

## **Access to Work - practical help at work**

Access to Work can help you if your health or disability affects the way you do your job. It gives you and your employer advice and support with extra costs which may arise because of your needs. Check if you qualify for Access to Work.

### **About Access to Work**

Access to Work might pay towards a support worker or the equipment you need at work. It can also pay towards the cost of getting to work if you cannot use public transport.

If you need a communicator at job interviews, then Access to Work may be able to pay some or all of the communicator costs.

### **Who can get Access to Work**

You may be able to get Access to Work if you're:

- ✓ in a paid job
- ✓ unemployed and about to start a job
- ✓ unemployed and about to start a Work Trial
- ✓ self-employed

and your disability or health condition stops you from being able to do parts of your job.

Your disability or health condition may not have a big effect on what you do each day, but may have a long-term effect on how well you can do your job.

### **Get a letter for your employer about your Access to Work support**

Follow the link below to check if you can apply for Access to Work support. If you're eligible you can print a confirmation letter and use it when you're talking to employers about a job.

You can also apply for Access to Work if you're self employed.

The letter is not an application for Access to Work. To apply please call the contact centre for your area (see 'How to contact Access to Work').

### **How to contact Access to Work**

If you feel that the type of work you do is affected by a disability or health condition that is likely to last for 12 months or more, contact your regional Access to Work contact centre to check whether you can get help.

Alternatively, ask the Disability Employment Adviser (DEA) at your local Jobcentre about Access to Work.

### **Getting help - the process**

If you are likely to be eligible for Access to Work, you will be sent an application form to fill in and send back.

When the completed form has arrived back, an Access to Work adviser will contact you. The adviser will usually speak to you and your employer to reach a decision about the best support for you. In most cases, this can be done over the telephone, but a visit can be arranged if necessary.

Sometimes specialist advice may be needed, which the Access to Work adviser will help to arrange. For example, your adviser may arrange for a specialist organisation to complete an assessment and recommend appropriate support.

In this case, a confidential written report will be sent to the Access to Work adviser, who will use this information to help them decide on the right level of support.

### **Your employer's responsibilities**

Once your adviser has decided on the package of support they feel is appropriate, they will seek formal approval of their recommendations from Jobcentre Plus. You and your employer will then receive a letter informing you of the approved level of support and the grant available.

It is the responsibility of your employer - or you, if you are self-employed - to arrange the agreed support and buy the necessary equipment. Your employer can then claim repayment of the approved costs from Access to Work.

### **Your Access to Work grant**

The amount of help which you may receive from Access to Work will vary depending on how long you have been employed, what support you need and whether you are self-employed.

Access to Work can pay up to 100 per cent of the approved costs if you are:

- ✓ unemployed and starting a new job
- ✓ self-employed
- ✓ working for an employer and have been in the job for less than six weeks

Whatever your employment status, Access to Work will also pay up to 100 per cent of the approved costs of help with:

- ✓ support workers
- ✓ fares to work
- ✓ communicator support at interview

Access to Work pays a proportion of the costs of support if all of the following apply to you:

- ✓ you're working for an employer
- ✓ you've been in the job for six weeks or more
- ✓ you need special equipment

The precise level of cost sharing is determined as follows:

- ✓ employers with 1 to 9 employees will not be expected to share costs
- ✓ employers with 10 to 49 employees will pay the first £300 and 20 per cent of costs up to £10,000
- ✓ employers with 50 to 249 employees will pay the first £500 and 20 per cent of costs up to £10,000
- ✓ large employers with 250 or more employees will pay the first £1,000 and 20 per cent of costs up to £10,000

After between one and three years, Access to Work will review your circumstances and the support you're receiving.