



Access to Work

A Practical Guide for Managers & HR



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What is Access to Work (ATW)?

Access to Work (ATW) is a government grant scheme designed to support employees with disabilities, long-term health conditions, or neurodivergent traits in the workplace. While employers have a legal obligation to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010, ATW provides additional financial and practical support to help employees thrive in their roles.

Access to Work Provides:

- Financial support for workplace adjustments that go beyond reasonable adjustments.
- Specialist equipment, coaching, and support workers.
- Travel assistance where public transport is not a viable option.

Purpose of this Guide

This guide outlines what employers need to know about the ATW scheme, their responsibilities, and how they can best support their employees through the process.

Employer Responsibilities vs. ATW Support

Employers are required to make reasonable adjustments to support employees, but ATW can provide additional help beyond what is considered "reasonable."

How Employers Can Support Employees Applying for ATW

Although employees must apply for ATW themselves, employers play a crucial role in supporting the process. Here's how:

Employer Responsibilities:

- Making reasonable adjustments, such as flexible working hours, quiet workspaces, or ergonomic equipment.
- Creating an inclusive environment to support employees with disabilities or neurodivergent traits.
- Covering costs where adjustments fall under reasonable expectations.
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Encourage Employees to Apply

- Raise awareness about ATW within your organisation.
- Reassure employees that seeking support is a positive step and will not affect their job security.

Provide Employment Verification

- Employees will need confirmation of their employment status, which the employer must provide when requested by ATW.

Facilitate Workplace Assessments

- Be open to assessors visiting the workplace or conducting remote assessments.
- Ensure employees feel comfortable discussing their challenges.

Implement Recommended Support

- Once ATW funding is approved, help employees acquire the necessary equipment and services.
- Assign a point of contact in HR to manage ATW-related processes.

Monitor and Review Support

- Regularly check in with employees to ensure adjustments remain effective.

Costs and Reimbursements

Understanding cost-sharing responsibilities is key for employers. ATW funding works as follows:

First 6 weeks of employment: ATW covers 100% of costs.

After 6 weeks: Cost-sharing applies based on company size:

- Small businesses (less than 50 employees): ATW covers 100%.
- Medium businesses (50-249 employees): Employer covers first £500, with ATW covering the rest.
- Large businesses (250+ employees): Employer covers the first £1,000, with ATW covering the rest.

Employers must keep receipts and submit claims to ATW for reimbursement.

What Happens After an ATW Award is Approved?

Once an employee receives an ATW award:

Approval Notification

Employees and employers receive confirmation of the approved support.

Implementation

Employers purchase equipment or services and arrange their use in the workplace.

Invoicing and Payment

Employers submit invoices for reimbursement where applicable.

Ongoing Review

Support is typically reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective.

Frequently Asked Questions

“Can I apply on behalf of an employee?”

No, the application must be made by the employee, but you can assist by providing employment details and support during the process.

“Does ATW replace reasonable adjustments?”

No, ATW is intended to complement, not replace, employer-provided reasonable adjustments.

“How long does the process take?”

Initial contact from ATW takes around 12 weeks, with full support typically in place within 4-6 months.

“What if an employee disagrees with the support provided?”

Employees can request a reconsideration within 4 weeks of the decision if they feel the support is insufficient.

“How do we ensure compliance with ATW recommendations?”

Regularly review ATW recommendations and maintain open communication with the employee to ensure their needs are met.

Key Takeaways for Employers

- Encourage employees to apply for ATW and reassure them of your support.
- Understand cost-sharing obligations and budget accordingly.
- Facilitate workplace assessments and assist with implementation of recommended support.
- Maintain an ongoing dialogue with employees to ensure ATW provisions are effectively supporting them.

By actively supporting employees through the Access to Work process, you can create a more inclusive and productive workplace for everyone.

For further information, visit [GOV.UK Access to Work](#).