banking is right for me?

Considerations for voice banking:

- o **Speech Quality:** Your speech needs to be consistently very clear and strong.
 - If your speech has changed a little bit but is mostly clear, record at times of the day when it is at its clearest.
 - If your speech is consistently very slurred, hard to understand, very quiet or becomes unclear by the end of a sentence, voice banking is unlikely to be successful as the computer software will not recognise all of your speech sounds distinctly enough.
 - If your speech has already changed significantly, you could nominate a relative or friend with a similar accent to record on your behalf.
- o **Computer Skills:** You need computer skills:
 - To get on the internet.
 - To set up a voice banking account with an email address.
 - To follow onscreen commands around sound settings.
 If you are unsure, you can always ask a relative or friend to help you with the process.
- o **Time Commitment:** You need to be willing to work at a computer for periods of time over a number of days or weeks. Depending on the service you use, you will need to commit 3-9 hours in total to complete the process.

www.rmn.ie/message-voice-banking

Voice Banking Services & Equipment Needed

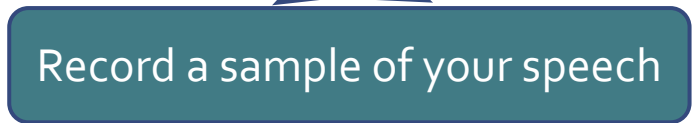
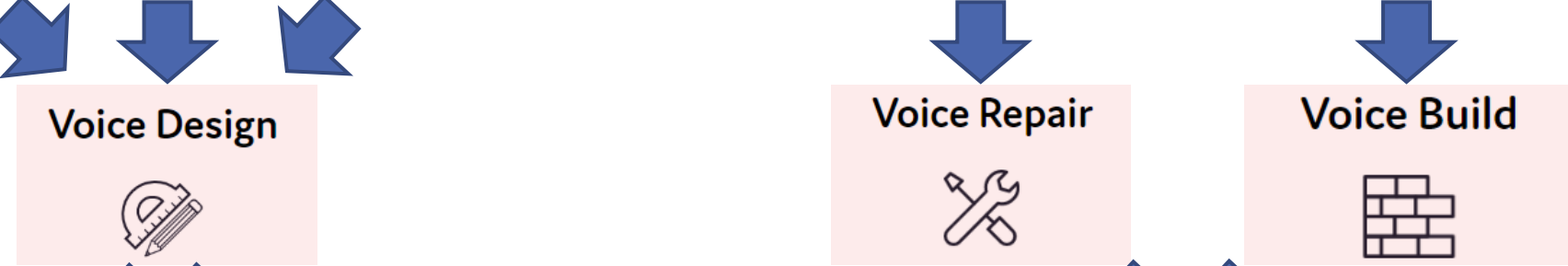
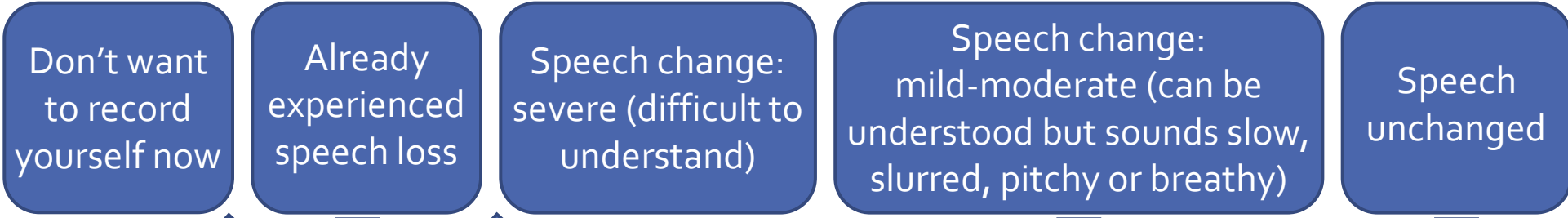
Service Name	 SpeakUnique	 ModelTalker	my-own-voice by 	CereVoice Me voice cloning 	
Website	www.speakunique.co.uk	www.modeltalker.org	https://mov.acapela-group.com/	www.cereproc.com/cerevoice-me	www.thevoicekeeper.com/
Languages available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English: All accents <p>Based on recording through either www.speakunique.co.uk or  www.iwillalwaysbeme.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English: Optimised for US word pronunciation but supports all English dialects incl. Ireland, Canada, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, India, South Africa, and Singapore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arabic Catalan Czech Danish Dutch (Belgium) Dutch (Netherlands) English (Australia) English (UK) English (US) Finnish French (France) French (Canada) German Greek Italian Norwegian Polish Spanish (Spain) Spanish (US) Swedish (Sweden) Turkish Portuguese (Portugal) Portuguese (Brazil) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Danish English French Italian Polish Romanian Spanish Swedish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English: American and British Isles accents Hebrew Spanish

SpeakUnique/ I Will Always Be Me are the IMNDA's preferred voice banking services because they offer multiple options for how you can provide a speech sample and they have a handy link for you/your SLT to apply for the IMNDA voice banking grant (but see the other services if you need a language other than English).

This section focusses on the options available for you to provide a speech sample to make your own personalised synthesised voice that will be processed by SpeakUnique.



SpeakUnique



Speech Quality
 SpeakUnique Option
 Speech Sample
 Recording options

Option	Synthesised voice based on:
Voice Build	Just your voice
Voice Repair	Your voice blended with a same accent speaker from bank of donor recordings
Voice Design - old recordings	Just your voice
Voice Design - donor speakers	Blend of voices of your nominated donor speakers with similar gender, age, accent

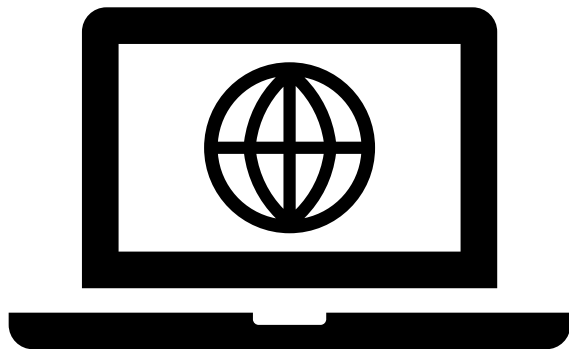
Choosing How to Record a Speech Sample

Recording the **I Will Always Be Me** book vs Recording **Phrases on SpeakUnique** Website

- Specifically written for people living with MND
 - Fast: you need to read 1-4 short lines of text per page (27 pages), takes an average of 15-30 mins in total
 - Provides a shorter sample of speech so might capture your personal speaking voice less accurately than the phrase recording option
 - Can be done on a smartphone or tablet as well as a laptop or desktop computer
 - A good option for people who:
 - don't want to spend much time recording
 - struggle a lot with fatigue so need a low energy option
 - Don't have access to a laptop or desktop computer so need to use a phone or tablet
- Phrase text is generic, mostly taken from published fiction books
 - Takes longer to complete. You need to read a minimum of 150 phrases (takes a strong, fast speaker who is familiar with the system approx. 45 mins) up to a maximum of 300 phrases
 - Provides a larger sample of your speech so likely to sound closer to your speaking voice
 - Can be done on a laptop or desktop computer but not currently on a smartphone or tablet
 - A good option for people who:
 - are strong speakers
 - have the time and energy to commit to recording a larger speech sample to more accurately capture your unique voice
 - Have access to a laptop or desktop computer

Whether you record your speech sample using the **I Will Always Be Me** book or phrases on the **SpeakUnique** website, **SpeakUnique** will process the synthesised voice.

Both recording methods can be used whether your speech is strong and unchanged, or you've noticed mild-moderate changes, as long as your speech can be understood on the recording.



Requirements

- A laptop/desktop computer for SpeakUnique; Will Always Be Me can also be used on a smartphone or tablet
- A reliable internet connection
- An email address to create a SpeakUnique or I Will Always Be Me account
- A headset microphone
- A suitable space to record



Microphones



Headset microphone with USB connector is best
(Can also use jack connection microphone headset)



Reliable brands:

Logitech, Sennheiser, Jabra, Plantronics, Evolve



Sample suggestions:

Logitech H340/H570E/H650E PC headset

Bluetooth headset microphones are not currently recommended.
If you don't have access to a suitable headset microphone,
your SLT can request one for you from the IMNDA equipment bank.



Best Recording Conditions

- Record in a quiet room
- Minimise background noise
- Avoid large echoey spaces – if possible, record in a room with lots of soft furnishings e.g., a box room with carpet, curtains, cushions, rugs etc.
- Break recording into manageable sessions to avoid fatiguing the voice
- Choose a time of day when your speech tends to sound best
- Have a drink to hand and take frequent sips
- Record in the same place with the same equipment each session for a consistent recording quality

Detailed Steps on How to Provide a Voice Sample

3 Options for a Providing a Voice Sample

1. **Making a recording of I Will Always Be Me**
2. Uploading old recordings to SpeakUnique
3. Making phrase recordings in SpeakUnique

This section will show you each option starting with I Will Always Be Me

I Will Always Be Me

- Can be used on a laptop, desktop computer and many of the most common tablets and smartphones.
- Recommended to use:
 - Google Chrome internet browser
 - An external microphone no matter what device you're using because it provides a better quality of audio recording
- Reading the entire story out loud takes an average range of 15-30 minutes.
- You can stop, resume, and continue at any time – everything is saved automatically.
- When you record your voice over of the I Will Always Be Me storybook, the recording will be saved on the website. You can replay, download and share your personalised version of the animated book with your voice over reading via social media or email. There is no cost for any of these steps.
- Within the website, you can also choose to use your voice over recording as your speech sample for voice banking, which will be processed by SpeakUnique. You can apply through the website for the IMNDA grant to fund the £200 cost for this service – shown on slide 45-52.

The Book

Keeping Your Voice

Power of Technology

Behind the Book

LOG IN

It's a good idea to first read the story so you can judge if you'd like to record it.

Some people find they really identify with the text because it is about the experience of having MND but it might be emotional to read some of the pages.

Click on 'The Book' tab highlighted in yellow to see the book before recording.

I WILL ALWAYS BE ME

The Book That Banks Your Voice

Created for people living with motor neurone disease and their loved ones.

BANK YOUR VOICE

Scroll down

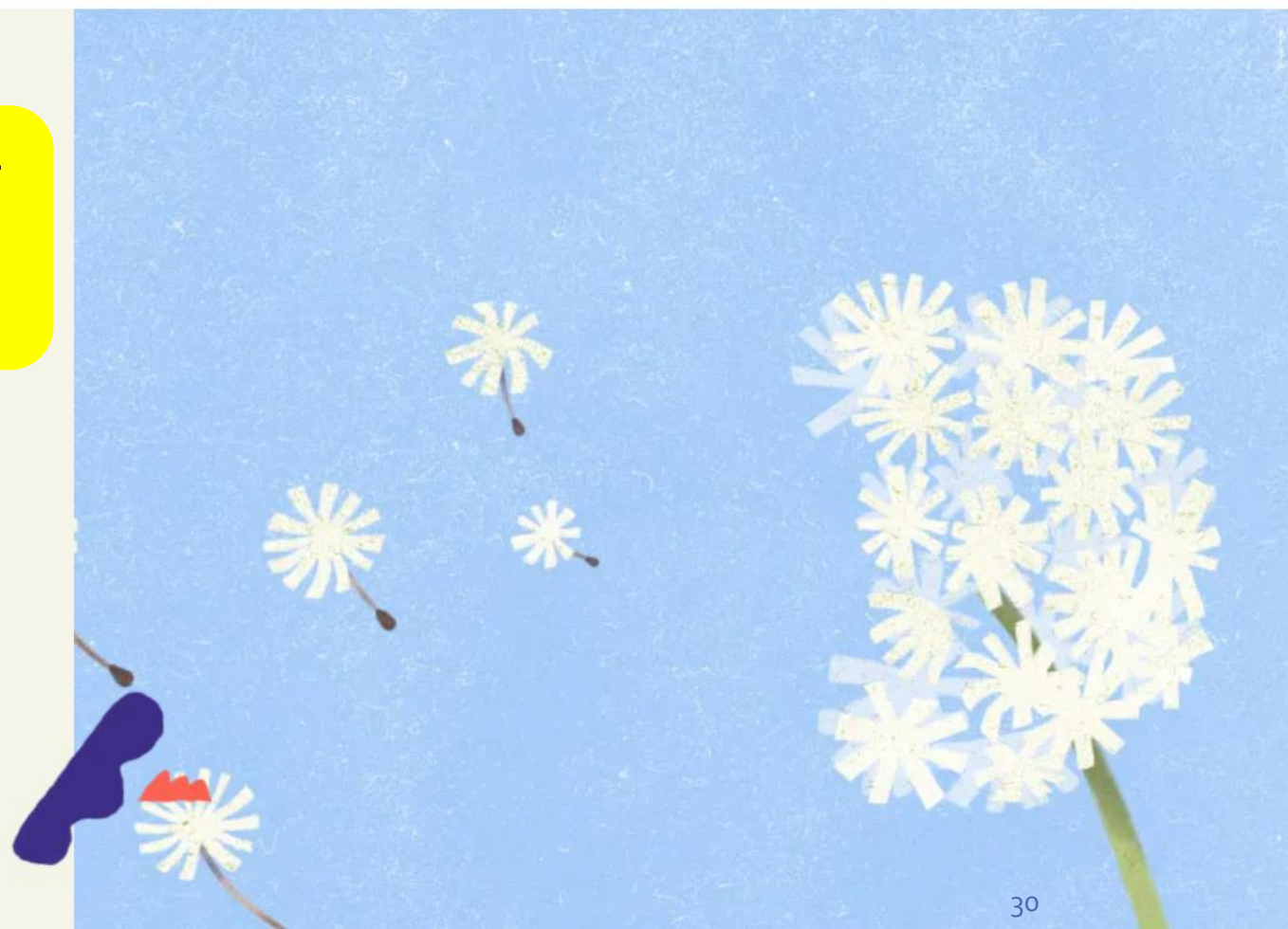
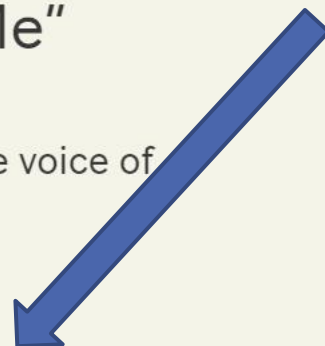


Click the black button that says, 'READ THE STORY'.
It will play an animated version with a voiceover.
You you can turn off your device/computer sound to
just read it if you prefer.

