

Working with disability

The Access to Work scheme - guidelines for managers

If you have a member of staff with a disability or health problem which affects the kind of work they are expected to do and it is likely to last for 12 months or more, then the *Access to Work* scheme is available to overcome the practical obstacles resulting from disability. It offers advice and help in a flexible way that can be tailored to suit the needs of an individual in a particular job. Through *Access to Work*, The Employment Service can make a grant towards the approved extra costs that arise because of an individual’s disability.

*Access to Work* can help where the employment contract is for paid work, part-time or full-time, permanent or temporary.

For example, *Access to Work* can help pay for the following resources:

1. a communicator for deaf people or those who have a hearing impairment and need a

 communicator with them at an interview

1. a reader at work, for someone who is blind or has visual impairment
2. special equipment (or alterations to existing equipment) to suit particular work needs arising from disability
3. alterations to premises or working environment, if needed because of disability
4. a support worker, if practical help is needed because of disability, either at work or getting to work
5. help towards the cost of getting to work if disability prevents the individual from using public transport.
6. All approved costs for Communicator Support at interview, for Travel to Work, or for a reader or a support worker, will be met in full by Access to Work regardless of employment status at the time of application.

*Access to Work* is available when additional costs are incurred because of disability. It cannot be used to provide support usually provided by employers or required under legislation for all their employees.

# HOW THE SCHEME WORKS

# Recruiting

If you are thinking of recruiting someone with a disability, you may have assessed that they have the necessary skills and potential to do the work, but there may still be practical issues to overcome.

If, following an interview, the successful candidate is someone with a disability, the Chair of the panel should inform the Recruitment Section, Human Resources of its intention to offer employment. A member of the Recruitment Team will discuss *Access to Work* with the faculty/service to confirm their understanding of the process involved and to offer any needed guidance or support.

The Recruitment section will supply the candidate with information regarding the scheme and will need to discuss whether s/he wishes to apply to The Employment Service for an *Access to Work* grant. The Recruitment Section will ensure that the faculty/service is informed of the candidate’s decision.

If the candidate decides that s/he does want to apply to the *Access to Work* scheme, then the faculty/service recruiting will need to nominate a member of their own staff to liaise directly with The Disability Employment Adviser (DEA). The Recruitment team will contact the DEA to introduce the nominated member of staff who will then need to liaise directly with the DEA and the disabled person. The DEA is part of an Employment Service Disability Service Team and will be able to guide the faculty/service through how application can be made for *Access to Work.* The DEA will explain how they can help with the practicalities of employing a disabled person, and together with the faculty/service and the disabled person will arrive at a cost-effective solution*.* ***However, it is the person with the disability who needs to apply for funding and not the University.***

Once the application has been made an *Access to Work* Adviser may need to visit the workplace before a full assessment can be made. If technical equipment is required then *Access to Work* will employ a technical consultant who will carry out an assessment and provide *Access to Work* with a Technical Advisory Service Report. This report will recommend appropriate resources to enable the individual to carry out their job of work, a suggested list of recognised suppliers and a guide to expected costs. This list of supplies is for guidance only and the nominated person in the faculty/service will need to contact Purchasing in Financial Services in advance of placing any orders so they can advise on the University’s equivalent suppliers.

As the faculty/service will need to bear the cost in the initial stages, a decision will have to be made by the faculty/service whether or not they wish to progress further with the recommendations. If the decision of the faculty/service is not to progress further, then *Access to Work* cannot waiver this and therefore they cannot proceed with the grant.

## An employee requiring assistance for the first time

If a current employee has a health problem, or a disability for the first time, which affects the kind of work they are expected to do and likely to last for 12 months or more, then the employee can apply for an *Access to Work* grant. Your HR Adviser in HR will be able to supply information regarding the scheme and will discuss whether the employee wishes to apply for an *Access to Work* grant**. *It is the employee who has to apply for the grant and not the University.***

If the candidate decides that s/he does want to apply then the faculty/service will need to nominate a member of staff as explained above. Your HR Adviserwill contact the DEA to introduce the nominated member of staff who will then need to liaise directly with the DEA and the disabled person.

# GRANTS TOWARDS COST

*Access to Work* makes grants towards costs and will only agree to pay a grant towards the approved costs in their recommendations.

If you recruit an unemployed person, or have recruited one less than 6 weeks before the claim is made, then the grant is up to 100% of approved costs. The agreed arrangement for an employee with disability continues for a maximum of 3 years, after which time it will be reviewed by *Access to Work* and, if further help is required, further grants may be available.

If someone already employed by you needs assistance for the first time, or a 3 year review has identified that the employee requires further assistance, then large employers with 250 or more employees pay the first £1,000 and 20% of approved costs up to £10,000. *Access to Work* can also reassess a disabled employee if they change their job within the University.

The nominated member of staff shall be responsible for seeking any quotes required and ensuring any agreed resources are procured. The nominated person will need to obtain three quotes for any resource potentially costing over £500 or more and one quote for resources less than £500. *Access to Work* will require all quotes before their final approval can be given to proceed. A retrospective grant claim form will be issued to the faculty/service with this approval.

The faculty/service will need to procure all approved resources against their own cost code. Copies of the paid invoices will need to be attached to the claim form and sent to *Access to Work* in order to claim the approved grant. The grant will be paid into the nominated budget in the faculty/service and so information regarding your selected budget head and cost code should be provided when the claim form is submitted.

**THE NOMINATED PERSON**

The person nominated by the faculty/service will need to liaise directly with the Disability Employment Adviser (DEA), other services within the University as necessary and the disabled person, to ensure that the process is completed as quickly as possible. The nominated person will be required to monitor the process on behalf of the faculty/service, ensuring that budget heads are identified and that quotes are obtained and forwarded to the DEA. Once approval has been obtained from the DEA, the nominated person will need to procure the identified resources and retrospectively claim reimbursement from *Access to Work*.

# ADDITIONAL ADVICE

The *Access to Work* team will give advice at any stage of the claim. They may also be able to provide Awareness Sessions for colleagues working in the same environment.

If something goes wrong or you are not satisfied with the outcome, then the *Access to Work* team can be contacted by telephone 02920 423291.

Please contact the Recruitment team, or your HR Adviser, Human Resources if you require any further information or guidance.