

Access to Work: A Guide for Employees

This factsheet has been put together by Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games Organising Committee with advice and approval from the Department for Work and Pensions.

Please be advised that this factsheet gives general information only and is not a complete and authoritative statement of the law.

More information about Access to Work can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>

Overview

Access to Work is government funded grant scheme that aims to help disabled people start or stay in work. The scheme can provide practical support to those who have a disability, or long term physical and/or mental health condition.

The amount you receive will depend on your circumstances. As it's a grant, the money doesn't have to be paid back and will not affect other benefits.

Your employer may also be responsible for some of the costs of your claim. Access to Work can also give practical advice and guidance to employers, to help them understand physical and mental health issues and how they can support employees.

More information can be found at www.gov.uk/access-to-work/what-youll-get

How can it help me?

Access to Work can help pay for support you may need in your role, for example.

- Assistance and equipment in the workplace
- Adapting equipment to make it easier for you to use
- Money towards any extra travel costs to and from work if you can't use available public transport, or if you need help to adapt your vehicle
- An interpreter or other support in a job interview
- Other practical support at work, such as a job coach or a note taker or lip speaker

You can get confidential support and advice from a trained healthcare professional from the Access to Work Mental Health Support Service. You do not need to have a diagnosed condition to use the service and it can help you to develop a support plan.

This may include steps to support you going in to, remaining in, or returning to work and suggestions for reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

Access to Work advisers will also work with your employer to advise them how best they can support you in the workplace.

Eligibility

To get help from Access to Work you must:

- Have a disability or health condition (physical or mental) that makes it hard for you to do parts of your job or to get to and from work.
- Be 16 or over
- Live in England, Scotland, or Wales – there's a different system in Northern Ireland

You also need to have a paid job or be about to start or return to one. A paid job could include:

- Self-employment
- An apprenticeship
- A work trial or work experience
- An internship

Please also be advised:

- You can also apply if you're getting Universal Credit, Jobseekers Allowance or Income Support, and work more than one hour a week.

If you are receiving Employment and Support Allowance, you can only get help from Access to Work if you're doing 'permitted work'. It's permitted work if all of the following apply:

- You earn up to £140.00
- You work less than 16 hours a week
- It's been agreed with your work coach

Paid work (Employment)

For Access to Work purposes, employment 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 being done while you are in receipt of normal wages

To be eligible for support if you are employed, you must have a contract of employment and be paid at least the National Minimum Wage. All Games positions pay in excess of the National Minimum Wage.

You can also apply if you have:

- A job offer letter
- A job start date
- A letter confirming your interview

Access to Work can help provide you with someone to help at a job interview. If you are registered with an agency, you must have a job to start before you can be eligible for support.

Supported internships and traineeships

From 1 September 2013, young people who start a work placement with an employer as part of the Department for Education supported internship programme or an Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) traineeship will be able to apply for Access to Work support during their work placement only.

Access to Work can fund additional travel, job coach and other support, including costs of equipment if appropriate, to promote the smooth transition into paid employment.

How to claim

The quickest and easier way to apply is online at www.gov.uk/access-to-work

You can also apply by calling Jobcentre Plus on:

Telephone: 0800 121 7479

Textphone: 0800 121 7579

You will be asked what help and support you need when you apply. Access to Work will also contact your employer for more information.

When you contact the Access to Work team, you may need:

- your National Insurance number
- your workplace address, including your postcode
- the name, email address and work phone number of a workplace contact, for example your manager
- your UTR number (if you're self-employed)
- the name of your New Enterprise Allowance mentor (if you have one)

If you are unable to contact Access to Work by telephone or need an alternative way of contacting Access to Work to discuss your needs, you can use the contact details below to write to:

Access to Work
Operational Support Unit
Harrow Jobcentre Plus
Mail Handling Site A
Wolverhampton
WV98 1JE

Coronavirus (covid-19) and Access to Work

During the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, help from Access To Work is still available. You may be able to get help with working from home, at your normal workplace, or a combination of both. If you cannot use public transport safely because of your disability, and your doctor or healthcare professional supports this, funding may be available for extra travel costs.

If you employ your own support worker and have additional costs for personal protective equipment (PPE), Access to Work may be able to provide funding.



Access to Work can also provide funding for remote support services, such as video remote interpreting or British Sign Language interpreting. DWP is currently prioritising making grants for new claims from critical workers, those in the clinically extremely vulnerable group and people due to start work within 4 weeks.