



Gloucestershire Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Access to Work

Introduction

Access to Work is a publicly funded employment support programme that aims to help disabled people start, or stay in work. The programme provides practical and financial support for those with a disability or a long term physical or mental health condition who are absent from work or finding it difficult to work.

You may be eligible for:

- A grant to help pay for practical support with your work
- Support with managing your mental health at work
- Money to pay for communication support at job interviews

How can Access to Work help me?

Access to Work could provide a grant to help with the cost of practical support such as:

- Physical changes to the workplace (can include home if working from home some or all of the time)
- Specialist equipment and assistive software
- Moving equipment if changing location or job
- Cost of travelling to work (if public transport cannot be used)
- Support from a BSL interpreter, job coach or travel buddy
- Disability awareness training for work colleagues
- Communication support at a job interview if you're deaf or hard of hearing and need a BSL interpreter or lip speaker

You can get support to manage your mental health at work, which might include:

- a tailored plan to help you get or stay in work
- one-to-one sessions with a mental health professional

For mental health support, you can only claim Access to Work once. If you have received it before, you cannot apply again.

Access to Work will also work with the employer to advise them how best they can support an employee in the workplace. The workplace can include working from home.

How much the individual earns will not affect the support offered by Access to Work.

If an Access to Work grant is awarded, it will not affect any other benefits and it does not need to be paid back. The individual or employer may need to pay some costs up front and claim them back at a later date.

Access to Work does not:

- Pay for reasonable adjustments in the workplace. These are changes that the employer must legally make to support the individual's job. Access to Work will advise the employer if changes should be made as reasonable adjustments.
- Pay for business start-up costs.

Eligibility

To apply for Access to Work, an individual must fit the following criteria:

- Aged 16 or over.
- Live and be in paid work (or be about to start/return to paid work in the next 12 weeks) in the UK.
- Have a disability or a long-term physical or mental health condition that means an aid, adaptation or financial/human support is needed to do the job. Long-term is defined as lasting or likely to last for at least 12 months.

The individual must also fit one of the following:

- Already be doing paid work, which includes:
 - Employment
 - Self-employment (must have annual turnover of at least £6,500).
 - An apprenticeship
 - Work trial or work experience
 - Internship
 - Work placement
- About to start work or become self-employed.
- Have an interview for a job.

Civil servants should contact the employer directly for workplace support.

Exemptions

Access to Work grants are not available for people who are receiving any of the following:

- Incapacity Benefit
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Income Support
- National Insurance credits

Universal Credit is a benefit paid to those in or out of employment. If the individual receives Universal Credit and has a disability or health condition, they can apply to Access to Work.

Preparing for your application

Access to Work will ask what help and support is needed when you apply and, with your consent, may contact the employer for more information. Please visit www.gov.uk/access-to-work for more information.

Access to Work will need the following information to process your application:

- National Insurance number
- Workplace address, including postcode
- The name, email address and work telephone number of a workplace contact (usually your line manager)
- Your Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR) number if you are self-employed

Access to Work may also ask for the individuals hearing aid(s) make and model. This information can be found in the hearing aid fitting pack or provided by the Hearing Services department.

How to apply

Online:

Visit the following website for more information about Access to Work and to complete the online form:

Website: www.gov.uk/access-to-work

By telephone:

The telephone lines are available Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm

Tel: 0800 121 7479

Textphone: 0800 121 7579

If you cannot hear or speak on the phone, you can download the app for **Relay UK** (www.relayuk.bt.com) or call them on your textphone by dialling 18001 then 0800 121 7479

Relay UK are open Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm

British Sign Language (BSL)

A video relay service is available if you are using a computer. Visit www.gov.uk/access-to-work for more information.

Content reviewed: April 2026

Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.

Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you asked to make a choice about your healthcare.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation.

***Ask 3 Questions** is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial.

Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>



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GHP11783_04_26
Department: Hearing Services
Review due: April 2029
www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk