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Specialist equipment for children and young people 2021 - Policy and procedures

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1.0 Introduction

All children and young people are entitled to an education, which enables them to:

- Reach their full potential and achieve the best possible education and outcomes
- Become confident children, young people, leading fulfilling lives with the ability to express their own views, and make a successful transition into adult life

The Children and Families Act (2014), SEN Code of Practice (2014) and Equality Act (2010) is clear that children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) are included in this entitlement, however they often need additional and different support and provision in place in order to achieve these outcomes. Early years settings and schools should use their best endeavours to ensure that effective provision is in place to support this. This means doing everything they can to meet children and young people's SEN.

The Equality Act 2010 provides people with legal protection from discrimination in a variety of circumstances. Part 6, Chapter 1 of the Act [addresses education specifically and talks about the protections offered to children in schools](#)

The Special Educational Needs – Code of practice 0 to 25 years 2015

States: “Some children and young people (CYP) require special educational provision because they have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided. These difficulties can be age related and may fluctuate

over time. Many CYP with Vision Impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or a Multi-Sensory Impairment will require specialist support and/or equipment to access their learning, or habilitation” (section 6.34). “Some CYP with a physical disability (PD) require additional ongoing support and equipment to access all the opportunities available to their peers” (section 6.35).

This policy is designed to:

- Ensure children and young people (CYP) **0 to 25 years** have their needs appropriately assessed and the necessary equipment provided to enable them to access all aspects of home and school life; achieving their potential and to maintain their health and independence.
- Clarify the responsibilities for the provision of equipment between Blackpool Council, Blackpool CCG, Blackpool Social Care and Educational establishments including; early years settings, school or college (further education)
- Provide guidance on when/which equipment may, or may not be provided to CYP in early years settings, school or college (further education)
- Promote understanding between managers of Blackpool Council, Blackpool CCG, Blackpool Social Care and Educational establishments and other parties involved in the provision of equipment to children. Thereby promoting a collaborative multi agency approach to ensure the CYP receive the right support at the right time

2.0 Eligibility

To be eligible for the provision of specialised equipment for educational purposes, the following requirements need to be met:

1) There is an assessed need for specialist equipment to enable a CYP (0 to 25 years) to access the environment, for educational purposes including; curriculum and life of the early years setting/school/home and/or health and safety.

And

2) The CYP (0 to 25 years) must attending one of the following eligibility setting/s:

- Pupils/residents attending early years settings, educational setting, school or college (further education) in Blackpool
- Pupils and attending early years setting, educational setting, school or college (further education) with a Blackpool address who attend a school or college in Lancashire
- For pupils with a Blackpool address who attend early years settings, educational setting, school or college (further education) in Lancashire – the setting would apply to Blackpool for funding for equipment

Pupils with a Lancashire address who attend an early years setting, educational setting, school or college (further education) in Blackpool - the setting should apply to Lancashire for funding for equipment.

Students attending university (Higher Education) equipment needs will be assessed and provided for by the University via the Disabled Students Allowance and not by Blackpool Education Authority.

3.0 Standard equipment and reasonable adjustments

Early years settings, schools, colleges and Universities are responsible for undertaking day to day maintenance checks, safety and repair of all equipment (Standard or Specialised) within their education setting.

3.1 Standard equipment

It is expected that the educational settings will provide a range of standard equipment for CYP to enable them to access education long and short term, for example:

- Disabled toilets
- Over the toilet wheeled commode chair

3.2 Reasonable adjustments

Schools will also be required to provide the following as stated in the Reasonable Adjustment for Disabled Children 2015:

- Assistance from a sign language interpreter, lip-speaker or deaf-blind communicator
- Extra staff assistance including support for personal care
- An electronic or manual note taking service

- Induction loop or infrared broadcast system
- Videophones
- Personal care items, including slings for hoists
- Audio-visual fire alarms
- Readers for people with visual impairments
- Assistance with guiding
- An adapted keyboard
- Specialised computer software
- Items which could be used for several CYP eg hoist

