

Access to Work Cheat Sheet

Advice pulled together by businesses for businesses

What is Access to Work?

Access to Work is a government funded scheme providing support for disabled people to get into and stay in work by helping to remove barriers in the workplace. The scheme helps employers hire disabled people with the skills they need and retain disabled employees in the workplace.

Please note Access to Work is not a replacement for employers making reasonable adjustments in the first place, it's a programme to provide additional support.

Some examples of the type of support Access to Work funds include:

- Communication support e.g. a British Sign Language interpreter
- Specialist equipment
- Support worker
- Funding travel to and from work

Application details can be found at the bottom of this document.

Who is eligible for Access to Work?

To be eligible for support an individual must:

- Have a disability or health condition (physical or mental) that affects their ability to do their job or travel to work that has lasted over 12 months
- Be in or about to start paid work (full-time, part time, work experience or apprenticeship)
- Live and work in England, Scotland or Wales - there's a different system in [Northern Ireland](#)

What will Access to Work need to know?

There are actions that can help the Access to Work Adviser to progress an application quickly.

The Access to Work Adviser will need some detailed information and it will help if you as an employer can provide the following information:

- A job description for the existing or new job
- Expected start date (if the application is for a new joiner)
- Contact details for the line manager
- Contact details for the person who will authorise the purchase and cost sharing

Starting the claim process

Access to Work will take an initial application over the phone and will then pass the application on to an Access to Work adviser.

They will need to check:

- The employees eligibility
- National Insurance number
- The workplace address, including the postcode
- The name, email address and work phone number of a workplace contact, e.g. the line manager
- A brief overview of the application

It is important at this initial contact stage to state the preferred format for conversation so the advisers are able to meet the individual's stated communication needs. It can also be helpful to consider the key issues at this stage and to explain the difficulties/challenges the employee is facing. This will help ensure that all needs relating to the job are addressed at the assessment.

The employee will be contacted by an Access to Work adviser within 7 working days and will be asked to provide a contact number. Advise the employee to be available where possible within this period. It is important to provide details of any dates/or times in the following 7 days the employee is not be available. Up to 3 attempts will be made to contact the employee on the number provided and the Adviser may leave a message or send a letter/email to say they have attempted contact. It is possible Access to Work may attempt contact at more unusual times including evenings and weekends.

Assessment

To get the most out of the assessment advise the employee to consider all the aspects of the job beforehand, identifying all of the areas where an employee's disability affects their work. This can be hard for new starters, but if their needs change they can always go back to Access to Work to ask for further help.

Report

There should always be a formal report as a result of an assessment. This is sent to Access to Work outlining the results of the assessment and will contain the necessary information to enable the Access to Work Adviser to reach a decision regarding the application. If no on-site assessment has taken place, the assessor can produce a formal document, or the employee can supply a letter containing the

necessary information (that is, what the employee requires, who manufactures it and how much it costs).

Agreeing support and costs

The Access to Work Adviser will present a final figure of necessary costs to the employer, and then the split of costs between the two agencies will be agreed. Maximum coverage of costs by Access to Work is up to 100 per cent.

Authority to proceed and purchase

Access to Work will provide written permission to the employer, which will include their final agreed contribution. Levels of grants depend upon how long your employee has been in work, the type of support required, and employment status. The current maximum grant award is £59,200. The amount you contribute depends on the number of employees you have. Any balance above £10,000 is typically met by Access to Work.

Purchasing

Employers are free to purchase the equipment as soon as permission has been granted. They can then apply for reimbursement of Access to Work 's agreed contribution with supplied documentation. Either the employee or the employer may be asked by Access to Work for an additional voluntary contribution to the cost of equipment. This is voluntary, and the entitlement to support will not be changed should the employee choose not to pay it.

Travel to work and travel in work costs are rarely funded up front, and the cost of employing a support worker is not always funded by employers. In most cases employees will be required to finance the costs of transport and support workers and then claim this money back from Access to Work.

Set up, installation and training

The costs of these elements will be outlined in the report, you as the employer can apply for reimbursement of the Access to Work contribution to these through supplied documentation.

Ownership, repairs and insurance

The equipment that used is the responsibility of, and is owned by, the employer. Agreements will be made between all involved parties if an employee wishes to purchase the equipment, or move it to their next place of employment. Access to Work will not pay for repairs or insurance under any circumstances.

Contacting Access to Work

In order to make an Access to Work claim the employee should contact the following preferably by telephone, visit the website www.gov.uk/access-to-work.

Access to Work Operational Support Unit

Telephone: 0800 121 7479

Textphone: 0800 121 7579

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

Visit: www.gov.uk/access-to-work/apply

Top tips

- Invite a new starter in for the day for a tour of the building so they can get a feel of their work environment and show them what equipment then will be using
- Show them most commonly used tools within your business such as WebEx or Skype – this will help make the applicant make a more informed application to Access to Work
- If an employee is making an application for a support worker, they will need to use their job description to break down all of the tasks in the role and use this to complete the log. Overestimate the amount of hours they will need main areas of support as Access to Work will only support around 10% of their weekly working hours
- If an employee is in a position where the recommended software or equipment just isn't working for them, they need to get back in touch with Access to Work as soon as possible with the original reference number and tell them