

Access to Work

jobcentreplus

Department for
Work and Pensions

Information for customers

What is Access to Work?

Access to Work is a Government programme delivered by Jobcentre Plus which provides advice and a financial grant for practical support to overcome work related barriers due to disability. It is available to customers with a disability who are in employment or with a job to start.

This leaflet describes the service standards you can expect from Access to Work and provides answers to some frequently asked questions.

If you would like this booklet in an alternative format, such as Braille, please contact us. Details are at the end of this leaflet.

ATWC1 01/14

What you can expect from us

We aim to:

- keep you informed throughout the process
- deal with you using the communication method that you prefer
- work with you and your employer to ensure that any agreed support is put in place as quickly as possible
- pay claims within 10 working days of getting a correctly completed claim form
- respond promptly to any changes in your circumstances
- be flexible and responsive to your individual needs
- review your Access to Work grant at least once a year.

We will

- talk to you and your employer to make sure that:
 - your grant has been used for the purpose you needed it for
 - you still need all the support, and
 - the support you get still meets your needs
- respect your privacy and protect your personal information, and
- be helpful, courteous and professional.

What we need from you

These are some of the things we need you to do to help us deal with your application and ongoing support.

- Tell us if the address of your workplace changes.
- Tell us if your or your employer's contact numbers change.
- Tell us about any changes to planned absences from work which may delay your application or stop you doing an assessment.
- Ensure you attend your scheduled assessment appointment as cancelling will delay your support
- Tell us straight away if there is any change in your circumstances as these may affect the Access to Work support you get, for example a change of home address.
- Sign and return the declaration on your award letter to show you accept the offer and that you have read and understood these notes.
- Claim any money back for your support straight away. We must get the claim within six months or we will not be able to pay the money back.
- When you claim money back for your support, please send us the claim form and attach the original invoices, tickets or receipts, or certified copies of them.
- If you have an employer and need to claim money back for any other costs, your employer must check your claim.
- If you need to claim for any travelling costs, they must be for the cost of travel for the journey and by the method we have agreed with you.

How your employer can help

Your employer can help by

- letting your Access to Work adviser or an independent assessor visit you at your workplace
- buying any support as soon we approve your Access to Work grant
- claiming straight away for any one-off support you need. We must get the claim within six months or we will not be able to pay the money back
- agreeing to share some of the cost of the support
- checking and signing the claim forms to show that your claims for money back are correct
- insuring any equipment or aid bought with Access to Work support
- maintaining any equipment or aid bought with Access to Work support
- letting you to take equipment with you if you move to another job.

More information about Access to Work

Employer cost share

If you have been in your job for 6 weeks or more when you apply for Access to Work support for specialist equipment or an adaptation, your employer will have to pay some of the cost. The minimum they have to pay is:

- employers with 1 to 49 employees do not have to pay a share of costs
- employers with 50 to 249 employees must pay the first £500 and 20% of costs up to £10,000
- employers with over 250 employees must pay the first £1,000 and 20% of costs up to £10,000.

Access to Work can pay 100% of any costs over £10,000.

Access to Work will normally ask your employer to agree additional voluntary contributions.

Standard equipment and reasonable adjustments

Access to Work will not provide funding for equipment that is considered standard for your job.

Employers have a duty under the Equality Act to make reasonable adjustments. Access to work will not fund support or equipment that it is reasonable for your employer to provide. If this applies to your case the Access to Work Adviser will discuss this with you and your employer.

Amount of Access to Work payable

If the actual cost of support is less than the approved amount then we will adjust the payments accordingly.

Backdated applications

Access to Work will not normally pay for any costs incurred before you contacted us to apply for support.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is an independent assessment and why do I need one?

An 'independent assessment' is an assessment done by a suitably qualified and experienced person to work out the support you need to do your job. Your Access to Work adviser will arrange this.

Who does my equipment belong to?

The equipment belongs to whoever bought it. If you are employed this will usually be your employer. If you are self employed it will be you.

Can I take my equipment with me to a new job?

If you need the same equipment in your new job, ask your employer if you can take the equipment with you. Your adviser can help you negotiate with your employer, fund the transportation of equipment to your new work place, and will make sure that you have the support you need in your new job.

Why do you need to speak to my employer?

In many cases we need to visit your workplace to assess exactly what support you need. Your employer will usually be responsible for buying the support. For some types of support we need your employer to agree to share some of the cost.

How long will I have to wait to claim any payment?

We prefer you to claim every month, but if this causes any problems you can claim every week.

Who orders the equipment?

Your employer, if you have one, or you, if you are self employed.

What if my employer doesn't order the equipment?

We will keep in touch with your employer and remind them that you need the support. We will not send out the grant until your employer has bought the equipment.

Who do I contact with a question about my payments?

Phone **0208 426 3110**, email or write to the office where you send your claim forms. Your query will be passed to a payments officer to investigate. Please allow at least 2 hours for a response to your query. Complex or multiple queries may take longer to resolve.

How do I complain about things?

We will aim to resolve any queries or problems at the point of contact. Where this is not possible we will escalate your concerns and/or complaint accordingly for further investigation. Where appropriate you will be notified of the outcome. You should write to your adviser or Access to Work regional manager.

How do I appeal against an Access to Work decision?

There is no statutory entitlement to Access to Work and so there is no formal appeal procedure. However an Access to Work manager can look at your decision again.