4.0 Specialist Equipment

4.1 Specialist equipment

Specialist equipment is defined as needed by a pupil with special educational needs within a private, voluntary or independent early years settings, maintained early years settings and schools, and post 16 settings in order to facilitate better access to the provision/curriculum provided in the setting/school/home. It is defined as the type of equipment which would not ordinarily be available in the home, school or setting. This will typically include items such as:

- Specialist seating and standing equipment
- Specialist communication aids
- Specialist positioning equipment
- Toilet aids specific to that particular CYP needs, hoists, slings, freestanding height adjustable changing tables
- Sensory equipment such as radio aids or portable sound field systems and Perkins or electronic Brailleurs or Braille notes

A laptop / notebook, iPad or equivalent computers are common-place, standard equipment in modern schools and is **not** considered to be "specialist equipment" under the above definition.

4.2 Sensory – FM systems

The National Deaf Children’s Society Quality Standards states: “Every Child with a Hearing Loss should be considered as a potential candidate for a Radio Aid”. In line with this recommendation, all CYP in Blackpool with a hearing loss will be considered for a FM System.

The teacher of the deaf (ToD), working with audiology, will identify suitable candidates for provision with a personal FM system as part of their amplification package and taking into account the child’s and parent/carers’ views, The ToD may recommend FM system use using audiology records and professional judgement to identify that the following criteria have been met:

The CYP:

- Has a permanent bilateral, moderate, severe or profound hearing loss
- Is a reliable hearing aid/cochlear implant user
- Has a record of good attendance at Audiology appointments (this is required because the hearing aids must be in good working order and matched to an up-to-date audiogram before a radio aid can be effective).

The setting:

- Agrees to use the equipment as advised by the teacher of the deaf

4.3 Sensory – Low vision aids

Some CYP with a visual impairment require access to low vision aids and/or modified work. The Qualified Teacher of the Visually Impaired (QTVI) will assess a CYP’s need and advise on the appropriate font size for the CYP. When appropriate a Low Vision Aid will be suggested and where possible a demonstration of the equipment will be organised. The decision to consider a Low Vision Aid is dependent on font size, the reading ability of the CYP – if a CYP needs to access large amounts of text and enlarged books are not manageable. Following this a decision will be made as to whether the equipment is appropriate for the CYP.

The equipment belongs to the CYP whilst they are in education and should follow the child through their education, as long as it continues to be fit for purpose. Young people may take the equipment into post 16 provision.

As the CYP may need the equipment for homework and access to everyday life they may take the equipment home as long as parents agree and sign to say that they will take responsible care of the equipment. This will include an assurance from the parents that it will be covered on their household insurance.

Please Note: It is likely to be unlawful for a school to charge a pupil (or his parents) for making a reasonable adjustment in any circumstances, whatever the financial cost to the school and however the school is funded. The Equality Act duty applies to all schools in England and Wales irrespective of how they are funded. This includes Independent Schools and academies.

5.0 Funding thresholds

Mainstream schools

The LA expects mainstream schools to provide equipment and software to CYP with SEND up to the threshold which will be reviewed each year and published for schools to view.

The contribution to costs of new equipment for children with EHC plans equipment will need to be listed as provision in the child's EHC plan and the setting is required to contribute towards the cost of such equipment. The contribution is per item and not the total contribution for multiple pieces of equipment.

For items of equipment over the agreed threshold (see published financial information for schools each year) mainstream schools will fund the first part and the LA will fund the remaining costs from the high needs budget.

The only exception to this will be sensory impairment based equipment for pupils with hearing and vision loss.

Where the child attends an education setting and does not have an EHC plan the setting is required under the Equality Act to provide the equipment the child needs, the above thresholds will also apply.

Early years (EY)

For pupils in EY settings there will be no expectation of financial support from the setting. The equipment costs will be covered by the Inclusion fund for EYs.

Special schools

For schools, with CYP with complex needs, who require a large amount of specialist equipment, the panel will expect that equipment to be included in the child's EHC plan and where the cost is significant the LA will work with the school to agree a contribution towards that equipment.

Recycled equipment

The LA has a small recycled store of equipment which can, if appropriate, be provided to the CYP for as long as it is needed. There will be a small charge (as detailed annually in the financial information for schools) per piece of equipment made to cover costs for cleaning (decontamination), servicing and delivery of equipment.

