

Access to Work

A Manager's Guide

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Access to Work

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Textphone: 0345 608 8753

Access to Work: an overview

What is Access to Work?

Access to Work is a specialist scheme, run by Jobcentre Plus, which helps people with a physical, learning or mental health impairment to find and stay in work.

If your employee is eligible and has a paid job, they can apply for Access to Work. It does not matter whether they work full-time, part-time, permanent or temporary.

For people starting a paid job, the grant is worth up to 100% of approved costs if the application is made within six weeks of them starting. For those who already work for NHSGGC, the grant is up to 80% of the approved costs (over and above the £1000 threshold – see p9: Funding).

Access to Work **does not** replace NHSGGC's normal responsibilities to provide reasonable adjustments. The scheme **does** provide practical help for you and your employee, and offers grants to help towards any support, aids, equipment or adaptations your employee may require.

It is important, therefore, that you contact Occupational Health in the first instance. They will assess whether or not your employee's requirements can be fully met by NHSGGC and, if it is required, advise on the Access to Work referral system. They can also be contacted for assistance at any point throughout this process.

How can Access to Work help me?

Access to Work funding helps to remove environmental barriers in the workplace, providing fair access for all employees. It can help you to:

- support new employees and enable them to perform to their full potential; and
- retain an employee who develops an impairment (keeping their valuable skills and saving both time and money recruiting a replacement).

Access to Work regularly engages with employees, and works closely with specialist private and third sector organisations (such as RNIB and Action on Hearing Loss) to provide the best service for you and your employee.

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Eligibility

Eligibility overview

To get help from Access to Work, there are certain criteria your employee must meet:

- they must be 16 or over and in full-time, part-time or temporary work – voluntary or unpaid work does not count; **and**
- they must have a mental or physical impairment or health condition that is likely to last for 12 months or more; **and**
- the impairment or condition must affect their ability to do a job, start a job, stay in work, or mean they have to pay work-related costs (e.g. travel costs if they cannot use public transport).

Eligibility exceptions

Your employee may not qualify for Access to Work even if they are defined as disabled if they receive any of the following benefits:

- Employment Support Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance
- Jobseeker's Allowance
- National Insurance Credits

However, if they have an interview or a certain type of work experience placement, support can be funded by Access to Work even if they are currently unemployed. Support can also be provided through the Higher Permitted Work scheme, but will only be provided over the 52 week period.

If your employee changes to a job which is not essentially the same within or outside the department, they are no longer eligible for Access to Work under their old job. They must re-apply for Access to Work, as Jobcentre Plus classes this as a new post.

Please contact Access to Work for more information.

Definition of 'disability' or 'impairment'

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disability as 'a physical or mental impairment which has substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

- 'Substantial' means more than minor or trivial, e.g. taking much longer to complete a daily task like getting dressed.
- 'Long-term' means 12 months or more, including, for example, a breathing condition that develops out of a lung infection.

People with progressive conditions can also be covered under the Equality Act; an individual automatically meets the disability definition under the Equality Act 2010 from the day they are diagnosed with HIV infection or AIDS, cancer or Multiple Sclerosis.

Some conditions are not covered by the disability definition. These include addiction to non-prescribed drugs or alcohol.

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Support

Access to Work does not provide support itself, but provides a grant to reimburse the cost to the NHSGGC of the support that is needed. This section details the various types of support that Access to Work can fund.

Support overview

Access to Work can provide grants towards 6 categories of support:

- Specialist Aids and Equipment (SAE) e.g. specialist IT hardware and software, powered chair, quill mouse;
- adaptations to premises and equipment e.g. doorways, access ramps, automatic doors with pad;
- support worker e.g. job interview support, transport escort or work driver, assistance in the workplace;
- Communication Support at Interview (CSI) e.g. interpreter or communicator if your employee is hearing impaired;
- travel to work e.g. taxi/alternative transport; and
- miscellaneous e.g. one off items of support.

