



BEYOND LIMITS

Beyond the limits of conventional support

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY POLICY

This policy outlines the commitment Beyond Limits has to the people we support to improve their quality of life by enhancing, where relevant the use of appropriate assistive technology.

INTRODUCTION

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY: WHAT THIS MEANS TO BEYOND LIMITS

As part of the support delivered by Beyond Limits, we assist the people we support to be as independent as possible. This means we look for ways to reduce the reliance on paid support when other forms of support may enable a person to be more independent. All employees will be expected to keep up to date with the types of Assistive Technology (AT) or Personalised Technology (PT) available that may be of use to the person they support

We all use AT in our everyday lives, we will use technology to help us remember things (alarms, reminders on our phones), to help us get places (Satellite Navigation), to make things work in our homes (remote controls to open curtains, close doors and alert us to risks) and now with applications on phones and the rise in artificial intelligence and other devices, we are able to do a whole host of things without relying on another person to support us.

PROCEDURE – WHAT WE SHOULD DO

When we are supporting people, we should always be thinking of how we can enable them to do things for themselves without relying on paid support. It is therefore vital when planning and reviewing someone's service, the use of Assistive Technology must be considered as a way of reducing a person's reliance on paid support. People have an Individual Service Fund (ISF) and this money is to be used creatively to promote the person's independence. The more innovative the team is the better. During ISF meetings the funding can be discussed in order to access or purchase expensive Assistive Technology. Lower cost items can be purchased through Support Funds. **Always check with the Team Leader or Service Leader if you identify suitable items before purchasing.**

We will always consider the full range of AT available to everyone (whether they have a disability or not). Many devices and apps are now ideal for someone with communication needs but are not necessarily specifically for someone with a disability; for example, a tablet is easy to use and is a desired product. There is of course some specialist AT that will help people with health or mobility problems become more independent which should not be discounted.

Some AT may require best interest decisions to be made before they are used as there may be consent and ethical issues, especially if it will in anyway restrict a person's freedom, privacy, or human rights. For example, some alarms restrict people's movements You should look at the

Capacity Policy for Beyond Limits to check on the procedure and only spend the person's money on AT once this has been agreed by all necessary parties

It is important to remember that AT can be a range of No, Low, or High-tech gadgets, equipment, or solutions. Below are some examples of these to help give you an idea of tools available. The list is not exhaustive: Assistive Technology is not all about computers and screens.

NO TECH:

- **Raised, Lined Paper:** To assist writing. The writer can feel the lines on the paper
- **Pen and Pencil Grips:** Slip on covers to assist holding and writing
- **Weighted Pens and Cutlery:** They may also have larger handles or grips with these
- **Non-Spill Cups:** These can be special lids or bases
- **Coloured Overlays:** Used to assist with reading
- **Medication Technology:** Pill reminder pots, these can have days/times written on, MDS (Monitored Dosage Systems) or blister packs. These systems can be combined.

LOW TO MID TECH:

- **Talking Calculators:** To assist with budgeting
- **Audio Books**
- **Switches or Buzzers:** Various sizes, tactile etc
- **Aids and Adaptations:** Bath aids to get in and out of the bath, stair lifts and hoists and slings and grab rails. Ramps and lifts and adapted cars. All these types of aids and adaptations would be discussed with an Occupational Therapist before purchase to ensure they are right for the needs of the people being supported.
- **Smart Meters:** Automatic Monitoring and reporting of Gas and Electric readings. Normally set up for free with existing supplier. Does not require internet in the home.

HIGH TECH:

- **Voice and Smart enabled devices:** Nest, Hive, Apple, and Google. Remote controls, cameras, doorbells, power sockets, lights, heating (thermostats & valves) smart speakers, phones, and tablets

- **Mobile phones and Tablets:** Vast range of versatile apps and features. Handsfree activation, talk and text services, calendars, reminders, alarms etc
- **Alarms and Pagers:** To monitor continence, Epilepsy, falls, or where someone is in their environment. Also, to detect smoke, gas, and alarms to alert that a cooker is still on.
- **In the Kitchen:** Kettles that hold only a cup full of water, tipping aids, apps for boiling an egg, timers, digital photo frames or computer tablets for showing pictures or video recipes.
- **Bathroom:** Alarms and sensors to say when water is going to overflow, Epilepsy alarms or alarms if a person goes under the water. Temperature monitors, Thermostatically Monitored Valves (TMV)
- **Communication Aids:** Phones that have apps for texting, talking to people, showing people what you want, Skype, Zoom, Microsoft teams, scanner readers, computers that have touch screens, Facetime/Skype for long distance face to face conversations, speech to text and voice recognition or phones that have pictures on so that a person can speed dial.
- **Fingerprint or Keycode Locks:** For people who have difficulties with keys and locks
- **Telecare:** This is ruled by specific legislative requirements. If required, Beyond Limits would refer to a reputable company for advice.

GENERAL SMART ENABLED DEVICES OR SMART HOME TECHNOLOGY

This is a constantly evolving area with new products, apps, devices, and ideas being introduced on a regular basis. An example of such is the increase in the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Such technology can be used to monitor long-term health conditions remotely, with results sent directly to medical professionals or the capacity to predict disease and illness. It is developing with pace, but it remains to be seen about the impact it will have directly on the people we support. There is a [National Strategy for AI in Health and Social Care](#) if anyone would like to know more about this developing field.

Smart Home technology can include a range of devices that can be controlled and monitored whilst away from a property so careful consideration and agreements must be discussed by appropriate professionals. They may also require planning permission/building control approval in advance from the local council.

