MindView®
Assistive Technology Suite

Assessors' Toolkit

DSA/Education

Contents

Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)

A quick, student-friendly guide to the process — UK Higher Education
DSA is extra support for students with a disability, mental health condition, or learning difference. It's not a loan — you don't pay it back. Use it for specialist equipment, software, support workers, travel, and other study-related costs.

The DSA Process in 5 Easy Steps

- Check you're eligible: If your condition affects study and meets the Equality Act definition of disability, you can apply. Check eligibility
- Apply online or by form: Use your Student Finance account or a DSA1 form. Applying early helps your support arrive on time. Apply for DSA
- Send your evidence: Provide a diagnostic report or medical letter confirming your condition.
- Have a needs assessment: A friendly conversation (not a test) about the study support that will help you most.
- Get your support: You'll receive an entitlement letter. Approved equipment and training are arranged and supplied for you.

What can DSA pay for?

- Specialist equipment (e.g., computer if needed), assistive software
- Non-medical help (study skills support, mentoring, BSL interpreter)
- Extra disability-related travel to campus or placements
- Other approved study-related disability costs

Quick tips!

- Apply early — setup can take a few weeks.
- Keep copies of evidence and letters.
- Wait for approval before buying equipment.

Official links

ENGLAND
GOV.UK DSA Guide

ENGLAND
DSA Forms & Notes

WALES
Disabled Students' Grants

SCOTLAND
SAAS: How to Apply for DSA

NORTHERN IRELAND
Apply for DSA

What is MindView Assistive Technology (AT)?

MindView AT is an assistive mind mapping and planning suite built for neurodiverse learners and fully accessible for disabled users. It is accredited to WCAG 2.2 and is AA certified compliant for users with disabilities by the Digital Accessibility Centre.

MindView AT includes Text to Speech and Speech to Text, high contrast modes, keyboard only navigation, and compatibility with other popular AT programs such as Dragon Professional (with native voice commands), Talk-Type, JAWS, SuperNova, and ZoomText

MindView removes “blank page” pressure. Students capture ideas visually, switch to different views to check sequence, then Export into MS Office with hierarchical headings and a table of contents, so drafting starts with structure, not from scratch.

Why Mind Mapping as a Strategy for learners with disabilities?

Mind mapping helps students externalise ideas, see relationships between concepts, and organise information visually. For learners with dyslexia, ADHD, autism, or executive function challenges, this reduces working memory load and makes complex tasks manageable.

Key benefits

- Reduces cognitive load through visual externalisation.
- Improves organisation and sequencing for essays and projects.
- Supports memory and recall for revision and comprehension.
- Boosts confidence and momentum by removing blank page anxiety.
- Enables flexible thinking; add, move, and restructure ideas quickly.
- Fits academic workflows when paired with MindView (Outline, Word/PPT export, research support and citations).

Why MindView?

MindView makes mind mapping even more effective. Students switch easily between map and outline, export their work to Word with clear headings, and add citations. This approach bridges the gap between planning and creating polished academic assignments.

MindView directly reduces cognitive load for DSA students during writing and reviewing. It transforms ideas into clear visual structures and allows instant export to MS Office formats. With MindView, students go from planning in a mind map to drafts with a structured document that includes a formatted academic style, a table of contents, and in-line citations and bibliographies, totally eliminating blank page anxiety.

Academic features like the MindView Research Assistant and Citation Tool guide students from planning and outlining assignments to producing assessment-ready documents in a seamless workflow.

MindView comes as a desktop app for Microsoft Windows and Mac OS, and a web app that works with all browsers. Each version mirrors its native platform, so students master MindView quickly and use it confidently across a wide range of academic tasks.

MindView®
Assistive Technology Suite

MindView - Accredited Assistive Technology Mind Mapping Software

Disability Impacts, Strategies & MindView Recommendations

Section B-2 of a DSA Needs Report is titled **"Impacts of Disability and Recommended Strategies"** In this section, the assessor links specific challenges faced by the student to the recommended strategies, ensuring these strategies address the student's underlying disability-related needs.

Assessors typically select only one category for each software recommendation.

B-2-1 Research and reading

Frames reading-comprehension and research-workflow barriers. MindView is rarely placed here (text-to-speech/summarising tools are usually more suitable), though you may reference it if a student benefits from visually structuring literature themes.

