**Brent’s Access to Inclusive Technology (BAIT) Guidance**

**Introduction**

This guidance is intended to raise awareness in schools regarding the assistive technology (AT) available to support children and young people (CYP) in Brent mainstream schools. It outlines what AT is, what the referral process is to access funding from Brent local authority, and what responsibilities there are if and when AT is issued.

The phrase ‘assistive technology’ is used to describe products or systems that support and assist individuals with disabilities, restricted mobility or other impairments to perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible.This guide is intended to help schools and teachers make use of assistive technology (AT) within the

AT devices are any item, piece of equipment, or product that can be used to increase, maintain, or improve the ability of any child or young person (CYP) with special needs. It is a piece of equipment or system that helps bypass, work around or compensate for an individual’s specific access needs.

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introduce assistive technology across a school. The guide can be used to help teachers and

managers consider all the issues to address in school planning, and can help inform discussions with

AT professionals and vendors. For many pupils assistive technology is important because without it

they would be denied access to the curriculum or educational program.

Implementing AT in the classroom is a challenge for any teacher or school. Whilst this guide

provides a starting point it is important for teachers to build confidence in using technology through

hands on experience and structured training programs. AT centers such as the Mada center in Doha

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Assistive technology is playing an increasingly important role in the education of pupils with additional needs. Computer-based AT applications have the ability to help overcome some of the barriers faced by children with additional needs and can e.g. enable CYP to read, write and communicate more effectively. The availability of assistive technologies can help to 'level the playing field' in terms of academic achievement.

**What can assistive technology be used for?**

Assistive technology should be considered for CYP when standard classroom supports are not working for that CYP the way those supports work for most other CYP of the same age. The role of assistive technology is to make the CYP more independent and enable them to access the least restrictive environment.

Assistive technology is a rapidly evolving field. There is now a wide range of support available which can assist CYP in schools ranging from low, to high-tech options.

**What can Assistive Technology not do?**

AT is not a complete solution. The use of AT may end in disappointment if too much emphasis is put on technology and not enough on how the CYP is likely to react to it, or whether it will work in the busy school environment. It is important, then, when considering the use of AT to think about the context, both in terms of the individual CYP and their environment.

**What AT is available in Brent?**

When determining which assistive technology tool would be best for a CYP, there are 3 classifications of technology to consider - low-tech, mid-tech and high-tech. The team determines which type of tool is most universally accepted in the CYP’s environment and what tool the CYP will continue using after they move on from high school.

Low Tech - Something that does not require a power source, is easily transportable and does not require a lot of training of either the CYP or staff. Examples include: different coloured paper, different shaped/weighted pens and pencils, calendars, slant boards, laminated communication boards, plastic line readers.

Mid Tech - These supports often require battery power, and sometimes a computer. They also may require some maintenance or programming to work. This type of device typically requires some training for the CYP to implement its use. Usually these supports are ready to go “out of the box." Examples:, alarm clock, talking scales, switches with recorded messages, Google Docs, a keyboard or laptop to type responses, electronic magnifiers.

High Tech - This class of AT is the most complex and almost always requires a power source to function. It also requires a higher level of training/programming, individualisation and support. If considered for a CYP, this level of technology will need commitment for consistent use from the CYP, staff, and family to be most effective. Examples: Dynamic display AAC devices, speech to text programs, text to speech programs, coded note taking software, specialised equipment for mobility, vision and hearing.

Educational settings are expected to use their own resources to provide low and medium tech provision under the value of £500. An application for high tech or medium tech AT over the value of £500 can be made to the local authority.

**Who can apply for assistive technology?**

If a CYP has a recommendation for assistive technology in a professional report an application may be made to the Local Authority. Applications can be made by relevant educational or health professionals (see below for full list of who may apply) and should include three options (with quotes) where possible.

Brent’s guidance covers CYP attending a mainstream school or educational setting in Brent. This guidance does not cover specialist schools, specialist provisions in mainstream schools (ARPs), or out of borough educational settings unless the CYP has a Brent funded EHCP. CYP attending out of borough special schools will be assessed on an individual basis taking into account the settings acceptance of meeting need. Similarly looked after children (LAC) placed outside of Brent will also be reviewed on an individual basis.

