



UCU South West Equalities Newsletter - Spring 2025

The next **Equalities Committee Meeting** is on **14th May** starting at 5.00pm [E-mail: ucuequalities@outlook.com](mailto:ucuequalities@outlook.com)

The Supreme Court Ruling and the challenges it raises for trans members

On the 16th of April, following a decade-long moral panic, the Supreme Court ruled that for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010, 'sex' refers to birth-assigned sex (which the Court called 'biological sex', overlooking that trans people change many of their biological sex characteristics in the process of medical transition). This ruling presents a grave threat to trans people's legal rights, personal safety and dignity. Rigid policing of gendered spaces will severely harm trans people's ability to participate in public life.

The core parts of the ruling concern how provision of gendered spaces such as men's and women's toilets and changing rooms is to be governed. Before the ruling, the most widely accepted interpretation of the Equality Act was that trans people could only be excluded from such spaces if this would be a 'proportionate means of meeting a legitimate aim'. The ruling, however, stated that providers may exclude trans people from spaces aligned with their lived gender by default.



Trans people have long used their own judgment to determine which facilities are safest and most appropriate for them to use and are painfully aware of the risks they face if perceived to be in

the 'wrong' space. If they are forced to use gendered spaces that align with their birth-assigned sex rather than allowed to make their own decisions, this will violate their privacy and expose them to forced outing, humiliation, harassment and potentially violence. The impact will be to severely limit trans people's safety at work and in public spaces.

In the wake of the ruling, some (including the current Chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Baroness Falkner) have suggested that provision of neutral third spaces could resolve the matter. While providing unisex toilets and facilities is a progressive step, they cannot be relied upon to preserve trans rights and dignity. It is, for starters, not reasonable to expect that businesses and service providers will suddenly scramble to create new gender-neutral spaces, especially given the state of the economy. But even if these spaces were viable, forcing trans people into 'trans toilets' would still breach their privacy and dignity and expose them to harassment.

Most concerning, however, is Baroness Falkner's indication that a new statutory code of practice will be introduced to instruct businesses and service providers to exclude trans people from spaces and facilities aligned with their lived gender. This interpretation of the ruling made its way into an 'interim update' published by the EHRC and appears to have been accepted wholesale by the government, with both the Minister for Women and Equalities Bridget Phillipson and the Prime Minister stating that from now on trans women should use the men's toilets. Yet this extreme interpretation is well beyond the text of the Supreme Court ruling itself, which in fact only states that trans people may legally be blanket-excluded from such spaces, not that they must. Compulsory exclusions would fly in the face of the intention of the Equality Act. The current Code of Practice to the Act clearly states that providers should treat trans people according to the gender in which they present and in the way that best meets their needs.

The ruling need not be interpreted in this way. In a Radio 4 interview on the 18th of April, former Justice of the Supreme Court Lord Sumption made clear that Baroness Falkner's interpretation was incorrect and that the ruling does not entail that trans people must be excluded from spaces that align with their lived gender. On the contrary, providers are still able to govern these spaces on a trans-inclusive basis.

Over the coming weeks and months, education providers are likely to come under intense political pressure to tear up existing trans inclusion guidelines and replace them with new guidance excluding trans people from spaces of their lived gender. Campus trade unions must unite to demand that their employers resist these political pressures and act to protect their trans staff and students. The first step is to remind employers that the EHRC interim update is not statutory and there is no obligation for them to implement it.