6.0 Assessment and ordering process

6.1 Identifying a potential equipment need

When a potential equipment need has been identified this should be communicated to the Therapist via an NHS referral from a doctor.

Once the referral is allocated, the Therapist will seek information for the proposed provision and use of specialist equipment through discussion between health professionals and the parent/carer, Head teacher, specialist teachers, class teachers, setting managers,

The discussion should include a reference to the educational purpose of the equipment and why it is essential for supporting access to the environment, curriculum and life of the early years setting/school/home and/or health and safety. Consideration must also be given to size of the equipment, storage and health and safety issues arising from the use of the equipment within the school/setting/home environment and to the training implications for parents/carers or staff in the school or setting.

6.2 Therapists clinical assessment and recommendations

The therapist will carry out a clinical assessment to identify the CYP individual strengths and areas where additional support from specialist equipment would be required. Blackpool SEN Specialist Equipment Provision Process (Appendix 1). The Therapist will provide clinical reasoning to support their recommendations for equipment and document this within the Blackpool SEND Equipment Request Form (Appendix 2).

6.3 Completion of an equipment request form (Appendix 2)

The Therapist will:

- Consider the availability and suitability of equipment already available within the equipment store (recycled specialist equipment)
- Complete a separate Equipment Request Form for each child clearly identifying if the equipment is to come from the equipment store or to be purchased.

Recycled equipment – attracts a set charge

New equipment - to support any new purchased equipment requests, the Therapist will include details of the cost of equipment to be provided and attach this to the Equipment Request Form. Price information is available via Blackpool TCES equipment catalogue. For special/bespoke equipment requests obtain three (where possible, but may be less) quotes from suppliers in line with Procurement procedures.

Equipment price information is available via Blackpool TCES equipment catalogue or by emailing: equipment@bch.co.uk or Telephone: 01253 476667

The therapist will also seek information about recommended equipment servicing and safety check requirements and include this as part of the order information. The therapist will then sign the Equipment Request Form and pass/email to the school / Head teacher for review.

6.4 Setting/School/College /Home approval

The head teacher or designated staff member will review the therapist's completed Equipment Request Form and recommendations and share these with the CYPs parent/carer obtaining their agreement to the provision of equipment for use in school/other setting by the child.

Once agreement is obtained the head teacher or designated staff member should return the completed form by email to the Therapist indicating their (and the parent/carer's) agreement and confirming their awareness of the nature of the equipment that will be issued to the school/setting for use by the CYP.

6.5 Therapists clinical assessment and recommendations – Management approval

The assessing therapist should send their order request to their line manager/approved authoriser for review, peer challenge and seek their agreement to submit an equipment order request to:

- Orders over £1,000 - before submitting a request to the Individual Patient Panel (IPP) the assessing Therapist should first send their order request to their line manager/approved authoriser for review and peer challenge. Once agreed, the Therapist should submit a request to the IPP Panel by completing a Joint Equipment Request (Appendix 3) and emailing it to: gemma.dexter1@nhs.net

N.B. Requests submitted to the IPP Panel must NOT include any personal patient identifier information. A new dedicated shared IPP mailbox: is being set up to receive IPP panel emails and requests.

- Orders under £1,000 - The assessing Therapist should place the order on TCES requesting approval from their line manager in

line with the agreed scheme of delegation. Evidence of approval will be via the Blackpool TCES system.

For orders for Blackpool children attending educational settings out of the Blackpool area the therapist should seek approval from a service manager/team leader from the assessing team (out of area) who will provide evidence of approval via email.

6.6 Individual Patient Panel (IPP) meeting

The anonymised approval request and accompanying clinical reasoning is reviewed by the panel and a decision made within that panel meeting which will include:

- Approval/refusal of specialist equipment. The outcome and rationale for the decision will be clearly communicated to the Therapist to share with the Head teacher/school/setting/parent/carer
- Information around warranties, service requirements and safety checks including safety/maintenance checks under The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER)

The IPP panel will communicate their decision by email to:

- The assessing therapist
- BES equipment helpdesk email: equipment@bch.co.uk

The therapist will input approved orders on Blackpool TCES.