B-2-2 Writing and reviewing academic work

This is the primary location for MindView because students need support to plan, sequence and structure essays. MindView enables visual planning, Outline view and export to Word with headings to overcome "blank-page" starts and coherence issues.

B-2-3 Note-taking in lectures and seminars

Captures barriers to listening-while-writing; MindView is not usually justified here; use dedicated capture tools instead.

B-2-4 Managing time and organising work

Use when task breakdown and deadline management are key. MindView's task data and Timeline/Gantt views provide visual scaffolding.

B-2-5 Access to and use of technology

Use to pair MindView with Assistive Technology training so the student can implement planning features effectively.

B-2-6 Practical sessions, placements, field trips and additional course activities

Rarely used for MindView unless you explicitly link practical activities to planning/report-writing outputs.

B-2-7 Examinations and timed assessments

Not a typical MindView location, unless pre-exam planning or structured revision maps feed into permitted materials or post-exam assignments.

B-2-8 Social interaction and communication

Generally not used for MindView.

B-2-9 Travel and access to the higher-education environment

Not applicable to MindView.

B-2-10 Additional information

Catch-all for context; seldom needed for MindView unless summarising its role in the wider support mix.

Disability Impact in Higher Ed & MindView Solutions

Dyslexia

Challenges

Students with dyslexia often struggle to break down assignment briefs into manageable parts and visualise a clear plan for their work. They may experience “blank page” anxiety, which delays starting assignments and increases stress. Working memory limitations make it difficult to hold multiple ideas at once, leading to disorganised structure and frequent loss of flow. Slow reading and processing speeds make reviewing drafts time-consuming, while spelling and grammar weaknesses add further pressure. These combined challenges often result in fragmented work, repeated redrafting, and reduced confidence.

How MindView Addresses These Challenges

MindView provides a structured, visual approach that reduces cognitive load and supports sequencing. Students can brainstorm ideas in a mind map, which externalises thoughts and makes relationships between concepts clear. Switching to Outline view transforms the map into a linear structure, helping students check the logical order of arguments before drafting.

The ability to export directly to Word with headings and a table of contents, with Bibliographies, eliminates the need for manual formatting and gives students a ready-made framework for writing. Features such as drag-and-drop reordering, colour coding, and icons make planning more intuitive, while sources and citations tools ensure references are captured early and carried through to the final document. These features help students overcome planning barriers, maintain structure, and produce work more efficiently and confidently.

Key Features

- Visual mind mapping
- Outline view
- Export to Word (headings & ToC)
- Drag-and-drop reordering
- Colour coding & icons
- Sources & citations
- Essay/planning templates
- Branch Text notes

Autism

Challenges

Students on the autism spectrum often experience cognitive overload when faced with large, unstructured tasks. They may find it difficult to interpret ambiguous briefs, prioritise tasks, and break assignments into smaller steps. Transitioning from ideas to a linear essay format can feel overwhelming, and unexpected changes in structure or requirements can increase anxiety. Many students benefit from predictable workflows and clear visual cues to reduce uncertainty and maintain focus.

How MindView Addresses These Challenges

MindView offers a predictable, step-by-step process that reduces ambiguity and supports executive function. Students can start by converting the assignment brief into a visual map, breaking it down into top-level sections and sub-tasks. This makes expectations concrete and reduces uncertainty. Branch Focus and Filtering allow students to work on one section at a time, minimising distractions and cognitive load.

Switching to Outline view provides a clear linear structure for review before drafting, while export to Word ensures a seamless transition to writing with consistent formatting. For students who need additional scaffolding, MindView's task data, Timeline, and Gantt views help visualise deadlines and progress, supporting time management and reducing stress. These features create a structured, low-ambiguity workflow that helps students stay engaged and complete tasks with confidence.

Key Features

- Built in Templates
- Branch Focus (single section view)
- Filtering (hide non relevant branches)
- Outline view (predictable structure)
- Colour/icon cues
- Attach notes/files to branches
- Export to Word

ADHD

Challenges

Students with ADHD often experience significant difficulty initiating tasks, sustaining attention, and resisting distractions. They may start multiple documents or tabs without completing any, leading to fragmented work and missed deadlines. Working memory limitations make it hard to hold the “big picture” while focusing on details, so they frequently lose track of ideas mid-flow. Time management is another major barrier: students often underestimate how long tasks will take, forget deadlines, or fail to break assignments into manageable steps. These challenges can result in last-minute panic, inconsistent quality, and high stress levels.

