

GET *inclusive*

Reasonable adjustments



SCOPE



Equality for
disabled people



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1. Reasonable adjustment toolkit

Reasonable adjustment toolkit

Scope research shows that **48%** of disabled workers have worried about sharing information about their impairment with their employer.

Recommendation

By having a clear and transparent process for reasonable adjustments, employers can instil a culture of confidence and provide a platform to maximise performance.

Steps

Step 1: Assess current accessibility and reasonable adjustments policies and procedures.

Step 2: Create an action plan to address areas of improvement.

Step 3: Implement the plan.

Outcome

- 1) Create a diverse workforce to support inclusive growth.
- 2) Gain experience and skills of a wider demographic.
- 3) Become an inclusive employer of choice.

Why disabled people need reasonable adjustments

Scope research shows that:

48% of disabled workers have worried about sharing information about their impairment with their employer.

15% felt they had been turned down for roles because they were disabled.

9 in 10 disabled jobseekers have had work but only half are still in work now.

Employer attitudes and inaccessible workplaces remain a significant barrier.

Reasonable adjustments are crucial in creating more inclusive workplaces.



Reasonable adjustment policy

Most organisations have a reasonable adjustment policy.

But it seems that many disabled employees choose not to discuss their access needs with employers.

This decision should always sit with the employee, but it makes business sense to make reasonable adjustments.

By making them, you are giving disabled people and those with long-term health conditions the support they need to do their jobs.

If staff need reasonable adjustments, encourage them to talk to their line manager or a designated person in HR if they would prefer.

Recommendation

Employers can provide disability awareness training for managers.

This will allow line managers to introduce discussions around reasonable adjustments.

The manager can ask the individual during a review if they feel they would benefit from a reasonable adjustment. The manager should not assume what that reasonable adjustment should be, if any.

If the employee declines the offer to discuss reasonable adjustments, make a note of this.

If the staff member feels that an adjustment would help, you can explore the options with them.

9 in 10 disabled jobseekers have had work but only half are still in work now.

Who is covered?

First, it's important to know who has a legal right to reasonable adjustments.

Every organisation should discuss and consider reasonable adjustments for:

- employees
- trainees
- apprentices
- contract workers
- business partners

Training providers must by law ensure that reasonable adjustments are available for everyone who uses their services. This includes material in accessible formats and accessible premises.

But it's good practice to be as accessible as possible for everyone.

This will benefit you by:

- increasing your potential market reach
- building your reputation as an inclusive company

When to adjust

The law states that an organisation becomes liable when:

- they become aware of a worker who is disabled or has a health condition
- they could be reasonably expected to know a worker is disabled
- the worker asks for adjustments
- the worker is having difficulties with any part of their role
- the worker is off work due to disability

Points of contact

If your organisation has a reasonable adjustment policy, review the accessibility of the process.

Some policies direct the employee to their line manager.

It's good practice to provide an alternative contact for reasonable adjustments. This is because not everyone will feel comfortable speaking to their manager about this.

Some organisations include the option of going through an employee group. This enables employees to discuss their needs and get support with reasonable adjustments.

48% of disabled workers have worried about sharing information about their impairment with their employer.

What does 'reasonable' mean?

What does what a reasonable adjustment mean in your organisation?

The key is the word 'reasonable'.

Any adjustments should be reasonable:

- within the business operations
- remove barriers to the employee's ability to perform alongside non-disabled colleagues

When looking at whether an adjustment is reasonable, consider the following:

- Is the adjustment adequate?
- Does it remove the disadvantage faced by the disabled employee?

This may include:

- changing the recruitment process
- doing things another way, such as allowing someone with social anxiety disorder to have their own desk instead of hot-desking
- making physical changes to the workplace, like installing a ramp for a wheelchair user or an audio-visual fire alarm for someone with hearing loss
- enabling a disabled person to work somewhere else, such as on the ground floor for a wheelchair user
- changing equipment, such as providing a special keyboard if they have arthritis
- allowing employees who become disabled to make a phased return to work, including flexible hours or part-time working
- offering employees training opportunities, recreation and refreshment facilities

This is not an exhaustive list. Everyone's requirements will be different.

It's good practice to have a central budget for reasonable adjustments. This eases line managers' concerns about costs affecting their individual budgets.

You can get help with the costs of reasonable adjustments through Access to Work. Delays in Access to Work can be frustrating for employees and affect productivity. But with a central budget, you can make the reasonable adjustment and reclaim costs later.

How to discuss reasonable adjustments

Where an employee asks for reasonable adjustments, they know best what will work for them.

It's good practice to ask the individual about what they need when you offer them employment.

Some people find it uncomfortable to discuss their needs if they must:

- provide medical evidence
- attend an occupational health assessment

Try to reassure employees if this is not the case.

If you use Access to Work, you will need medical evidence to apply for the government grant.

15% of disabled people felt they had been turned down for roles because they were disabled.



After adjustments

Once you made reasonable adjustments, provide the employee with a record of these. This can move with them and help to make the transition to other departments smoother.

You can get help with the costs of some reasonable adjustments with an Access to Work grant from the Government.

It's best for the employee to start the application but you can assist with this.

The amount of the grant depends on:

- when you apply
- how long the employee has worked for you
- the size of the organisation

The amount can vary from a full grant or a contribution to adjustments. This helps to minimise costs.

[Access to Work \(GOV.UK\)](https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work)

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Monitoring impact

- Create an action plan to reassess your reasonable adjustment policies.
- Take a benchmark of the current position and measure the impact.

The Government suggests two parts to the voluntary disability reporting:

Part A - percentage of employees who consider themselves as disabled or having a long-term health condition.

Part B - a narrative on the recruitment and retention of disabled staff:

- recruitment and retention policies
- support offered to employees with specific conditions
- the role of networks and support groups
- progression and age of disabled employees
- workplace adjustments
- employee engagement scores

To add to this, Scope recommends employers:

- compare HR records of staff declaring themselves as disabled or having a health condition with anonymous staff surveys for discrepancies
- record adjustment requests and the percentage agreed
- track the time taken from initial request to implementation of adjustments
- monitor feedback on reasonable adjustments from follow-up meetings with employees and staff satisfaction surveys

Progression and pay can be challenging data to collate. If full disability pay gap analysis is not available, collect data on the breakdown of disabled employees at each pay quartile.

By monitoring this information, you can identify areas that need improvement and show the impact of changes you introduce.

For a successful inclusion policy, build employees' confidence with:

- an official launch
- short lunch and learn briefings on the new policies and process
- success stories from employees who have benefitted

Raising awareness

Some employees may not feel comfortable sharing their experiences.

A strong statement from senior staff can help employees feel confident in the new process.

It's good to provide training for all line managers and team leaders. This helps them to discuss reasonable adjustments with colleagues.

Build the conversation about reasonable adjustments into:

- one to ones
- disciplinary meetings
- back to work interviews
- performance reviews

This will help to ensure that reasonable adjustments for disabled employees are embedded in your organisation's culture.



Tips from disabled employees

Disabled people have told Scope how employers have created successful employment opportunities by:

- embracing reasonable adjustments
- fighting the disabled person's corner
- being approachable, understanding and open to suggestions
- thinking of practical solutions
- encouraging positive attitudes of staff.

From [Our lives, our journey report](#) in partnership with Esme Fairbairn.

Summary

- Review your policy and procedure
- Identify areas for improvement
- Implement new policy and process
- Raise awareness and understanding through training
- Monitor impact

A strong statement from senior staff can help employees feel confident in the new process.



Get in touch

We'd love to hear from you, drop us an email at getinclusive@scope.org.uk

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= Equality for
= disabled people