Dr Fran Amery, University of Bath UCU member

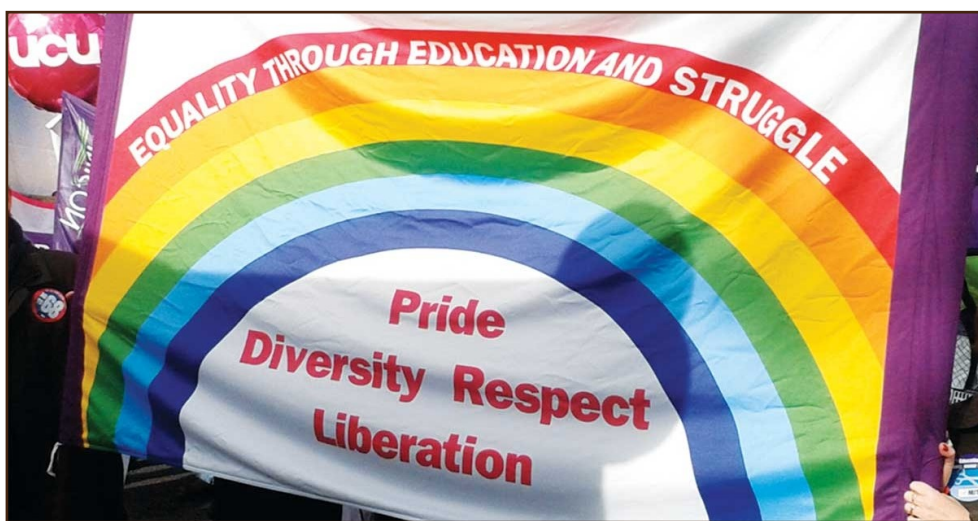
"The Supreme Court ruling not only sets trans rights back, it sets a dangerous precedent. Today is a difficult day, but we won't stop fighting for trans rights."

"For those saying it's a win for women. It isn't. It's a violent set back in feminist history."

"Taking aim at trans women does nothing to make women safer."

Dr Jo Grady, General Secretary of UCU





UCU statement following Supreme Court ruling on the legal definition of a woman

UCU is committed to standing up for all members and fighting against all forms of harassment, prejudice and unfair discrimination on whatever grounds that may arise.

Our policy position remains clear: we proudly and actively support trans rights, and we will continue to campaign for fully inclusive practices across our union and workplaces.

We know the clarification of the Equality Act and associated public discourse may cause concern or distress, especially for our trans members and colleagues. We stand in full solidarity with you. Your rights, safety, and dignity matter, and we are committed to ensuring your voice is heard and respected.

We will be taking time to carefully consider how we can best advocate for the most inclusive policies and practices across our workplaces. This will include listening to and learning from our members, especially those with lived experience, to ensure that our approach is as informed, effective, and inclusive as possible.

UCU will also be sharing the perspectives of our equality standing committees, and we will continue to amplify the voices of those directly affected by these issues. As ever, their insights will guide our advocacy and strengthen our collective action.

Further information

You can access this statement on the UCU website along with links to other support and advice as well as what you can do

https://www.ucu.org.uk/article/13993/UCU-statement-following-Supreme-Court-ruling-on-the-legal-definition-of-a-woman?utm_source=lyr-contacts&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=reprs&utm_term=bou&utm_content=UCU+branch+officers%27+update:+25+April+2025

UCU's Vision for Trans & Non Binary Members Equality & Inclusion

chrome-extension://efaidnbmninnibpcapjpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/13476/Trans-and-Non-binary-guidance/pdf/UCU_trans_and_non-binary_guidance_o4d6cwi5z5ks.pdf

If any of the links in this UCU SW Equalities Newsletter do not work please copy and paste them into your browser and then they should work. Any problems, please e-mail UCUEqualities@outlook.com

Malcolm X Leader, Visionary, Radical

Malcolm X is to this day is considered one of the most powerful, and influential Black leaders in recent history.

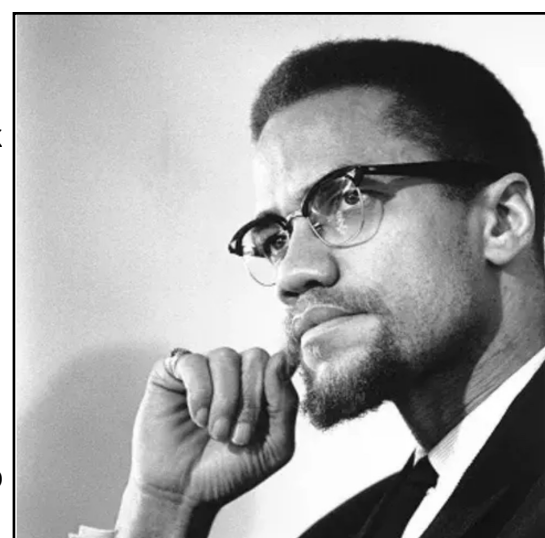
UCU Southwest Equalities Committee - as part of UCU's month of celebration and commemoration, will be paying tribute to the man who spoke out on and fought for racial justice, without fear or favour while at the same time advocating for self-determination, Black pride and Black power across the diaspora, Africa and beyond.

