

[News story: Tobii's purchase of Smartbox raises competition concerns](#)

Tobii and Smartbox design and supply technology – known as augmentative and assistive communication or “AAC” solutions – that enables people with complex speech and language needs to communicate. This could include a computerised device with an additional access method such as a joystick or eye gaze camera.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) launched a [Phase 2](#) inquiry in February after initial competition concerns led to the merger being referred to a Group of independent panel members at the CMA for an in-depth investigation.

In its provisional findings, the Group has found that the merger could lead to a substantial lessening of competition in the supply of certain AAC solutions, where the businesses are the two leading suppliers and compete closely.

Kip Meek, chair of the independent inquiry group carrying out the investigation, said:

This is vital equipment, used by many people who have difficulty communicating because of a disability or illness. It is typically bought on behalf of the those that need it by the NHS, charities and schools, so it's important to ensure that pricing remains competitive.

We are concerned that the merged company would face little competition, which could lead to higher prices, reductions in the range of products available for users and less product development.

The CMA has set out potential options for addressing its provisional concerns, which include blocking the deal by requiring Tobii to sell the Smartbox business.

Views are invited on the provisional findings by 20 June 2019 and the notice of possible remedies by 13 June 2019. The CMA's final report will be issued by 25 July 2019.

More information can be found on the [Tobii/Smartbox case page](#).