



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

# Access to Work



## An Introduction to Access to Work

 [www.gov.uk/access-to-work](http://www.gov.uk/access-to-work)

# Access to Work

- Access to Work was introduced in June 1994
- Is a National Programme delivered by Department for Work and Pensions
- To help overcome barriers that disabled people come across when moving onto or retaining employment.
- Provides a grant to cover additional costs over and above the requirements of making “reasonable adjustments” which an employer is legally obliged to provide under the “Equality Act 2010”
- A flexible programme that focuses on the needs of the individual.

# Benefits of Access to Work

- Encourages greater independence
- Promotes work as being the best route to inclusion for disabled people
- Enables disabled people to work on a more equal basis with non disabled colleagues
- Encourages employers to recruit and retain disabled people by offering practical help.
- Provides advice to disabled people and their employers

# Eligibility Criteria - Types Of Help

- Have a disability or health condition that has a long term, adverse affect on their ability to carry out their job
- Be over 16 years old
- Be in, or about to start, paid employment (including self employment)
- Live and work in England, Scotland or Wales
- Not be claiming Incapacity Benefit or ESA once they are in work (with the exception of higher permitted work)

# What is a Reasonable Adjustment?

## Summary

Where someone meets the definition of a disabled person in the Equality Act 2010 (the Act) employers are required to make reasonable adjustments to any elements of the job which place a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled people.

Employers are only required to make adjustments that are reasonable. Factors such as the cost and practicability of making an adjustment and the resources available to the employer may be relevant in deciding what is reasonable

# 3 Requirements of Employers Duty to make Reasonable Adjustments

There are 3 main considerations when determining what reasonable adjustments could be put in place for an employee

- Changes to the ways in which things are done in the organisation
- Changes to overcome the barriers created by the physical features of the workplace
- To provide extra / auxiliary equipment

# If you get other benefits:

Certain benefits may affect whether you can get an Access to Work grant. These include:

- Universal Credit
- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income Support

You can still get help from Access to Work if you work more than one hour a week.

Employment and Support Allowance:

You can only get help from Access to Work if you're doing 'permitted work'. It's permitted work if all of the following apply:

- you earn up to £120 a week
- you work less than 16 hours a week
- it's been agreed with your work coach

# Types Of Help

There are seven main elements within Access to Work:

- Special Aids and Equipment (SAE)
- Adaptations to Premises and equipment (APE)
- Travel to Work (TtW)
- Travel in Work (TiW)
- Support Worker (SW)
- Communication Support at Interview (CSI)
- Mental Health Support Service (MHSS)

# Mental Health Support Service

Support is available for people with mental health conditions who are either:

- Going into work
- Absent from work as a result of a mental health condition
- Finding work difficult as a result of a mental health condition

The support available from Access to Work includes:

- An assessment of needs
- A personalised six month support plan, with detailed steps designed to keep a person in, or help them to return to work
- Signposting to relevant intervention and support services

This service is provided for Access to Work by Remploy

# Examples of Mental Health Support

## Coping strategies

This could cover a range of strategies and will depend on the individual's job role, their condition and how this impacts their work. For example:

- Keeping a mood diary
- Using memory aids such as Mind Maps, checklists
- Relaxation techniques when under pressure
- Developing a Wellbeing Recovery Action Plan
- Cognitive Behavioural techniques

## Reasonable adjustments

- Development of Flexible working, phased return, etc.
- Putting in place a buddy or mentor
- Temporary reduction in targets or reallocation
- Additional time to complete certain aspects of job role
- Regular formalised 1-2-1 meetings to review concerns

# Access to Work Grants -Cost Sharing Financial Support

The level of grant will depend on:

- Whether the applicant is employed or self employed
- How long they have been in their job
- The type of help required
- The size of company they work for

Access to Work provides the grant with which to procure the support that is needed, it does not provide the support itself.

# How to Apply - Contact Details

- Disabled employee makes the application
- Telephone applications - Alternative arrangements can be made.
- The Customer Service Team will take basic details
- A stencil will be sent to an adviser who will call the customer and undertake an eligibility check and appraisal of need.
- Once the appraisal has been undertaken this will help the adviser make an informed decision to award support or identify if a further workplace holistic assessment is required before being able to identify what support is required ( this will mainly be for specialist aids)

# The Access to Work customer journey

## **1. Application**

The customer applies for Access to Work provision.

## **2. Approval/Rejection**

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) approves or rejects the provision after considering the customer's eligibility and their employer's duty to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010. The customer is notified of the decision and a grant may be approved to cover some or all of the costs of the approved provision.