"I Will Always Be Me"

Read the story yourself through the voice of
people with MND.

READ THE STORY



I WILL ALWAYS BE ME

The Book That Banks Your Voice

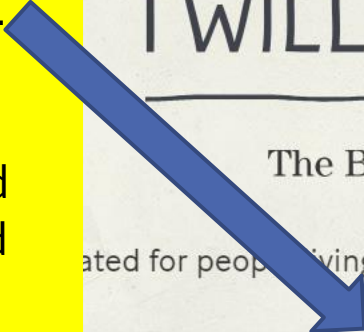
Created for people living with motor neurone disease and their loved ones.

BANK YOUR VOICE

Scroll down



To record your own voiceover, start by clicking the blue button that says, 'BANK YOUR VOICE'. This will take you to a page to make a free account. You can record a voice over and just save, replay, download and share it with whoever you choose, or you can also use your recording as your speech sample for voice banking that will be processed by SpeakUnique.



COUNTRY ▾

FIRST NAME

LAST NAME

EMAIL

PASSWORD 🔒

Your password needs to consist of at least 8 characters of which at least 1 lowercase, 1 uppercase, 1 number and 1 special character

I AM A PERSON LIVING WITH MND/ALS

I AM NOT A PERSON LIVING WITH MND/ALS

I consent to the "I Will Always Be Me" and SpeakUnique [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#)

I confirm that I am 18 years of age or older.

SIGN UP



Be careful to type your password correctly as you don't need to re-enter it to verify it. You can click on the eye symbol on the right side of the password box to check you typed it as you intended. Also make sure to keep note of your login details somewhere reliable as it's very common for people to forget them.

COUNTRY ▾

- Country
- England
- Scotland
- Wales
- Northern Ireland
- Republic of Ireland**
- Albania
- Andorra
- Austria
- Belarus
- Belgium
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany

at least 1 lowercase, 1 uppercase, 1 number and 1 special character

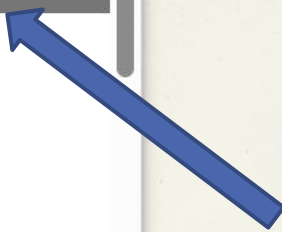
I AM A PERSON LIVING WITH MND/ALS

I AM NOT A PERSON LIVING WITH MND/ALS

I consent to the "I Will Always Be Me" and SpeakUnique [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#)

I confirm that I am 18 years of age or older.

SIGN UP



Scroll down the page to complete your registration. Here, 'Country' refers to where you live so even if you were born in another country but moved to Ireland, choose 'Republic of Ireland' if you are an IMNDA client.

This book is short, and you'll read it at your own pace. You can finish reading it in one sitting, or stop and continue at a later time. Everything is automatically saved.



CONTINUE

Click 'CONTINUE' to progress through some explanatory pages.



- * 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

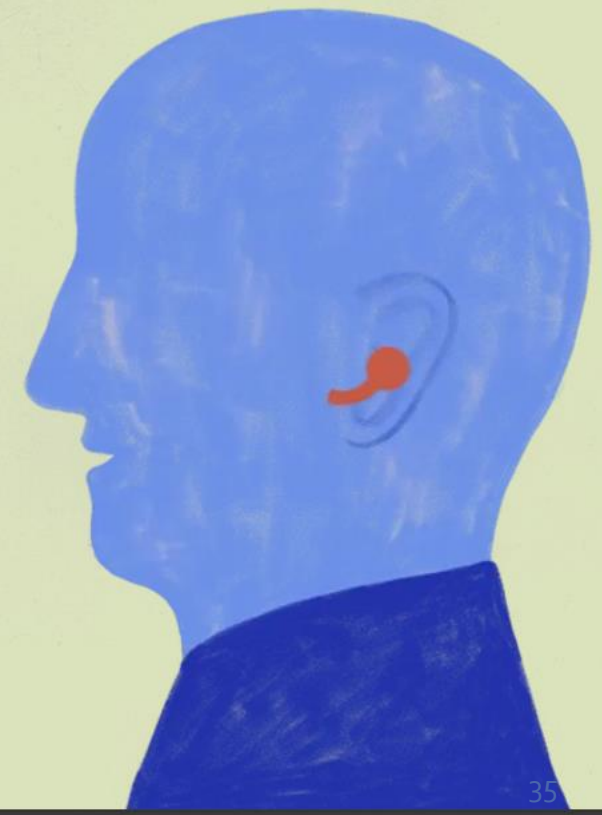
To bank your voice, you'll need a working microphone. We recommend an external wired microphone or headset.
Please connect it now.

- 1
- * 2
- 3
- 4

NEXT STEP ←

I DON'T HAVE A MICROPHONE

Follow the instruction here to connect your headset microphone before you start your recording.



iwillalwaysbeme.com wants to

Use your microphone

Allow **Block**

Let's make sure your microphone is working properly. Please allow the site to access your microphone.

ALLOW ACCESS

Allow access to your microphone. A popup message box will appear that might default to 'Block' but just click the 'Allow' button in the popup.



I WILL ALWAYS BE ME

The Book Keeping Your Voice Power of Technology Behind the Book **MY ACCOUNT**

Now it's time to test your microphone. Please click RECORD and read out loud the sentence on the right. When you're finished reading, click NEXT.

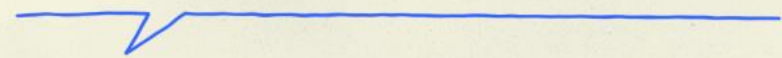
- 1
- 2
- * 3
- 4

RECORD NEXT STEP

I'm about to read
I Will Always Be Me.

Click the black 'RECORD' button and read this phrase out loud to test your microphone before you start the book.

Tell us more about the recording:



- 1
 - 2
 - * 3
 - 4
- IT SOUNDS GOOD IT SOUNDS NOISY THERE IS AN ECHO
- I DON'T HEAR ANYTHING

REPLAY RECORDING

I'm about to read
I Will Always Be Me.

Listen back to your test recording and confirm how it sounded to you by clicking one of the options.

1 You're now set up to start reading the book.

2
3
* 4 **OPEN BOOK**

You are now ready to start reading the book. Click 'OPEN BOOK' to begin.



EXIT BOOK ?

I Will Always Be Me



Click 'START RECORDING' and read aloud the line of text shown on the screen.



START RECORDING

EXIT BOOK ?

I Will Always Be Me

The screen will show when you are recording.

When you have read aloud the text on screen, you can either click:

- 'STOP' which will stay on this screen and give you the option to listen back to your recording and re-record it if you wish.
- If you are happy with the phrase and don't need to listen back, click 'CONTINUE' which automatically saves your recording and takes you to the next page of the book.
- At any stage, you can click 'EXIT BOOK' in the top right. Any pages you have already recorded will be saved and you can log back in whenever you wish and continue from where you left off.



EXIT BOOK ?

I Will Always Be Me

If you pressed 'STOP', you can listen back and re-read the text to record again if you wish to. Click 'CONTINUE' when you are ready to move to the next page of the book.





Yes, everything is changing.
But I will always be me.
And I will always love you.

There are 27 pages in the book.
When you get to this last page,
click 'FINISH THE BOOK'.



EXIT

All pages have been recorded.

Please listen to your recordings to make sure you're happy with them. You can re-read any parts you wish to improve. Remember that your voice sounds different when you hear it playing back from a recording. This is perfectly normal.

REVIEW RECORDINGS

You are offered another chance to review your recording and re-record any page you aren't completely happy with. When you are satisfied, click 'COMPLETE VOICE BANKING' to finalise your recording.



Once you've clicked, this is irreversible.

When you're happy with your recordings continue to

COMPLETE VOICE BANKING

Record the Book ✓ — [Create Digital Voice](#) — [Share Your Story](#) — [Thank you!](#)



CREATE YOUR DIGITAL VOICE



Thank you for recording the story.



Your voice is ready to be processed by SpeakUnique. Once your details have been submitted and verified, we'll start creating a digital copy of your voice.

If you would like to learn more about SpeakUnique and how a digital voice is created, please visit our [FAQ](#).

When you get to this page, scroll down to fill in the required information.



Your voice is unique. Knowing more about it will help us process it more accurately.

*

GENDER	DATE OF BIRTH
GENDER <input type="text"/>	DD/MM/YYYY <input type="text"/>
YOUR ACCENT	
COUNTRY <input type="text"/>	

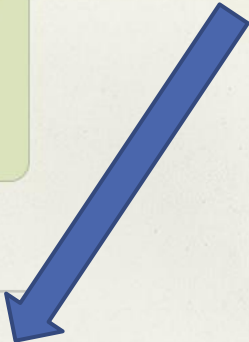
Fill in the information required. Click 'PROCESS MY VOICE' if you want SpeakUnique to build a synthesised voice that you can hear samples of.

If you don't want to use your recording for voice banking at this stage, for now, click 'SKIP VOICE PROCESSING'.



PROCESS MY VOICE

SKIP VOICE PROCESSING



If you clicked 'PROCESS MY VOICE' on the previous screen, you will see this screen. It takes about 24 hours for SpeakUnique to build the synthesised voice. You will receive an email when it's ready.

Well done.

*

Your recording was successfully submitted and is being processed by SpeakUnique.

→ SpeakUnique will update you via email about the status of the process. You will receive a notification when your digital voice is ready. This usually takes up to 24 hours.

→ Once you listen and approve your digital voice, if you've been diagnosed with MND in England, Wales or Northern Ireland you'll have the option to apply for funding from the MND Association. If you've been diagnosed with MND in Scotland, you'll have the option to apply for funding from MND Scotland. If you've been diagnosed with MND In Northern Ireland, you'll have the option to apply for funding from the Irish MND Association.

→ Finally, your digital voice will be made available to download to your compatible assistive speech device.

NEXT

Your speech on the recording needs to be intelligible for SpeakUnique to successfully process a synthesised voice for you based on this recording as your speech sample.

If your speech is strong and unchanged, SpeakUnique will automatically process your synthesised voice as per their 'Voice Build' option.

If your voice quality is slow, slurred, pitchy or breathy, SpeakUnique will automatically process your synthesised voice as per their 'Voice Repair' option where they blend your recording with a speaker with similar age and gender from their bank of donor recordings – this will smooth out the voice quality.

MY ACCOUNT

When your synthesised voice is ready, click 'LISTEN' to hear some samples.

STATUS: DIGITAL VOICE PROCESSED



Updated on:
19th July 2023

LISTEN

Your digital voice has been processed by SpeakUnique and a sample is ready for you to hear. Please click below to listen to samples of your synthetic voice – you will then be given the option to apply for funding.



My Digital Voice



Here are samples of your personalised digital voice!

Here is a sample of my personalised SpeakUnique voice.



This is based on a recording of my voice.



It means I can continue to communicate in my own voice.



The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog.



I'll have the soup of the day, please.



If you are happy with the resulting synthesised voice and want to purchase it, click on the 'Apply For Funding' button.

Before you can download your digital voice, you will need to apply for funding or purchase the voice.

Funding is available for people with a diagnosis of MND who live in the UK or the Republic of Ireland from either the MND Association, MND Scotland or Irish Motor

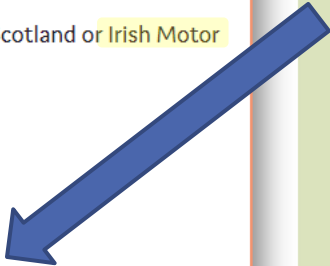
Neurone Disease Association.

Please click "Apply for Funding" for eligibility criteria and further instructions.

If you wish to purchase the voice yourself, it will cost £200.


Pay Now

Apply For Funding



Apply for Funding


A selection of charities will fund a SpeakUnique voice for communication aids. Please see below for the charities that will currently fund our voices and the eligibility criteria for each fund.



MND Scotland
Making time count
Motor Neurone Disease Scotland

MND Scotland will fund 100% of the cost of SpeakUnique products for those resident in Scotland who have a confirmed diagnosis of Motor Neurone Disease or Kennedy's Disease.

[Apply →](#)



mnda
motor neurone disease
association
Motor Neurone Disease Association

The MND Association will fund 100% of the cost of SpeakUnique products for those resident in England, Northern Ireland or Wales, who have a confirmed diagnosis of Motor Neurone Disease or Kennedy's Disease.

[Apply →](#)



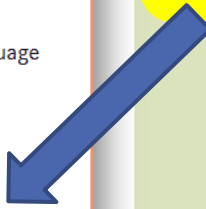
Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association
Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association

IMNDA are able to offer funding for Voice Build, Voice Repair or Voice Design, to those living with a confirmed diagnosis of MND in the Republic of Ireland.

To apply for funding from IMNDA you will need to be registered with IMNDA and provide contact details for your Speech and Language Therapist.

[Apply →](#)

Click the 'Apply' button below the IMNDA logo.





My Digital Voice



Apply for Irish Motor Neuron Disease Association Funding

To apply for funding from The Irish Motor Neuron Disease Association to cover the cost of your synthetic voice, please complete this form:

Your Title	<input type="text"/>
Your Name*	<input type="text"/>
Your address*	<input type="text"/>
Your postcode*	<input type="text"/>
Your phone number*	<input type="text"/>
Your email address*	<input type="text"/>
Your Date of Birth*	<input type="text"/>
Speech & Language Therapist (SLT) details <i>(If applicable)</i>	<input type="text"/>
Doctor/GP details*	<input type="text"/>
Date of Diagnosis*	<input type="text"/>

Fill in your information and scroll down the page.



Please note that you do not need to provide the information set out in this form and you can return to the previous page without

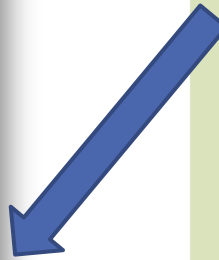
Your address*	<input type="text"/>
Your postcode*	<input type="text"/>
Your phone number*	<input type="text"/>
Your email address*	<input type="text"/>
Your Date of Birth*	<input type="text"/>
Speech & Language Therapist (SLT) details <i>(If applicable)</i>	<input type="text"/>
Doctor/GP details*	<input type="text"/>
Date of Diagnosis*	<input type="text"/>

Please note that you do not need to provide the information set out in this form and you can return to the previous page completing these fields. However, if you would like to apply for funding to cover the cost of your SpeakUnique voice ("Funding") you must complete the information on this page. If you do not complete the information in this form, we will not be able to process your application for Funding.

For the purposes of applicable data protection law, SpeakUnique Limited ("SpeakUnique", "we", "us") is a controller of personal data you provide by submitting this form. Irish Motor Neuron Disease Association is a separate controller of your personal data and their privacy notice is available at <https://imnda.ie/privacy-policy/>.