**Who identifies the technology needed?**

All applications must be supported by any one of the following: Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist, Teacher of the Deaf, Teacher of Vision Impairment or Speech and Language Therapist.

We have a number of providers that we use to secure equipment and support setting.

**What happens next?**

Brent will allocate the assistive technology following assessment of need and application. Educational settings or professionals will be notified of the outcome of their referral and the assessment within 6 weeks.

Brent will arrange delivery of the equipment and in most cases appropriate set-up and initial training for staff. More specialist equipment will be set up by the referring professional.

If the application is successful:

The equipment will either be purchased from suppliers used by the local authority or recommended by the assessor commissioned by the local authority, or by the setting and the local authority will reimburse the cost. Although the equipment will be assigned to a particular CYP the equipment will, as a rule, remain the property of the local authority and will be available for allocation to subsequent CYP with similar needs when the CYP no longer requires the equipment or leaves the local authority. Brent will issue a loan form for all equipment provided.

If the application is NOT successful:

The referring professional and Parent/Guardians will be notified if their referral is not successful and given a reason why. An alternative solution in some cases may be offered.

**Repair / Replacement of Assistive Technology**

Educational settings are requested to contact the local authority if the equipment is not in working order as soon as this becomes known. Brent will then determine if the equipment needs to be repaired or replaced.

A designated teacher in the school should take responsibility for the management of the equipment and for monitoring its effective use within the school.

**Equipment required for physical needs**

Any equipment that is a fitting (wall mounted fold down bed etc.) should be viewed as part of the setting’s access plan and is not funded by the LA or covered in this guidance. Schools are expected to review their accessibility plans on an annual basis and anticipate and plan for changes.

When a CYP moves from a mainstream school to a special school, the LA is no longer responsible for providing or funding equipment as the special school receives its own funding for this. Equipment would then be returned to the local authority or NRS. If the CYP moves to another mainstream setting the equipment will follow them.

**The educational setting and child/young person must be made aware of the following procedures and expectations:**

1. Ensure that the equipment is returned at the end of the school day to the secure storage and put on charge to make sure it is ready for the next day.
2. The school is responsible for the equipment while it is on school property, as per the signed school loan form.
3. Equipment purchased should normally be kept in the school. However, the CYP may, with the consent of Brent and a signed home loan form, use the equipment at home. All assistive technology must be fully charged before arriving in school in the morning.
4. The safety of the equipment when transporting it to and from school is the responsibility of the CYP in line with signed home loan form. The LA cannot be held responsible for any damage to the equipment that occurs while in the CYP’s care out of school. It will be the parent’s responsibility to replace the equipment if damaged while in the CYP’s care out of school.
5. Parents must take responsibility for internet safety and ensure e.g. parental locks are on when the CYP is using assistive technology while using the home internet.
6. The Assistive Technology must not be used by any other CYP other than the CYP to which it has been issued.
7. The technology must only be used for educational/school purposes.
8. The technology must be brought to school every day and used in classes as specified in the initial application for AT.
9. Where the CYP has no further requirement for the equipment, it must be returned to the local authority and a return form signed.

**Conclusion**

Hopefully this guidance makes clear the process and expectations of accessing BAIT funded equipment for CYP with access need. Please contact Brent SEND 0-25 Team or the Brent BAIT Resource coordinator if you have any further questions.

Brent SEND 0-25 Team BAIT Resource Coordinator

sen.casework@brent.gov.uk BAIT@brent.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – BAIT Procedure (for PD equipment only)

Appropriate specialist eg, OT to identify needs and equipment required to provide for those needs.

Specialist to complete BAIT form, including justification as to why student needs equipment, plus quote if possible and send to BAIT email address.



BAIT co-ordinator to send BAIT form/justification/quote to budget holder for approval.



If approval given: If approval not given:

Reason given to SENCO/specialist and if possible alternative option provided.

EITHER BAIT co-ordinator to purchase equipment from previously used supplier/recommended supplier

OR setting to purchase equipment and BAIT to reimburse funds.



If purchased by BAIT; BAIT co-ordinator will arrange delivery of equipment, but any training required should be provided/arranged by specialist.

Please note that any equipment required for VI or HI students will be requested by QTVIS/ToDs, and staff member in each team responsible for purchases will organise this.