

Help Sheet – Access to Work

Access to Work is a publicly funded employment support programme that aims to help more disabled people start or stay in work. It can provide practical and financial support if you have a disability or long term physical or mental health condition.

An Access to Work grant can pay for practical support to help you:

start working

stay in work

move into self-employment or start a business

However, this grant is not for business start-up costs.

How much you get depends on your circumstances. The money does not have to be paid back and will not affect other benefits.

Employers must make reasonable adjustments to ensure workers with disabilities, or physical or mental health conditions, are not substantially disadvantaged when doing their jobs. This applies to all workers, including trainees, apprentices, contract workers and business partners.

Reasonable adjustments include:

Changing the recruitment process so a candidate can be considered for a job.

Doing things another way, such as allowing someone with social anxiety disorder to have their own desk instead of hot-desking.

Making physical changes to the workplace, like installing a ramp for a wheelchair user or an audio-visual fire alarm for a deaf person.

Letting a disabled person work somewhere else, such as on the ground floor for a wheelchair user.

Changing their equipment, for instance providing a special keyboard if they have arthritis.

Allowing employees who become disabled to make a phased return to work, including flexible hours or part-time working.

Offering employees training opportunities, recreation and refreshment facilities.

Your employer may also be responsible for some of the costs of your claim. Access to Work can also give practical advice and guidance to employers, to help them understand physical and mental ill health and how they can support employees.

Access to Work can help pay for support you may need because of your disability or long term health condition, for example:

Aid and equipment in your workplace.

Adapting equipment to make it easier for you to use.

Money towards any extra travel costs to and from work if you cannot use available public transport, or if you need help to adapt your vehicle.

An interpreter or other support at a job interview if you have difficulty communicating.

Other practical help at work, such as a job coach or a note taker or lip speaker.

You may need to give some proof of costs, e.g. for taxi fares.

If you have a mental health condition, you will be offered assistance to develop a support plan. This may include steps to support you going in to, remaining in or returning to work and suggestions for reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

Examples of assistance to develop a support plan:

Flexible working patterns to accommodate changes in mood and impact of medication
providing a mentor to give you additional support at work
Giving you additional time to complete certain tasks
Providing you with additional training
Regular meetings between you and your manager to talk about your concerns
A phased return to work, such as reduced hours or fewer days
Access to Work partners will also work with your employer to advise them how best they can support you in the workplace.

Eligibility

You can apply for Access to Work if you:

are normally resident in, and working in Great Britain
have a disability or long term health condition that means you need an aid, adaptation or financial or human support to do your job (long term means lasting or likely to last for at least 12 months)
have a mental health condition and need support in work
are aged 16 or over

You must also:

already be doing paid work
be about to start work or become self-employed
have an interview for a job
be about to begin a work trial or start work experience under the Youth Contract arranged through Jobcentre Plus

Your condition

To receive support from Access to Work you must have a disability or health condition that means you need an aid, adaptation or financial or human support to do a job. For example, special computer equipment or travel costs because you can't use public transport.

Your mental health condition must affect your ability to do a job. It must also mean you need support to:

start a new job
reduce absence from work
stay in work.

For more information about Access to Work

www.gov.uk/access-to-work/what-youll-get

NOTE: The Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are not covered by Access to Work and there is a different service in Northern Ireland.