Reasonable adjustments

Access to Work is provided where an employee requires support or adaptations **beyond** the reasonable adjustments which NHSGGC is legally obliged to provide under the Equality Act 2010. Any alterations or standard equipment classed as **reasonable adjustments will NOT be covered by Access to Work** – these are covered 100% by NHSGGC. Some examples of reasonable adjustment include:

- Making adjustments to the premises
- Job sharing
- Flexible working
- Buying or modifying standard equipment and/or furniture
- Changing instructions and information manuals
- Modifying procedures for testing or assessment

Speak to your employee to arrange a work station assessment. For further guidance, please contact Access to Work.

Support workers

Check with your employee whether the job role can be shared or adjusted before applying for this support. If your employee needs a support worker, inform your Access to Work adviser. Support workers are generally split into the following 3 groups.

- **Admin support, or job aide:** Your employee may consider a job aide if they have problems with manual dexterity in their hands and need a job aide to do their filing. Your employee would need to oversee the job aide while they are working. As a

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general rule, Access to Work can fund a job aide for up to 20% of your employee's working hours.

- **Care support:** to support your employee with personal care in work only and would include help with meal breaks, toilet breaks, etc. The level and length of time of the support is assessed by your Access to Work adviser and is generally 100% funded by Access to Work.
- **Interpreting support:** If your employee needs an interpreter, for example for British Sign Language (BSL), Access to Work can fund one. This support can either be for the whole working day, or for one-off/ad-hoc periods such as interviews. Access to Work will decide on the level of support after consultation with your employee.

Access to Work can also fund the following support workers, if your employee requires them.

- **Driver:** If public transport and taxis are not an option to get to, from, and around work, your employee may be eligible for driver support. If the support worker drives your employee's vehicle, your employee is responsible for their insurance cover.
- **Job Coach:** If your employee has mental ill health, this kind of support worker can provide work-focused support tailored to them. If your employee has a learning disability, they can also get support from a job coach.

There are different ways that a support worker can be recruited to assist your employee:

- use an agency worker (*this is the standard option*);
- you could recruit a new employee;
- your employee could employ the support worker directly; or
- you could add the support role to an existing employee's job. Please note that Access to Work cannot fund any more than an existing employee's normal salary.

You and your employee will need to decide how you want to recruit and employ the support worker, taking account of:

- the number of hours of support needed; and
- the skills the support worker must have.

Support workers' travel costs

Access to Work will not accept claims for support workers' travel costs. If the support worker is employed on an hourly basis, all travelling costs including parking must be included in the rate agreed with the Access to Work adviser.

Support workers' hours

If a support worker is required full time (more than 30 hours a week), Access to Work will normally fund this on the basis of an annual salary rather than an agency worker employed on an hourly basis.

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The Access to Work adviser will be able to give you more information about agencies and professional associations who can help you and your employee find a support worker with appropriate skills and qualifications.

Mental Health Support Service

The Mental Health Support Service is provided by Remploy in partnership with Access to Work. The service:

- gives advice and guidance to help employers understand mental ill health and how they can support employees, and
- offers eligible individuals an assessment to find out their needs at work and help to develop a support plan.

For more information about the Mental Health Support Service, contact Remploy:
0845 146 0501
vocationalrehabilitation@remploy.co.uk

Specialist equipment

Access to Work will **not** provide funding for equipment that is considered standard for your employee's job or equipment that NHSGGC can reasonably provide. If this applies to your employee's case, your Access to Work adviser will discuss this with you both.

Access to Work is able to provide funding towards special equipment which incurs **extra costs**. Please check with Access to Work (see details below) to find out if your employee's requirements come under this funding.

If Access to Work can fund your employee's specialist equipment, you are responsible for any on-going costs for that equipment. This includes the costs of consumables, such as batteries, as well as maintenance and insurance.

Confirm with Access to Work that your employee will be trained to use any specialist equipment and that it is checked regularly to make sure that it is working correctly.

Travel

If your employee cannot use public transport, they may be eligible for funded taxis. The employee would pay the normal travel to work cost and Access to Work would pay the difference.

Where it is work-related travel, NHSGGC would pay travel expenses in line with policy, and Access to Work would pay the balance.

It is the employee's responsibility to apply, access direct payments and organise their taxis to and from work.

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If taxis are not an option, your employee may be eligible for a support worker who drives them to, from and/or within work. The arrangement would need to be discussed with Jobcentre Plus. If the support worker drives your employee's vehicle, your employee is responsible for their insurance cover.