By completing this form, you consent to SpeakUnique processing the information set out in this form for the purpose of linking your SpeakUnique account with any Funding in accordance with our Privacy Notice at www.speakunique.co.uk/privacy-policy, and to SpeakUnique sharing the information set out in this form with Irish Motor Neuron Disease Association for the purpose of Irish Motor Neuron Disease Association assessing whether to offer you Funding. You can withdraw your consent at any time by emailing privacy@speakunique.co.uk. If you have any questions about how your personal data is used by Irish Motor Neuron Disease Association or wish to withdraw your consent to Irish Motor Neuron Disease Association processing your personal data, please contact info@imnda.ie

Click 'Send'. This generates an email to the IMNDA to apply for the voice banking grant.



Send

Back

The Book

Keeping Your Voice

Power of Technology

Behind the Book

MY ACCOUNT

I WILL ALWAYS BE ME

The Book That Banks Your Voice

Created for people living with motor neurone disease and their loved ones.

GO TO MY BOOK



Regardless of whether you requested a synthesised voice or not, when you are logged into your I Will Always Be Me account, you can play back an animated version of the book with the voice over you recorded.

Scroll down



I Will Always Be Me

Your book will play and move automatically through the pages.



DOWNLOAD YOUR BOOK

Request to download a copy of your book. This process will take up to 24 hours to complete.

REQUEST DOWNLOAD



You can also request to download an animated version of the book with your voice over and/or generate a link to share it via social media.

SHARE YOUR STORY

Create your unique link

*

Share your recording with your loved ones. This unique link will give people access to your recording as they flip through the pages of the book.



PRIVATE LINK

<https://iwillalwaysbeme.com/book/re...>

SHARE | 📧 | 📘 | 🐦



3 Options for a Voice Sample

1. Making a recording of I Will Always Be Me
2. **Uploading old recordings to SpeakUnique**
3. **Making phrase recordings in SpeakUnique**

We have covered how to create a speech sample for voice banking using I Will Always Be Me.

If you prefer to record phrases on the SpeakUnique website or upload old recordings, you need to start by creating a SpeakUnique account which is the same process for both option 2 or 3 here.

Building your Voice using speakunique.co.uk

All: Use your email address to register to create an account

Voice Design: upload old recordings or create voice donor codes – your voice donors then also register using a donor code

Voice Build/Repair/Nominated voice donor: Record 150 (min) - 300 (max) phrases and click 'Save and Submit' when finished recording

All: Listen to samples of the synthesised voice

Voice Build: 5 sample phrases of the voice provided for review

Voice Repair: Choose your favourite from 5 versions of synthesised voices

Voice Design: SpeakUnique work closely with you to create a bespoke voice you are happy with

All: Pay/Apply for funding via IMNDA

All: Download and use the completed voice

www.speakunique.co.uk

The screenshot shows the homepage of the SpeakUnique website. The browser address bar displays 'speakunique.co.uk'. The navigation menu includes 'About Us', 'Overview of Services', 'Pricing', 'Using Your Voice', and 'Resources & Support'. The 'Sign Up/Login' button is highlighted with a yellow box and a blue arrow pointing to it from a yellow callout box. The callout box contains the text: 'Start by clicking the 'Sign Up/Login' button to create an account.' The main content area features the text 'Welcome to SpeakUnique' and 'Voice banking solutions for all speech needs. In your own words.' A large black arrow points downwards from this text. The background is decorated with several circular images of people using technology and abstract orange and yellow shapes.

SpeakUnique

About Us ▾ Overview of Services ▾ Pricing ▾ Using Your Voice ▾ Resources & Support ▾ **Sign Up/Login**

Welcome to SpeakUnique

Voice banking solutions for all speech needs.
In your own words.

↓

Start by clicking the 'Sign Up/Login' button to create an account.



Enter your email address (not an SLT's or healthcare professional who might be helping you). Then accept the terms of use and click 'Begin Registration'.

New to SpeakUnique?

Start with your email address:

I agree to the [privacy policy](#) and [terms of use](#)
(These links will open in a new window.)

Begin Registration →

[Click here if you have a Voice Donor code](#)

Registered already?

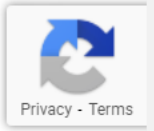
Enter your email address:

Enter your password:

Login →

[Forgot your password?](#)

← Cancel






Let's get to know each other

Fields marked with a red star * are required for registration.

First name*

Last name*

Choose a password* 

How did you hear about SpeakUnique?

Would you like to join our marketing list?


← Cancel

Continue →

Be careful to type your password correctly as you don't need to re-enter it to verify it. You can click on the eye symbol on the right side of the password box to check you typed it as you intended. Make sure to keep note of your login details somewhere reliable as it's very common for people to forget them.



Voice Build




£175

If your speech is **not yet** affected.

A synthetic replica of your own voice.

Get Started

Voice Repair



£250


If your speech is already affected.

For if your voice is slow, slurred, or the pitch has changed.

A repaired version of your voice.

Get Started

Voice Design



£300

Use old recordings of your voice.

OR

Create a bespoke voice from voice donors.

Get Started

Click 'Get Started' on whichever of the 3 options you want to register for. If you are not sure, discuss this with your SLT.

The recording process is the same for Voice Build and Voice Repair so if you chose one and want to switch later, you can do this by emailing support@speakunique.co.uk BEFORE you click 'Save and Submit', which is a button you will see when you reach the minimum of 150 phrases.

email address.

Get Started



Let's get to know each other

We collect this information to help us create your synthetic voice.

What is your medical diagnosis or condition?

When were you diagnosed?
Month... Year...

Please select your date of birth *
Day... Month... Year...

Please select your gender *
Male Female Other

← Previous

Please note that you do not need to provide the information set out on this page and you can proceed to the next page without completing these fields. However, in order to improve our understanding of how to create your voice, you can complete the information on this page.

Next →

For the purposes of applicable data protection law, SpeakUnique Limited ("SpeakUnique", "we", "us") is a controller of personal data you provide by submitting this form. By completing this form, you consent to your personal data being collected and processed by us in order to improve our understanding of how to create your voice in accordance with our Privacy Notice at www.speakunique.co.uk/privacy-policy You can withdraw your consent at any time by emailing privacy@ speakunique.co.uk.

Fill in the required information. You can choose to enter your diagnosis or leave that blank.

If you are accessing an SLT service, fill in their contact details here and select 'Speech and Language Therapist/Assistant' from the dropdown list.

Let's get to know each other

Is anyone helping you with the voice banking process?

We know that many people are supported by a healthcare professional, e.g. speech and language therapist, to bank their voice. We offer healthcare professionals accounts so they can monitor your progress and work with us to ensure your SpeakUnique voice is right for you.

If you would like to add your healthcare professional to your account, please enter their contact details below and confirm you are happy for us to share information with them. If you do not wish to add any details now, you can add their details through "Your Account" later.

Healthcare Professional Name:

Healthcare Professional Email Address:

Healthcare Professional Phone Number:

Healthcare Professional Role:

Your Healthcare Professional will be able to:

- View your name and email address
- View your recording progress
- Listen to the recordings you complete with SpeakUnique or listen to the recordings you upload to your account
- Listen to samples of your personalised synthetic voice
- Discuss the status and any feedback on the voice with the SpeakUnique team
- Apply for funding on your behalf

By ticking this box you confirm you give permission for SpeakUnique to liaise with your named healthcare professional about your account. You can withdraw your consent at any time by emailing support@speakunique.co.uk.

- Please select...
- Please select...
- Speech Language Therapist / Assistant
- AT Assistant
- Nurse
- Occupational Therapist
- Charity
- Support Worker
- Other - please specify

Skip this step for now

Next →



Voice Design

What accent should your synthetic voice have?*

Country:

Region/County/State:

Do you currently use a communication aid?

Yes No

If yes, what communication aid are you using?

Next →

Everyone will be asked about their accent.

Only people who register for Voice Design will be asked if they currently use a communication aid.



Voice Build

Voice Repair

How would you describe your accent?*

Country:

Please select ⌵

Region/County/State:

Please select ⌵

Do you have any other accent influences? [More about this ?](#)

(optional)

Next →

Select the options that best describe your accent and type in any other relevant information about your accent influences.



What accent should your synthetic voice have?*

Country:

Please select

- Please select
- United Kingdom
- Ireland
- United States of America and territories
- Afghanistan
- Albania
- Algeria
- American Samoa
- Andorra
- Angola
- Anguilla
- Antarctica
- Antigua and Barbuda
- Argentina
- Armenia
- Aruba
- Australia
- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Bahamas

Select your country from the dropdown list. Ireland is the second option, so you don't need to scroll down to find it.



What accent should your synthetic voice have?*

Country:

Ireland

Region/County/State:

Please select

Please select

- Carlow
- Cavan
- Clare
- Cork
- Donegal
- Dublin
- Galway
- Kerry
- Kildare
- Kilkenny
- Laois
- Leitrim
- Limerick
- Longford
- Louth
- Mayo
- Meath
- Monaghan
- Offaly

If you selected Ireland, you can then select your county.



Thanks for signing up to SpeakUnique

Your account has successfully been created.

A confirmation email has been sent to the email address you provided. Please use this email address and the password you set at registration to log back in to your account.

You are now ready to start creating your synthetic voice repair.

[Start Now →](#)

You have now finished creating your account and can get started on providing your speech sample.

3 Options for a Voice Sample

1. Making a recording of I Will Always Be Me
2. **Uploading old recordings to SpeakUnique**
3. Making phrase recordings in SpeakUnique

This section shows you the Voice Design options including both uploading old recordings and generating codes for nominate voice donors to make phrase recordings on your behalf.



Voice Design

Thanks for signing up to SpeakUnique

Your account has successfully been created.

A confirmation email has been sent to the email address you provided. Please use this email address and the password you set at registration to log back in to your account.

You are now ready to start creating your synthetic voice design.

[Start Now →](#)

Click 'Start Now' to see the Voice Design options.



Please select between our two Voice Design methods:

Create a synthetic voice from old audio recordings

To create a synthetic voice from old recordings of your voice, the recordings must be:

- just you speaking
- no background noise
- at least 5 minutes of audio (can be across multiple clips)

Upload

Create a bespoke synthetic voice from voice donors

We can take donor voice recordings and blend these together to create a bespoke synthetic voice for you.

To do this, we require two donor voices. We recommend the donors match the voice you want in regional accent, age and gender.

Get Started

Not sure? Contact our support team at <support@speakunique.co.uk>

These two options are explained more on the next slide.



Voice Design

Option 1: Create a synthesised voice from old recordings of you speaking

- You can use file(s) in .wav / .mp3 / .mp4 / .mov or other digital formats
- You need a minimum of 5 minutes of the you speaking, 15 – 20 minutes of speech is optimal
- Must be free of loud background noises e.g., music playing, background chatter
- If the recording contains another speaker, you need to email to say which voice is yours
- Recordings where other people are speaking simultaneously over each other are not suitable

Option 2: Use donor voices to create a bespoke voice

- Choose 2 people you know with a similar accent, age, gender or vocal characteristics to you to record Speak Unique phrases (150-300): the resulting voice will be a blend of the two speakers
- If you have no/only 1 suitable person to nominate, you can email info@SpeakUnique.co.uk to check if they have a suitable match in their bank of donor voices with similar accent, gender, age

If you have only 1 nominated voice donor, you could also consider asking them to complete Voice Build.



Please select between our two Voice Design methods:

Create a synthetic voice from old audio recordings

To create a synthetic voice from old recordings of your voice, the recordings must be:

- just you speaking
- no background noise
- at least 5 minutes of audio (can be across multiple clips)

Upload

Create a bespoke synthetic voice from voice donors

We can take donor voice recordings and blend these together to create a bespoke synthetic voice for you.

To do this, we require two donor voices. We recommend the donors match the voice you want in regional accent, age and gender.

Get Started

Not sure? Contact our support team at <support@ speakunique.co.uk>

To use old recordings, click 'Upload'.




Your Account

Logout

For files larger than 100 megabytes you may want to try our [large file uploader](#) instead.

Drag files here to upload them into your SpeakUnique account



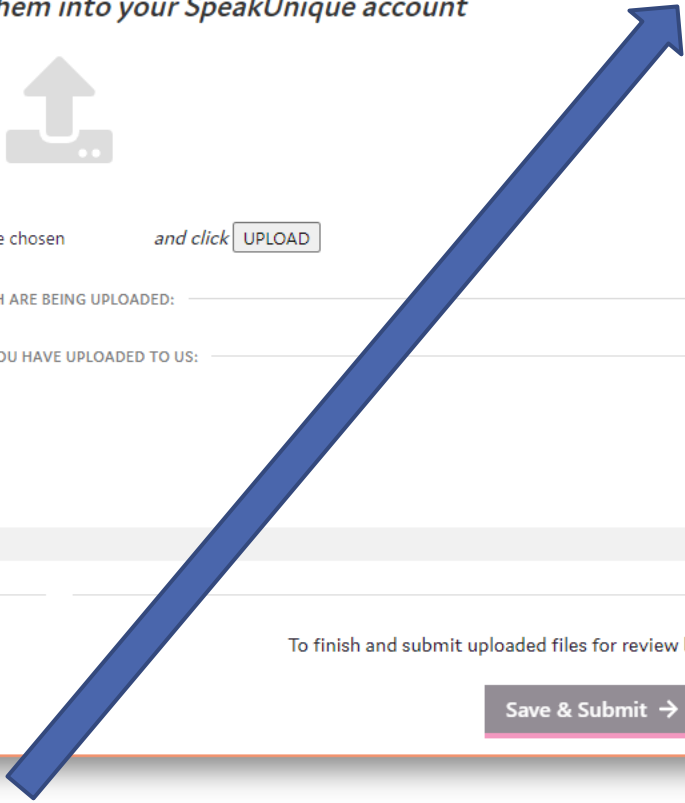
or No file chosen and click

FILES WHICH ARE BEING UPLOADED: _____

FILES WHICH YOU HAVE UPLOADED TO US: _____

To save your progress and add more files at another time, click below:

To finish and submit uploaded files for review by our team, click below:



Follow the instructions shown in the box.
Note the link in the top right for the large file loader if your files are over 100 megabytes (MB).



Your Account

Logout

Please select between our two Voice Design methods:

Create a synthetic voice from old audio recordings

To create a synthetic voice from old recordings of your voice, the recordings must be:

- just you speaking
- no background noise
- at least 5 minutes of audio (can be across multiple clips)

[Upload](#)

Create a bespoke synthetic voice from voice donors

We can take donor voice recordings and blend these together to create a bespoke synthetic voice for you.