May 19th marks what would have been Malcolm X's 100 anniversary. Join us in celebrating his life and legacy with a series of essential reading, quotes, resources and information on events taking place across the country.

If you would like to make a contribution, share a resource, please email: ucuequalities@outlook.com

Amelia Baldwin, Chair, UCU South West Black Members Network

Maxine Looby, UCU President



UCU for Trans Rights!

We are delighted to be able to inform you that the UCU South West Equalities Committee are organising an online lunchtime meeting 'UCU for Trans Rights' at which our General Secretary, Dr Jo Grady will be the key note speaker. More details will be circulated nearer the time but please put the following details in your diary:

UCU for Trans Rights, 12.30pm to 1.30pm online meeting on Thursday 5th June with Dr Jo Grady



UCU for Trans Rights

12.30pm to 1.30pm online meeting on Thursday 5th June With Dr Jo Grady



Report on the UCU SW Anti-Casualisation & Equalities in Education Event held on 1st February



At the beginning of February UCU South West held their first in person Anti-Casualisation Event at Hamilton House in Bristol. The event brought together education workers from Brockworth in Gloucestershire to Plymouth in Devon.

After the opening presentations by Manoj, Rebecca, and Maxine, there was a very lively discussion in which participants shared their experiences of casualised working and the concerns that they had.

Through out the day we had a variety of speakers including UCU President, Maxine Looby, who led a discussion on Equalities and Casualisation.

A detailed report of the Casualisation & Equalities Event is contained in the first edition of the UCU South West Anti-casualisation News published in February. If you would like to receive a copy of that Newsletter please e-mail

UCUEqualities@outlook.com

There were a lot of really good discussions through out the day which concluded with us pulling together the following Action Plan

Action Plan

- Discussion: What do participants want to see from a SW anti-casualisation network?
- Set up South West Anti-Precarity Network, with regular newsletter
- WhatsApp group
- SW-specific anti-casualisation training
- SW-specific talks
- Making sure we are not just duplicating things at branch, regional, and national level.
- What makes sense to do specifically at regional level?
- Training (especially chances to meet in person)
- Resource sharing
- A regional approach makes sense for casualised workers (especially but not exclusively fractional and HPT) who might work at multiple institutions or move between them in short periods of time.
- How could we increase the engagement of casualised workers who hop from institution to institution, and perhaps don't think it worth getting involved with the union because



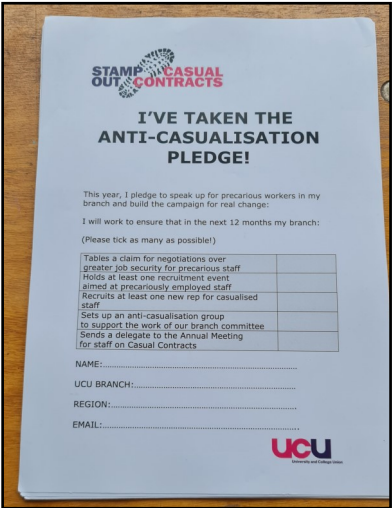
they are only in each place for a short time? Could we have some kind of outreach/comms plan for these workers?

- Sharing successes: via comms and events. This could help with closing the feedback loop and also the social side of union recruitment and organising.

If you would like to get involved please e-mail Jeff Pocock and let him know how you can help

ucuequalities@outlook.com

You can also encourage your colleagues and members to sign the Anti-Casualisation Pledge! Follow this link to download it <https://www.ucu.org.uk/stampout>



Casualisation & Migrants

We are planning the next Anti-Casualisation meeting and are highlighting one aspect of the very strong links between Casualisation and Equalities. The theme for the next meeting will focus on Migrants and why so many migrants end up in casualised work?

We would welcome your input and ideas for items to discuss at the next meeting. Naturally we will review the Action Plan and look for volunteers to help us take this forward.

We held the first meeting in Bristol - we think that it would be a good idea to hold the meeting in a different location in the South West Region - any volunteers to help organise the next meeting? Where should the next meeting be held? Exeter, Plymouth or some where else?

