Beyond Limits Dumfries & Galloway provides policies and procedures to promote safe and consistent practice across the Organisation. The framework laid down within our policies and procedures lets everyone know how we work and reflects our values and mission statement. Our policies and procedures are written to help us, employees of Beyond Limits Dumfries & Galloway, to make good, safe decisions.

Beyond Limits Dumfries & Galloway expects all employees to be familiar with the contents of all policies and procedures relevant to their role and to understand how to apply them within their daily work.

None of these documents stand alone, all fit within the larger framework of the way we work and any associated policies which are particularly relevant will be directly referenced.

Assistive Technology

Assistive Technology Policy – what this means to Beyond Limits Dumfries & Galloway

Beyond Limits Dumfries & Galloway has a commitment to the people we support to find ways to improve their quality of life by reducing reliance on paid support, when other forms of support may enable a person to be more independent and valued in their community. All employees will be expected to keep up to date with the types of Assistive Technology (AT) available that may be of use to the person they support.

We all use AT in our everyday lives, if you think about it, we will use technology to help us remember things (alarms, reminders on our phones), to help us get to 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 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 that 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 and this money is to be used creatively to promote the person's independence. The more innovative the team is the better.

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, the iPad 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 Beyond Limits Dumfries & Galloway Capacity Policy 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. This 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 with 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**

- **Audio books –** downloadable, CDs.

- **Switches or buzzers –** various sizes, tactile etc.

- **Aids & adaptations –** bath aids to get in and out of the bath, stair lifts and hoists, slings, 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 person 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 –** such as Nest, Hive, Apple and Google. Remote controls, cameras, doorbells, power sockets, lights, heating (thermostats & valves), smart speakers, phones, tablets.

- **Mobile phone & tablets –** huge range of versatile apps and features. Hands-free 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 tablet for showing pictures or video recipes.

- **Bathroom –** Alarms and sensors to say when water is going to overflow, epilepsy alarms or alarms if the person goes under the water. Temperature monitors, Thermostatically Monitored Valves.

- **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 Dumfries & Galloway 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 so you should consider researching this area and discuss with your team, person you support and other professionals. 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.