To do this, we require two donor voices. We recommend the donors match the voice you want in regional accent, age and gender.

[Get Started](#)

Not sure? Contact our support team at <support@speakunique.co.uk>

If you have nominated people you know to record on your behalf, click 'Get Started' to generate codes they can use to make their own SpeakUnique accounts to make phrase recordings that will be linked to your account.



Voice Donor One

Please share the link below with your voice donor:

<https://www.speakunique.co.uk/donor>

And their unique donor code

1008-5561

Status: Waiting for voice donor to register

Voice Donor Two

Please share the link below with your voice donor:

<https://www.speakunique.co.uk/donor>

And their unique donor code

8334-7922

Status: Waiting for voice donor to register

Note the codes. Give one to each of your nominated voice donors.

< Cancel

If you do not have any suitable voice donors, or if you only have one available voice donor, please email info@speakunique.co.uk with the accent, gender and approximate age of the voice you would like. We may be able to use one of our existing voice donors.

Continue >

You can contact SpeakUnique if you have no/only one nominated person to record on your behalf by emailing info@speakunique.co.uk. SpeakUnique can check if they have a suitable gender, age and accent match in their bank of donor voices.



New to SpeakUnique?

Start with your email address:

I agree to the [privacy policy](#) and [terms of use](#)
(These links will open in a new window.)

Begin Registration →

Click here if you have a Voice Donor code



Your nominated voice donors need to register also.

← Cancel

Registered already?

Enter your email address:

Enter your password:

Login →

[Forgot your password?](#)



Thank you for being a Voice Donor!

To continue please register for an account below:

Fields marked with a red star * are required for registration.

Email address*

First name*

Last name*

Choose a password*

Enter your 8 digit donor code* - [More about this](#)

Please select your date of birth*
Day... Month... Year...

Please select your gender*
Male Female Other

How would you describe your regional accent?*

Country:

Region/County/State:

Would you like to join our marketing list?

I agree to the [privacy policy](#) and [terms of use](#)

Next →

Your nominated voice donors enter the code you gave them when they register. When they complete registration, they will then record phrases as per Voice Build/Repair and their recordings will be linked to your account through this code.

3 Options for a Voice Sample

1. Making a recording of I Will Always Be Me
2. Uploading old recordings to SpeakUnique
3. **Making phrase recordings in SpeakUnique**

This is the option that most people currently use.



Voice Build

Voice Repair

Thanks for signing up to SpeakUnique

Your account has successfully been created.

A confirmation email has been sent to the email address you provided. Please use this email address and the password you set at registration to log back in to your account.

You are now ready to start creating your synthetic voice build.

[Start Now →](#)

Thanks for signing up to SpeakUnique

Your account has successfully been created.

A confirmation email has been sent to the email address you provided. Please use this email address and the password you set at registration to log back in to your account.

You are now ready to start creating your synthetic voice repair.

[Start Now →](#)

When you completed registration, your 'Start Now' message is the same for Voice Build/Repair.



Recording your voice

For step-by-step instructions on how to record your voice, please watch our video below



On the website, you have an option of playing this video with instructions.

< Previous

Next >



Recording Tips

To get a good quality recording, please follow these recording tips:

1. Record in a quiet room with lots of soft furnishings to remove background noise and reverberation.
2. Ideally, use an external, headset microphone to complete the recording.
3. For each sentence, please press Record (or the R key) and read the sentence aloud, then press "Stop" or "Next" to move onto the next sentence.
4. If you make a mistake, please re-record the sentence.
5. Please listen back to the first 5 sentences to check the quality of your recording. We recommend listening to every 20 - 30 sentences throughout the recording to continue to monitor quality.
6. You can complete the recording across multiple sessions - please use the "Save & Log Out" button on the screen if you would like to stop the recording at any time.
7. When you have recorded as many sentences as you would like, please use "Save & Submit" button to let us know you have finished the recording.

[< Previous](#)[Next >](#)

Some recording tips are shown on the screen.



Get ready



Position your microphone so it is level with your jaw



Not too low...



...and not too high

Some tips about microphone placement are shown on the screen.

< Previous

Next >



Choosing a script

First, you are required to read a set of sentences designed to cover all the sounds in the English language.

Next, you will be asked to read sentences from a book.
Please select the genre of book you would like to read from:

Science Fiction



Detective and Adventure



Period Drama



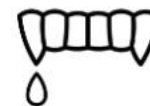
Bedtime Classics



Legends and Mythology



Horror and Supernatural



< Previous

Next >

You can pick a genre of book that might interest you for the phrases you will read aloud to provide your speech sample.



Choosing a script

You have selected Bedtime Classics. Please select a book to read from below.

Title	Author	Reading Difficulty	
Alice in Wonderland	Lewis Carroll	Average	<input type="radio"/>
Dick Whittington and His Cat	Edith Carrington	Easier	<input type="radio"/>
Peter Pan	J.M. Barrie	Harder	<input type="radio"/>
Stories by Beatrix Potter	Beatrix Potter	Average	<input type="radio"/>
The Jungle Book	Rudyard Kipling	Average	<input type="radio"/>

Please note that some books may have been edited for clarity and ease of reading. The books have been rated for difficulty based on factors such as length of sentences, structure of sentences and vocabulary. To return to the genre selection please press Previous

[< Previous](#)[Next >](#)

Within each book genre, there are multiple book options for you to choose. An estimate of reading difficulty is provided as a guide.



Your Account


Logout

We need to access your microphone to continue. If there is box above asking for permission to use your microphone, please click "Allow".

If you have done that and you are still seeing this message, please **reload this page**.

If there is no box and you are having trouble, look for a small microphone icon in the URL bar at the top of the window and try clicking it to reset your permissions for this page.

Please click on your microphone in the list below and then click Continue:



- Mic 1: Default - Microphone (HS-720 V2)
- Mic 2: Communications - Microphone (HS-720 V2)
- Mic 3: Microphone (HS-720 V2)
- Mic 4: Microphone Array (Realtek(R) Audio)

Continue

You now need to plug in your headset microphone then pick the microphone from the list by clicking on it (it will usually be named by brand/model number). Click on the name of the microphone you are using. When you see a black box appear around the selected microphone, then click 'Continue'.



If your microphone was not successfully selected, you will see a popup message. Click the radio button for the 'Always allow' button and make sure the headset microphone you are using is the one selected in the 'Microphone' box.



Microphone blocked

This page has been blocked from accessing your microphone.

Always allow <https://www.speakunique.co.uk> to access your microphone

Continue blocking microphone access

Microphone:

[Manage](#) [Done](#)



Your Account

Logout

Please call Stella.



This is sentence 1 of 150 (minimum recordings).

Save and Log Out

If you want to complete the recording at a later date please click this button. Your current progress will be saved and you will be logged out.

1 %

Reading: Around the World in Eighty Days
[Click to change book]

You are now ready to start recording. Click the 'Record' button in the centre of the screen.



Please call Stella.



This is sentence **1** of **150** (minimum recordings).

Save and Log Out

If you want to complete the recording at a later date please click this button. Your current progress will be saved and you will be logged out.

1 %

Reading: Around the World in Eighty Days
[\[Click to change book\]](#)

When you are in recording mode, a red box appears around the phrase. Read the phrase aloud and then click 'Stop'. You can then play the phrase back to check the quality and re-record if needed. For the first few phrases, you might need to adjust the position of the microphone by your mouth – it's is good to do this at the start to check the sound before you get too far into your recording.



Your Account

Logout

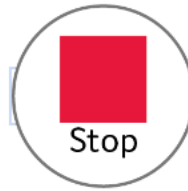
Status: Recording...

Microphone: Communications - Microphone Array (Realtek(R) Audio) [Change](#)

Ask her to bring these things with her from the store.



You will see how many phrases you have completed, a progress bar and a percentage so you can judge how much is left to record.



This is sentence 2 of 150 (minimum recordings).



Save and Log Out

If you want to complete the recording at a later date please click this button. Your current progress will be saved and you will be logged out.

1 %

Reading: Alice in Wonderland
[\[Click to change book\]](#)



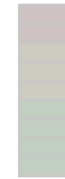
Your Account

Logout

Status: Ready to Record

Microphone: Communications - Microphone Array (Realtek(R) Audio) [Change](#)

Six spoons of fresh snow peas, five thick slabs of blue cheese, and maybe a snack for her brother Bob.



This is sentence **3** of **150** (minimum recordings).

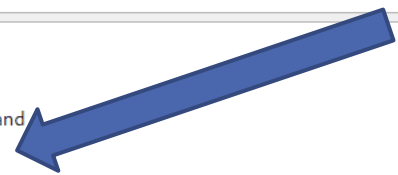
The first 27 sentences are the same for everyone. They are a mix of shorter and longer phrases and designed to capture all of the sounds in the English language. Your selected book will start at phrase 28 but at any stage, you can click 'Click to change book' which will not reset your progress.

Save and Log Out

If you want to complete the recording at a later date please click this button. Your current progress will be saved and you will be logged out.

2 %

Reading: Alice in Wonderland
[\[Click to change book\]](#)





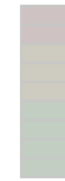
Your Account

Logout

Status: Ready to Record

Microphone: Communications - Microphone Array (Realtek(R) Audio) [Change](#)

We also need a small plastic snake and a big toy frog for the kids.



At any stage, you can click 'Save and Log Out' to save what you have recorded so far, log out and log back in to do more recording at another time.



This is sentence 4 of 150 (minimum recordings).

Save and Log Out

If you want to complete the recording at a later date please click this button. Your current progress will be saved and you will be logged out.

3 %

Reading: Alice in Wonderland

[\[Click to change book\]](#)

Listen Back

- Listen back to recordings regularly to check quality
 - SpeakUnique suggest:
 - listening to the first 5 sentences
 - then listen back every 20 sentences



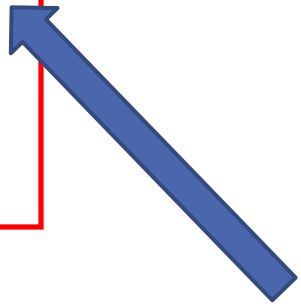
Your Account

Logout

Status: Recording...

Microphone: Microphone (G432 Gaming Headset) [Change](#)

Dale had never wanted a sister. He totally hated that silly little girl.



⏪ ▶ Play ■ Stop ⏩

The bar to the right of the phrase represents volume. If it is red, your microphone might be too close to your mouth for your volume of speech.

This is sentence **15** of **150** (minimum recordings).



Save and Log Out

If you want to complete the recording at a later date please click this button. Your current progress will be saved and you will be logged out.

10 %

Reading: Howards End
[\[Click to change book\]](#)



Your Account

Logout

It seems your microphone is too close to your mouth.
Please move your microphone a bit further away and try again.

Try Again

Don't show this message again

Oops, that sentence wasn't quite loud enough.
Please try that one again and speak a bit more loudly.
If this keeps happening, go to your computer's settings
and try adjusting the levels for your microphone.

Try Again

Don't show this message again

The system will prompt you to re-record a phrase if it was too loud or too quiet.

These are some messages that you might see. Adjust your microphone position by your mouth and then re-record if you see one of these pop up.



Status: Ready to Record

Microphone: Microphone (G432 Gaming Headset) [Change](#)

'You know as much as I do now.

⏪ **Play** **Record** ⏩

This is sentence **150** of **150** (minimum recordings).

Save and Log Out

If you want to complete the recording at a later date please click this button. Your current progress will be saved and you will be logged out.

100 %

Reading: Howards End
[\[Click to change book\]](#)

When you have recorded 150 phrases, your progress will be at 100%.



Status: Ready to Record

Microphone: Microphone (G432 Gaming Headset) [Change](#)

'It's a young man out the unknown.'



This is sentence **151** of **300** (total recordings)



50 %

Save and Log Out

If you want to complete the recording at a later date please click this button. Your current progress will be saved and you will be logged out.

Reading: Howards End
[\[Click to change book\]](#)

Save and Submit

If you have recorded all the sentences you can manage please click to submit your recording and we will generate your synthetic voice.

When you proceed to phrase 151, you will see that your progress resets to 50% because you have the option to keep recording up to 300 phrases to make a larger sample of your speech, but you will also now see a 'Save and Submit' button. At any point from here on, you can click this button to finish recording and SpeakUnique will start processing your synthesised voice.



Your Account

Logout

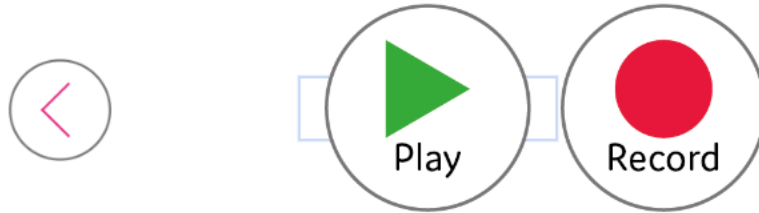
Status: Great! You can proceed to the next sentence.

Microphone: Microphone (G432 Gaming Headset) [Change](#)

Silence would have been criminal.



300 is the maximum number of phrases. If you got this far, click 'Save and Submit' now to finalise your voice sample.



This is sentence **300** of **300** (total recordings).

Save and Log Out

If you want to complete the recording at a later date please click this button. Your current progress will be saved and you will be logged out.

100 %

Reading: Howards End [\[Click to change book\]](#)

Save and Submit

If you have recorded all the sentences you can manage please click to submit your recording and we will generate your synthetic voice.



Your Account

Logout

Thank you for submitting your recordings to SpeakUnique. You will receive an email when your synthetic voice has been generated.

Don't show this message again

Finish

Your SpeakUnique Products

Product: Voice Build
Status:
Your Voice Build has been generated.

You will be notified by email when your synthetic voice is ready to listen to.

The system will show you a message to confirm that you have successfully submitted your speech sample. SpeakUnique will now generate your synthesised voice. You will receive an email to let you know when it is ready for you to listen to samples.

When Your Voice is Ready



Your Voice Build is ready to listen to.

Yahoo/Inbox ☆



SpeakUnique

Your Voice Build is ready!



Great news! Your new SpeakUnique voice is now ready to listen to.
Click the button below to head over to our website and hear a sample.

Listen to voice

What now?

You can click on the 'Listen to voice' link in the email you receive or log directly into your SpeakUnique account to play some phrases with samples of you synthesised voice.

Your Voice Build is ready!

"Here is a sample of my personalised SpeakUnique voice."



"This is based on a recording of my voice."



"It means I can continue to communicate in my own voice."



"The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog."



"I'll have the soup of the day, please."



