

EDNA

Employee Disability and Neurodivergent Advice

Access to Work Support Guide

This guide has been created to help you and your employer. It provides information about the Access to Work scheme and will help you gain an overall understanding of the scheme and how to access the right support if you have a physical or mental health condition or disability.

Please note this document has been compiled as a guide only. Access to Work may alter their process or offerings at any time. Therefore, you might wish to review their current process online or you might wish to contact them directly.

What is Access to Work?

Access to Work is a publicly funded employment support grant scheme that can offer practical and financial support for people who have a disability, neurodiversity, physical or mental health condition. It aims to support people to get or stay in work.

Support can be provided where someone needs help or adaptations beyond reasonable adjustments. The support you get will depend on your needs. Through Access to Work, you can apply for:

- » a grant to help pay for practical support with your work
- » support with managing your mental health at work
- » money to pay for communication support at job interviews

What's the criteria for Access to Work?

To qualify, you must:



- » have a disability, neurodiversity, physical or mental health condition that means you require support to do your job or need help getting to and from work
- » have a paid job that is full or part-time. This can include employment, an apprenticeship, a work placement, a work trial or work experience
- » live in England, Scotland or Wales

Please note: you cannot get Access to Work support for voluntary work.

How can Access to Work support me?

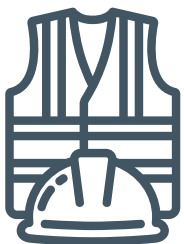
Access to Work can:

- » offer financial support for aids and equipment such as assistive software
- » fund the cost of a support worker, like a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter. ([BSL videos about the Access to Work factsheet and other resources are available here](#))
- » provide funding towards travel to work costs. For example, paying for taxis if you cannot use public transport, and/or providing a travel buddy
- » provide support to help manage your mental health at work. This might include a tailored plan to help you get or stay in work, and one-to-one sessions with a mental health professional
- » provide help with costs for work-related support staff and job coaches

Please note: personal care support workers are not covered by Access to Work.



What costs are not covered by Access to Work?



- » Access to Work does not pay for reasonable adjustments that your employer must legally make to support you to do your job.
- » Access to Work does not pay for items that would normally be needed to do the job whether a person is disabled or not.

Do I need a formal diagnosis for Access to Work?

- » No, you do not need an official diagnosis.



Do hidden disabilities like ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) count as a disability for the purpose of Access to Work?

Yes, 'The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities' (GOV.UK, 2023).



Do I qualify for Access to Work support if I work from home?



Yes, your workplace can include your home, whether you work from home some or all of the time.

Does it matter how much I earn?

No, and if you get an Access to Work grant, it will not affect other benefits you get and you do not have to pay it back.

You or your employer might need to pay some costs up front and claim them back later.



Do I need to speak to my employer before applying to Access to Work?



You should talk to your employer about reasonable adjustments. If the help you need is not covered by your employer making reasonable adjustments, you may be able to get help from Access to Work.

Access to Work will advise your employer if changes should be made as reasonable adjustments. For further information:

[Reasonable adjustments for workers with disabilities or health conditions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/reasonable-adjustments-for-workers-with-disabilities-or-health-conditions)

Can my employer refuse Access to Work?

In nearly all cases, it is unlawful for an employer to discriminate against a disabled person in the selection process. All reasonable measures should be considered to allow a disabled person to access the workplace, to do the job in question in the same way as a non-disabled person and not be put at a disadvantage.



How long can I get Access to Work support?

Support can last for up to three years, however Access to Work normally reviews your need for support and to see whether additional support is needed. For as long as you need support, you should continue to receive it.

How do I apply?



You can apply to Access to Work by telephone or online.

By telephone: Call 0800 121 7479 between the hours of 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

Online: This is the quickest and easiest way.

You can apply here: [Access to Work: get support if you have a disability or health condition: Apply for an Access to Work grant - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/get-support-if-you-have-a-disability-or-health-condition/apply-for-an-access-to-work-grant)



You will need to provide the following information:

- » Your National Insurance number
- » Your workplace address and postcode
- » The name of your workplace contact who can authorise your Access to Work payments, including their contact email address and phone number

You will also need to explain:

- » How your condition affects you at work or getting to work
- » What help you are already receiving and what else could help you
- » It will help your application if you've spoken to your employer about reasonable adjustments before you apply to Access to Work

What happens after I have applied to Access to Work?

You will hear from someone from Access to Work and they will talk with you about your application. If phone calls are difficult for you, you can ask for communication to be made by email instead.

Access to Work might ask about your work and ask for your consent to speak with your employer. If you are eligible for support, they will arrange for an assessor to call you or view your workplace by video call, or they will arrange to visit so they can determine what changes/support might help.



What happens after I have seen an assessor?



You will receive a letter with a decision and explanation. The letter will provide details of what you have told the assessor, and it will tell you how much your grant will be and what it should pay for.

Your employer will receive a report from Access to Work that will list the recommendations they have made, and Access to Work will provide your employer with details of the grant/cost share involved. The report will not disclose confidential details of what you have shared with your assessor.

What happens once I have received my Access to Work letter?