Here is a quick outline of some of the challenges for Migrant Workers in Casualized Work:

Exploitation: Migrant workers, especially those who are undocumented or have limited English skills, may be more vulnerable to exploitation by employers who take advantage of their need for work.



Lack of Awareness of Rights: Many migrant workers may not be aware of their rights under UK employment law, making it difficult for them to challenge unfair practices.

Fear of Deportation: The prospect of deportation can deter migrant workers from complaining about unfair treatment, even if they are being exploited.

Language Barriers: Language barriers can make it difficult for migrant workers to understand their rights and to communicate with employers or other authorities.

Cultural Differences: Cultural differences can also lead to misunderstandings between migrant workers and employers, potentially leading to unfair treatment.

Migrant members resources <https://www.ucu.org.uk/article/12142/Migrant-members>

UCU South West Disabled Members Network launched

Since the last UCU South West Equalities Newsletter we have launched the South West Disabled Members Network.

The launch meetings were held on 18th February at lunchtime and also on 21st February in the late afternoon. These meetings were publicised through e-mails to all UCU members in the South West which resulted in good attendances. There were follow up meetings held on 18th March both at lunchtime and in the late afternoon – details of these meetings were e-mailed to all UCU members in the South West Region.

Further meetings are to be held on 29th April

At the meetings that have taken place so far a number of issues have been raised including:

- ⇒ Access to Work – are employers aware of it? Do our members know about it?
- ⇒ Reasonable Adjustments – are employers providing the necessary reasonable adjustments for staff?
- ⇒ Sharing Best Practice and what works
- ⇒ Launching a sub-group of the Disabled Members Network to look at how we can support Neurodivergent members both within the UCU and in their workplaces - do let us know if you would be interested in joining this sub-group. Also would you be willing to help organise and lead this sub-group?

Disabled Staff Networks

During the discussions a suggestion was made that Disabled Staff appear to be treated better where there is a Disabled Staff Network at that workplace. 3 things flow from this:

- ◆ How many Disabled Staff Networks do we have at workplaces across the South West?
- ◆ How do you set up a Disabled Staff Network?
- ◆ What support can UCU provide to assist with the setting up of a Disabled Staff Network?

In order to progress these areas of work the following survey link is included in this article:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfftBQp2cgrRH4zvJtUWtSHqIGdO8eqW9IJBc1q705XnBBbXg/viewform?usp=sf_link

We would be grateful if everyone reading this report could complete the survey for us.

Above we mentioned that we will be setting up a Neurodivergent members sub-group of the Disabled Members Network – please let us know if you would be interested in getting actively involved in this group.

There is a lot more that we could write about the Disabled Members Network and disability issues, especially in light of the Labour Government's decision to attack Disability Benefits which many disabled people rely on. Prior to the General Election the Tories brought forward proposals to cut disability benefits by £3 billion a year. Labour are now proposing cuts of £7 billion. We understand that the Government's proposals could include

removing Access to Work for disabled workers who are employed by large employers.



We could write at length on this issue but it would be better to invite you to read my article below which was originally published on the All4Inclusion website <https://www.all4inclusion.org/>

Helping disabled people into work???

When the new Labour Government was elected 10 months ago little did anyone suspect or expect the intensification of the 'War on Disabled People' that not only matched the Tories but actually surpassed them.

Let's start from Labour's Mantra of wanting to get people into work, especially disabled people. What does this actually mean?

That's a good question. So let's look at it from the perspective of a disabled person/worker.

If you are genuinely wishing to support disabled people into work then what type of support would they be looking for?

1. Increased support through Access to Work to include help for job seekers as well as those in work. This should include the following:
 - i. Increased employer awareness of Access to Work so that they can encourage and support new employees to apply for it
 - ii. Increase the awareness of disabled job seekers of Access to Work and the support available to them.
2. Reasonable Adjustments need to be enforceable in a speedy and timely manner. I would suggest that the assessment for Reasonable Adjustments and the timetable for their implementation should be 4 weeks or 20 working days. At the moment if the employer does not implement the reasonable adjustments identified the only recourse for the disabled worker is to take the employer to an Employment Tribunal which invariably leads to the disabled worker losing their job because 'the relationship of trust has broken down'. This is a totally unacceptable position to place a disabled worker, or indeed any worker, in.
3. The continuation of in work benefits and other benefits to support disabled people and disabled workers whose costs are, on average, £1000 per month higher than for a non-disabled people and non-disabled workers.
4. Accessible transport and especially public transport is essential for many disabled workers. Whilst writing this blog I arrived at Bristol Parkway Station to find that the lift was out of order. I was offered assistance with carrying my suitcase upstairs to the platform but what if I hadn't been able to climb those stairs? What would have happened?

If you want to know about the horrors that disabled people face whilst travelling on public transport just follow Tanni Grey-Thompson on Twitter @Tanni_GT

To truly help those disabled people who can work into work, the Government need to make all forms of transport fully accessible. They also need to continue to provide support for disabled people and workers under the mobility scheme.

- 5. Full and swift implementation of the Disability Employment Charter and the Disabled People’s Manifesto
- 6. Full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- 7. Enhanced Employment Rights to incorporate all of the above into UK law along with other necessary support for disabled people and workers
- 8. The Government need to halt the ‘War on Disabled People’. Many people in work will not self-identify as disabled because of the fear of being stigmatised and discriminated against.
- 9. Disabled Bus Passes and Travel Cards should be useable 24 hours a day and not after 9.30am as is currently the case. Disabled workers need to get to and from work at all times of day and night.
- 10. Hybrid and flexible working – Covid and especially the lockdowns clearly showed that many workers could do their job from home. During Covid I attended weekly online team meetings where I was repeatedly told that we were being more productive working from home than we had been in the office.



Let us say two things to CEO’s and Managing Directors who insist that people should not work from home:

- i. How often do you work from home? In our experience many CEOs, Directors and Senior Managers work from home when it suits them especially during school holidays
- ii. It is your job as a CEO or Senior Manager to ensure that your managers and team leaders are able to manage their staff effectively whether they work from home or in the office. If they fail to do that then that is Your failure and not their failure or the failure of workers whether they are disabled or non-disabled. You are responsible and need to accept that responsibility

Hybrid and/or flexible can be a Reasonable adjustment for some disabled workers but it is not a panacea or a solution for all disabled workers.

So let us now look at what the new Labour Government are doing to disabled people and disabled workers.

- 1. Slashing disability benefits and other forms of support by a reported £6 billion. So the Government want disabled people to work but the new Labour Government want to make it more difficult for them to do so. This just doesn’t make sense!
- 2. Possibly cutting Access to Work and trying to make employers, especially larger employers, pay for it. You really think that this encourages employers to employ disabled workers?
- 3. Disabled people and disabled workers did not even get a mention in the Employment Rights Bill – no enforcement

powers for Reasonable Adjustments or a realistic time frame for employers to provide Reasonable Adjustments.

People can wait months and longer for Reasonable Adjustments and whilst they are waiting for them the employer may then try to manage them out of the organisation for not achieving their targets. They fail to achieve the targets because they do not have the Reasonable Adjustments they need. Totally unacceptable and discriminatory behaviour

Let’s get real, with an ageing population and an ageing workforce and the raising of the retirement age the number of disabled workers as a percentage of the workforce will grow.

Politicians and employers need to wake up and smell the coffee. Disabled people and disabled workers offer a huge reservoir of talent which is largely untapped. The opportunities for disabled workers and employers are huge.

Employers need to challenge their own attitudes and cast aside their prejudices to embrace and support disabled workers.

Having said that, we need to recognise that a significant number of disabled people will never be able to work, or at least not in the conventional sense. There is no point in trying to force these people into work because you will only drive them further into poverty

Kevin Daws

Equalities & Casualisation Motions to UCU Congress and the Sector Conferences from the South West Region

Below I have, hopefully, identified all the motions submitted by Branches in the South West which relate to Equalities or Equalities & Casualisation – I hope that I did not miss any of those motions. There are a number of other motions on other subjects that have been submitted by UCU Branches in the South West Region but these are not included below

EQ4 Composite: Unite against the far right and racism, and Reform UK South and City College Birmingham, South West retired members branch

Congress notes:

- ◆ The breakthrough of Nigel Farage’s far right Reform UK
- ◆ Fascist Tommy Robinson’s efforts to build a fascist led far right and racist street movement in Britain
- ◆ The summer's racist riots were stoked by Robinson,
- ◆ Stand Up To Racism organised national demonstrations in July (5,000), October (20,000) and in February this year (over 5,000), and many successful counter protests in August and September
- ◆ Internationally, the far right is growing, gaining confidence from Trump’s election, electoral gains of the fascist AfD, and interventions by Musk.