BES equipment helpdesk will update the SEND Equipment Asset Register (Spreadsheet) to include the following:

- Referral date
- Assessment date
- Date signed off by school/parent/carer
- Date of panel meeting
- Date order placed in TCES
- Date of delivery to school
- Warranty and service information

6.7 Therapy check visit and adjustments

Equipment orders input via Blackpool TCES trigger an electronic notification alerting the assessing therapist that placed the order that the equipment has been delivered. Once the equipment has been delivered to the school/setting the assessing therapist will:

- Arrange to attend school/setting/home to carry out a check of the equipment with the individual CYP it was ordered for and make any required adjustments
- Provide information to the setting / school staff or parent/carer on how to use or position the equipment and daily safety checks prior to use
- Record the equipment on the NHS systems to ensure regular reviews for growth are carried out at least 6 monthly and make adjustments as required at each visit.

Issue a Patient Information Letter (Appendix 4) to the head teacher or staff member with delegated responsibilities that will include essential information about:

- Delegated responsibility for the equipment provided to the settings/schools/home
- Details of arrangements for the servicing of the equipment– including Information for schools/settings/home around warranties, service requirements and safety checks including safety/maintenance checks under The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER)
- How to contact BES equipment helpdesk
- How to contact the SEND Team
- Where to access the Local Authority Charging Policy (SEND Equipment), information about financial contributions to be made by the school/setting and SEND equipment invoicing/re-charge arrangements

Early years settings, schools, colleges and universities are responsible for undertaking day to day safety and maintenance checks of all equipment (standard or specialised) within their education setting. Therefore, schools/other settings may find it helpful to maintain a log of equipment ordered/delivered so they can include this in their equipment maintenance schedule.

7.0 Repairs, transfers and returns

7.1 Repairs

If any equipment develops a fault or is identified as needing a repair, it should be immediately taken out of use and clearly labelled, cleaned down. The school/setting should immediately inform Blackpool Equipment Service of any concerns about damaged or broken equipment and arrange repairs. Email to: equipment@bch.co.uk or Telephone: 01253 476667.

Once the repair has been completed BES helpdesk will notify the therapy team by email to: bfw.potteam@nhs.net so they may check the child in the piece of equipment to ensure settings are still correct before it is used by the setting/school/home.

7.2 Transfers of equipment

Important - All planned transfers of equipment to other schools/settings (inside or outside) of Blackpool **must** be promptly notified prior to a transfer taking place. N.B. The School/setting is responsible for informing Blackpool Equipment Service by email to: equipment@bch.co.uk as early as possible. This is so that:

- Equipment asset registers and essential servicing and maintenance schedules can be updated to reflect the new location of the equipment
- Equipment may be collected, cleansed, decontaminated and checked/serviced prior to delivery to the new school
- Contracted suppliers of hired equipment can be contacted to arrange the return or relocation under a new hire agreement for the equipment.

7.3 Transfer to schools/Settings in Blackpool

When a child moves to a school/setting within Blackpool, then the equipment prescribed for that child will normally move to the new school/setting with them.

7.4 Transfer to schools/Settings outside of Blackpool

When a child moves to a school/setting outside of Blackpool, then the equipment prescribed for that child will normally move to the new school/setting with them with the exception of hired equipment, which **must** be returned to the supplier unless a new hire agreement for the equipment has been agreed.

In some cases it may be appropriate to contact the head teacher to negotiate a contribution to the costs of the equipment of up to 50% of the original school expense and the full costs of the recycling and decontamination process. For further information please contact Blackpool Equipment Service. Email to: equipment@bch.co.uk

7.5 Return of equipment

Equipment should be returned to the recycle store when the individual child it was prescribed for no longer needs it. When a piece of equipment is no longer in use, the setting/school must promptly contact Blackpool Equipment Service to arrange for the equipment to be removed from the setting/school. Email to: equipment@bch.co.uk

The local authority will pay the cost of returning equipment to the recycling store. The returned equipment will be checked, decontaminated and stored for reuse.

