



Access To Work Guide



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About

Access To Work

Access to Work, provided by the DWP, offers practical and financial support to help individuals with disabilities or health conditions overcome barriers to employment.

This scheme can include funding for special equipment, workplace adaptations, travel expenses, or support workers, tailored to individual needs.

The goal is to provide equal opportunities in the workplace and enable individuals to perform their jobs effectively.

Access to work is for people IN paid employment, even if self-employed.

It is NOT means-tested and does NOT require you to be in receipt of any benefits

Conditions Covered

Examples

Each case is individually assessed to explore what help is needed and what can be provided. ANY health condition or disability can be considered.

Physical: Mobility impairments, chronic pain conditions

Sensory: Visual impairments, hearing impairments

Neurological: MS, Parkinson's disease, cerebral palsy

Mental health: Depression, anxiety, bipolar

Neurodiversity: Dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD, Autism

Chronic health: Diabetes, epilepsy, chronic fatigue

You do NOT need a formal
diagnosis to apply for Access
to Work



Available Help

Examples

Equipment: Computer equipment, ergonomic devices, office furniture

Software: Screen readers, dictation software, spelling & grammar software, mind mapping

Workplace adaptations: ramps, handrails, adjustments to lighting

Travel Support: Taxi fares, carer costs

Communication Support: sign-language interpreters, note-takers

Support Workers: Assistants, virtual assistants

Mental Health Support: Therapy, apps, online support

Coaching: Workplace coaching to help build skills and strategies in your weaker areas

Who Pays?

Employer Costs

If you have been in a job for more than 6 weeks your employer may have to share some of the costs for -

- special aids and equipment
- adaptations to premises or equipment

Access to Work consider paying grants of up to 100% for:

- Self-employed
- Have been working less than 6 weeks when you apply
- Using the Mental Health Support Service
- Require a support worker
- Additional travel to work and travel in work costs
- Communication support at interviews

When cost sharing applies, Access to Work will refund up to 80% of the approved costs between a threshold and £10,000. Your employer will contribute 100% of costs up to the threshold level and 20% of the costs between the threshold and £10,000.

The amount of the threshold is determined by the number of employees you have.

Number of employees	Amount of threshold
0 to 49	nil
50 to 249	£500
Over 250	£1,000

Any balance above £10,000 will normally be met by Access to Work.

Eligibility

To be eligible for an Access to Work grant you need to

- have a physical or mental health condition or disability that means you need support to do your job or get to and from work
- be 16 or over
- be in paid work
- live and work in England, Scotland or Wales

A paid job can be full or part-time and can include:

- employment
- self-employment
- an apprenticeship
- a work trial or work experience
- an internship
- a work placement

You can get support from Access to Work:

- However much you earn or have in savings
- At the same time as most benefits, as long as you work more than 1 hour a week

You CAN'T claim Access to work if you are a volunteer or civil servant

Applying

You can apply online or by phone, details can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/apply>

You'll need to give:

- your contact details
- your workplace address and postcode
- information about how your condition affects your work and what support you think you need
- details of a workplace contact who can confirm you work there, if you're employed (they will not be contacted without your permission)
- your Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR) number, if you're self-employed

The information in the following pages may help you with explaining what support you need. Don't worry if you don't know what to ask for, the assessors will have suggestions for you.

I am happy to discuss needs with you, see the how I can help you page

After applying, you will be contacted, and an assessment will be arranged. This will be several months after your application.

The assessors are there to help you, this is not like other assessments you may have had for your disabilities.

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

Software

Your assessor will recommend software to meet your needs, you will also be given training for the software. These are some examples.

Text-to-speech: Listen to documents using a variety of high-quality voices. It also includes various proofreading tools to help with the accuracy of written work.

Speech to text: Speech recognition software which types as you dictate, will spell correctly and improve productivity

MindMapping: Visualise and develop your ideas and notes in a non-linear fashion. Supports you with processing and organising ideas

Spelling: Fixes spelling errors seamlessly as you type.

Screen Readers: Reads the contents of the screen, for visually impaired users

Subscriptions: Grammarly for spelling and grammar, Otter for recording/transcribing meetings, Chat GPT for writing content, and task management tools.

ANY software that will help you in an area that you struggle with because of your conditions/disability will be considered

Client Experiences

Dragon has been amazing! I use it to dictate my reports and don't have to worry about the spelling. I used to work extra hours to fit everything in but now I go home on time.

Georgia, Dyslexia

I didn't think I'd need training but there were so many features I would have missed without it. Using MindView to take notes whilst I'm on the phone is a game changer.

Eddie, ADHD

When I have long documents to read I convert them to audio using Read & Write and I can listen to them as I drive to clients. I sometimes have to listen twice but its still less than I had to read to make it sink in.

Ahmed, ADHD & Dyslexia

My Grammarly subscription is a real time-saver. It doesn't just pick up grammar, it offers to reword sentences and can write replies to emails for me.

But my favorite thing is that it tells me the "tone" of my writing so I know how it sounds to others.

Harper, Autism

Using Mindview & Dragon means I can dictate all of my thoughts on a bad day without any exertion or worrying about making sense of them. I don't forget things and can organise them another day when I have more "spoons"

Sara, Fibromyalgia

I love the software I got from ATW, I use Dragon every day to dictate my work and then Grammarly to help me rewrite and improve. I used to spend hours trying to write and rewrite, and I often got asked to change them after as I had missed mistakes. I would finish the day in lots of pain and feeling drained. Now I feel confident and able to work as well as everyone else.

