

Access to Work Guide Deafblind Scotland Cost of Living Project 2025



What is Access to Work?

If you're disabled or have a physical or mental health condition that makes it hard for you to do your job, you can:

- talk to your employer about changes they must make in your workplace
- get extra help from Access to Work, including mental health support

Talk to your employer about changes they must make in your workplace. Your employer must make certain changes (known as 'reasonable adjustments') to make sure you're not substantially disadvantaged when doing your job. These could include changing your working hours or providing equipment to help you do your job.

You should talk to your employer about reasonable adjustments before you apply for Access to Work.

Access to work is a government grant scheme which helps people with a disability to start or remain in employment. It can provide financial and practical support to help disabled people overcome the barriers they face in the workplace.

This support could pay for equipment, support from a job coach or other work-related costs. This guide will provide an overview of who is eligible for Access to Work, what help Access to Work will provide and how to make a claim.

Who can get help



In order to receive help from Access to Work

- You must be over 16
- Live in England, Scotland or Wales (Northern Ireland has a different system)

You also have to meet certain health qualifications:

- You must have a long term health condition or disability that affects your ability to work.
- Your disability or health condition must have lasted longer than a year, and be expected to continue for the next year.
- You will need extra aids, equipment or adaptations, financial or human help in order to do your job and remain in work.
- If you have a mental health condition, then it must affect your ability to do your job. It must also mean that you need support in starting a new job, staying in your current job or reducing your absence from work.

Work qualifications

To receive help from Access to Work, you must either

- be doing paid work (including self-employment)
- be about to start work or become self-employed
- have an interview for a job
- be about to start a work trial arranged through Jobcentre Plus

Self-employment

You can receive help from Access to Work if you are self-employed. Access to Work grant cannot pay for the costs of setting up your own business. There is no upper age limit for applying.

You will need to show your business's financial accounts as evidence of your self-employment. If your business is newly set up, you can show a business plan instead. This business plan must be of a standard accepted by a bank.

What help is available?

Support from Access to Work depends on your individual circumstances. Examples of the type of help provided include:

- aids and equipment for use at work
- adapting work equipment so that it works for you
- help with travel costs if your health condition means you cannot use public transport
- a support worker to help you at work, for example a note taker, a reader or job coach
- someone to help you at a job interview, for example a communicator, advocate or BSL interpreter
- disability awareness training for your work colleagues, to help them understand how to support and work with you

Mental Health Support

If you have a long-term mental health condition which affects your ability to work, Access to Work will work with you to develop a Work Support Plan to help you to start working or remain in your current work.

Examples of help include:

- flexible working patterns to account for changes in your mood and the effect of medications
- a mentor to provide emotional support to help you at work
- extra training, so that you are confident in your work
- extra time to finish certain work tasks
- phased returns to work- i.e. working fewer hours than normal when you first return to work
- working with your employer and your manager to find the best ways to support you

What Access to Work will not cover

You will not get an Access to Work grant to pay for:

- changes that your employer has to make (reasonable adjustments)
- items that would normally be needed to do the job whether a person is disabled or not
- support that your employer used to provide but has stopped

How to apply



You can apply here [Access to Work](https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/apply)
<https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/apply>

To apply over the phone, you can call DWP on:
Telephone: **0800 121 7479**
Textphone: 0800 121 7579

When applying you will need to access to your:

- National Insurance Number
- your workplace address including post code
- the name, work phone number and email address of a workplace contact, such as your manager
- if you are self-employed, you will need your Unique Tax Reference Number (UTR)

Once you've applied, an Access to Work adviser will contact you to discuss what help you could get.

An adviser may also contact your employer to discuss how Access to Work can support you. They will not contact your employer until they've agreed this with you first.

An assessor may visit your workplace to assess your needs.

You may get an offer of support, which could include a grant. If it does, you'll be told how much you'll get and for how long.