Congress believes:

- ◆ Reform UK is malignly influencing British politics pushing anti-migrant, Islamophobic and “anti-woke” ideas
- ◆ We must build the biggest movement possible to unite against and expose the fascists. Trade unions are central to this.

Congress welcomes the recognition by the TUC that Reform UK poses a major threat to working class and cross-community

solidarity by setting worker against worker and encouraging community fragmentation.

As well as having a racist and anti-migrant programme, Reform UK:

- offers nothing for working or retired people
- is run by a financier
- supports the privatisation of the NHS and the Education Service as well as cuts in social welfare budgets.
- opposes the extension of workers’ rights.

Congress resolves to:

- circulate material to members from the Stand Up To Racism organisation
- participate in all broad-based campaigns exposing Reform UK.
- support campaigns against Reform UK in local elections.
- support future initiatives against Robinson, the far right and Reform organised by SUTR and the unions.

SFC33 Linking equality and casualisation – a unified industrial strategy

City of Bristol College, Anti-Casualisation Committee (ACC)

Congress believes that equalities and the casualisation of work are integrally linked.

Congress notes:

- ◆ That UCU needs to take a more strategic approach through making the fight against casualisation central to all equalities work, and vice versa.
- ◆ Casualisation disproportionately affects women, migrants, Black, disabled staff, and those with caring responsibilities.
- ◆ UCU’s data repeatedly show that precarious contracts and equality are structurally linked yet the bargaining agendas are often separate.

Congress calls on the General Secretary and the NEC to work with the ACC to:

- Undertake research to identify how many workers in HE, FE, ACE and Prison Education work on casualised contracts and for how long
- Consider how we can more accurately identify people working on casualised contracts in HE, FE, ACE and Prison Education who are intersectionally minoritised / marginalised staff
- Develop a strategy to organise to win for casualised workers in HE, FE, ACE and prison education.

FE15 Protect casualised staff amid budget cuts and redundancies

City of Bristol College

Conference notes that:

- ◆ Colleges have announced voluntary and compulsory redundancy schemes, alongside budget cuts.
- ◆ Invisible or hidden redundancies of staff on fixed-term,

open-ended with review dates and hourly contracts are already happening, with contracts not renewed or hours reduced, dramatically increasing the precarity of casualised staff and increasing the workload of those who remain.

Conference believes that:

- ◆ Threats of redundancies affect all staff independent of their contract type.
- ◆ Solidarity means protecting all workers from redundancies.

Conference resolves to:

- i. Ensure that any actions opposing voluntary or compulsory redundancies does not disproportionately affect casualised staff who could be used as “buffers” to shield others from redundancy.
- ii. Ensure that any campaigns against redundancies must also protect and defend the roles of casualised staff.

Access to Work

In the report back on the launch of the UCU South West Disabled Members Network we mentioned that a number of issues were raised at the meetings and that Access to Work was one of those issues. It was surprising to find that not only many of our members had not heard of Access to Work but also many of our employers had not heard of Access to Work, or if they had heard of it, they did not know much about it. We would encourage you to find out about Access to Work and also ensure that your employer knows about it. Below is a brief overview about Access to Work.

The briefing below is based on information from the DWP website and some other sources.

What is Access to Work?

Access to Work is a publicly funded employment support grant scheme that aims to support disabled people start or stay in work. It can provide practical and financial support for people who have a disability or physical or mental health condition. Support can be provided where someone needs support or adaptations beyond *reasonable adjustments*.



An Access to Work grant can pay for practical support to enable you - the employee - to start or stay in work, or to support you if you are self-employed. The Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are not covered by Access to Work and there is a different service in Northern Ireland.

Access to Work can be used for flexible working arrangements, such as hybrid working. This can include:

- ◆ support to work from more than one location
- ◆ support for working at home for all or part of your time

Access to Work is a discretionary grant scheme that provides personalised support to disabled people who are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ in paid employment ◆ self-employed ◆ apprentices ◆ trainees ◆ supported interns ◆ doing self-directed work experience ◆ on Jobcentre Plus promoted work trials ◆ going to a job interview ◆ You can also apply if you have: ◆ a job offer letter ◆ a job start date ◆ a letter confirming your interview <p>Who can get help?</p> <p>You can get help if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ are disabled, have a mental health condition or have a long-term health condition that impacts on your ability to work; ◆ are aged 16 or over; and ◆ live in England, Scotland or Wales - there's a different system in Northern Ireland <p>There is no set amount for an Access to Work grant as the recommendations of support are tailored to your specific needs. What you get depends on your circumstances. However grants are capped to a certain amount each year. For example for grants awarded or reviewed between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025, the cap is £69,260</p> <p>Mental Health Support</p> <p>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: www.able-futures.co.uk/mental-health-support-for-individuals/</p> <p>What support can you get?</p> <p>The support you can get will depend on your personal and employment circumstances but Access to Work can give you or your employer a grant to help pay for things like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a support worker or job coach to help you in your workplace • specialist software, such as screen readers • personal care at work • a support service if you have a mental health condition and you're absent from work or finding it difficult to work • adaptations to the equipment you use • specialist software, such as screen readers • a BSL interpreter, lip speaker or note taker if you're Deaf or face communication barriers • specialist equipment (or alterations to existing equipment such as chairs or desks) to suit your particular need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help towards the additional costs of taxi fares or adaptations to your vehicle if you cannot use public transport to get to work • disability awareness training for your colleagues • a communicator at a job interview • the cost of moving your equipment if you change location or job • support from Access to Work's dedicated Mental Health Support Service. <p>'Disabled' has the same meaning as in the Equality Act 2010. This defines disability as 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on [your] ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.</p> <p>Disabled can also include disabilities that only become apparent in the workplace. An example of this might be where you started work and found that your eyesight was affected by computer screens but had not noticed this problem before you started work.</p> <p>What next?</p> <p>Register</p> <p>Apply online or contact Access to Work directly to register your interest.</p> <p>Apply online: https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/apply</p> <p>Email: atwosu.london@dwp.gsi.gov.uk</p> <p>Telephone: 0800 121 7479</p> <p>Textphone: 0800 121 7579</p> <p>Post: Operational Support Unit, Harrow Jobcentre Plus, Mail Handling Site A, Wolverhampton,WV98 1JE</p> <p>When you contact Access to Work you may need the following information at hand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your National Insurance number • your workplace address, including your postcode • the name, email address and work phone number of a workplace contact, e.g. your manager • your unique tax reference number (if you're self-employed) • the name of your New Enterprise Allowance mentor (if you have one) <p>Provide them with your contact details and an AtW (Access to Work) Advisor will call you within 7 working days.</p> <p>The AtW Advisor will go through the eligibility criteria with you and have a "fact finding" discussion with you to establish what your barriers in the workplace are and what kind of support might be available.</p> <p>Disclosure</p> <p>At this point, if you haven't already done so, it's worth discussing with your employer that you're applying for Access to Work funding.</p> <p>We understand that disclosing a disability and asking for support can be a daunting prospect. There is no right or wrong way of approaching it – it will depend on your relationship with your</p>
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employer, the nature of your disability, the reason for support, and many other factors

If it helps, you can show your employer this Access to Work eligibility letter to outline what Access to Work is and what might be required of them in the process.

Evidence

You will be asked to present evidence to support your claim for an Access to Work Grant.

If you have a Specific Learning Difficulty you will need an up to date diagnostics report. If you don't have one already, unfortunately Access to Work do not help with the cost of having one, so you will either have to fund this independently, or you could ask your employer if they might be able to support you with this cost.

However we should point out that anyone with symptoms of a Neurodivergent nature is not required to have a formal diagnosis.

If you have a physical disability, long term health condition, or suffer from mental health issues then you will need to present a letter from your doctor or consultant.

Assessment

If Access to Work decide that you meet the eligibility criteria, they will authorise a workplace needs assessment (paid for by Access to Work). This usually takes place within a couple of weeks of the referral.

An assessor will either visit you in the workplace or hold an over the phone assessment, depending on the "complexity" of your needs.

The assessment will identify what your challenges are and what types of support will enable you to overcome them.

The assessor will draw up a report of recommendations which will then be sent back to your AtW Advisor for evaluation.

