

## For Immediate Release

# nasen leads new training pilot to encourage the use of Assistive Technology in mainstream schools

nasen – the National Association for Special Educational Needs (SEND) - has joined forces with Assistive Technology provider, Microlink and the Department for Education (DfE) to lead a training pilot involving over 80 mainstream schools across the country.

Funded by the DfE, the Assistive Technology Training Pilot, aims to grow and develop the use of assistive technology to support children and young people with SEND.

nasen, the leading charity that exists to support and champion those working with, and for, children and young people with SEND and learning differences, and Microlink will collaborate to run online training sessions to nominated Assistive Technology Champions from each school between 31<sup>st</sup> January and 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

Children’s Minister, Will Quince announced the pilot at a recent National Network of Parent Carer Forums<sup>1</sup> event sharing the importance of reducing and removing barriers to learning for children with SEND by training teachers and school staff to use assistive technology by increasing confidence and capability.

nasen CEO, Annamarie Hassall MBE, said: *“Assistive Technology has an increasingly important role to play in education. Through the pandemic, its importance has accelerated with children and young people learning both in school and remotely. We know that using assistive technology can be life-changing and empowering for a learner with SEND or learning differences.*

*“Despite this, the growth in Assistive Technology has brought numerous challenges for educators and families alike. nasen is thrilled to be supporting this training pilot with the Department for Education and Microlink to help ensure children and young people with SEND receive every support possible to ensure that they can learn and thrive alongside their peers in mainstream education. We must continue striving towards ensuring equity of provision in the classroom and through remote learning.”*

The training pilot will explore how Assistive Technology can remove barriers and support teachers to ensure all children with SEND have the opportunity to succeed to the best of their ability. The training will share knowledge and best practice, enabling the Champions to put their learning into practice and lead a whole-school approach.

Dr Nasser Siabi OBE, CEO, Microlink added: *“I am delighted that Microlink is working closely with a charity of nasen’s significance on the DfE’s Assistive Technology Training Pilot.*

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<sup>1</sup> Event took place on December 1<sup>st</sup> – full speech transcript is available at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/childrens-minister-speaks-to-the-national-network-of-parent-carer-forums>

*“Microlink has been a leading provider of Assistive Technology for Higher Education and Business for nearly 30 years, and we have a whole-hearted belief in its potential to revolutionise our classrooms. Assistive Technology can bring the confidence of a level playing field for all students, improve the support we offer to those most in need of help and improve the lives and productivity of our teachers.”*

A launch event will take place on 27<sup>th</sup> January, attended by the senior leaders and Assistive Technology Champions from the 24 participating secondary schools and 57 primary schools meeting with nasen and Microlink to help embed the forthcoming learning across the whole school.

Upon completion in March 2022, the effectiveness of the training pilot will be independently evaluated by CooperGibson Research, with the results announced later in the year.

For further information and updates, please visit [www.nasen.org.uk](http://www.nasen.org.uk) or follow on Twitter @nasen\_org

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For more information please contact Lisa Church on 07467 945661 / [lchurch@consiliumcommunications.co.uk](mailto:lchurch@consiliumcommunications.co.uk) or Laura Smith on 07467 945848 / [lsmith@consiliumcommunications.co.uk](mailto:lsmith@consiliumcommunications.co.uk)

## Notes to Editors

### About nasen

- nasen – the national association for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) – is the leading membership charity that exists to champion, connect and support those working with and for children and young people with SEND and learning differences
- A fully inclusive and equitable education must be the aspiration for all children and young people. We exist to champion, connect and support all those involved in the education community - from the early years to schools, post-16, specialist schools and wider settings - to make this a reality
- Our free membership network, leading campaigns, trusted experience and training are empowering a generation of knowledgeable and effective leaders and practitioners who are transforming outcomes for the learners they serve day in, day out. We will not rest until we live in a world where learning is meaningful and accessible for every child and young person
- As we mark nasen’s 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we have worked in partnership with over 46,000 education practitioners across more than 9,700 schools and settings and are deeply committed to ensuring that our expertise in SEND is available to every school and setting in the UK
- nasen’s work spans the delivery of international programmes of support through to direct, ‘on the ground’ engagement with schools and settings in the UK through the DfE-funded, Whole School SEND consortium and wider project and programmes
- For further information, visit [www.nasen.org.uk](http://www.nasen.org.uk)
- Follow nasen on Twitter [@nasen\\_org](https://twitter.com/nasen_org), Facebook [@nasen.org](https://www.facebook.com/nasen.org) or LinkedIn [@the-national-association-for-special-educational-needs-nasen](https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-national-association-for-special-educational-needs-nasen)