

Overview

Access to Work is a publicly funded employment support programme that aims to help more disabled people start or stay in work.

It can provide practical and financial support for people who have a disability or long term physical or mental health condition. Support can be provided where someone needs help or adaptations beyond reasonable adjustments.

An Access to Work grant can pay for practical support to help your employee stay in work, or to support you if you are self-employed.

Access to Work can also give practical advice and guidance to employers, to help them understand physical and mental ill health and how they can support employees.

How can it help me?

- hire disabled people with the skills you need
- retain an employee who develops a disability or long term condition (keeping their valuable skills and saving both time and money recruiting a replacement)
- show that you value and will support your employees by having good employment policies and practices.

Your employee can get help paying for support they may need because of their disability or long term health condition, for example:

- aid and equipment in the workplace
- adapting equipment to make it easier for them to use
- travel to work
- travel in work
- communication support at interviews
- a wide variety of support workers
- the Mental Health Support Service
- other practical help at work, such as a job coach or a sign language interpreter.

If your staff member has a mental health condition, they will be offered assistance to develop a support plan. This may include steps to support them in remaining in or returning to work and suggestions for reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

Examples of assistance to develop a support plan:

- flexible working patterns to accommodate changes in mood and impact of medication
- providing a mentor to give additional support at work
- arranging additional time to complete certain tasks
- providing additional training
- regular meetings between you and your employee to talk about their concerns
- a phased return to work, such as reduced hours or less days.

Access to Work does not provide the support itself, but provides a grant to reimburse the cost of the support that is needed.

Health and Safety Procedure – Access to Work		
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Who can get Access to Work?

To be eligible for help, a person must:

- have a disability or long term health condition that has a negative effect on their ability to do their job
- have a mental health condition and need support in work
- be over 16 years old
- be in, or about to start, paid employment (including self-employment)
- normally live and work in Great Britain

Their condition

Their disability or health condition must affect their ability to do the job or means they have to pay work-related costs.

For example, special computer equipment or travel costs because they can't use public transport. If they have a mental health condition it must affect their ability to do the job. It must also mean they need support to:

- reduce absence from work
- stay in work.

Universal Credit

Universal Credit is a single benefit paid to those in or out of employment. If your employee is claiming Universal Credit and has a disability or health condition, they will be able to apply for Access to Work for any paid work they do.

Changing jobs

If an individual changes employers, they may be able to transfer equipment to their new employer, but they cannot automatically transfer awards for support workers or travel – they would need to contact the Access to Work team to discuss their new arrangements. Any agreement to transfer equipment to a new employer will need to be discussed and agreed with their manager at KCC.

If a new KCC staff member requires special aids and equipment when they join us, will KCC have to pay towards the cost?

As an employer you may have to share the cost with Access to Work if the person has been working for you **for more than six weeks** when they apply for Access to Work. You will only have to share the cost for:

- special aids and equipment, and
- adaptations to premises or equipment.

Cost share does not apply to self-employed applicants or to the Mental Health Support Service.

How much do KCC pay towards the cost of any recommended equipment or adjustments?

Large employers with 250 or more employees will pay the first £1,000 plus 20% of costs up to £10,000.

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How do I apply?

Speak to your manager in the first instance before making your application. The application must be initiated by you with your manager's knowledge. For more information about the Access to Work programme, or to make an application, contact their customer service team:

How can someone claim?

Your employee can apply for Access to Work if they need help and support to get them back to work.

The quickest and easiest way to apply is online at www.gov.uk/access-to-work.

They can also apply by phoning The Access to Work helpline on:

Telephone: 0800 121 7479

Textphone: 0800 121 7579

For further health and safety advice and support contact the Health and Safety Team by emailing healthandsafety@kent.gov.uk or telephone 03000 418456.

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