

Access to Work



 www.gov.uk/access-to-work

An Introduction to Access to Work

This presentation needs to be read in conjunction with the speaker notes.

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.

Access to Work is not a benefit and therefore there is no entitlement. Because it is not a benefit there is no appeal process with regards to decisions. However if a customer is not happy with a decision they can ask for a reconsideration of that decision. This will be explained on their decision letters they receive.

AtW is a discretionary grant based on need not want AtW will consider the most cost effective solutions / support that will meet a customers need. e.g. if a deaf person requires an interpreter we will discuss the level of support required and if this is a communication support worker (CSW) we would fund this as opposed to a BSL Interpreter.

In cases where a customer requires full time support i.e. 30 hours a week or more then AtW will reimburse the cost at a salaried rate rather than freelance/agency rates. This has been guidance since 2011. If a customer wishes to employ their own support worker or BSL Interpreter or CSW (based on their need) AtW will re-imburse the salary costs (plus on-costs). In cases where the customer chooses to use an agency / freelance then AtW will assess on a reasonable annual salary for that service to meet that individual's needs.

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

Access to Work can provide a discretionary grant that meets the additional costs over and above what an employer is legally obliged to make as a reasonable adjustment .(RA)

What is reasonable could be different dependant on the size of the employer. E.g. It would be reasonable for a multi national employer to provided a good ergonomic chair for the staff or a large call centre operation to do the same. This could be different for a micro employer who employs one or two people and a good ergonomic chair may be something specific for 1 person because of a disability.

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

The first 2 requirements would probably not require any AtW support. E.g.

Changes to the ways things are done – e.g. An employer has a policy that designated parking spaces are only offered to senior managers. A worker who is not a manager, but has a mobility impairment and needs to park very close to the office, is given a designated car parking space. This is likely to be a reasonable adjustment to the employers car parking policy

Changes to overcome the barriers created by the physical features of the workplace e.g. Clear glass doors at the end of a corridor in a particular workplace present a hazard for a visually impaired worker. Adding stick on signs or other indicators to the doors so that they become more visible is likely to be a reasonable adjustment for the employer to make

To Provide extra / auxiliary equipment – This duty involves providing extra equipment – which equality law calls auxiliary aids and auxiliary services, where someone else is used to assist you, such as a reader a sign language interpreter or a support worker. The employer may also need to provide some extra auxiliary equipment e.g specialist IT software, Assistive technology. This is where Access to Work would be appropriate to support i.e funding the human support or equipment

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

•aim to support the individual to become independent where possible e.g. under the travel to work option Atw will consider travel buddies, travel training, or adaptations to a vehicle as opposed to a taxi where practical and possible. We can and will continue to support those customers where this is not an option with the provision of taxi's. Elements of support will be covered on a later slide.

- Access to Work plays an important role in facilitating an open constructive and productive relationship between employer.
- Access to work advisers can provide advice to both employers and disabled employees prior to making any application for support.

Eligibility Types Of Help



Eligibility Criteria

- 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 Great Britain
- Not be claiming Incapacity Benefit or ESA once they are in work (with the exception of higher permitted work)

SUGGESTED AUDIENCE: ALL

- Explain the eligibility criteria.
- Explain that if there is someone who is uncertain as to whether they meet the criteria, contact us to discuss as we will always look to include rather than turn people away.

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)

Specialist Aids and Equipment (SAE) - e.g Voice activated software for a person who is visually impaired or someone with a specific learning disability e.g. dyslexia.

Travel to Work (TTW)- can be long term or short term support. an example: A person who has been diagnosed with a progressive condition such as MS who can drive, but due to the progressive nature of the condition is unable to drive every day or use public transport. Access to Work can pay for taxis to work on the days that are not well enough to drive. Another example which falls under this element is where AtW has helped a disabled person have their vehicle adapted to drive. This can be done in collaboration with Motability or direct with the customer.

Travel in Work (TiW) - Where a person is required to travel within their job e..g meetings etc and their disability precludes them from driving or using public transport, Access to Work pas paid for taxis, less any employer contributions that they pay staff for business travel; in some cases a Support Worker Driver maybe more cost effective and appropriate

Support Worker (SW)- There are a variety of situations which could require a person needing human support e.g. Access to work fund BSL Interpreters for deaf customers in their job, A support worker driver who drives a person to work and takes them home. A SW / driver could also provide support in work as well e.g personal care, job aid, Personal reader.

Adaptations to Premises and Equipment (APE) - It is generally the employers responsibility to pay for adaptations to ensure their premises are accessible for disabled people. In exceptional circumstances ATW can

Mental Health

Covered more a bit later.

Holistic Assessments – In many cases involving specialist aids and equipment where the person does not know what is required to help overcome the barrier, AtW will pay for a work place assessment. This does not form any part of any cost share arrangements and ensures that what is being recommended will meet the customers needs.

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

This is not medical treatment. It is primarily looking at reasonable adjustments and coping strategies. It can compliment other support the individual is receiving from GP/ Primary care trust and is about helping that person stay in work.

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 121 meetings to review concerns

Some examples of the type of things that can be done /changed to support the individual.

Cost Sharing Financial Support



Access to Work Grants

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.

Access to Work can pay grants of up to 100% for:

Unemployed people starting a job

All self employed people

People who have been in their jobs for less than six weeks when they first apply for Access to Work

And in all cases for:

Support Workers

Additional Travel to Work and Travel in Work costs

Communication Support at Interview

Cost Sharing

- 0 – 49 attract no cost share
- 50 – 249 - £500 Threshold and 20% of the costs thereafter
- Over 250 - £1000 Threshold and 20% of the costs thereafter
- Costs above £10,000 will normally be met by Access to Work
- If there is a general business benefit a contribution will be sought in addition to any compulsory cost share

Mandatory Cost sharing applies to applicants who are employed and have been in their job for more than six weeks when they apply for Access to Work

It applies only to Special Aids and Equipment (SAE) and Adaptations to Premises and Equipment (APE)

It does not apply to self employed applicants

How to Apply Contact Details



How to Apply

- 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 AtW application has recently changed to improve the customer service. The previous process involved the customer making an application by phone (or other agreed channel) and having the form sent to them to check over and return. Once received this was then allocated to an adviser who would then contact them in 24hrs. On average the process to send out and wait for the form to be returned took 10 -15 days. Under the new process once a call is taken only basic info is taken and referred straight to an adviser. The adviser will the contact the person – On average this will ensure a customer gets quicker access to the programme.

Further Information

Further information about Access to Work can be found on the internet at

www.gov.uk/access-to-work
[Access to Work Factsheet](#)
[Employer's Guide to Access to Work](#)

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

Telephone: 020 8426 3110

Textphone: 020 8426 3133

Email: atwosu.london@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

This presentation is intended to be a general guide to the principles underpinning the Access to Work programme and is not a full and authoritative statement of the law

Contact details and obtain further information