



A Place for Everyone

Explore our goals of improving accessibility from the perspective of two librarians at the University of Birmingham.



What We Provide Our Students

When a student has been assessed by Disability Services, they will be given a **Reasonable Adjustment Plan (RAP)** which informs different departments about the extra support they need.

The library RAP Team receive a limited section of each student's RAP. They update student accounts with library-centric codes and email instructions on using our accessible services. We process **500 to 600 RAPs** each academic year. One of the most popular services we offer, and the focus of our recent projects, are the **Assistive Technology Booths (ATBs)**.

Library RAP Codes

book_lentent
deaf_alertter
alt_format
book_fetch
atb_user



What Are ATBs?

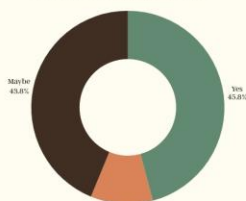
Assistive Technology Booths are four private, bookable study rooms in the Main Library. They contain various assistive software and hardware and have steadily increased in popularity over the years, with **1064 bookings from January to May 2026** compared to **850 bookings in all of 2023**.

Our Wellbeing Service Improvement Group, made up of Library Customer Support staff, have been exploring ways to improve our ATBs and testing for interest in a new accessibility-related item lending service.



Our Recent Project

"Would you be interested in borrowing new Accessibility-related Equipment?"



Our central piece of research involved creating a 9-question survey aimed at ATB users. It was rolled out in March 2026 in physical and digital formats.

We had a great response, collecting 51 feedback forms from 100 regular ATB users, and a further 3 responses from less frequent users. Students were very appreciative of the opportunity to provide feedback, with one emailing to thank us personally for the care taken with the questions.

We learned from the results that students liked having:

- A private place to work
- Dimmable lights
- Cooling fans

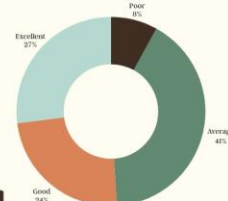
Consistent requests included:

- Further lighting options (35/51)
- Comfortable seating/cushions (29/51)
- A cleaning station (Open text responses)

Main takeaway:

Students want tidy and clean spaces optimised for work with a customisable environment.

"How would you rate the ATBs in terms of Appearance?"



Learning From Our Peers

Another aspect of our research has involved looking up the accessibility offerings of other university libraries and asking staff there to share their insights. Over the past months, we have spoken to representatives from four other universities. We found plenty of overlap in our experiences, with tidy study spaces and a customisable environment being highly valued by students everywhere. Each staff member we spoke to was lovely and had lot of passion for making library spaces as accessible as possible.



A quote that stuck out from one call was that 'There's lots of stuff we didn't have two years ago that is used frequently now.' This highlighted to us how necessary ongoing assessment is and has reaffirmed the importance of this recent work.



So, What's Next?

We are currently working out how best to action our findings to improve our services. Staff discussions have produced lots of great ideas, including:

- Adding **daylight lamps, galaxy lights** and **comfier seating** to ATBs.
- Buying **new headphones** and loanable ear defenders.
- Exploring the logistics of opening a **Sensory Room**.
- Creating a **sub-team to help keep our ATBs tidy**.



With a report currently being written to collate our ideas, we are very hopeful that the value of this feedback will be recognised. Further information on accessibility-related work at the University of Birmingham can be found via this link (Padlet).

The world gets better for everyone when the needs of people with disabilities are met.