Isn't it great? We hope you love your voice as much as we do!

What next?

If you're happy with your samples and want to start using your voice, you will need to purchase or apply for funding for your SpeakUnique voice in order to be able to download it.

[Show More](#)

Apply For Funding

Pay Now

You can play these sample phrases. Scroll down the page to see a message from SpeakUnique about how to let them know if you don't like the voice.





Your Account

Logout



Isn't it great? We hope you love your voice as much as we do!

What next?

If you're happy with your samples and want to start using your voice, you will need to purchase or apply for funding for your SpeakUnique voice in order to be able to download it.

Use the Apply for Funding button to apply for funding from one of our charity partners. If you wish to purchase your voice yourself, please use the "pay now" button. You can also email funding@ speakunique.co.uk if you would like to discuss funding from the health service or a charity not listed on our website.

Hide

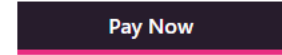
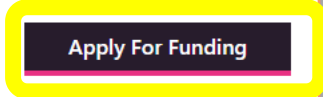
What do you think?

If you're happy with your voice but don't need to download it yet we will store the voice for as long as you like - free of charge! Click 👍 to let us know you like the voice but don't need it yet!

If you don't like the voice, please don't apply for funding or purchase the voice just yet. Just click 👎 and a member of our team will be in touch with you or email support@ speakunique.co.uk.

If you're not happy with the voice, there may be some changes that we can make to improve the voice. It is helpful for us to understand what exactly you don't like about the voice - for example, the speed, the pitch, the accent, the vocal identity. Unfortunately as the voice is a digital replica of your natural voice there will always be a "synthetic" quality to the voice and it will not be as expressive as natural speech.

Hide



If you like the voice and want to purchase it, click 'Apply For Funding'

If you don't like the voice, click the thumbs down and a member of the SpeakUnique team will email you to follow up.


A selection of charities will fund a SpeakUnique voice for communication aids. Please see below for the charities that will currently fund our voices and the eligibility criteria for each fund.



MND Scotland
Making time count
Motor Neurone Disease Scotland

MND Scotland will fund 100% of the cost of SpeakUnique products for those resident in Scotland who have a confirmed diagnosis of Motor Neurone Disease or Kennedy's Disease.


[Apply →](#)



mnda
motor neurone disease
association
Motor Neurone Disease Association

The MND Association will fund 100% of the cost of SpeakUnique products for those resident in England, Northern Ireland or Wales, who have a confirmed diagnosis of Motor Neurone Disease or Kennedy's Disease.

[Apply →](#)



PSPFA
Progressive Supranuclear Palsy
Association

PSPA are able to offer funding for SpeakUnique products for those who live in the UK with a confirmed diagnosis of PSP or CBD. Please note you will need to provide contact details of a healthcare professional to apply.

[Apply →](#)



Multiple System Atrophy Trust
Multiple System Atrophy Trust

The MSA Trust can offer funding for their members living with MSA in the UK and



Mouth Cancer FOUNDATION
Awareness and Support
Mouth Cancer Foundation

The Mouth Cancer Foundation will offer



ATAXIA
Ataxia UK

Ataxia UK can offer funding for Voice Build,

Scroll down this page until you see the IMNDA logo.





Apply →

Apply →

Apply →




MND and Me
FOUNDATION

MND and Me

The MND and Me Foundation will offer funding for Voice Build, Voice Repair and Voice Design for patients, who live in Queensland Australia and have a confirmed diagnosis of MND. If not already registered with the Foundation, a Client Contact Form and Consent Form will be required.

Apply →



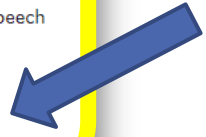
Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association

Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association

IMNDA are able to offer funding for Voice Build, Voice Repair or Voice Design, to those living with a confirmed diagnosis of MND in the Republic of Ireland. To apply for funding from IMNDA you will need to be registered with IMNDA and provide contact details for your Speech and Language Therapist.

Apply →

Click 'Apply' under the IMNDA logo.



Back



Your Account

Logout

Apply for IMNDA Funding

To apply for funding to cover the cost of your SpeakUnique voice from The Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association please complete this form.

The details you enter will be sent to the named healthcare professional and IMNDA, alongside the message below asking the healthcare professional to endorse your application for funding from IMNDA. We will notify you by email on the outcome of your funding application.

Your Title

Your Name*

Your phone number*

Your email address*

SpeakUnique Product

Cost

Name of healthcare professional endorsing application for Support Grant*

Email address of healthcare professional endorsing application for Support Grant*

Below is a preview of the email that we will send on your behalf to your healthcare professional

Date: Tue, Sep 19, 2023
 To:
 From: SpeakUnique <support@speakunique.co.uk>

SpeakUnique voice.
 application.
 you endorse this application and give a

If you have an SLT, IMNDA would like you to fill this form out with them and for your SLT to enter their email address as the healthcare professional endorsing your grant application. Enter your information and then click 'Send'. This generates an email to the IMNDA to apply for the voice banking grant.



Send

Please note that you do not need to provide the information set out in this form and you can apply for funding to cover the cost of your SpeakUnique voice ("Funding"), you must complete the process your application for Funding.
 For the purposes of applicable data protection law, SpeakUnique Limited ("SpeakUnique", "we

however, if you do not wish to apply for funding, we will not be able to process your application. If you do not complete this form, IMNDA is a separate

Apply for Funding

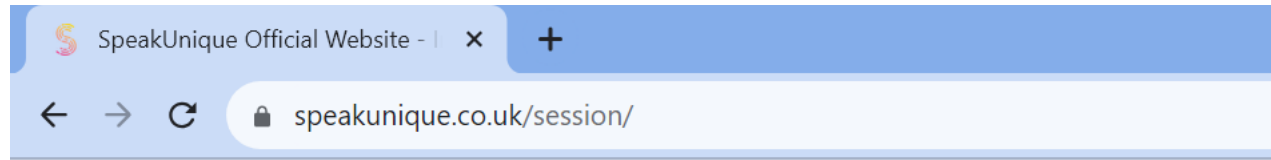
Thank you. Your information has been sent.

Continue

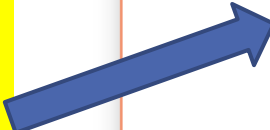
You will see a message confirming that your voice banking application has been submitted.

3 Options for a Voice Sample

1. **Making a recording of I Will Always Be Me**
2. **Uploading old recordings to SpeakUnique**
3. **Making phrase recordings in SpeakUnique**



When IMNDA have processed your grant application and your synthesised voice is now available for use, you will receive an email. When you log in to your SpeakUnique account, you will see an option to 'Download your voice'.



Your SpeakUnique Products

Product: Voice Build
Status: [Download your voice](#)

Your Voice Details

Accent country: Ireland
Accent region: Dublin

[Update](#)



Your Account

Logout

Download Voice

Your SpeakUnique voice is now ready to be downloaded.

For more information on how your voice can be used, please [click here](#).

Your voice can be downloaded as many times as you would like, onto a range of different devices. Please select a tab below for more information on how to use your voice on each of our supported platforms.

Apple Android Windows Grid for iPad Predictable (iOS Only)

Compatible Android Devices

Your voice can be used through compatible Android phones and tablets.

If you can find the "SpeakUnique" app in the Play Store then your device is supported. Otherwise, please [check our compatible devices here](#).

Logging into the app

You can log into our app using your email address and password or email address and the download code, shown below:

10005262

[Click here](#) for our app guide.

Downloading Your Voice







If you have already logged into the SpeakUnique app and you are now ready to download your personalised voice into the app, please go to

"Options" > "My Account" > "Voice Status" and click "Download Voice"

You will see some links in red colour font on this page with guides and more details about using your synthesised voice.

You will see your unique download code which you can enter in the SpeakUnique app to use your synthesised voice. For some other communication apps/software that support voice banking, you will be prompted to enter your SpeakUnique login email address and password to download your voice with the communication app/software (if you used I Will Always Be Me as your speech sample, use those login details).

How to Use Your Banked Voice

Voice Banking Compatible Communication Systems		Speak Unique	Model talker	Acapela My-Own-Voice	The Voice Keeper	Cereproc CereVoice Me
Apps	 Predictable (iOS: €179.99, Android: €189.99)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	 SpeakUnique app (iOS, Android: free)	✓				
	 The Voice Keeper App (iOS, Android: free)				✓	
	 Grid for iPad (Monthly £9.99 or one time £399.99)	✓				
	 TD Talk and TD Pilot by Tobii Dynovox (iOS 15+: free)		✓	✓	✓	
	 Proloquo4Text AAC (iOS: €129.99)				✓	
Devices/OS	Compatible Tobii Dynovox devices	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Compatible Liberator/PRC devices	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Compatible Grid 3/GridPad devices	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Mac OS		✓			✓
	Windows (SAPI5 format)	✓	✓	✓		✓

This is just for reference. Your SLT or Assistive Technology service can help you decide which option will suit you best.



SpeakUnique App

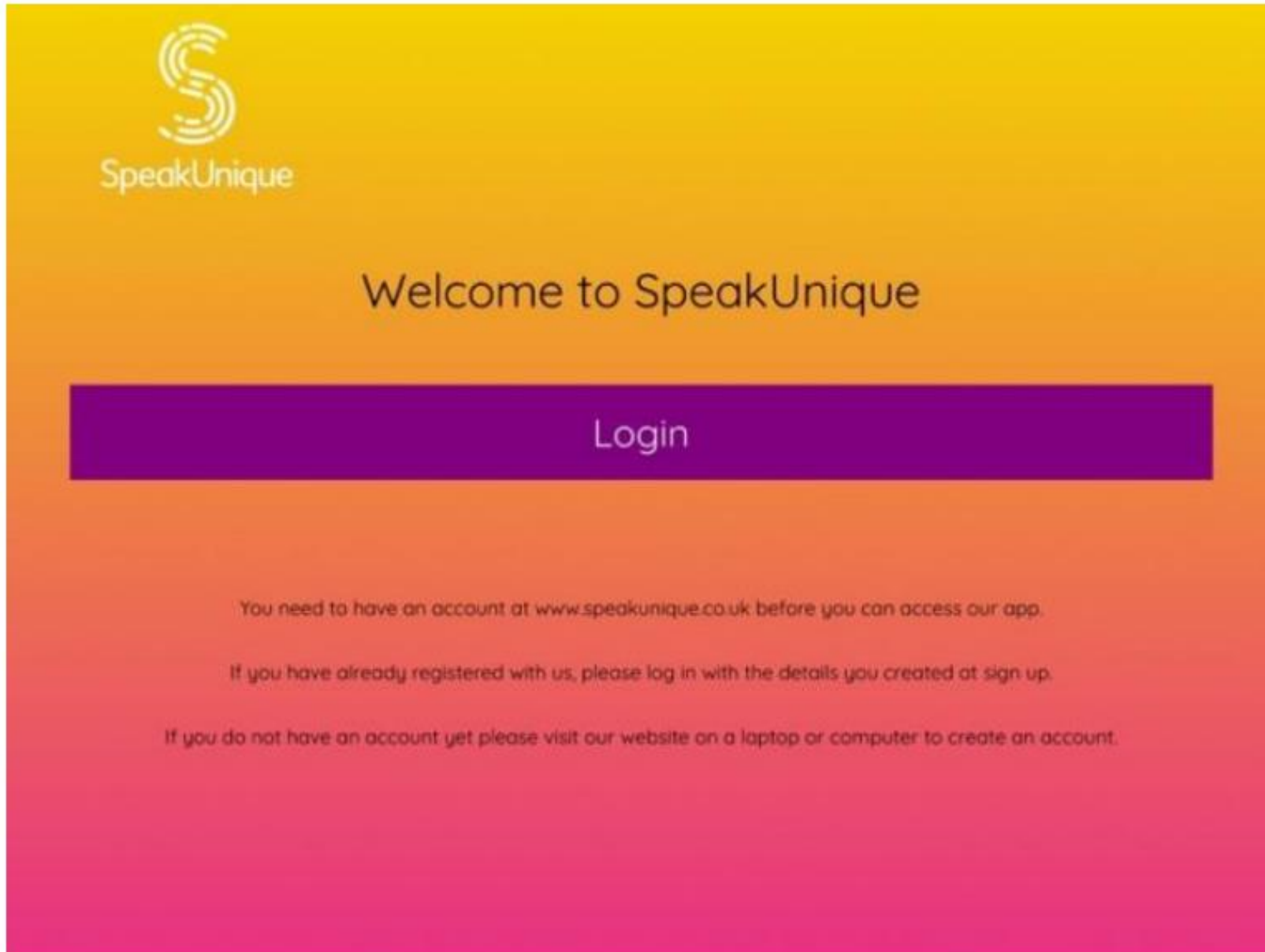
The SpeakUnique app is free so you can download it yourself to try out your synthesised voice. You need to have a SpeakUnique voice banking account to log in (or use your I Will Always Be Me log in details if you used your story recording as your speech sample).

First, download the free SpeakUnique app from the Apple app store for the iOS version or the Google Play app store for the Android version.



SpeakUnique
app

Press 'Login'
to start





SpeakUnique
app

Enter the log in details you used on the SpeakUnique website to bank your voice (or use your I Will Always Be Me log in details if you used your story recording as your voice banking speech sample).

A screenshot of the SpeakUnique login interface. At the top is the SpeakUnique logo and the text 'SpeakUnique'. Below this is the label 'Your email address' followed by a white input field containing the placeholder text 'Email'. Underneath is the label 'Password' followed by another white input field containing the placeholder text 'Password'. At the bottom of the form is a large purple button with the text 'Login' in white. The background of the screen has a vertical gradient from yellow at the top to pink at the bottom.

