

Reasonable adjustments at work

What reasonable adjustments are

Reasonable adjustments are changes an employer makes to remove or reduce a disadvantage related to someone's disability. For example:

- finding a different way to do something
- making changes to the workplace
- changing someone's working arrangements
- providing equipment, services or support

Reasonable adjustments are specific to an individual person. They can be for physical or mental health conditions. They can cover any area of work.

It's not enough for employers to provide disabled people with exactly the same working conditions as non-disabled people. Employers must make reasonable adjustments by law.

Some disabled people might not need or want adjustments, although this might change over time.

When an employer must make reasonable adjustments

The law (Equality Act 2010) says that employers must make reasonable adjustments for:

- employees and workers
- contractors and self-employed people hired to personally do the work
- job applicants

Employers must make reasonable adjustments when:

- they know, or could reasonably be expected to know, someone is disabled
- a disabled staff member or job applicant asks for adjustments
- someone who's disabled is having difficulty with any part of their job
- someone's absence record, sickness record or delay in returning to work is because of, or linked to, their disability

The employer must also:

- make reasonable adjustments for anything linked to someone's disability – for example an organisation might not allow dogs at work but make a reasonable adjustment for someone with an assistance dog
- make sure other people do what's needed for a reasonable adjustment to work – for example if someone needs information presented in a certain format, making sure other people at work do that

An employer could be liable under the law if they do not do these things. If someone does not get the reasonable adjustments they need they could make a claim to an employment tribunal.

Find out more about:

- [if an employer does not make reasonable adjustments](#)
- [who is considered to have a disability by law](#)

What 'reasonable' means

What is reasonable depends on each situation.

The employer must consider carefully if the adjustment:

- will remove or reduce the disadvantage – the employer should talk with the person and not make assumptions
- is practical to make
- is affordable
- could harm the health and safety of others

The employer does not have to change the basic nature of the job.

For example, someone in a call centre asks for a job that does not involve taking calls. This might not be reasonable if there is no other job to give them.

An employer does not have to make adjustments that are unreasonable. However, they should still find other ways to support the disabled person. This could include making other adjustments that are reasonable.

Who pays for reasonable adjustments

The employer is responsible for paying for any reasonable adjustments.

Many adjustments will be simple and affordable. However, a small employer might not be able to afford as much as a large organisation.

Example of when an adjustment is not reasonable because of the cost

An employee who uses a wheelchair asks for a lift to be installed so they can get to the upper floors of their workplace. The employer looks into this. They find the cost would be damaging to their business.

The employer can turn down the request because it is not reasonable for them. However, they must make other workplace adjustments that are reasonable. For example, making changes so the employee can do their job entirely on the ground floor.

Support from Access to Work

Access to Work is a government scheme. It helps people with a physical or mental health condition or disability to get or stay in work. Someone might be eligible for a grant to help pay for practical support.

This is not a substitute for the employer's legal obligation to make reasonable adjustments or pay for them.

[Find out more about Access to Work on GOV.UK](#)

Examples of reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are specific to an individual person. They can cover any area of work.

Finding a different way to do something

For example:

- giving someone more time to do written or reading tests that are part of an interview
- distributing work differently within a team
- giving someone different responsibilities or offering another suitable role
- finding a different way to train someone if they find classroom-based training difficult

Making changes to the workplace

For example:

- changing the lighting above someone's desk or workstation
- changing the layout of a work area or the entrance to a building
- providing an accessible car parking space
- holding a job interview in a room that's accessible for someone who uses a wheelchair

Changing someone's working arrangements

For example:

- changing someone's working patterns
- distributing someone's breaks more evenly across the day
- [flexible working](#) – including home or hybrid working
- [reasonable adjustments for absence](#) – including paid time off for medical appointments and treatment
- a [phased return to work](#) after absence

Providing equipment, services or support

For example:

- providing extra or adapted equipment, such as chairs, computer software and phones
- providing emails and documents in an accessible format
- giving one-to-one support, for example to help someone prioritise their work
- providing other specialist support, for example a sign language interpreter

More examples

[Find more examples of reasonable adjustments from the Equality and Human Rights Commission \(EHRC\)](#)