You and your employer will then receive a letter which states what funding you will be awarded.

Further information

You can find further information on Access to Work on the following websites:

Access to Work: get support if you have a disability or health condition <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>

Disability Rights UK: Access to Work is a government programme aimed at supporting disabled people to take up or remain in work

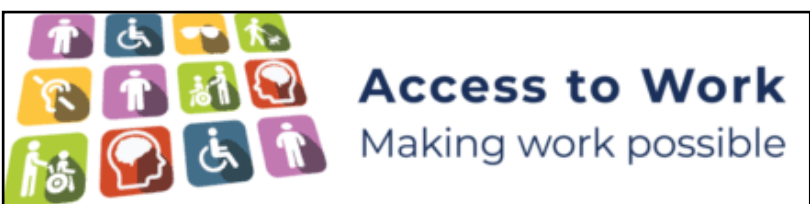
https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/resources/access-work?srsId=AfmBOooYg4IFcNrl6nuNawb5_xPKmPRc-vT0jJcgLmqajNAUbA1SU18j

UCU Guide to Access to Work

chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/11006/Guide-to-Access-to-Work/pdf/ucu_guide-to-access-to-work.pdf

Business Disability Forum: Access to Work

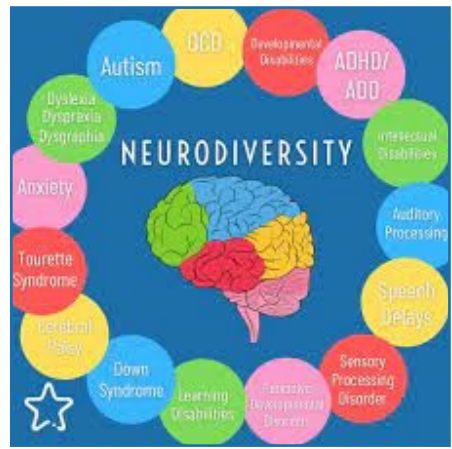
<https://businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/resource/recruitment-toolkit/access-to-work-gstk/>



Neurodiversity at work - Understanding neurodiversity

You may not be aware that earlier this year, ACAS published new advice to raise awareness of neurodiversity at work with the aim of helping employers create inclusive organisations.

Neurodiversity describes the natural differences in how people's brains behave and process information. Some well-known types of neurodiversity include:



- ◆ ADHD – stands for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and affects people's behaviour
- ◆ autism – sometimes called a spectrum condition and affects how people communicate and interact with the world

- ◆ dyslexia – mostly affects reading and writing skills and is sometimes referred to as a learning difficulty
- ◆ dyspraxia – affects movement and co-ordination

A lot of neurodivergent people do not see themselves as disabled but will often be considered as having a disability under the Equality Act 2010.

In November last year ACAS ran its own poll on neurodiversity with 1,650 line managers. It asked about the barriers to making a reasonable adjustment for neurodiverse employees. The barriers identified by respondents included:

- over 7 seven out of 10 (72%) said employees were not disclosing the need for a reasonable adjustment
- lack of organisational knowledge about neurodiversity was reported by 45%
- 39% said it was due to line managers finding it difficult to have the conversation

You can download a copy of the ACAS Guidance by following this link: <https://www.acas.org.uk/neurodiversity-at-work>

One of the problems faced by both trade unions and employers is that many people will not self-identify as disabled because of the perceived stigma and this is especially true with 'hidden disabilities' which can include many forms of neurodivergence.

The UCU SW Disabled Members Network would like to set up a Neurodivergent Member Group—please let us know if you would be interested in joining the group and working with others to support Neurodivergent workers: ucuequalities@outlook.com

Equality Resources on the UCU website

Enabling NOT Disabling - chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/1625/Enabling-not-disabling-UCU-Nov-5/pdf/ucu_enablingnotdisabling_nov15.pdf

David's story: A Disability Awareness toolkit for Branch Equality Officers - chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8828/Disability-awareness-toolkit/pdf/DA_toolkit_4equality_officers_Aug17.pdf#:~:text=It%20is%20designed%20to%20assist%20UCU%20equality,for%20disability%20issues%20within%20their%20local%20branch.

Contact UCU South West Equalities Committee
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