How MindView Addresses These Challenges

MindView provides a structured, visual environment that reduces cognitive overload and supports executive function. Students can capture ideas quickly in a mind map, then use Branch Focus and Filtering to work on one section at a time, minimising distractions. The ability to switch between Mind Map and Outline views helps them maintain both the big picture and the detail.

For time management, MindView allows students to add task data (start dates, due dates, priorities) to branches and view their plan in Timeline or Gantt charts. These features make deadlines visible and actionable. Integration with Outlook means tasks can sync with calendars, providing reminders and accountability. This combination of visual planning and task tracking helps students initiate work earlier, sustain focus, and complete assignments in a structured, timely way.

Key Features

- Branch Focus (reduce distractions
- Filtering (step-by-step work)
- Task data on branches (start/due/priority)
- Timeline view, Gantt view
- Export tasks to MindView Assist
- Visual progress tracking

Dyspraxia

Challenges

Students with dyspraxia often find writing physically and mentally exhausting. Fine motor difficulties make typing slow and error prone, while handwriting is often illegible and fatiguing. These barriers increase the cognitive load of writing, leaving less mental energy for planning and structuring ideas. Sequencing information is another common challenge: students may have strong ideas but struggle to arrange them logically, leading to disorganised drafts. Re structuring work is particularly difficult because it requires cutting, pasting, and reformatting text—tasks that demand precision and motor control. These issues can cause frustration, delays, and reduced confidence.

How MindView Addresses These Challenges

MindView reduces the physical and cognitive demands of planning by allowing students to drag and drop branches to reorganise ideas instantly, without retyping or reformatting. This visual approach supports sequencing and helps students see relationships between concepts.

The AT edition integrates with Speech to Text tools such as Dragon, enabling students to dictate content directly into the map, which bypasses fine motor limitations. Once the plan is complete, students can export to Word with headings, a table of contents, and page numbers, eliminating the need for manual formatting. These features save time, reduce fatigue, and allow students to focus on content rather than mechanics, improving both efficiency and confidence.

Key Features

- Drag-and-drop organisation
- Quick reordering without retyping
- Speech-to-Text/Dragon integration
- Keyboard shortcuts
- Export to Word (auto-formatted headings/ToC/Bibliographies)
- Structure templates, Outline view

Visual Impairments

Challenges

Students with visual impairments require planning tools that are fully accessible and reduce fatigue caused by visual strain. Common barriers include incompatibility with screen readers, lack of keyboard navigation, and poor contrast settings. For students with light sensitivity, bright or cluttered interfaces can trigger discomfort or migraines, making sustained work difficult. These challenges can slow planning, increase cognitive load, and create unnecessary stress when completing assignments.

How MindView Addresses These Challenges

MindView AT is designed with accessibility at its core. It supports screen readers such as JAWS, SuperNova, and ZoomText, ensuring that all content is navigable and readable. Built-in Text-to-Speech and Speech-to-Text features allow students to listen to content or dictate ideas, reducing reliance on visual input and fine motor control. High-contrast modes and customisable colour themes help minimise glare and visual fatigue, supporting those with light sensitivity. Keyboard-only navigation and ALT-tagged images ensure that all functions are accessible without a mouse. Export options maintain accessibility in Word and other formats, so students can continue working seamlessly across platforms.

Key Features

- Built in Text to Speech
- Speech to Text (dictation)
- High contrast modes
- Screen reader compatibility (JAWS, SuperNova, ZoomText)
- Keyboard only navigation
- ALT tagged images
- Accessible export formats

Executive Function Disorder

Challenges

Students with EFD experience persistent difficulties with planning, prioritising, and initiating tasks. They often misjudge time, underestimate workload, and struggle to break assignments into actionable steps. Working memory weaknesses make it hard to hold the "big picture" while focusing on details, leading to disorganised drafts and frequent task-switching. Cognitive overload and poor self-monitoring can cause students to drift off-brief or over-edit, while time blindness and procrastination increase the risk of missed deadlines and last-minute stress.

How MindView Addresses These Challenges

MindView provides a structured, visual workflow that externalises thinking and reduces cognitive load. Students can convert an assignment brief into a mind map using built-in templates, breaking it into clear sections and sub-tasks. Branch Focus and Filtering allow work in short, distraction-free bursts, while switching between Mind Map and Outline views maintains both detail and overall structure.

