University of Bristol

Workplace Adjustment Plan

Frequently Asked Questions

# What is a Workplace Adjustment Plan?

Where an employee feels they require workplace adjustments to enable them to work to their full potential (due to having a disability and/or a long-term health condition), a Workplace Adjustment Plan is a good practice approach to ensure there is a living record of adjustments agreed between an employee and their line manager. The Plan provides a structure for an employee to have a confidential conversation with their line manager about workplace adjustments. Relevant information can be captured on the Workplace Adjustment Plan Form and enable adjustments to working practices and work environments to be actioned in a timely manner. Where an employee has a change of line manager, a completed Workplace Adjustment Plan can be shared with them, confidentially, to ensure that they are aware of the impacts of an employee’s disability / long term health condition. They can also be aware of required and agreed adjustments which are in place without the need for the employee to repeat potentially difficult conversations.

# Who can initiate a conversation about a Workplace Adjustment Plan?

Normally it would be for an employee who has a disability or a long-term health condition to speak to their line manager to make them aware that workplace adjustments would be beneficial to them. This may be something that is raised prior to or at the beginning of their employment with the University or it may come up during the course of their employment should they develop a long-term health condition or disability and/or find over time that there may be workplace barriers to them working to their potential.

# What can I do as a line manager to raise awareness of the Workplace Adjustment Plan and its benefits?

Talk about the Plan in regular team communications including team meetings. This may then encourage employees who have not felt comfortable disclosing a disability early in their employment or where they receive a diagnosis whilst they have been in employment with the University for a while to initiate a conversation about workplace adjustments with their line manager. For example, there are a number of employees who will be undergoing or living with the after-effects of cancer treatment and cancer is a health condition which is automatically considered to be a disability under the Equality Act 2010, even when someone has completed treatment and may be in remission.

# What if I am not sure what workplace adjustments may be helpful?

Workplace adjustments can include:

* a more flexible working pattern, such as changes to working hours or work location
* arranging additional one-to-one supervision or training, or providing a mentor
* making a physical change to the workplace or workstation, for example, changing a desk height, or moving office furniture to improve access
* providing extra equipment or assistance, for example, noise cancelling headphones, a new chair or specific software

Line managers are encouraged to seek advice from their relevant HR Business Partnering Team, who can arrange a referral to the University’s Occupational Health Service where necessary. The Occupational Health Advisor will then make some recommendations of options to consider via an Occupational Health report which will be shared with your line manager.

You will have an opportunity to review the report prior to it being sent to your line manager. You can then discuss those ideas further with your line manager to see what adjustments can be made.

# How will my line manager decide if an adjustment is “reasonable”?

Line managers will refer to the University guidance on workplace adjustments and follow the steps identified in the process diagram.

In all cases, any adjustment must be effective in helping to remove or reduce any disadvantage that is experienced due to any aspect of a job or workplace. When deciding whether an adjustment is reasonable, your manager can consider:

* whether taking any particular steps would be effective in preventing the substantial disadvantage.
* the practicability of the step.
* the financial and other costs of making the adjustment and the extent of any disruption caused.
* the extent of the employer’s financial or other resources.
* the availability to the employer of financial or other assistance to help make an adjustment (such as advice through Access to Work).
* the type and size of the employer.

# Is there anyone else who can provide advice about workplace adjustments apart from Occupational Health?

Other external specialist advisors may be able to provide advice and/or help to undertake or support workplace assessments, for example Access to Work (this can also include grants to help cover costs) or the Workplace Mental Health Support Service (which also provides tailored mental wellbeing support and advice for six months). There is also an Access to Work Mental Health Support Service for Apprentices.

# Does the Workplace Adjustment Plan need to be regularly reviewed?

The Plan can be reviewed and amended as necessary with the agreement of both you and your line manager:

* At any regular one-to-one meeting.
* At a return-to-work meeting following a period of sickness absence.
* Before a change of job or duties or introduction of new technology or ways of working.
* Before or after any change in circumstances for either you or the organisation (for example, if there is planned restructuring to a team and job roles need to be reviewed as part of that process).

# If I have a disability do I have to complete a Workplace Adjustment Plan in order to receive support?

Completing a Workplace Adjustment Plan is entirely voluntary, but it may be helpful if you are finding that there are things which are making you not able to work to your potential in your role due to the job design or workplace environment. It is important to note that the legal duty to make reasonable adjustments applies to disabled colleagues experiencing difficulty at work due to their disability regardless of the completion of a Workplace Adjustment Plan.

# I struggle with completing forms so how can I engage with this process?

We understand that form filling can be difficult for some colleagues, but this should not be a barrier to engaging in the process. It may be that you prefer to use the Plan as a framework to guide a conversation with your line manager, using each of the section headings to focus

your discussion. Your line manager should complete the form as the conversation progresses, checking in with you to confirm that the information that is being recorded is accurate.

# Who will see a copy of my Workplace Adjustment Plan?

An up-to-date copy of this form will be retained by you and your immediate line manager. A copy of this form may then be shared with a new line manager with your prior consent. You may also feel that it would be helpful for some of the information in the Plan (for example, the details relating to the workplace adjustments agreed) to be shared with other work colleagues where this will enable the agreed workplace adjustments to be implemented effectively. Consent to

share information about a disability or health condition must always be sought from the individual concerned.