8.0 Roles and responsibilities

8.1 The setting/school

The setting/school/college/home will:

- Notify the Blackpool Equipment Service helpdesk by email to: equipment@bch.co.uk and therapist when then equipment has been delivered in school
- Ensure equipment is kept clean and is stored in a safe place
- Carry out daily safety checks and liaise with Blackpool Equipment Service to arrange regular servicing (as required) in line with manufacturers recommendations
- Promptly report any damaged or lost equipment to the Blackpool Equipment Service. Email: equipment@bch.co.uk removing damaged equipment from use until fully repaired
- Arrange for return of equipment to the recycling store when no longer in use by the child
- Track servicing and maintenance checks for all equipment within the setting/school/home
- Track any loan applications and agreements, including insurance evidence from academy settings
- Approve and pay the invoice for the proportion of equipment cost in line with the LAs agreed charging policy. The LAs SEND

Team will administer the charging policy and liaise with the school/setting about invoicing arrangements and financial contributions where appropriate.

8.2 Professionals

Therapists this may be the physiotherapist (PT), occupational therapist (OT), speech and language therapist (SLT) or specialist sensory teachers will:

- Undertake assessment of needs
- Confirm if specialist equipment can be provided by health and/or provide advice on other loans, and/or other funding available for said equipment
- Provide evidence of need and advise on equipment including provision of quotations if the equipment cannot be sources by BES's existing contracted suppliers
- Where appropriate contribute to the Annual Reviews for the CYP

8.3 Blackpool Equipment Service (BES)

Blackpool Equipment Service will:

- Facilitate delivery of equipment order requests and communicate with suppliers and those people that have signed the equipment request form eg therapist, Head teacher and parent/carer
- Track orders, and report any exceptions, delays or incidents
- Blackpool Equipment Service helpdesk will liaise with suppliers and the school/setting about arrangements for servicing, repairs and maintenance checks.

8.4 Local authority

The LA will:

- Update the Individual Patient Panel Terms of Reference to include this equipment approval within their remit
- The LAs SEND team will administer the charging policy and liaise with the school/setting about invoicing arrangements and financial contributions where appropriate.

8.5 Local authority, health providers and commissioners

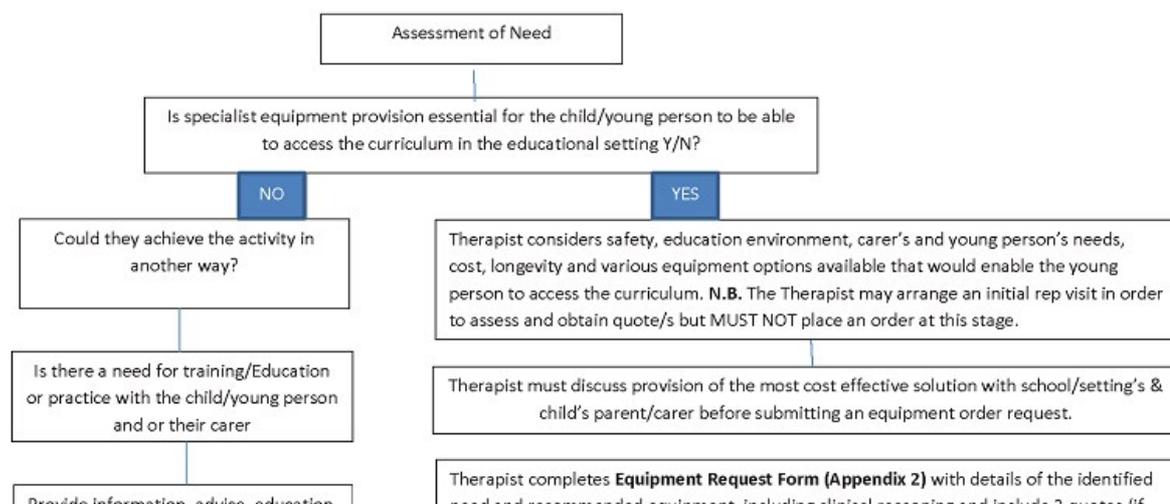
Partner organisations will work together to:

- Monitor and review this policy and guidance on an annual basis
- Audit the process and service at least annually, provide feedback to inform continuous improvements

9.0 Policy review

The policy and associated procedures will be reviewed annually. The local authority and health providers will work together to monitor and review the policy and associated guidance providing feedback to inform continuous improvement.