For time management, task data (start/due dates, priorities) can be added to branches and viewed in Timeline or Gantt charts, making deadlines visible and actionable. Colour coding, icons, and status indicators support quick prioritisation and progress tracking. Notes and attachments on branches keep requirements in context, reducing off-brief errors. When ready, export to Word with headings and a table of contents provides an immediate draft framework, lowering the barrier to writing. Integration with Outlook ensures reminders and accountability.

Key Features

- Built-in templates
- Branch Focus
- Filtering
- Mind Map Outline view
- Task data (start/due/priority)
- Timeline & Gantt views
- Colour/icon cues
- Status indicators, Notes & attachments
- Export to Word, Outlook sync.

Mental Health Conditions

Challenges

Students with anxiety or depression often feel overwhelmed when starting assignments. Intrusive thoughts and low confidence make planning and structure difficult and delay drafting.

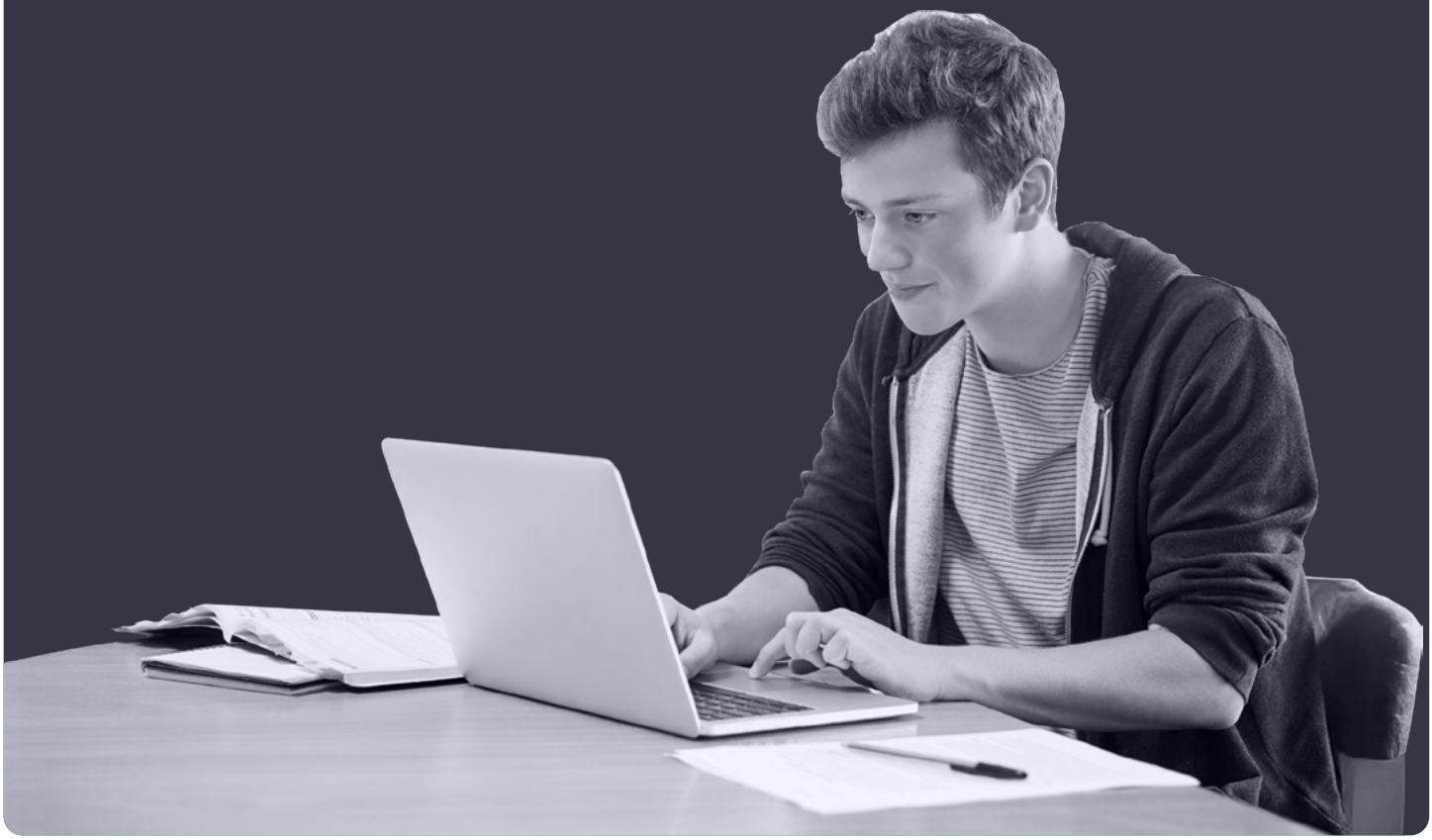
How MindView Addresses These Challenges

MindView provides a low-pressure start: the student captures ideas visually, shapes a clear outline and exports to Word. Branch Focus enables short, manageable work bursts that build momentum.

Key Features

- Visual brainstorming (low-pressure start)
- Outline view (sense of progress)
- Branch Focus (manageable chunks)
- Filtering (reduce overwhelm)
- Export to Word (quick drafting)
- Colour coding for clarity/motivation
- Templates for step-by-step planning

Student Personas & Examples of MindView Recommendations



Aaliyah

(Dyslexia, Short Working Memory, Slower Reading Pace)

Disability Information

- Experiences significant difficulty with phonological processing, which affects spelling and decoding unfamiliar words.
- Has a reduced working memory capacity, making it challenging to hold multiple ideas in mind when planning or writing.
- Reads at a slower pace than peers, which increases fatigue and limits time for drafting and proofreading.
- Reports anxiety when faced with large volumes of text or unstructured tasks.

Recommendation | Writing and reviewing academic work

MindView is recommended to help Aaliyah plan and structure her written work in a way that reduces cognitive overload and supports her working memory. She can create a visual map to capture ideas quickly and organise them into a logical sequence.

The ability to personalise the map with colours and images will make the process more engaging and easier to navigate. Once her plan is complete, she can export it directly to Microsoft Word, which will generate a structured document with headings and subheadings, reducing the anxiety of starting from a blank page.

