

Guide to Access to Work

The Access to Work scheme is a government funded employment scheme that provides a grant to support disabled people to start or stay in work. The grant provides practical and financial support if you have a disability, neurodiversity, health or mental health condition. You will need to disclose your disability to your employer to ensure support can be arranged and funded.

Access to Work can also give practical advice and guidance to employers to help them understand physical and mental ill health and how they can support employees.

Access to Work is not applicable if you do voluntary work or live in the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man – there are different arrangements in Northern Ireland.

Mental Health Support

If you have a mental health condition, you can receive confidential support and advice from trained healthcare professionals from the **Mental Health Support Service**. The service is provided by:

- Able Futures: able-futures.co.uk/mental-health-support-for-individuals/
- Remploy: www.remply.co.uk/employers/mental-health-and-wellbeing/workplace-mental-health-support-service-employers

What can Access to Work support?

- Counselling or job coaching
- Changes to equipment
- Moving equipment if you change where you work
- Provision of interpreters, for example: BSL, relay service support, lip readers or note takers
- Changes to your vehicle to allow you to get to work
- Pay taxi fares or a support worker if you cannot use public transport
- Support worker or job coach
- Disability awareness training for those you work with

How to apply for Access to Work and how will you be notified?

Application are made online at www.gov.uk/access-to-work/apply

or by phone on **0800 121 7479**

or by text phone on **0800 121 7579**.

An Access to Work adviser will contact you to discuss your application to establish a) how Access to Work can help you b) what type of assistance is available.

Access to Work **will not** cover:

- changes your employer has to make (Reasonable adjustments)
- items that would normally be needed to do the job whether the person is disabled or not
- support your employer used to provide but has stopped.

What will you get?

There is an annual cap on the total amount of support that can be provided under Access to Work and depends on when your grant was awarded or reviewed. The cap for the period 1 April - 31 March 2021 is currently set at £60,700.

You are eligible to apply if:

- you have a physical or hidden disability
- mental health condition which makes it difficult to do your job or for you to get to work
- you are in paid employment – see below
- about to start work
- aged 16 years old or above and live in England, Scotland or Wales
- returning to work
- are in an apprenticeship
- self employed
- an internship.

Paid employment under the scheme means:

- full or part-time paid work, whether permanent, casual or temporary
- a work trial arranged by Jobcentre Plus
- work in an unsupported or supported environment
- not volunteering
- some councillor and other elected official positions
- not training, except for training related to your current paid job and is being done while you are in receipt of normal wages
- must have a contract of employment and be paid at least the National Minimum Wage

You can also apply if you have:

- a job offer letter
- a job start date
- a letter confirming your interview.

Are you claiming other benefits?

If you are claiming other benefits such as **Universal Credit** and have a disability or health condition, you can apply for Access to Work for any paid work you do.

Are there any exceptions to the scheme?

If you receive one of the following benefits, you may not be able to get Access to Work, however, your Access to Work adviser will inform you of your eligibility:

- Incapacity Benefit:
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Income Support
- National Insurance Credits

Access to Work may also visit you at work to see how best to support you and will confirm and relay the outcome of your application, in particular:

- if you have been given a grant, you will be told how much this is for – **you will not need to repay this**
- your employer may need to contribute toward these costs and Access to Work will inform you of these costs
- you or your employer must retain any receipts in order for Access to Work to reimburse.

Making adjustments

Your employer has a **legal duty** to provide you with adjustments at work. The duty for employers to provide reasonable adjustments is specifically stated in the Equality Act 2010. Please contact your branch rep if you are experiencing difficulties in gaining reasonable adjustments.

UCU encourages members to read our guidance on reasonable adjustments

www.ucu.org.uk/media/6091/Reasonable-adjustments---removing-barriers-to-disabled-people-at-work-UCU-guidance/pdf/Reasonable_adjustments.pdf

and our information sheet on using the Reasonable Adjustment Passport and to use the passport to record agreed adjustments.