

Access to Work factsheet

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Background

A person is disabled if they have an **impairment or health condition** that has a **substantial and adverse** impact on their day-to-day life, which has lasted or is expected to last for over **one year**. It includes fluctuating and/or recurring conditions, such as arthritis or depression, which may be more or less impactful at a given time.

Employers have a **legal duty** to make adjustments for disabled staff and candidates, providing that these are 'reasonable'. What is considered reasonable varies, but usually relates to the time, cost, and practicality of implementation, the size and nature of the business, and any effect on existing staff. If the employer has a good reason why they cannot meet all the needs of a staff member or applicant - for example, if they require specialist support or equipment - help is available.

About

Access to Work is a discretionary grant scheme led by the UK Government, aimed at supporting disabled people to begin, or remain in work. Individuals can **apply** for funding based on their needs, and may be awarded up to **£60,700** per year, to cover a wide range of interventions. This money does not have to be repaid.

Access to Work funding agreements can cover **up to three years**, with annual reviews to establish if continued or additional funding is needed. This should remain in place for as long as it is required.

Who can apply?

Access to Work can identify and recommend personalised support for disabled people over the age of 16, living in England, Scotland or Wales*, who are affected by workplace barriers.

This includes people who are:

- in paid employment
- self-employed

- completing an apprenticeship, traineeship, or supported internship
- doing self-directed work experience
- on Jobcentre Plus promoted work trials
- going to a job interview.

To be able to apply, the individual must have a job offer letter, a start date, or a letter confirming they have been invited to interview.

What is available?

Examples of the kind of help available through Access to Work are:

- **Personnel**, such as an assistant, support worker, communication professional, advocate, or specialist job coach.
- **Specialist equipment** (or alterations to existing equipment) to suit the person's particular need.
- Help towards **taxi fares** if they cannot use public transport to get to work.
- If applicable, support via Access to Work's dedicated **Mental Health Support Service** (see below).

Young people who start a work placement with an employer as part of the **Department for Education supported internship programme** or a traineeship will be able to apply for Access to Work support for the time of their work placement only.

Access to Work will fund additional travel, job coaching and other support - including costs of equipment, if appropriate - and promote the smooth transition into paid employment.

No other types of unpaid internship or traineeship will qualify for Access to Work support.

Travel

Access to Work uses a specific medical form in connection with claims for travel to work. The form can be completed by someone who knows the applicant well, giving a clear indication of why they need support with travel to work.

* There is a different system in Northern Ireland. See [Access to Work - practical help at work | nidirect](#).

Once completed, it must be signed by a medical professional to verify that the information is accurate. This could be a GP, Practice Nurse, Psychiatrist, Psychologist or Learning Disability Nurse, but it can't be signed by a non-medical person such as Social Worker or Support Worker.

The Mental Health Support Service

Access to Work provides a free and confidential service to anyone with a long-term mental health condition. The individual will be offered an **assessment** of their needs, to identify coping strategies; tailored, **work-focussed mental health support** for up to nine months; a personalised **support plan**, detailing the steps needed for them to remain in, or return to work; ideas for **adjustments** in or of the workplace.

Support for Apprentices

This free service is run by fully trained professionals, and offers a similar level of support. It is open to people who are in an apprenticeship (attending or signed off sick) and have a mental health condition that has resulted in absence, or difficulties remaining in the apprenticeship. Individuals can access the scheme using these details:

Telephone: 0300 456 8210

Email: apprentices@remploy.co.uk

www.remploy.co.uk/employers/mental-health-and-wellbeing/supporting-apprentices-service

How-To

The individual must apply directly **within the first six weeks** of their employment:

Apply online
www.gov.uk/access-to-work/apply

Telephone: 0800 121 7479

Textphone: 0800 121 7579

Find out about call charges.

British Sign Language (BSL) video relay service

To use this, first **check you can use the service** and then **go to the video relay service** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

Alternative formats

To ask for alternative formats, such as braille, large print or audio CD, call Access to Work or write to:

Access to Work
Operational Support Unit
Harrow Jobcentre Plus
Mail Handling Site A
Wolverhampton
WV98 1JE

Employers

Employers must contribute all costs up to the threshold level and 20% of the costs between the threshold and £10,000. **Access to Work cover all additional costs over £10,000, up to the cap.**

Employees	Threshold	Access to Work Pays
Fewer than 50		80% of approved costs
50-249	The first £500	80% of approved costs, up to £10,000
More than 250	The first £1000	80% of approved costs, up to £10,000

Information for employers is available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-work-guide-for-employers.

For general information on Access to Work, go to www.gov.uk/access-to-work

See also DWP's Access to Work **factsheet** for customers, staff **guidance** and **statistics**.

For further help and information, **Search for your local Citizens Advice - Citizens Advice**.

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