How to Apply

It is up to your employee to apply for their own Access to Work support; however, if your employee is unable to do this, Access to Work will accept an application from you.

If your employee is starting a new job, their support can be 100% funded by Access to Work **if they apply for Access to Work in their first 6 weeks.**

The average timescale for a claim to be processed can depend on the equipment needed and how quickly it can be procured. Complex or bespoke adjustments can take longer.

Application process

1. Discuss Access to Work and/or reasonable adjustments with your employee in a comfortable, confidential environment. Bear in mind that your employee may or may not be aware of what they need; their support will depend on them, their job and what is considered reasonable in the circumstances.
2. Your employee should then contact Access to Work directly; please refer them to the employee's Access to Work guide. Access to Work then sends a written assessment to you to check, sign and return. **Remember - all applications must bear your signature.**
3. An Access to Work adviser will either phone or visit your employee to assess their needs and circumstances.
4. The Access to Work adviser will provide your employee with two copies of the report which outline findings, recommendations and quotes/supplier for the equipment or support they require.
5. If your employee is satisfied with the report, they should pass one copy on to you.
6. It is then your responsibility to order the equipment as is protocol in your organisation.
7. If your employee has a support worker, you will need to complete the worker's claim form and authorise it regarding dates, times and journeys and send it to Access to Work.

Applications are live for three years. An Access to Work adviser will review your employee's support once a year. Discuss your employee's support with them at regular one-to-one meetings. After three years, your employee's claim expires and they must make a new claim.

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Funding

Funding overview

There is no set amount for an Access to Work grant; it depends on your employee's circumstances, including how long they have been working for NHSGGC and what support they need.

Anyone who purchases goods or services outside of the scheme protocol **will not be awarded retrospective payments by Access to Work.**

Access to Work claims are funded for up to 3 years – after this, you and your employee must make a new claim.

How much can Access to Work pay?

Access to Work can fund up to 100% of the costs of:

- support workers
- additional costs for travel in work, and
- support where the employee has been working for **less than 6 weeks** when they first apply for Access to Work.

Does NHSGGC have to pay anything?

In some circumstances, NHSGGC may have to share the cost with Access to Work. NHSGGC will only have to share the costs where the employee has been working for more than 6 weeks when they apply for Access to Work, and they need:

- specialist aids and equipment, and
- adaptations to premises and equipment.

What will be NHSGGC's share of the costs?

When cost sharing applies, Access to Work will refund up to 80% of the approved costs between a threshold of £1,000 and £10,000. As the employer you will contribute 100% of costs up to the £1,000 threshold and 20% of the costs between the threshold and £10,000.

Any balance above £10,000 will normally be met by Access to Work. If the support also provides a general business benefit, a contribution will be sought in addition to any compulsory cost share.

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NHS equipment

If equipment is available through the NHS free of charge, encourage your employee to obtain their equipment through this route as Access to Work will not fund this type of equipment. An example is over-ear hearing aids – as these are obtainable free through the NHS, Access to Work cannot fund them.

If your employee feels that the equipment/support provided by the NHS is not appropriate, they must obtain a letter from the NHS confirming what can/cannot be provided. Access to Work will only provide equipment if the NHS provision does not fulfil your employee's work requirements.

Employee Contributions

Usually, your employee will not have to pay anything towards their equipment. However, in certain situations your employee may have to contribute towards the cost of the equipment, depending on how many days they work. This is mainly applicable in cases where your employee would benefit from the equipment that is being purchased in their personal or social life rather than being only a work-based requirement.

If this applies to your employee, they should pay their contribution directly to NHSGGC. If the equipment costs more than £1,000, the costs will be shared between NHSGGC and Access to Work.

Employee contribution example

John Smith works 37 hours a week over 5 days and he requires a piece of equipment costing a one-off payment of £1,000.

- VAT on the equipment is reclaimed from the taxman, so £1,000 - 20% VAT = £800
- $£800 \div 7$ (days in the week) = £114.29 per day
- NHSGGC contributes towards John's 5 working days, so $5 \times £114.29 = £571.43$
- John contributes towards 2 personal use days, so $2 \times £114.29 = £228.57$

The total cost to John Smith is £228.57, for the 2 days per week he will use the equipment outside of work.