Chris, Dyslexia & Arthritis

Equipment

Ergonomic equipment, furniture and devices can make a huge difference to pain and other difficulties encountered during the workday.

Standing desk: Increased blood flow, which increases oxygen levels, productivity and alertness whilst also elongating the spinal column and reducing strain on the back muscles.

Ergonomic chair: Reduced pain and increased comfort whilst sitting can increase productivity and wellbeing

Vertical mouse: encourages a natural forearm position (to eliminate forearm twisting and reduce the risk of carpal tunnel syndrome. They reduce wrist strain by using the shoulder muscles and help prevent RSI.

Footrests: Support your feet and legs to relieve aching in the knees, legs and ankles.

Armrests: Protect you from the injury and strain of inadequate limb support when using a keyboard and mouse.

Remarkable Tablet: Take notes without the distraction of other features or the glare of a screen, allowing conversion to typed text.

Additional Monitor: Transferring information from one application to another without memory issues.

Braille Keyboard: Visually impaired users can type with fewer mistakes when working on the computer

Client Experiences

My standing desk and rocking footrest really help me. I change between standing and sitting all day and when I'm moving my feet on the footrest nobody on Teams can see me moving.

Jordan, ADHD

The second monitor helps me loads when I'm taking information from one system to another. I used to forget by the time I'd changed from one system to another.

Jenna, dyslexia

My new chair makes a huge difference to my pain levels at the end of the day. It supports my back and also rocks with me as I move so I feel comfortable all day.

Anna, spinal degeneration, hypermobility & chronic pain

I love my standing desk!

When I'm on long calls I can stand and move about easily whilst still being able to take notes.

I bought a balance board and often stand on that to work on my core and balance whilst I work.

Charlie, ADHD

I didn't know you could get arm rests before I had my assessment, they are brilliant.

I no longer have shoulder pain at the end of the day and my carpal tunnel syndrome has improved

Louise, lupus & dyslexia

My remarkable tablet is fantastic, I can keep all of my notes on it, as well as documents I need to read and my to-do lists.

I can access it all on the computer too. It means I carry less equipment and instead of multiple notebooks where I can't find anything, it's all in one place.

Farooq, dyslexia & ADHD

Coaching

Coaching will help you understand why you struggle with certain tasks and give you the tools you need to become more productive.

Commonly neurodiverse people and those dealing with painful conditions will have executive function weaknesses in areas such as:

- Time management
- Organisation
- Concentration
- Task initiation
- Working memory
- Planning & Prioritisation

Coaches have many different approaches to help improve your skills and your productivity, making work easier and allowing you to feel more comfortable and happier in your role.

Disability Awareness

If a Disability Awareness session is given this involves your colleagues and managers attending a session where there is information given about your condition.

These sessions help to dispel myths surrounding conditions and gain an understanding of how people can be affected.

After these sessions, colleagues find they are more understanding of the challenges and barriers faced by others and can take steps to remove or reduce these barriers.

Support Workers

Support workers funded by Access to Work come in various forms.

A visually impaired person might have support from a reader, whilst a hearing impaired person might have a signer for communication support.

Neurodiverse individuals often have a support worker in the form of a virtual assistant. This could be helpful with organisation, planning, time management and more. They are there to help support you in the areas you struggle with, not to do your job for you.

Client Experiences

My support worker has freed up my time to focus on the most important aspects of my work.

She manages my calendar for me and organises all of my emails, replying to those she can. She has proofread papers for me and even summarised documents. I don't know how I managed without her.

Claire, ADHD & dyslexia

Having my VA has helped me to grow my business. I couldn't keep on top of all the admin work and would take weeks to get back to clients, often losing them.

My VA deals with my invoices, updates my website with availability, organises my emails and responds to social media enquiries. I no longer lose clients because I didn't get back to them.

Blake, ADHD & Autism

Your Grant

Once you have had your assessment you will receive a report outlining the details of your grant and the equipment that was discussed and recommended.

This report will contain information about the cost of all the equipment and where to purchase it.

You should purchase equipment within 9 months in order to claim the money back.

You should set up any support, such as coaching or support workers, within 13 weeks of making your claim.

Normally your employer will purchase the equipment and claim the money back from ATW

A Pro-forma invoice may be put in for a claim to pay the supplier directly IF

- Your employer has less than 50 employees
- You are employed by a charity
- You are self-employed

You do NOT have to use the suppliers recommended. You can choose your own coach or trainer, provided they are not more expensive than the quote given



How can I help?

I am an experienced Assistive Technology Trainer and Coach. I have a wide range of knowledge of neurodiversity and other conditions.

I have ADHD and mobility impairments, and I live with daily pain.

I have lived experiences of the challenges people face.

I am a daily user of equipment and software provided by Access to Work.

If you need help applying for AtW or have questions, I am happy to help.

I run free monthly group Q&A sessions, which you are welcome to attend.

I can deliver your Assistive Technology Training, Coaching and Disability Awareness sessions.

I am happy to have a discovery call with you before booking.

It doesn't matter which company is recommended after your assessment; you can use any company to deliver these as long as they are not more expensive. I am cheaper and can offer a more personalised service than the larger companies.

I am best contacted via email; I spend much of the day in one-to-one coaching or training sessions, so I cannot answer calls.

Kathryn@wiki-ed