## **3. Commissioning**

The customer or their employer commissions the approved provision and submits invoices relating to approved grants to DWP.

## **4. Receipt**

The customer receives the approved and commissioned provision.

## **5. Payment**

DWP pays the invoices relating to approved grants. In some cases a DWP payment is not required, for example because provision can be provided at no cost or the employer covers the relevant costs.

## **6. Review**

DWP schedules reviews to ensure the provision is still adequate and to check that the customer is still eligible.

# Grant to support disabled people in the workplace rises by over a third

- Hundreds of disabled employees are to benefit from a £15,000 rise in Access to Work grants to assist them at work, following new measures introduced in Parliament on 20 March 2018.
- From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018, people will be able to claim up to £57,200 annually to help pay for additional support that they may need in the workplace – approximately £15,000 more than the current cap of £42,100.
- Access to Work provides financial support to ensure someone's disability or health condition doesn't hold them back at work, and can cover workplace adaptations, assistive technology, transport and interpreters.
- Increasing the amount people can receive annually will ensure that more disabled people, particularly from the deaf community, are able to benefit from the grant and achieve their career aspirations.

# Access to Work further measures:

- Discretion in exceptional cases of multiple disability, to consider award limits averaged over a longer period – for example, where a customer's ongoing need for a support worker may be below the cap but when coupled with a periodic need for say a wheelchair, would exceed the cap in that year
- Introduction of managed personal budgets to enable greater choice and control for customers in the way grants are spent
- Taking applications 12 weeks ahead of a job start date rather than the current 6 weeks to allow more time for support to be agreed and put in place
- Continuing to invest in our digital improvements such as developing the facility to submit invoices online
- Allowing more flexibility in how people can use Access to Work to support short periods of work experience where there is a likelihood of a paid job in the near future

# Reconsideration, Review and Complaints

Access to Work is decided on a case to case level and the amount awarded is based on discussions with you and with your employee. This means that it is not possible to appeal against the level of an award.

However, the Access to Work scheme does have a reconsideration policy. Everybody is entitled to one reconsideration of an award by a different Access to Work Adviser. Please ask your employee to use the contact details at the top of their award letter if they want to arrange this.

If your employee's job role has changed, they can ask for their award to be reviewed. This can take place as many times as their situation changes, and they will still be able to get their award looked at again if they do not agree with the level of the reviewed award.

Not agreeing with the level of the award and the results of reconsideration does not, on its own, give enough reason for a complaint. However, if you or your employee have had poor customer service or think the Access to Work claim has not been handled correctly, a complaint can be made using our [complaints procedure](#).

# Further Information

Information about Access to Work or how to apply can be found on the internet at:

[www.gov.uk/access-to-work](http://www.gov.uk/access-to-work)

## Other ways to apply:

- You can contact Access to Work to apply for a grant.
- When you contact Access to Work you'll need:
- your National Insurance number
- your workplace address, including your postcode
- the name, email address and work phone number of a workplace contact (your manager, for example)
- your unique tax reference number (if you're self-employed)

You can contact the Customer Service Team with any questions on:

Telephone: 0800 121 7479

Textphone: 0800 121 7579

Email: [atwosu.london@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:atwosu.london@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

# Ryan – Specialist Equipment and Interpreter

Ryan is profoundly deaf. He is employed as Part Time BSL Teacher. In addition he is also self-employed as a Plasterer

In his teaching profession Ryan experiences communication difficulties with others, especially in meetings; his colleagues are not hearing impaired and do not use BSL. Access to Work has provided funding for Interpreter support.

Recently Ryan has started his new venture as a Self Employed Plasterer. Ryan feels that he has the appropriate skills to undertake plastering work and the relevant equipment. His only difficulty is communication.

Access to Work has provided funding for The BSL interpreter that will help overcome communication difficulties which Ryan will experience at various times of the day, dependant upon different stages of each job e.g. on site dealing with customers, contractors, builders, and then at home accessing answer machine messages and making telephone calls when texting / e-mails / minicom is not appropriate. He has also been provided with Special Aids and Equipment such as Ubi Duo communication devices for short conversations (face to face communication only) when it would be impractical to call out an interpreter

## **Quote from Ryan:-**

**"Thanks to Access to Work I have equality of access. It gives me the same opportunities as hearing people. That means I can be independent and develop my own business to support my young family and get off benefits. Without Access to Work I would have to rely on benefits for ever"**

# Karan – Travel to Work

Karan has been employed by a Borough Council. She deals with examination standards for Ofsted and has to ensure that the team delivers these standards in accordance with Ofsted requirements. The work is mainly office based; she spends 50% of the time sat at a desk and her duties in part involve accessing and inputting data via a PC system and the completion of written reports and correspondence. She also deals with telephone enquiries, filing, photocopying and other general clerical duties and line manages five staff.

