



Joseph Patrick Trust Assistive Technology grants

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the Joseph Patrick Trust's assistive technology grants scheme?

To enable people with muscle-wasting conditions to have the assistive equipment they need to maintain or improve their ability to communicate independently. Assistive technology is an umbrella term to describe a product or service that is used to increase, maintain or improve the capabilities of individuals with disabilities, helping people to communicate, learn and live independent and fulfilling lives.

Our Joseph Patrick Trust assistive technology grants scheme is currently focused on specialist communication aids, and computer controls which help people use their communication devices.

The scheme was announced in July 2015; [read more](#).

What items can I apply for funding towards?

The following assistive technology (AT) items are covered by the scheme:

– **Switch interface:** Switch interfaces let you control a computer, phone or tablet device by using large, easy to press buttons, or your wheelchair controls. They are very useful for people with muscle-wasting conditions because they don't require precise movement in your hands, and are often easier to use if you have less dexterity in your fingers or weakness in your hands and arms.



– **AT software:** Most switch interfaces will require the installation of software to allow your device to communicate with and understand the inputs from hardware that you use, such as voice or eye activated hardware.

AT software can also cover programs that are designed to increase your productivity. These can range from mind-mapping software to typing programs which help you to construct sentences using just a few inputs.

Having the right assistive technology software can greatly increase your productivity and improve communication made through another device. It can therefore be very useful for people living with progressive muscle-wasting conditions, particularly over the long-term.

– **Eye-gaze add-on:** Eye-gaze add-ons allow you to control other devices using only eye movements. They are portable bar-shaped devices that have a built in camera that detects where your eyes are looking. They can be used with a PC, laptop or tablet, where they sit below the screen allowing you to control the computer simply by looking at the screen. Because Eye gaze technology only requires movement in your eyes to control a device, it is great for people with limited movement in their arms and hands over time.



– **AT Tablet (specialist communication device):** These are portable devices, similar to regular tablets but with built-in specialist alternative communication software. The software makes communication easier, for example by using grids and images on the screen that can be used for communication, for controlling the devices and for using apps on them. They are touch-screen operated and can also have eye-gaze technology built into them. These items would benefit anyone who has muscle weakness in their upper limbs, and who would also benefit from having a portable device.



– **All-in-one PC (with built-in AT features):** All-in-one PCs are computers with built-in specialist eye-gaze and communication hardware and software. They are designed to be mounted on a wheelchair and used on the go. The eye-gaze hardware lets you control the PC with eye movements and the communication hardware is usually some form of text-to-speech which turns written words into vocalised speech from a speaker built into the PC. Voice-activated software could also be built-in. They remove the need for having several pieces of hardware by having everything you would need built into one device.



Disclaimer:

Please note that the images of items above are for reference only and do not in any way represent a recommendation from Muscular Dystrophy UK for that particular item or brand. We always recommend you contact a healthcare professional to advise you on what equipment you need and what model and brand will be best for you.

What items are not covered by the scheme?

Items that are readily available on the consumer market are not covered by this scheme; eg iPads, tablets, laptops, MacBook, PCs or iMacs. (Funding towards these items can, however, be made through our regular grant scheme - up to £100 can be awarded – please refer to our [online tariff](#)).

Assistive technology items with uses other than communication are also not covered by this scheme, eg environmental controls such as door entry systems and telecare items such as blood pressure monitors.

Our Assistive Technology scheme is for specialist communication aids, and computer controls which help people use their communication devices. These items have been specifically designed for people who are finding it hard to use their existing communication devices. They often come with ongoing expert customer support from the supplier and/or manufacturer, which is important for ensuring you get the most from your device now and in the future.

Who can apply for an assistive technology grant?

Anyone living with muscular dystrophy or a related neuromuscular condition in the UK.

How much funding can you provide?

Please refer to our [online tariff](#) for an up to date listing of how much can be awarded.

The current tariff is:

Equipment Type	Amount
Switch Interface	Up to £300
AT Software	Up to £300
Eye-gaze Add-on	Up to £2000
Tablet (specialist communication device)	Up to £2000
All In One PC (with built-in assistive technology features)	Up to £2000

Additional funds may be available to make further awards for these assistive technology items, and additional accessory components that are essential for their function. Please apply for all items that you need and applications will be considered on a case by case basis in line with the tariff and funding available.

How do I apply?

You will need to complete and submit an application form together with a quote for the item you are seeking funding towards. You will also need to send a letter of support from a healthcare professional eg a care advisor or neuromuscular nurse, physiotherapist or occupational therapist.

The health care professional should attend an assessment with you so they can provide details of why the item(s) of equipment being requested are the best for you.

There are three ways to apply:

1. [Online](#)
2. [Download](#) an application form to print off, complete and post to us:
3. We can send you a paper version of the form – please contact us at JPTgrants@muscular dystrophyuk.org or on 0207 803 4814 or 0207 803 4811.

Find out more about the [application process](#).

When can I apply?

You can apply at any time. Your application will be assessed by the Joseph Patrick Trust Grants Panel at their next meeting; four meetings are held every year, in February, May, August and November. Please see our website for [deadlines](#) for the meetings.

You will be notified of the outcome of your application shortly after the next meeting.

Can I apply for both an assistive technology and other equipment grant?

Yes, but you will need to complete two different application forms as these will be considered separately.

What happens if my item is only part funded by the award?

If the item you request funding for is not fully funded by the award we can provide a list of other possible funding sources that may be able to help you get the remaining funding you need.

Where can I get more information and advice on assistive technology for my needs?

Your local care advisor, occupational therapist or assisted living centre can provide advice and information on the assistive technology available that would be suitable for your individual needs.

Many suppliers of assistive technology equipment offer assessments and demonstrations to help you decide whether these items would be beneficial. An independent healthcare professional should be present at your assessment, to ensure your individual needs are met, and so they can write a supporting letter detailing why the particular item(s) being requested are best for you.

For more information you can call us on 0207 803 4814 or 0207 803 4811 or email us at JPTgrants@musculardystrophyuk.org.