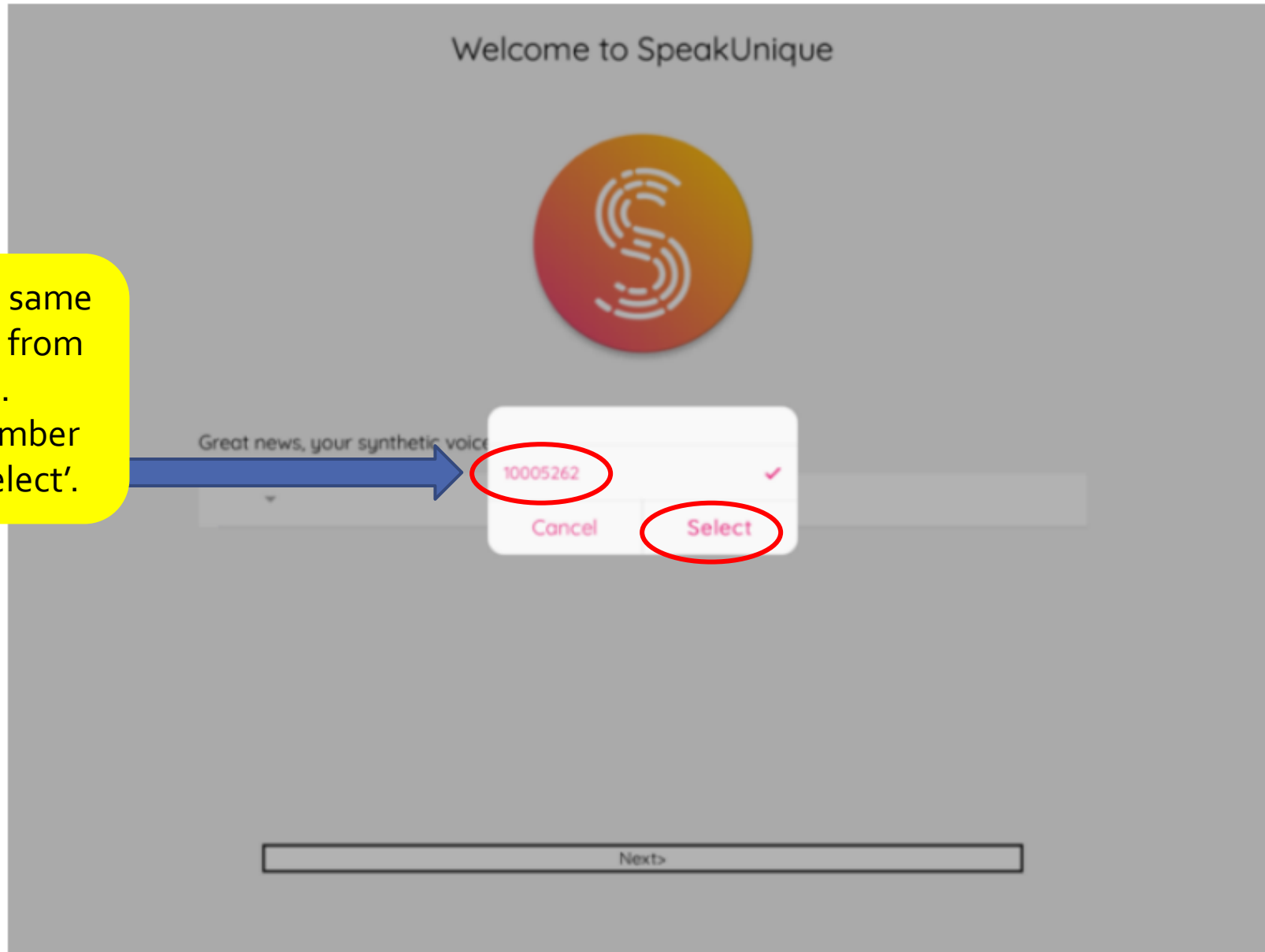
If your **voice is ready** when you open the app for the first time

The steps to importing your synthesised voice are different depending on whether your synthesised voice is ready to use at the time when you first open the app. If it is not yet ready, go to slide 120. If it is ready, press the downward arrow in the blank white box.

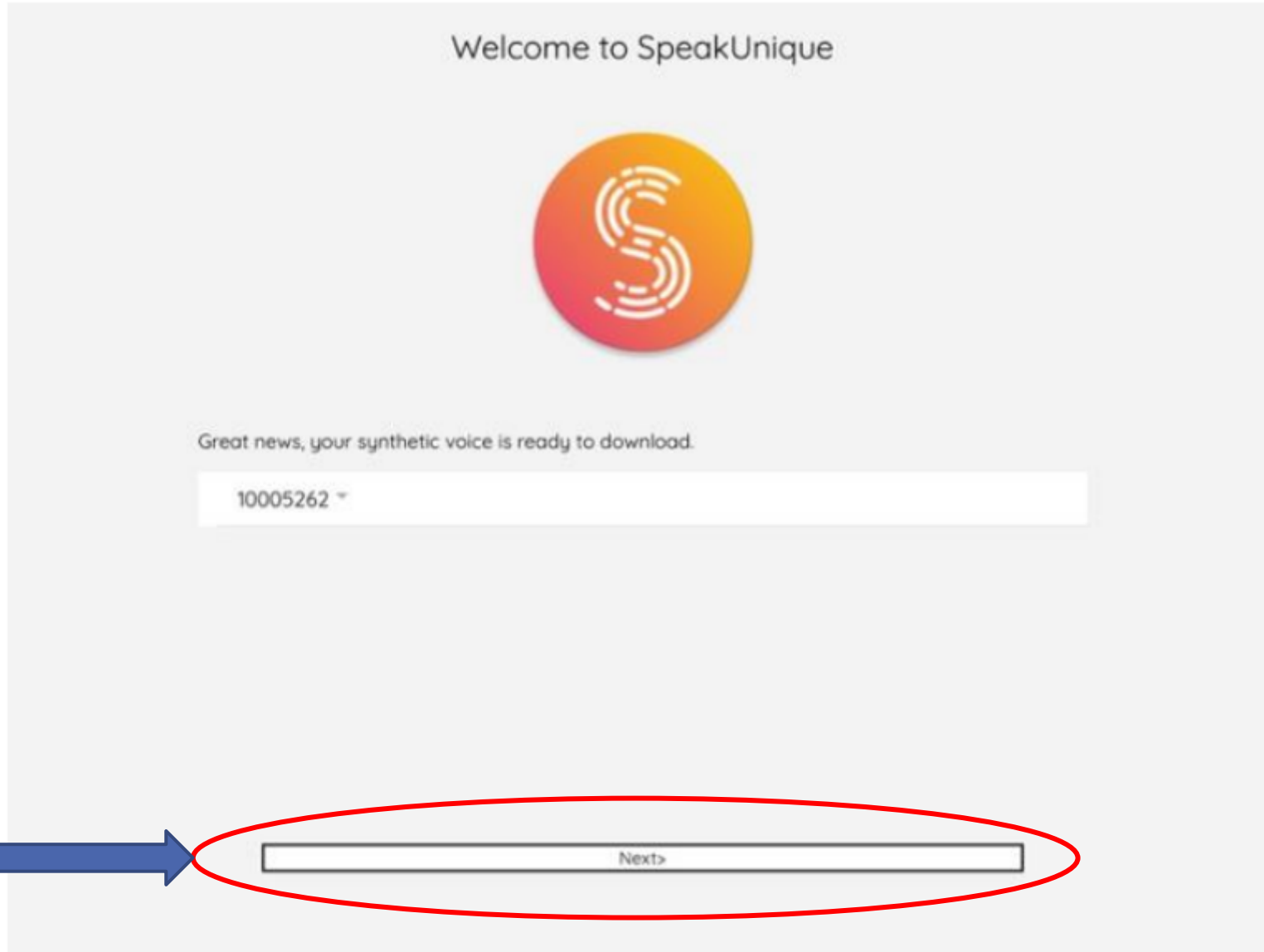


If your **voice is ready** when you open the app for the first time

You should see the same code you received from SpeakUnique.
Press the code number and then press 'Select'.



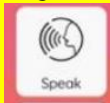
If your **voice is ready** when you open the app for the first time



Now press
'Next'.

If your **voice is ready** when you open the app for the first time

You'll see a message to let you know your synthesised voice is being imported. Once this completes, you can try out the app by typing in some sentences and pressing 'Speak' to hear how it sounds.



For Irish person or place names, you can adjust the pronunciation. In 'Options', scroll down to 'Pronunciation Exceptions', press the + box, type in how the word is spelled in the 'Before' box, then enter a phonetic spelling of how it should sound in the 'After' box.

If your **voice is not ready** when you open the app for the first time

If your synthesised voice is not ready for use when you first download the SpeakUnique app, you can get started by selecting a generic voice and then later import your personalised voice when it is finalised. To start, you can select a male or female voice.



If your **voice is not ready** when you open the app for the first time

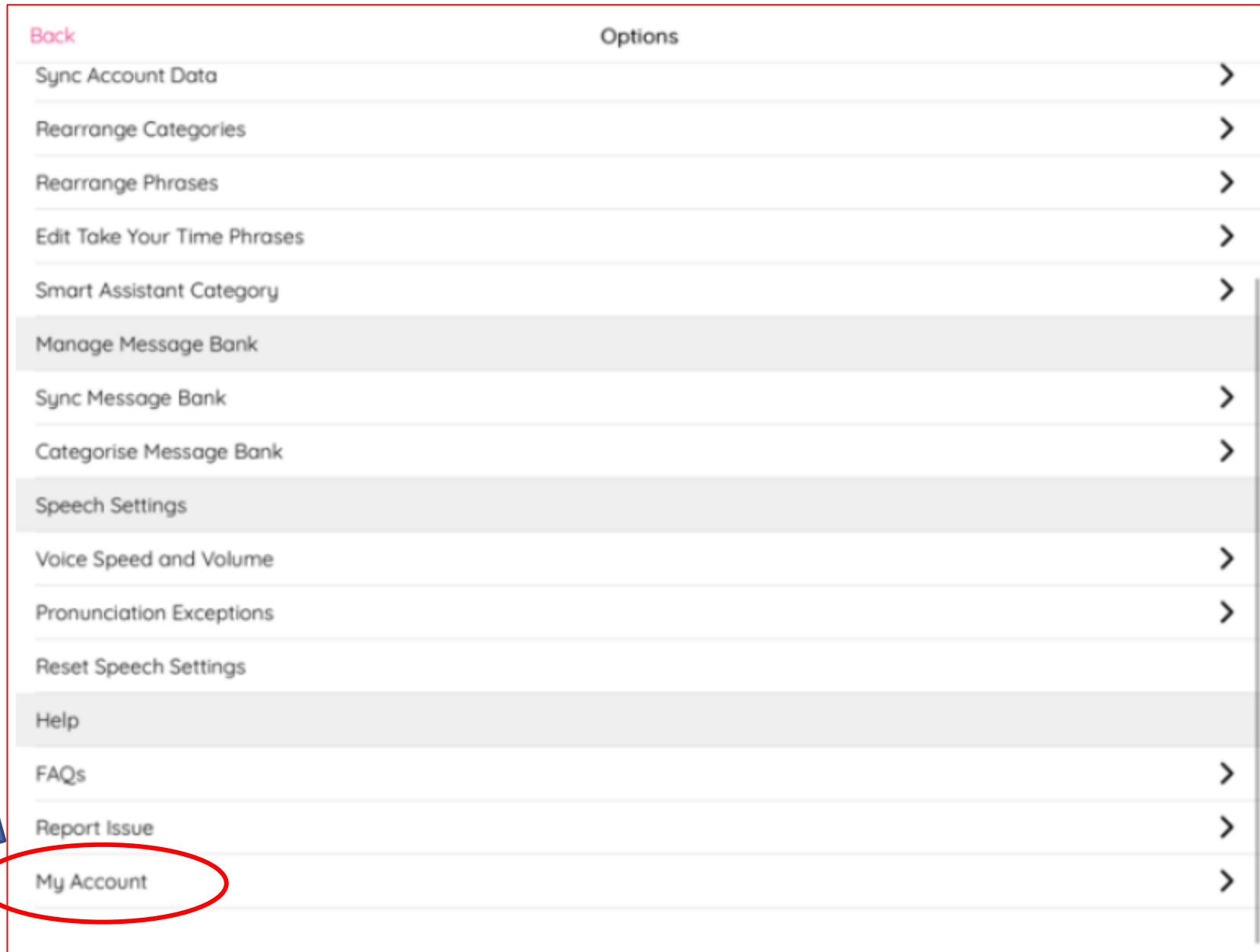


You can type in messages and press 'Speak' to play them using the generic voice.

Whenever your own synthesised voice is ready for use, you can import it within 'Options'.

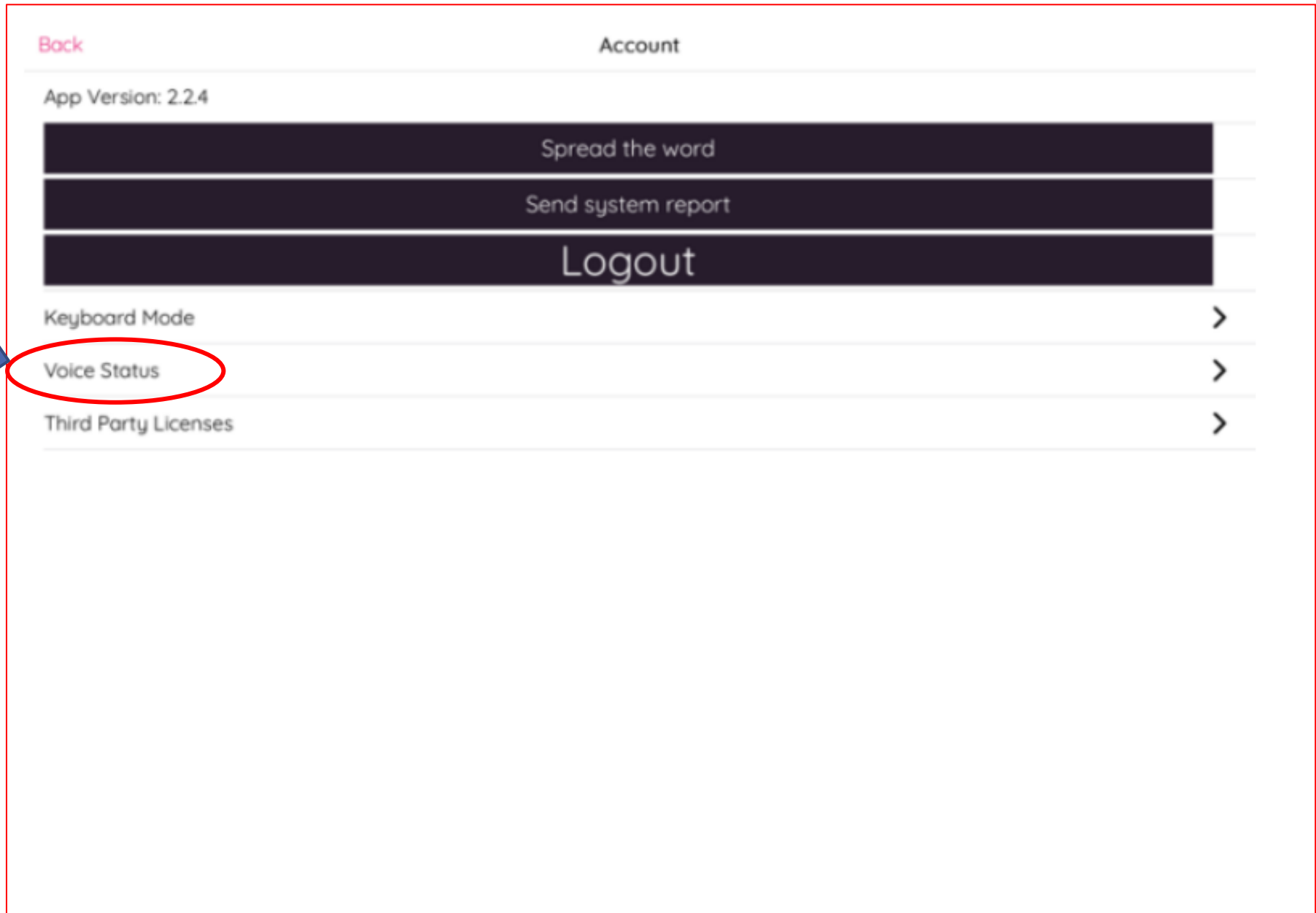
If your **voice is not ready** when you open the app for the first time

Within 'Options', scroll down to 'My Account'.



