

**ACCESS TO WORK SCHEME - GUIDANCE NOTE FOR MANAGERS****1 Purpose**

The purpose of this guidance note is as follows:

- to provide information about the Access to Work Scheme.
- to outline the process which managers should follow when it emerges that an existing employee is experiencing difficulties in carrying out their job for reasons of their disability
- to inform managers of the support which Access to Work can provide in a recruitment situation when an applicant declares on their application form that they consider themselves to have a disability.

This information and guidance is intended to complement the existing guidance note entitled *The Disability Symbol and the Equality Act 2010: Guidelines for Implementation and Compliance*

Disability for the purposes of this guidance note is defined as “any physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the person’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities” [Equality Act 2010].

2 The Access to Work Scheme

The purpose of Access to Work is to minimise the effect that a disability has on a person’s ability to carry out their job. This complies with the Council’s legal obligations in terms of the Equality Act 2010 and its commitments as a designated Disability Symbol user. The scheme sets certain criteria and if these are met, provides financial grants towards the purchase of equipment / support services for employees with disabilities. The remainder of the cost of equipment / support services is the responsibility of the employer.

There is no set amount for an Access to Work grant. Any award is dependent on circumstances.

The funding can pay for things like:

- adaptations to the equipment the employee uses
- special equipment
- a support worker or job coach to help the employee in the workplace
- transport to work if the employee is unable to use public transport
- a communicator at a job interview

The scheme provides grants to employees regardless of status, whether full-time, part-time, permanent or fixed term.

Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to make 'reasonable adjustments' if the work premises or working arrangements place a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled person. Access to Work may provide a financial contribution to making a reasonable adjustment. However, if a contribution from Access to Work is not possible, this does not exempt the Council from its obligations under the Equality Act 2010, and a decision will have to be made, on whether the adjustment is reasonable. Assistance in determining what may constitute a reasonable adjustment may be obtained by contacting AskHR.

3 The Process

- 3.1 The Access to Work scheme may apply:
- where an employee is experiencing difficulty in carrying out their job because of their disability;
 - where an existing employee becomes disabled and/or
 - where a person with a disability is appointed.
- 3.2 The line manager should meet with the individual concerned to discuss the options on how the difficulties might be overcome, bearing in mind the Council's legal obligation to make whatever adjustments are reasonable in the circumstances. For example, consideration should be given to whether an aspect of the work could be altered, whether aids or modifications may help, and if so, whether such resources already exist within the Council.
- 3.3 The Council's occupational health service provider should be consulted in cases where medical advice is required to determine which aids or modifications may be appropriate.
- 3.4 It is up to the employee to make a claim. They do this by contacting:

Access to Work - Glasgow

atwosu.glasgow@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone: 0141 950 5327

Textphone: 0845 6025850

Fax: 0141 950 5265

Or in writing to:

Jobcentre Plus, Access to Work Operational Support Unit, Anniesland JCP,
Baird Street, Glasgow G90 8AN

- 3.5 Access to Work will process the claim which may include providing advice on equipment / services to help the individual employee perform their job. They may also advise on an appropriate supplier for any equipment / services which they have recommended.

- 3.6 The manager should then consider any recommendation from Access to Work and make a decision as to whether the service can support the application and should contact AskHR if required.

NB There is no central budget for the purchase of equipment relating to an individual employee's disability. The purchase has to be funded from the individual service budget in the same way as any other purchase of equipment (e.g. office furniture, PCs)

- 3.7 The manager should set a review date to review whether the employee's difficulties have been satisfactorily overcome.
- 3.8 The manager should ensure that any adjustments are reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that they still meet the needs of the individual. It is recommended that this is done at least annually. If any aid or modification is no longer functional, becomes obsolete, or the individual's needs change, a new application to Access to Work should be considered.

Further Advice

Further advice on the Access to Work Scheme is available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/employer-guide-atw.pdf>

Further guidance on implementing the disability symbol criteria as well as on the recruitment implications of the Equality Act 2010 is available from Human Resources and Organisational Development.