

Access to Work

Access to Work (AtW) 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 you stay in work, or to support you if you are self-employed. The Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are not covered by Access to Work and there is a different service in Northern Ireland.

How can it help me?

Access to Work can help you by providing support with:

- aids or equipment in the workplace
- adapting equipment to make it easier for you to use
- travel to work
- travel in work
- communication support at interviews
- a wide variety of support workers
- the Mental Health Support Service

The Mental Health Service

If you have a mental health condition, you may be offered assistance to develop a support plan. This may include steps to support you 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 employer to talk about your concerns
- a phased return to work, such as reduced hours or less days.

Through the Mental Health Support Service, Access to Work:

- gives advice and guidance to help employers understand mental ill health and how they can support employees, and
- offers eligible people an assessment to find out their needs at work and help to develop a support plan.

Who can get Access to Work

To be eligible for help, you must:

- have a disability or long term health condition that has a negative effect on your ability to do their job, or 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
- not be claiming Incapacity Benefit or Employment Support Allowance once you are in work.

However, you may get it for a limited time if you are doing certain types of 'permitted work' to help you to move off benefits completely.

Your disability or health condition must affect your ability to do the job or mean you have to pay work-related costs.

For example, special computer equipment to work from home or travel costs because you can't use public transport.

If you have a mental health condition it must affect your ability to do the job. It must also mean you need support to reduce absence from work or stay in work.

Universal Credit

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

Changing jobs

If you change employers, you may be able to transfer equipment to your new employer, but you cannot automatically transfer awards for support workers or travel – you would need to contact the Access to Work team to discuss your new arrangements.

Supported internships/traineeships

From 1st September 2013, young people who start a work placement with an employer as part of the Department for Education supported internship programme or a BIS traineeship can apply for Access to Work support for the time of their work placement only.

Access to Work will fund additional travel, job coach and other support, including costs of equipment if appropriate, and promote the smooth transition into paid employment.

No other types of unpaid internships/traineeships will qualify for Access to Work support.

How you can claim

If you think you can get help from Access to Work, call or email the Access to Work team:

Access to Work: atwosu.london@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone: 0345 268 8489

Textphone: 0345 608 8753

Calls to 0345 numbers cost no more than a standard geographic call, and count towards any free or inclusive minutes in your landline or mobile phone contract.

An adviser will then call you back. You can tell them about the help and support you need.

When you contact Access to Work, you may need:

- your National Insurance number
- the workplace address, including postcode
- the name, email address and work phone number of a workplace contact, for example your manager
- a unique tax reference number (if self-employed)

If you need an alternative way of contacting Access to Work to discuss your needs, you can use the contact details below to write to them:

Access to Work
Operational Support Unit
Harrow Jobcentre Plus
Mail Handling Site A
Wolverhampton
WV98 1JE

N.B. Please note this information was taken from the Access to Work site and was accurate at the time of writing. Please check with Access to Work as they may alter the services offered.