

## **What is Access to Work?**

Access to Work is a Government programme delivered by Jobcentre Plus which provides advice and a financial grant for practical support to overcome work related barriers due to disability. It is available to customers with a disability who are in paid employment or with a job to start.

This booklet will guide you through the Access to Work process and help you to understand what you need to do next.

If you would like this booklet in an alternative format, for example Braille, please contact us.

## What to do now

We have sent you your Access to Work application form **AtW1**. This form shows the things you told us about when you contacted us recently.

You now need to check that the details on the form are correct. Please also tell us about anything that might help your application that is not shown on the form.

Then sign and return the application form to us. If you have an employer, please check that their contact details are correct. The contact must be someone who we can talk to about your Access to Work application.

We may need an independent assessor to do an assessment of your needs. It is important that you sign the declaration which allows us to share your details with them. Assessments are usually done at your workplace. We will contact you if we need to do an assessment.

We will write to you to tell you what help you can get. We may also write to your employer to tell them too. We will then contact you within four working days, to check if the support has been ordered or bought.

## What you can expect from us

We aim to:

- have an Access to Work adviser contact you within 24 hours of them getting your application form
- keep you informed throughout the process
- deal with you using the communication method that you prefer
- work with you and your employer to ensure that any agreed support is put in place as quickly as possible
- pay any claims within 10 working days of getting a correctly completed claim form
- respond promptly to any changes in your circumstances
- be flexible and responsive to your individual needs
- review your Access to Work grant at least once a year. We will talk to you and your employer to make sure that:
  - your grant has been used for the purpose you needed it for
  - you still need all the support, and
  - the support you get still meets your needs
- respect your privacy and protect your personal information, and
- be helpful, courteous and professional.

## What we need from you

These are some of the things we need you to do to help us deal with your application and ongoing support.

- Tell us if the address of your workplace changes.
- Tell us if your or your employer's contact numbers change.
- Tell us about any changes to planned absences from work which may delay your application or stop you doing an assessment.
- Tell us straight away if there is any change in your circumstances as these may affect the Access to Work support you get, for example a change of home address.
- Sign and complete the declaration on your application form to show that it is correct and that you have read and understood these notes.
- Claim any money back for your support straight away. We must get the claim within six months or we will not be able to pay the money back.
- When you claim money back for your support, please send us the original invoices, tickets or receipts, or certified copies of them.
- If you have an employer and need to claim money back for any other costs, your employer must check your claim.
- If you need to claim for any travelling costs, they must be for the cost of travel by the method we have agreed with you.

## How your employer can help

Your employer can help by

- letting your Access to Work adviser and, if needed, an independent assessor visit you at your workplace
- buying any support as soon we approve your Access to Work grant
- claiming straight away for any one-off support you need. We must get the claim within six months or we will not be able to pay the money back
- agreeing to share some of the cost of the support
- checking and signing the claim forms to show that your claims for money back are correct
- insuring any equipment or aid bought with Access to Work support
- maintaining any equipment or aid bought with Access to Work support
- letting you to take equipment with you if you move to another job.

## **More information about Access to Work**

### **Employer cost share**

If you have been in your job for 6 weeks or more when you apply for Access to Work support for specialist equipment or an adaptation, your employer will have to pay some of the cost. The minimum they have to pay is:

- employers with 1 to 9 employees do not have to pay a share of costs
- employers with 10 to 49 employees must pay the first £300 and 20% of costs up to £10,000
- employers with 50 to 249 employees must pay the first £500 and 20% of costs up to £10,000
- employers with over 250 employees must pay the first £1,000 and 20% of costs up to £10,000.

Access to Work can pay 100% of any costs over £10,000.

Access to Work will normally ask your employer to agree extra voluntary contributions.

### **Standard equipment and reasonable adjustments**

Access to Work will not provide funding for equipment that is considered standard for your job, or equipment that it is reasonable for your employer to provide. If this applies to your case the Access to Work Adviser will discuss this with you and your employer.

### **Amount of Access to Work payable**

If the actual cost of support is less than the approved amount then we will adjust the payments accordingly.

### **Backdated applications**

Access to Work will not normally pay for any costs incurred before we received the signed application and approval of your support.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is an independent assessment and why do I need one?**

An 'independent assessment' is an assessment done by a specialist to work out the support you need to do your job. Your Access to Work adviser will arrange an assessment if you need one.

### **Who does my equipment belong to?**

The equipment belongs to whoever bought it. If you are employed this will usually be your employer. If you are self employed it will be you.

### **Can I take my equipment with me to a new job?**

If you need the same equipment in your new job, ask your employer if you can take the equipment with you. Your adviser can help you negotiate with your employer, and will make sure that you have the support you need in your new job.

### **Why do you need to speak to my employer?**

In many cases we need to visit your workplace to assess exactly what support you need. Your employer will usually be responsible for buying the support. For some types of support we need your employer to agree to share some of the cost.

### **How long will I have to wait to claim any payment?**

We prefer you to claim every month but if this causes any problems you can claim every week.

**Who orders the equipment?**

Your employer, if you have one, or you, if you are self-employed.

**What if my employer doesn't order the equipment?**

We will remind the employer that you need the support. We will not send out the grant until your employer has bought the equipment.

**Who do I contact with a question about my payments?**

Contact the payments team at your Operational Support Unit, on the phone number you used when you applied for Access to Work support.

**How do I complain about things?**

You should write to your adviser or Access to Work regional manager.

**How do I appeal against an Access to Work decision?**

There is no statutory entitlement to Access to Work and so there is no formal appeal procedure. However an Access to Work manager can look at your decision again.