MindView's native text-to-speech function with high quality natural voices will allow her to review her work audibly, while Predictive Text and built-in Dictation will support faster and more accurate text entry. These features work together to minimise the impact of slow reading speed and short working memory, enabling Aaliyah to focus on developing her ideas rather than struggling with structure and formatting.

Owen

(ADHD, Attention Regulation Difficulties, Time Management Challenges)

Disability Information

- Finds it difficult to sustain attention during long or complex tasks, leading to frequent loss of focus.
- Experiences impulsivity and struggles to prioritise tasks effectively, often switching between activities without completing them.
- Has poor time awareness, which results in missed deadlines or last-minute work under pressure.
- Reports feeling overwhelmed when faced with multiple competing demands.

Recommendation | Managing time and organising work & Writing and re-viewing academic work

MindView is recommended to assist Owen in breaking down complex tasks into manageable steps and maintaining focus throughout the planning process. He can use the mind mapping view to capture ideas quickly and then switch to the outline or timeline view to create a clear sequence of tasks.

The ability to colour-code branches and apply visual cues will help him prioritise and stay engaged. MindView's task management tools, including the Timeline, Year Wheel, Kanban and Gantt chart, will allow Owen to set deadlines and monitor progress, reducing the risk of last-minute rushes.

When he is ready to draft, he can export his structured plan into Word or PowerPoint, ensuring a smooth transition from planning to writing.

The Focus and Branch Focus modes will help him minimise distractions, while native Dictation will allow him to capture ideas without losing momentum. These features provide Owen with a structured, visually engaging workflow that supports his attention and time management needs.

Maya

(Autism, Sensory Processing Sensitivities, Difficulty Managing Change)

Disability Information

- Finds it difficult to cope with unexpected changes or ambiguous instructions, which increases anxiety.
- Experiences sensory overload in visually busy or noisy environments, reducing concentration and stamina.
- Struggles with social communication demands in group work or when receiving feedback from multiple sources.
- Prefers predictable routines and clear, structured workflows to manage academic tasks effectively.

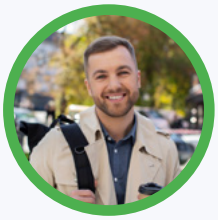
Recommendation | Managing time and organising work & Writing and reviewing academic work

MindView is recommended to give Maya a predictable and structured environment for planning her work. She can use the mind mapping view to break down complex briefs into clear, hierarchical branches, which will reduce ambiguity and provide a visual representation of the task.