Blackpool SEND Specialist Equipment Provision Process (Appendix 1)

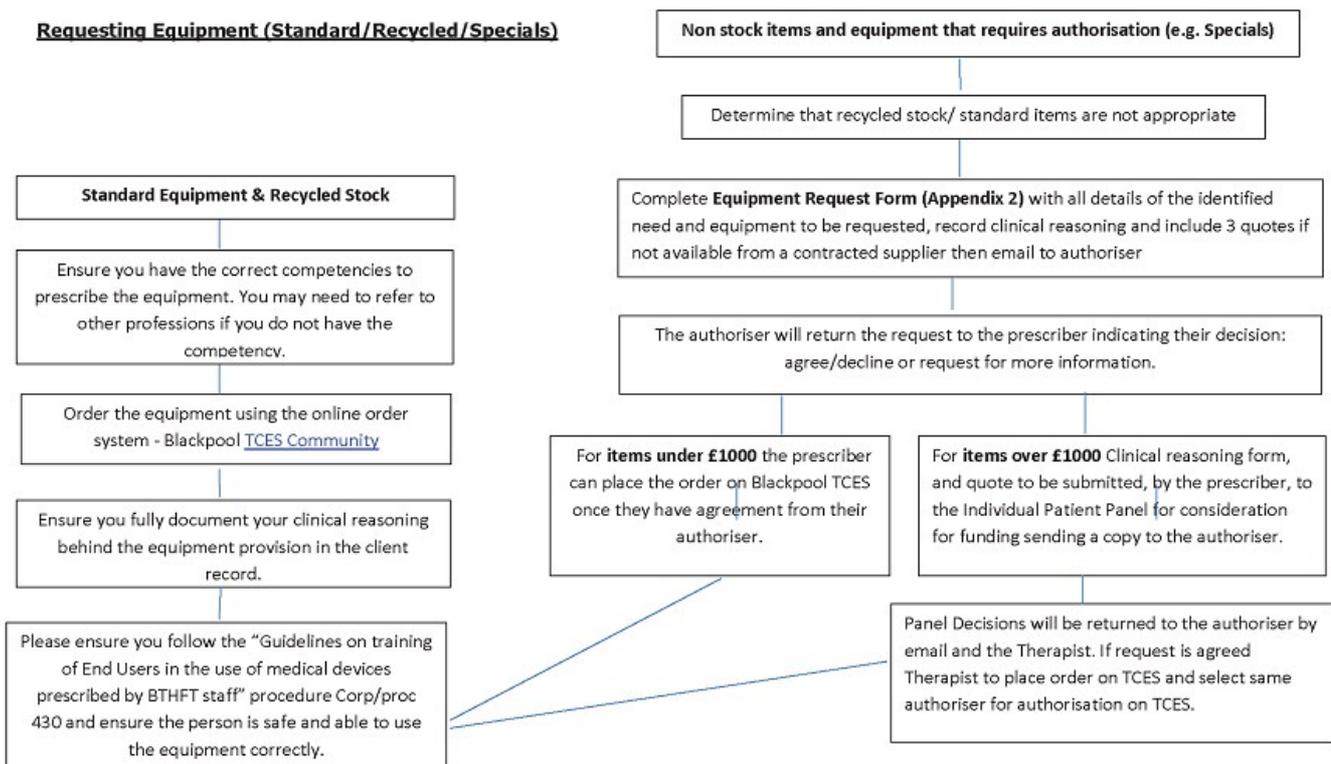


Provide information, advice, education, rehabilitation as required including commercially available items

need and recommended equipment, including clinical reasoning and include 3 quotes (if the equipment is not available from a contracted supplier) and emails the form to the school/setting to obtain their and the parent/carer's agreement.

School/setting emails the Therapist and returns the **Equipment Request Form** confirming their and the parent/carer's agreement to the provision of the equipment. Therapist records outcome in the individual's assessment record before submitting an equipment order request via Blackpool TCES - **see next page**

Requesting Equipment (Standard/Recycled/Specials)



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