If your **voice is not ready** when you open the app for the first time

Press
'Voice Status'



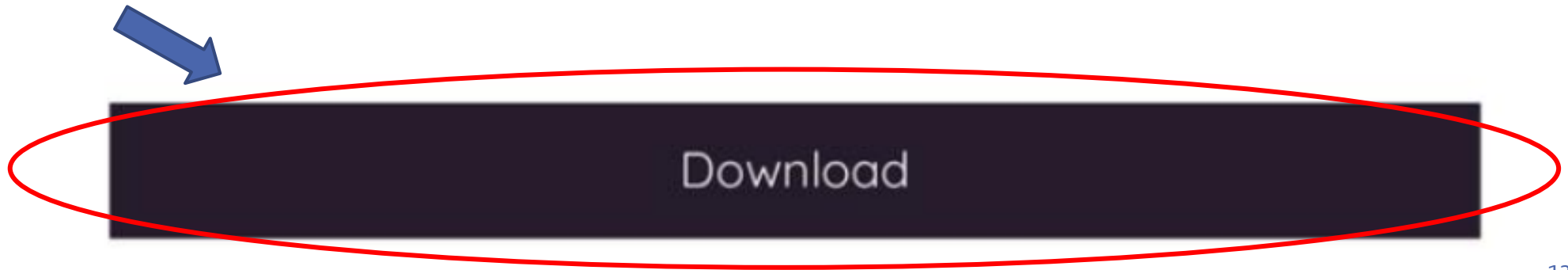
If your **voice is** **not ready** when you open the app for the first time

Voice Status

Voice ready to download

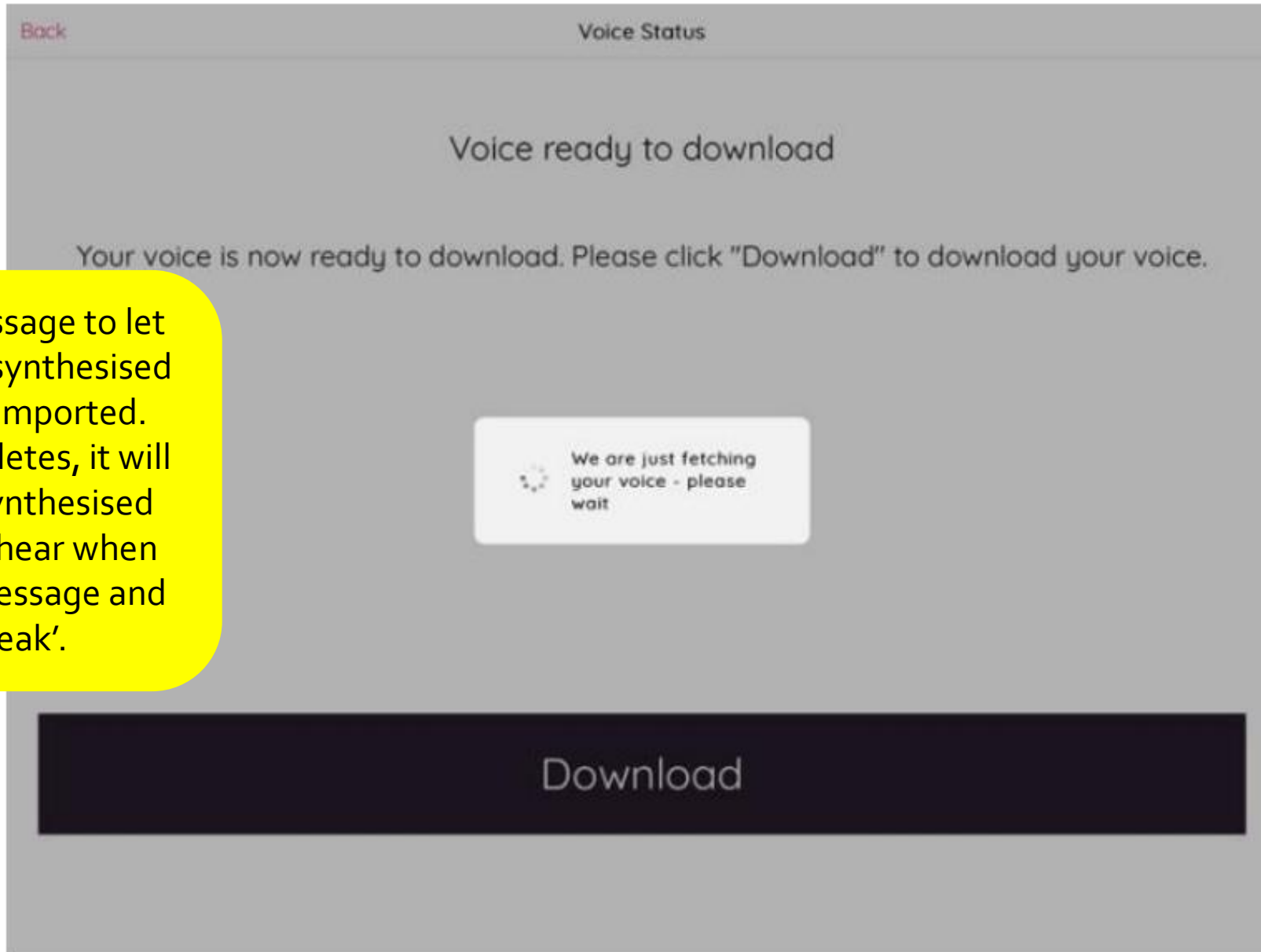
Your voice is now ready to download. Please click "Download" to download your voice.

Press 'Download'.



If your **voice is not ready** when you open the app for the first time

You'll see a message to let you know your synthesised voice is being imported. Once this completes, it will be your own synthesised voice that you hear when you type in a message and press 'Speak'.



See slide 119 for how to adjust the pronunciation of Irish person or place names.



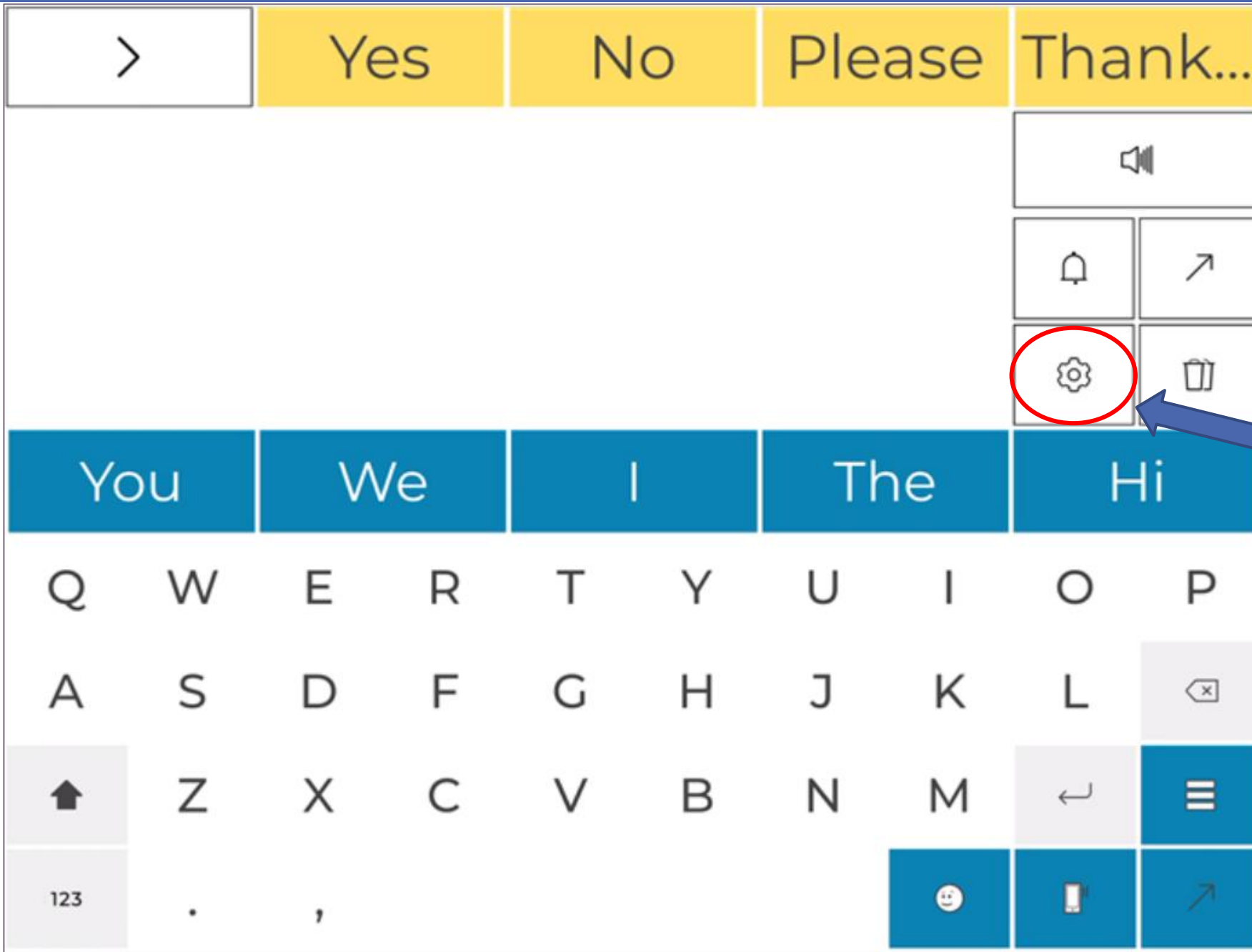
Predictable App

Predictable is an expensive app (currently iOS €179.99 and Android €189.99). It is not necessary for you to purchase this app yourself. If your SLT or Assistive Technology team recommend an iPad as a suitable communication device for you, they will request one on your behalf from the IMNDA equipment loan bank. The IMNDA will provide both the SpeakUnique and Predictable apps loaded on their loan iPads.



Predictable app

When you first open the Predictable app, you need to create an account. This is a separate account to your voice banking account.



To import your own synthesised voice into this app, go to 'Settings'.

Press the 'Speech' tab

Settings

Search X

- Account
- Speech**
- Accessibility
- Gesture Speak
- Theme & Appearance
- Word Prediction
- Keyboard
- Grid Layout
- Make Phone Calls

CE

CE mark indicates conformity with health, safety, and environmental protection standards for products sold within the European Economic Area.

Speech

VOICE ENGINE

✓ Device voice

Acapela

ModelTalker

SpeakUnique

The Voice Keeper

Choose your preferred Voice Engine.

Speaking rate (Medium)



+

Speaking pitch (Medium)



+

SPEAK BUTTON BEHAVIOUR

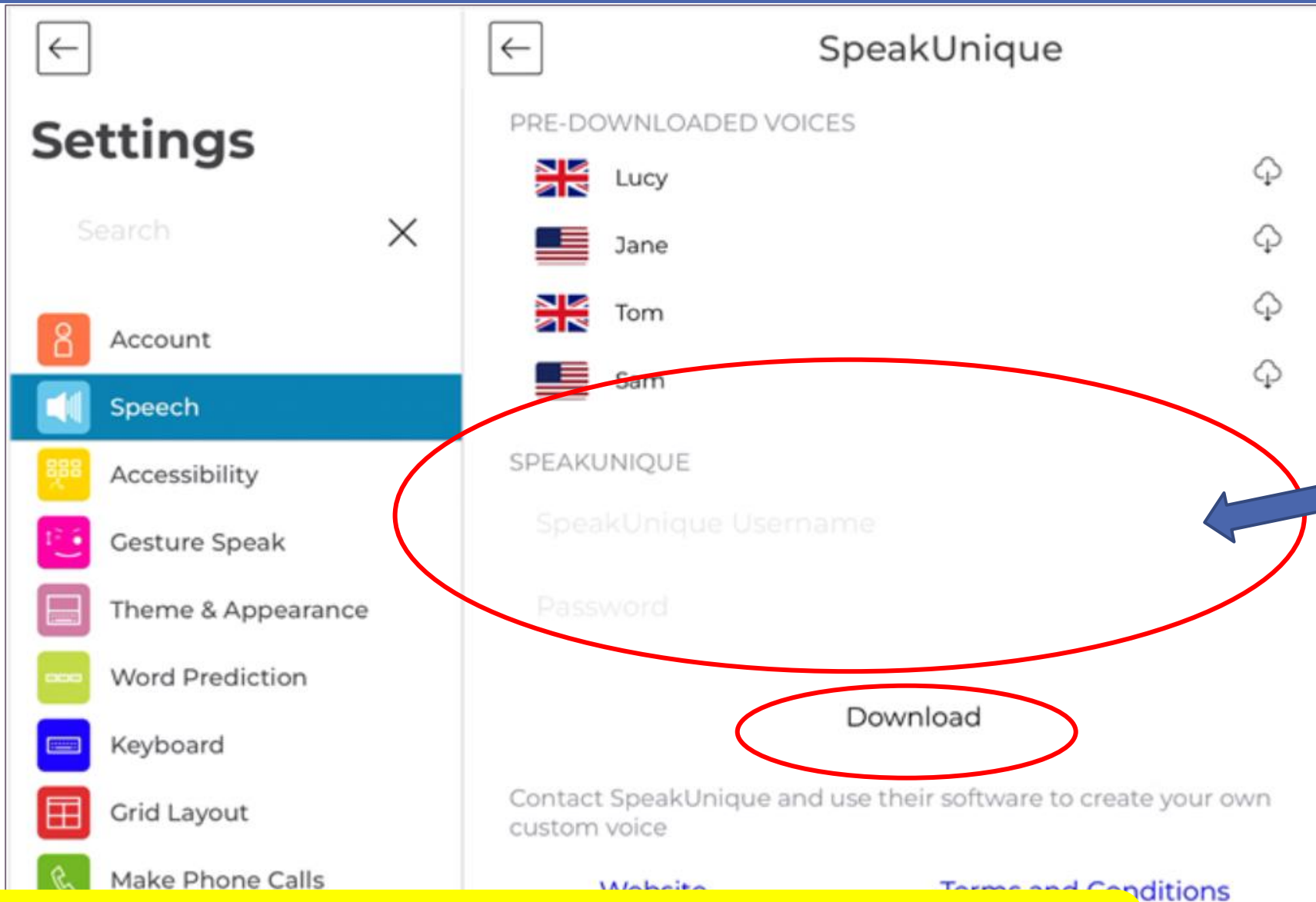
Main speak button

>

Keyboard speak button

>

Within the Speech tab, you will see the names of voice banking companies, press SpeakUnique



Enter the log in details you used on the SpeakUnique website to bank your voice (or use your I Will Always Be Me log in details if you used your story recording as your voice banking speech sample) then press 'Download' (the iPad needs to be connected to Wi-Fi for this and it might take a few minutes to complete the download).