The ability to personalise the map with colours and layouts will help her create a workspace that feels comfortable and reduces sensory overload.

Maya can attach files, links, and notes to each branch, keeping all related information in one place and reducing the need to switch between multiple platforms. When she is ready to draft, she can export her plan to Word, ensuring that the structure remains consistent and eliminating uncertainty during the writing process.

MindView's Focus mode and high-contrast options will help her manage sensory sensitivities, while the timelineand Gantt views will provide a clear overview of deadlines and progress. These features create a stable, transparent workflow that supports Maya's need for clarity and control.



Noah

(Dyspraxia, Motor Coordination Difficulties, Organisation Challenges)

Disability Information

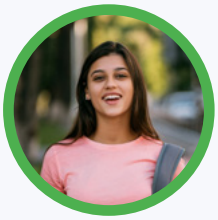
- Experiences fine motor difficulties that make handwriting slow and physically tiring.
- Struggles with sequencing and organising multi-step tasks, particularly in practical or written work.
- Finds it challenging to maintain neatness and consistency when producing handwritten notes or diagrams.
- Reports fatigue and frustration when required to rewrite or reformat work multiple times.

Recommendation | Writing and reviewing academic work

MindView is recommended to support Noah in organising multi-step tasks and reducing the physical effort associated with planning and drafting. He can use the mind map view to lay out ideas visually and reorder them easily using drag-and-drop or keyboard shortcuts, avoiding the need for extensive re-writing.

The ability to switch between map, outline, and timeline views will help him understand the sequence of tasks and maintain clarity throughout the process. When his plan is complete, he can export it to Word or Excel, which will create a formatted document without requiring manual layout adjustments.

MindView's integration with Dragon and built-in dictation tools will allow Noah to input text and control the software by voice, reducing reliance on fine motor skills. These features combine to provide Noah with an efficient, low-effort method for planning and structuring his work, helping him overcome organisational challenges and physical strain.



Priya

(Visual Impairment, Visual Fatigue, Navigation Difficulties)

Disability Information

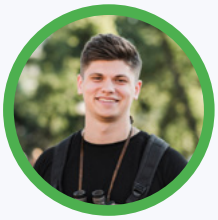
- Has reduced visual acuity, making it difficult to read small text or poorly formatted documents.
- Experiences visual fatigue during extended reading or screen use, which limits study endurance.
- Finds it challenging to navigate long documents without clear headings or bookmarks.
- Reports frustration when learning materials are not provided in accessible formats.

Recommendation | Writing and reviewing academic work

MindView is recommended to help Priya reduce visual strain and manage information in an accessible format. She can create a concise mind map to organise ideas visually, which will minimise the need to navigate through long linear documents during the early stages of planning.

The software's compatibility with screen readers, high-contrast themes, and keyboard-only navigation will allow Priya to work comfortably and efficiently. Once her plan is complete, she can export it to Word, where she can apply her preferred accessibility settings such as zoom and text-to-speech.

MindView's outline view and automatic numbering will make navigation easier, while the ability to attach files and audio notes to branches will reduce the need to handle multiple documents. These features enable Priya to maintain independence and reduce fatigue while managing complex academic tasks.



Daniel

(Chronic Pain, Fatigue, Reduced Physical Stamina)

Disability Information

- Experiences chronic pain that limits his ability to sit and type for extended periods.
- Suffers from fatigue that fluctuates daily, making it difficult to maintain consistent study routines.
- Finds it challenging to complete tasks that require repetitive physical effort, such as re-writing or reformatting work.
- Reports increased anxiety when symptoms interfere with meeting deadlines.

Recommendation | Writing and reviewing academic work

MindView is recommended to reduce the physical and cognitive effort required for planning and drafting.

Daniel can capture ideas quickly in a mind map and re-order them without re-writing, which will save energy and minimise strain. The ability to export the plan directly to Word will eliminate repetitive formatting tasks and allow him to focus on content rather than layout.

MindView's dictation feature and Dragon integration will enable Daniel to input text and control the software by voice, reducing the need for prolonged typing.

The timeline, year wheel, Kanban and Gantt views will help him distribute tasks across his available energy levels, while MindView Drive will allow him to access his work from different locations, supporting flexibility and comfort. These features provide Daniel with a streamlined, low-effort workflow that accommodates his fluctuating stamina and pain levels.