

# Access to Work Frequently Asked Questions



## Overview

*Access to Work (AtW) is a publicly funded employment support grant scheme that aims to support disabled people start or stay in work. It can provide practical and financial support for people who have a disability or physical or mental health condition. Support can be provided where someone needs support or adaptations beyond reasonable adjustments. – UK Government definition*

**This document has been developed by the central Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Team using the UK government's guidance and resources. It is also informed by the experiences of members of the Disability and Wellbeing (DAWN) and Neurodiversity Staff Networks.**

**This guidance is not intended to replace existing government guidance on Access to Work. Colleagues must ensure they review the full guidance prior to making an application. [Access to Work: get support if you have a disability or health condition: What Access to Work is - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)**

## Who is eligible?

To receive support from Access to Work (AtW), you must have a physical or hidden disability or health condition that means you need aid, adaptation, financial support, or human support to do your job.

This can include but is not limited to.

- A physical disability
- A learning disability or related condition
- A developmental condition
- Learning difficulties or differences
- An illness such as diabetes or epilepsy
- A temporary condition
- A mental health condition.

You can apply for AtW if you:

- Are sixteen or over.
- In, or about to start, paid employment
- Are a resident in, and working in, England, Scotland, or Wales – there is a different system for [Northern Ireland](#)
- Not claiming Incapacity Benefits or Employment Support Allowance once in employment

If you are applying for a mental health condition, it must affect your ability to do your job, and it may also mean you need support to

- Start a new job.
- Reduce absence from work.
- Stay at work.

*"Access to Work has been Revolutionary for me! Having been struggling with the commute to and from the office as an autistic person, I began to avoid going into the office; this negatively impacted my feelings about my performance at work.*

*With the support of Access to Work and a grant for taxis to work, I feel more comfortable going into the office, and it has removed a significant barrier and drastically improved my work life!"*

*Figure 1- Quote from Staff who has claimed for AtW.*

## **Key information for eligibility.**

To apply for AtW, you do not need to be diagnosed with a condition to apply, but it helps.

## How can it help me?

AtW is designed to help identify and resource the support best suited to you. This support will depend on your individual needs. Under AtW, you can apply for

*"My electric Wheelchair, partially funded by AtW, has been a godsend!"*

A grant to help pay for practical support with your work.

- Support with managing your mental health at work.
- Money to pay for communication support at job interviews.

*Figure 2- Quote from a Staff member who has claimed for AtW in 2016*

There is no set amount for an AtW grant; how much you will be awarded depends on your specific case and individual needs—examples AtW can pay for.

- Aid and equipment in your workplace
- Adapting equipment to make it easier for you to use.
- Money towards any extra travel costs to and from work if you cannot use available public transport or need help adapting your vehicle.
- An interpreter or other support at a job interview if you have difficulty communicating.
- Other practical help at work, such as a job coach, note taker, or lip speaker.

If you have a mental health condition, AtW can help in developing a support plan. This may include steps to support you remaining in or returning to work and suggestions for reasonable adjustments in the workplace. Examples of assistance to develop a support plan:

- Flexible working patterns to accommodate changes in mood and the impact of medication.
- Providing a mentor to give you additional support at work.
- Giving you additional time to complete specific tasks.
- Provide you with additional training.
- Have regular meetings with your manager to discuss your concerns.
- A phased return to work, such as reduced hours or less days

### **Advice from those who used Access to Work before.**

*This advice and suggestions were all collected from members of the Neurodiversity and Disability and Wellbeing (DAWN) Staff Networks.*

I would recommend anyone who has a new diagnosis or feels like they have barriers to work to apply to AtW and ask for a workplace assessment to learn what help and support is available for them.

You don't need to know what you want from AtW when applying! If you know what barriers you have in your work; AtW can help identify opportunities for support to remove these.

I was surprised you did not need to prove or provide a diagnosis of your disability! You simply enter your disabilities into a text box, and AtW will support you.

A workplace assessment was immensely helpful and only took a 1-hour phone call. They made suggestions that I still use today! I very much recommend it.

AtW are very flexible in the support they offer. If you feel like your request may be too much for AtW to support I recommend asking anyway. They are keen to support and help you in the best way they

Communicate with your line manager/department head before applying, its handy to have someone to aid with the application process and who can support you during it.

## How to apply?

### Applying online,

- Please visit [Access to Work: get support if you have a disability or health condition: Apply for an Access to Work grant - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

### Applying by Telephone,

- Telephone: 0345 268 8489

What you will need to apply,

- You will need the following information when you contact AtW.
  - Your contact details,
  - Your workplace address and postcode,
  - Information about how your condition affects your work and what support you need,
  - Details of a workplace contact who can confirm you work there if you are employed (they will not be contacted without your permission). Ideally, this should be your line manager.

Next steps,

- An AtW Advisor will contact you and your workplace to discuss the help and support that is best suited to you,
- An assessor from the Department for Work and Pensions may visit where you work to determine the best support options for you,
- AtW will then inform you of the outcome of the request and what support you can receive.
- **Where IT equipment and software is recommended, it is important to contact IT Services before purchasing to ensure compatibility with university systems and to explore if any current provision can provide the required level of support. University-preferred suppliers may be used instead of those recommended by AtW.**

**For further information on the Neurodiversity and DAWN Staff Network, please see -**

[The Disability and Wellbeing \(DAWN\) Staff Network](#)

[The Neurodiversity Staff Network](#)

### Additional resources

[Supporting disabled staff | Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Team | University of Bristol](#)

[Access to Work: get support if you have a disability or health condition: What Access to Work is - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)