

Access to Work

Fact sheet



What is Access to Work?

Access to Work (AtW) is available to help overcome the problems resulting from a disability. The Equality Act (2010) replaced the Disability Discrimination Act (2005) in providing protection and legal rights for disabled people. It uses the following definition of disability:

“The Act defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term (i.e. has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months) adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

It offers practical advice and help in a flexible way that can be tailored to suit the needs of an individual in a particular job. AtW does not replace the normal responsibilities of the employer to implement Health and Safety regulations or replace the responsibilities required by the Disability Discrimination Act.

The following website gives further information on the scheme:

www.direct.gov.uk/accesstowork

How does it do this?

As well as giving advice and information to disabled people and employers, Jobcentre Plus pays a grant, through AtW, towards any extra employment costs that result from a person’s disability.

Eligibility - Basic conditions

In order to receive AtW assistance, you will need to satisfy the following basic conditions.

You must:

- be disabled (and the disability is likely to last for 12 months or longer)
- be resident in Great Britain, excluding Northern Ireland, with a job in Great Britain (support can, however, be used to cover the client for overseas visits providing the job is based in the UK)

Plus be in need of one or more of the following:

- be in need of support at a job interview with an employer or/and
- have a job to start, or
- be in a job, whether as an employed or self-employed person

- be in need of support to progress in, or take up work, on a more equal basis with non-disabled colleagues

Other eligibility criteria may apply and an Access to Work Adviser will be able to advise you in more detail about the conditions that apply and whether or not you are eligible for help.

How does the programme work?

AtW can offer a grant towards the approved costs that arise because of an individual's disability in the work place.

For people who are starting a job, the grant is up to 100% of the approved costs. For people already working for an employer and who have been in the job for six weeks or more and need special equipment or adaptations to premises, AtW pays a proportion of the costs of support.

What type of help can be provided through Access to Work?

The AtW is under constant review by the Government and it is advisable to check eligibility conditions and the types of provision that might be available directly with the AtW team at Harrow (details at the bottom of this factsheet).

How are the disabled person's particular needs assessed?

The AtW Adviser will normally speak to you and your employee to arrive at the most effective solution. In the majority of cases, this can be done over the telephone; however, a visit can be arranged if necessary. Sometimes specialist or technical advice may be needed, which the AtW Adviser will help arrange.

How long will it take to put the assistance in place?

We aim to get you the help that you need in the shortest possible time. However, if it is likely to take some time, the AtW Adviser will explore temporary alternatives with you, for example a support worker or reader, while the permanent solution is sorted out.

Who will purchase the help needed?

It is usually you, the employer, who arranges to purchase the agreed support and then you claim back the grant from AtW.

NOTE: AtW will not fund retrospective claims. If you have purchased support or equipment without an AtW assessment having taken place, the cost of these items or support cannot be reimbursed.

How much is the 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, and what support you need. AtW makes grants towards work related costs. If you take on an unemployed person or have recruited someone less than six weeks ago, the grant is up to 100% of the approved costs approved by the AtW Adviser. It is worth noting that that AtW does not fund assessments of need (diagnosis assessments), and will not make retrospective payments for solutions already put in place.

There are some elements of the AtW scheme that, whatever the employment status

of the applicant, will **pay up to 100% of the approved costs**. These are of help with:

- support workers and fares to work; and
- Communicator support at interview.

For people working for an employer, and who have been in the job for six weeks or more and need special equipment or adaptations to premises, AtW pays a **proportion of the costs of support**, as follows:

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. AtW may provide help for a further period if your employee continues to be eligible for help under the rules that then apply.

AtW is available when additional costs are incurred because of a disability. It cannot be used to provide support usually provided by the Employer, such as in the provision of fundamental office equipment necessary for any employee to undertake the job.

AtW solutions are individually tailored to meet the disability needs of the disabled employee in the workplace. The Disability Act 1995 puts a duty on employers to take any steps that are reasonable to reduce or remove any substantial disadvantage that a physical feature of their premises or their employment arrangements causes a disabled employee or job applicant compared with a non-disabled person. This is known as 'reasonable adjustment'.

The fact that Jobcentre Plus is providing help for a disabled employee through Access to Work does not mean that you have satisfied this duty.

How to apply for the AtW grant

The employee is required to complete an AtW application form. The employee will need to provide current medical evidence (such as a consultants report, audiogram, or Educational Psychologists report), and in addition to DOB, and NI number they will be asked to outline the reasons why support is required, and what the possible solutions might be.

Contact Details for the AtW team covering the South East - (which includes, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire) – to request an application form contact:
Access to Work First Contact and Enquiries
Harrow Jobcentre, Nine Elms Lane, London, SW95 9BH
Tel: 0208 426 3110

Text: 0208 426 3133

Fax: 0208 426 3134

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

Disability Advisory Service

E-mail: disabililty@admin.ox.ac.uk

Website: www.ox.ac.uk/students/shw/das

Tel: +44 (0)1865 280 459

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