If you have any questions regarding funding, please contact Access to Work.

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JobCentre Plus forms

Guidance

How to complete claim form DP224 (Version 06/09)

One off costs

Part 1 – Applicant details

Enter the Title, Surname, Forename, 9 digit Unique Reference Number and e-mail address of the person receiving the Access to Work support.

Part 2 – Employer details

Enter:

- the Employer Name;
- the Employer Contact Name;
- the Employer Contact's telephone number; and
- the Employer's address – this can be a company stamp.

Part 3 – Payment details

Please complete the details of employer's bank account.

Part 4 – Claim details

Please give a brief description of:

- the equipment bought or changes made to the premises; and
- the date that equipment was received or changes completed.

Please note: Please attach original receipts or invoices.

Part 5 – Declaration

- Enter the total cost of the equipment purchased or changes made to the premises.
- Read the declaration points.
- Sign and date the form.
- Enter your company's details or company stamp.

Now return your claim form and relevant documentation to the office address detailed at the back of the form.

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Please ensure that you have completed all parts of the claim form, as incomplete forms may delay reimbursement.

How to complete claim form DP227 (Version 06/09)

Travel in work costs

Part 1 – Applicant details

Enter the Title, Surname, Forename, 9 digit Unique Reference Number and e-mail address of the person receiving the Access to Work support.

Part 2 – Claim Details

PLEASE NOTE: Each claim can only be used for up to one calendar month. If you are claiming for support that covers more than a one-month period you will have to complete two separate claim forms.

- Enter the dates of the period that you are claiming for. For example 01/10/12 to 31/10/12.
- In the main table, enter each separate date that you received support and the numbers of journeys or mileage per day.
- Below the main table, enter the total amount of the taxi journeys or mileage travelled for this period.
- Enter the total amount paid by you/Employer or other in this period.
- Enter your contribution as agreed with your Access to Work Adviser.
- Enter Employer contribution as agreed with your Access to Work adviser.
- Deduct all contributions from the total amount and then enter the **amount claimed back from Access to Work.**

PLEASE NOTE: The amount claimed back might be paid to your employer or direct to your taxi company and you are responsible for making sure any other contributions are paid.

PLEASE NOTE: Please attach original receipts/invoices for the support that has been received.

Part 3 – To be completed by your employer

PLEASE NOTE: Your employer must complete this part of the form fully including any company details otherwise your claim will be returned to you. If you are self-employed Part 3 does not require completion.

PLEASE NOTE: The claim form must be signed by your employer on the same day or after you have completed Part 4.

Part 4 – Declaration

Please complete where/who you wish the payment to be made to.

Read the declaration points in Part 4.

Sign and date the form.

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Please ensure that you have completed all parts of the claim form, as incomplete forms may delay reimbursement.

How to complete claim form DP228 (Version 06/09) New or amended details

Part 1 - Customer details currently held

Enter the Title, Surname, Forename, 9 digit Unique Reference Number and e-mail address of the person receiving the Access to Work support.

Part 2 – New personal details

Please input the remittance address of any 3rd party or your new home address if you are moving home

Part 3 – New payee details

Bank or Building Society Name – i.e. Lloyds, Halifax

Bank or Building Society Address – The address where the branch is situated

Account Name – Your name as noted on your bank card

Account number – This will be the 8 digit account number

Sort code – This is a 6 digit number

Building Society Roll Number – This is your membership identification of the building society you are a member of

Part 4 Declaration

The access to work customer whose details have been supplied at Part 1 should sign and date this part of the form.

Now return your form and relevant documentation to the office address detailed at back of the DP228 form.

Please ensure that you have completed all parts of the claim form, as incomplete forms may delay reimbursement.

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Useful contacts

Access to Work Glasgow

Email: atwosu.london@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone: 0345 268 8489

Textphone: 0345 608 8753

Mental Health Support Service (Remploy)

0845 146 0501

vocationalrehabilitation@remploy.co.uk

Acknowledgement

Re-produced for NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde by kind permission of Access to Work and Leeds Council.

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