



National Star

Realising the aspirations
of people with disabilities

EdTech Demonstrator: National Star case studies

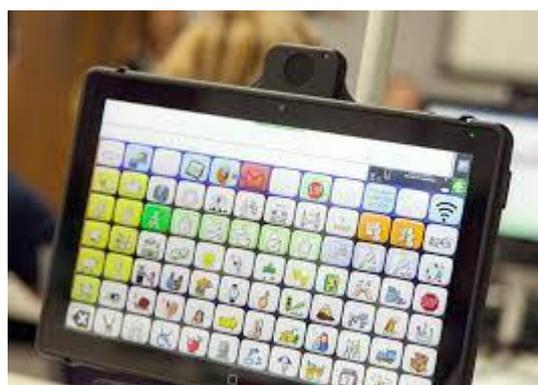
AAC devices – improving confidence and engagement

By Kayleigh Hunt, July 2021

'I am very good at driving with my AAC device and communicating with others. I can chat and drive!'
Dave, Student at National Star.

Many students start their journey at National Star with an already assigned AAC (Augmented and Alternative Communication) device. However, students may not necessarily get the best use and functionality from their devices until they have worked with National Star's Integrated Therapies team. A remit of this team is to understand each student's requirements and tailor their AAC device to meet those needs. In this case study, we share the progression of a current student (alias 'Dave') whose AAC device was initially a hindrance rather than a valuable asset.

Dave arrived at National Star for a three-year residential course with an AAC device buried in his luggage. The device could not be used by Dave when he was driving his chair because it obscured his vision. It was not used to interact with other students or staff.



As part of the education pathway, Dave worked closely with National Star's Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy teams. Within a couple of months, Dave was confidently using his tailored AAC device, responding to emails in a timely manner and communicating his thoughts and wishes.

The AAC device's mount was adapted by the Assistive Technology team to ergonomically fit the chair and is now accessible for continued use throughout all activities. After two years of continued working with National Star's combined therapies teams, Dave's confidence levels are sky high and he uses his AAC device in a range of situations to communicate and actively engage with his environment. Dave's AAC device was even instrumental in canvassing for his candidacy for the Student Union. Tremendously positive feedback from Dave's parents and staff alike has been received.