When your synthesised voice has finished downloading, within the 'Speech' tab, you can also go to 'Custom Pronunciations and Abbreviations' to add phonetic spellings for pronunciation of Irish person and place names.

Other Types of Recording



Message
Banking

Record personally meaningful phrases, sentences & ways of saying things in own voice while speech quality is clear enough to be easily understood.

Legacy
Recordings

Way to capture unique voice and communication style but don't plan to use recordings for direct communication e.g.

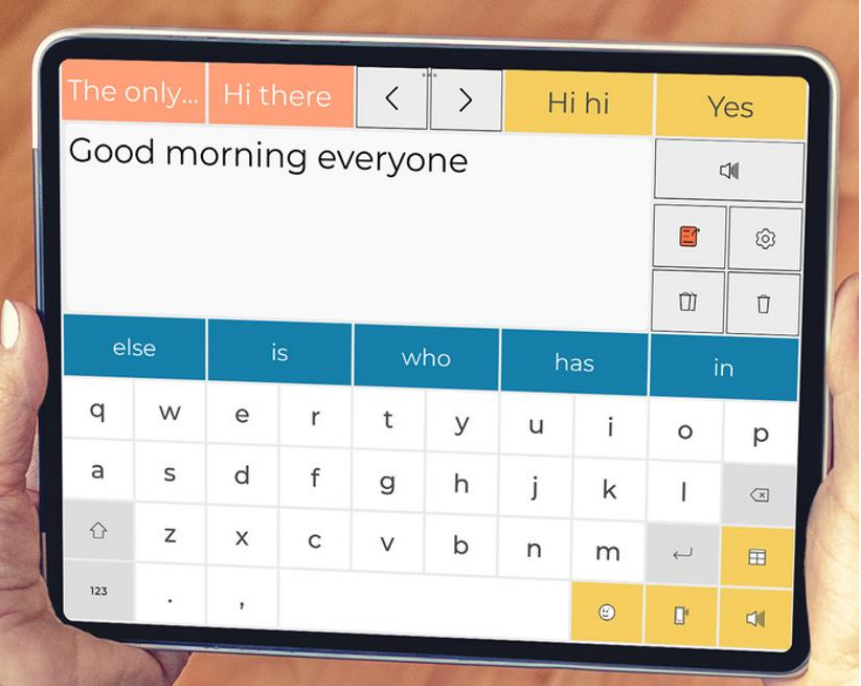
- telling life stories
- a 'spoken letter'
- prayers
- favourite poem

Voice Banking

Voice Repair

Voice Design

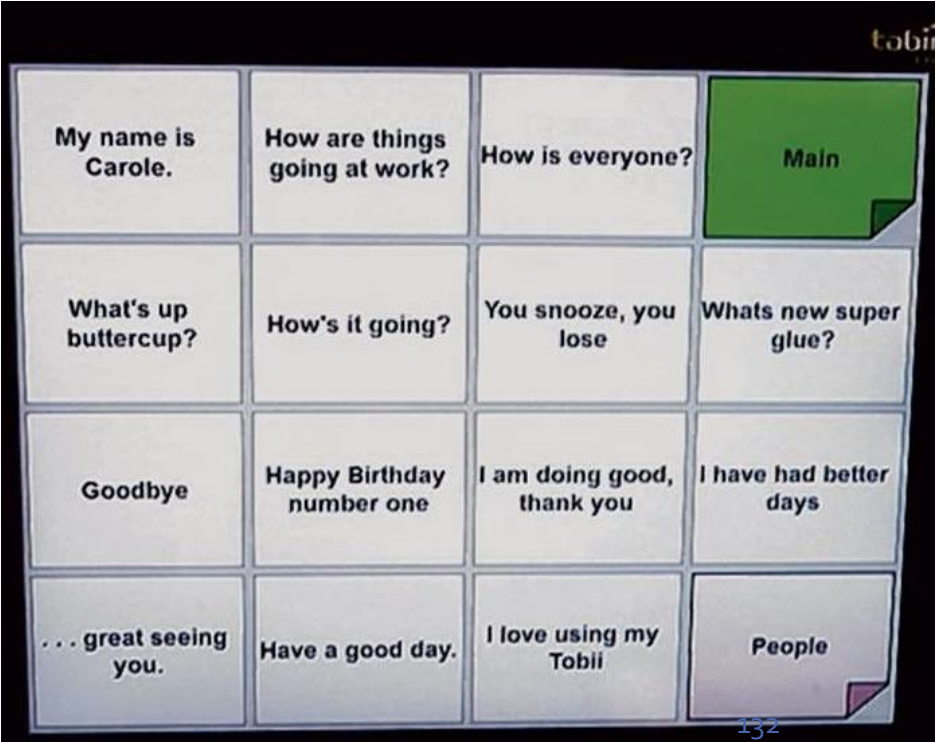
Use in the future on an electronic AAC device as the text-to-speech voice instead of the built-in synthesised voice



Message Banking

Legacy Recordings

Use for the speech output of pre-stored messages on an electronic AAC device





The Irish Message Banking Toolkit



The Message Banking Process

Each person's communication style is unique. Your speaking voice, accent and turn of phrase are components of 'you' and your personality. *Message banking* is a process that allows you to capture your individual style of communication that you have developed over time through your personal life experience. It involves making recordings of your natural speech as it sounds now. If a medical condition causes your speech clarity to deteriorate in the future, *message banking* provides you with the option to use your recorded phrases on an electronic communication device. You may or may not need to use these messages in the future but it can provide some reassurance to know that they are there should you need them.

Electronic communication devices

Electronic communication devices provide a different way to participate in conversation if your speech is not easy to understand. Typically, the device uses an electronically generated voice known as *computerised speech*. With *message banking* it is possible to use the recordings of your natural speech alongside computerised speech. Playing your recorded phrases can add additional meaning to what you are saying compared to using computerised speech on its own. It is a way to continue to communicate part of your personality if your speech is affected by your medical condition.

Deciding whether or not to message bank

If you have a medical condition that can cause speech to deteriorate, it is important to be aware that *message banking* is possible should you wish to do it but not everyone chooses to record their speech. Following your diagnosis, you may need time to accept and reflect on the diagnosis itself and/or you may have other priorities that you need to focus on. Family and friends can support you with the process but ultimately it is important that you feel it is right for you.

Possible reasons to decide for or against message banking are outlined below.

Reasons to message bank include ...

- o Being able to communicate a part of 'you'
- o When played it will be natural speech, not computerised speech
- o Peace of mind knowing you have a plan in place if your speech deteriorates
- o Feeling positive about taking on a proactive project that you could find enjoyable/interesting

Reasons **not** to message bank include ...

- o Difficulty in adjusting to your medical diagnosis
- o Feeling that how your speech sounds now does not represent 'you'
- o Your speech is very difficult to understand so a recording would not be clear
- o Feeling overwhelmed by the technical component of the process
- o Preference to use non-electronic ways to communicate (e.g. writing) if needed
- o Deciding to manage symptoms that are present rather than focusing on ones that might appear in the future



The Irish Message Banking Toolkit



Legacy Messages for Message Banking

(i.e. stories, jokes & person-specific messages)

Recording *legacy messages* involves making audio and/or video recordings of you telling stories about your life, interests and/or advice for loved ones. This serves as an account of **who you are** as well as providing special information for particular loved ones to retain; hence the term 'legacy'.

These recordings are **not** intended to be used for direct two-way communication in conversation, though you may want to play a particular story or joke to a group on a social occasion.

Ways to make legacy recordings

Ask yourself some questions, for example:

- o Do you want to tell your life story?
 - If so, consider telling stories about the important events, experiences, traditions and/or influences in your life that make you who you are.
 - It can be useful to approach it as if you are being 'interviewed' by a person who knows you well, so you may want to ask a relative or friend to ask you questions.
- o Do you want to record life lessons or advice for specific family members or friends that would capture how you view the world, your values and your outlook?
- o Do you want to audio or video record a 'spoken letter' for a named person?
- o Are there jokes, stories, poems or narratives that you want to record for posterity?

Legacy messages can be either audio or video recorded using your own camera, smart phone, tablet or computer. Make sure to copy your recordings and save them where they can be accessed easily in case your recording device is lost or broken.

Free apps & internet services

There are some free apps and Internet services that may help to spark ideas and/or to create and collate your recordings. They include:

- o <https://storycorps.org> (free iOS and Android apps to voice record an interview)
- o www.recordmenow.org (free computer app for Windows/Mac and iOS iPhone app to video record answers to questions about your life story and personality)
- o www.legacymessages.com (a website to create a digital scrapbook with words, photos and videos)



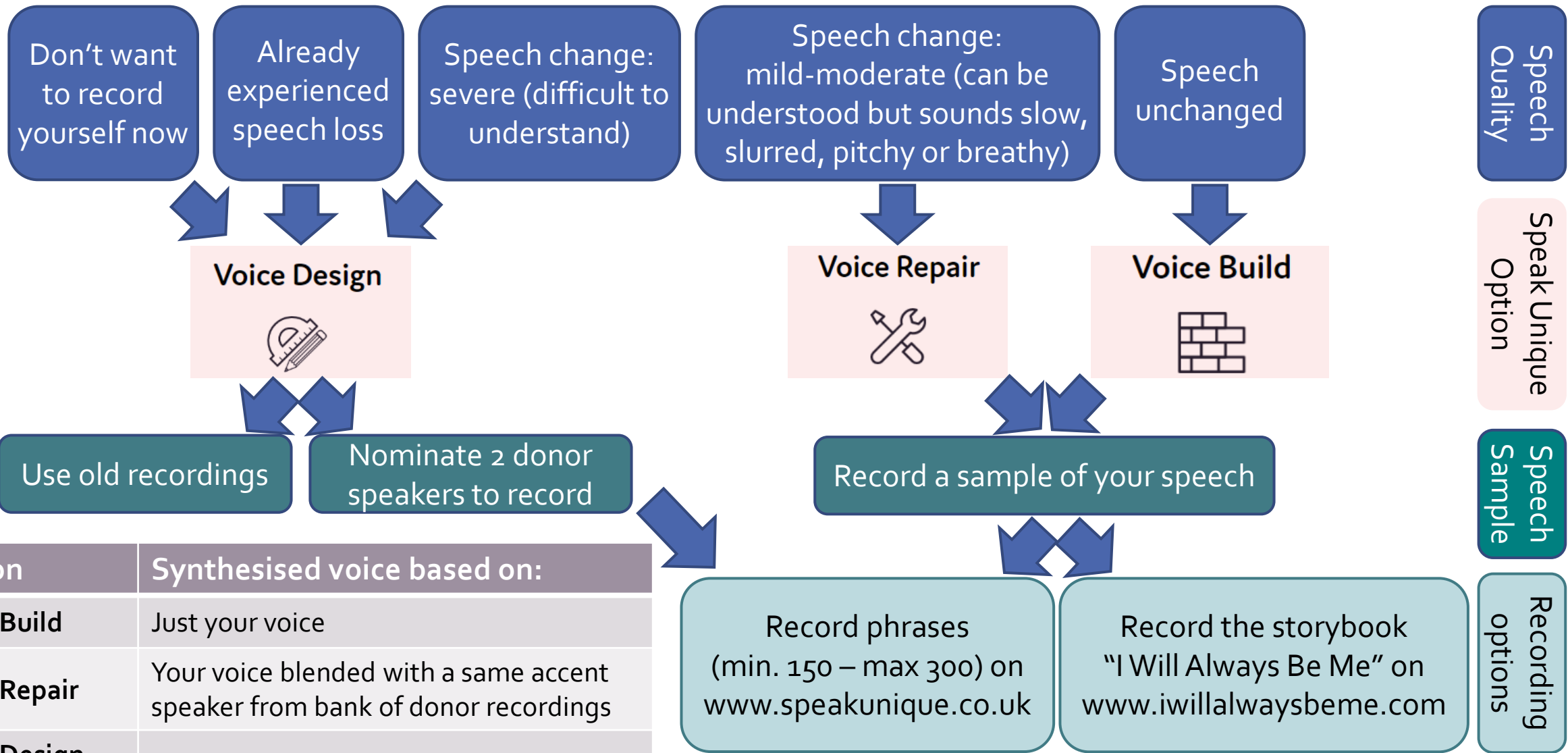
Legacy messages are **not** intended as recordings to be built into an electronic communication device.

Some may be compatible with communication devices but many will **not**, so discuss with your SLT.

This document may be photocopied

If you'd like more information on other types of recording options, see the handouts on the Message Banking process and Legacy Messages on the website.

Summary



Option	Synthesised voice based on:
Voice Build	Just your voice
Voice Repair	Your voice blended with a same accent speaker from bank of donor recordings
Voice Design - old recordings	Just your voice
Voice Design - donor speakers	Blend of voices of your nominated donor speakers with similar gender, age, accent

Key Points

- Speech and Language Therapists (SLT) help with decision making, provide support through the process and address needs for communication aids
- Headset microphone and laptop/desktop computer recommended for voice banking
- Different ways to build a personal synthesized voice
- Funding:
 - IMNDA have bank of headset microphones and Voice Banking grant
(preferred service is SpeakUnique because of range of options and easy way to apply for funding)



services@imnda.ie