Karan contacted Access to Work because she is affected by the debilitating effects of a brain tumour. She had a brain tumour which was removed, and another brain tumour was found last year and she has had further surgery. As a result Karan has lost the sight in her left eye. She has severe fatigue and has to take strong medication. Her mobility is dramatically affected to the extent that her ability to guarantee punctual arrival at work each day is in doubt. She has had her driving licence revoked, due to a seizure following surgery, and the nature of her tumour is such that she has been advised not to drive.

The standard method of transport to and from this location would either be driving or using public transport, Karan can do neither. She is unable to drive and the journey time on public transport is over 1.5 hours, this is not manageable given Karan's fatigue levels.

Having discussed the various options with her advisor, Karen was awarded Taxi's to and from work. Karan is thrilled and cannot believe such support is available; she has managed to return to work and is able to adequately carry out her duties.

**She is so inspired by Access to Work that she is making contact with the consultant, to ensure that all clinical staff are aware of the scheme.**

# Visual Impaired Specialist Equipment & Support Worker

Danny is Registered Blind (Occult Maculopathy / Bi Lateral Retinal Dysfunction). He states that he has no useful vision.

Danny works as a Service Delivery Manager for The Guide Dogs Association; his role is demanding and varied. He manages staff / volunteers and is involved in all the administration associated with this. Although office based Danny also visits service users, attends conferences and events across the country.

An assessment of need was carried out and all of the circumstances taken into account.

In addition to some technical solutions, a grant for a Support Worker has also been agreed. Danny's employer has recruited the Support Worker. The Support Worker enables Danny to meet his full potential and work independently. Some of the Support Worker duties include guiding, driving, reading hand written documents and take notes.

## **Customer Quote:**

**I've worked all of my life and have always tried to better myself. I have never liked asking for help because I try and do as much as I can myself, when you lose your eyesight you have to face up to the fact that you have to reach out for help. I'm indebted to AtW because without them I would have had to stop working a long time ago.**

# David – A range of support

David had a motorcycle accident which left him with a spinal injury. He had two or three years off work rehabilitating, living in a council bungalow on housing benefit and on disability benefits.

David has moved into private practice and established Burdus Access Management. To do this he had the following support from the AtW :

- Adaptation of the premises
- Adaptation to vehicles
- IT equipment and software
- Training

As part of his health management he changed over to a large wheelchair accessible van with a tail lift and a powered wheelchair. AtW helped fund these solutions. This has enabled David stay in employment because he could no longer cope with many of the larger buildings and external sites in his manual wheelchair.

Part of the job involves report writing. AtW funded voice dictation software and the relevant training. David states that “This I believe has been one of the most cost-effective solutions identified and provided to me by your team. I am able to work at my desk for far longer periods because I can shift position, lift up on my arms to take the weight off my bottom and back and it is much faster using voice dictation than it is typing so my productivity levels have risen back up to where they were before I had my problems using my keyboard.”

David has provided employment for eight people and subcontracted to many others (the vast majority of disabled people). He is proud to have worked on the many great projects including:

- The Houses of Parliament
- The Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Fountain
- The Royal Opera House

## **Customer Quote:**

**“I have used the Access to Work Programme of 24 years now.**

**The quality of the expertise, advice and support I have received during that time has been superb.”**

# Emily – Job Coach

Emily is 22 years old and works for a large Supermarket. Emily has high functionality Aspergers.

Emily had difficulties with communication, planning work and coping with changes in work. She felt isolated and misunderstood by her colleagues and managers. There had been some issues at work and Emily was at risk of losing her employment.

Access to Work agreed funding for a support plan; the support was delivered by Autism Success Formula. The plan included (not exclusively):

- Appropriate Communication including responses to colleagues and working on positive relationships with colleagues and managers
- Producing schedules, timetables and routines to support her Autism.
- Some job coaching to embed the good working practices
- Awareness sessions for colleagues and managers

**The relationships at work have improved. Emily is now much more positive about her future with this Supermarket and she has been able to return to her full time hours, which her mother attributes to the help from Access to Work.**