- » You and your employer will agree on what support is required.
- » Your employer will need to retrieve necessary quote/s from the recommended supplier/s on your report.
- » Your employer proceeds to raise an order through your procurement department.
- » Your employer will need to attach quotes when raising an order through your organisation's procurement department.
- » It might be that the procurement department suggests an alternative support aid that is equivalent to what Access to Work have recommended, and therefore as long as the support aid does not exceed the grant agreement and fulfils the same purpose, Access to Work may honour the alternative. However, it is recommended that you seek confirmation of this from Access to Work before a purchase is made.
- » It is important that all receipts for any items/services purchased are kept.

PLEASE NOTE

If you require software, please ensure you have confirmed with your IT department that the software will be compatible to work with the systems you use; some software applications may not work efficiently due to bespoke systems used within the NHS. Please ensure this will be approved by IT before purchase.

Does my employer need to contribute to the approved costs?

- » If you have been employed in your job for less than six weeks, Access to Work will pay the full cost. This only applies if you are a new employee to the organisation.
- » It is important to note that you will need to apply to Access to Work within the first six weeks of your new employment start date for full funding to be granted.
- » If you have been in your job for six weeks or more when you first apply, Access to Work will share the costs with your employer.
- » Depending on the size of your organisation, Access to Work could refund up to 80% of approved costs under £10,000. It will normally pay any balance over £10,000, up to £66,000 a year. This means that your employer will need to contribute 100% of costs up to a 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 your employer has - please see table below.

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



Before using your team budget to fund reasonable adjustments, check with your organisation's Diversity and Equality team to see if your Trust has a centralised funding pot for reasonable adjustments.

How does my employer claim the money back?

- » Once you have received your item/s or service and you are satisfied, your employer can then claim money from your grant by post or online.
- » If you are wanting to claim money back for services, for example, travel support such as taxis, then you can submit a claim form by post or online. For online claims you will need to create an account [Sign in – GOV.UK \(dwp.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/sign-in-to-dwp).
- » If you or your employer wishes to claim money back by post, a paper claim form will need to be completed and returned. This will be attached to your Access to Work decision letter.
- » All invoices and receipts will need to be included with your claim form as a proof of purchase. It's ok to send copies if you do not have the originals.



**You have nine months to claim for costs.
This has been increased from six months
since the COVID-19 pandemic.**

What happens if my support needs change?

It is important that you inform Access to Work if your support needs change. Additional support might be available for you, or changes might need to be made to your award granted.



How do I renew my Access to Work support?

- » Access to Work funding is ongoing. They will review your circumstances and support needs after three years or if your condition changes.
- » You will need to renew your Access to Work grant before it expires if you use it to pay for ongoing support such as a support worker.
- » Your decision letter will state when your grant expires.
- » You can apply to renew your grant 12 weeks before your grant expires.
- » You can apply to renew your Access to Work support by telephone: 0800 121 7479 or online: [Are you a civil servant? \(get-disability-work-support.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.get-disability-work-support.service.gov.uk)
- » You will need to check if you are still eligible before you apply for renewal.
- » You will need to provide them with your unique reference number. If you need the form in a different format such as braille, large print or audio, you can call the Access to Work helpline.



Can I keep my Access to Work equipment?

- » Your employer owns the equipment brought through Access to Work. Therefore it is a decision that your employer will need to make as to whether you can keep your equipment, due to cost sharing between Access to Work and your employer.
- » Access to Work can pay to transfer your equipment to a new job if your employer agrees, or you can make a new application to Access to Work if you leave your organisation.
- » Your employer is responsible for the maintenance, insurance and disposal costs of the equipment they have purchased.

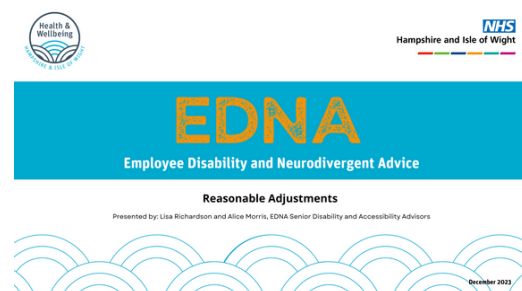


Further information, guidance, and resources

Inclusive practice and reasonable adjustments

This document provides useful information for Inclusive practice and reasonable adjustments.

CLICK HERE

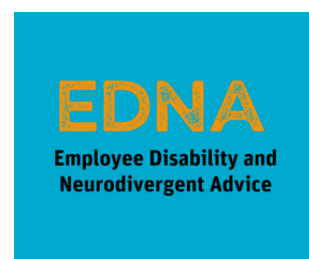


Employee Disability and Neurodivergent Advice (EDNA)

To find out what the Employee Disability and Neurodivergent Advice (EDNA) service offers, please **click here** to visit the People Portal

You can view previous 'Say Hello to EDNA' sessions by **clicking here**

If you or your manager have further questions, you can contact the EDNA team by emailing edna@solent.nhs.uk



Access to Work

[Access to Work: get support if you have a disability or health condition: What Access to Work is - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work)

[Access to Work: factsheet for customers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/factsheet-for-customers)

[Access to Work factsheet for employers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/factsheet-for-employers)

[Your guide to the Access to Work \(AtW\) process \(diversityandability.com\)](https://diversityandability.com/atw-guide)

Transport Concession schemes

<https://www.transportforall.org.uk/your-rights/>