

Your guide to Access to Work.





● What is Access to Work?

If you are deaf or have hearing loss, an Access to Work grant could help pay for any assistive listening devices or communication support you need at work.

Access to Work is a publicly funded employment support programme that aims to help more disabled people start or stay in work. It can provide practical and financial support if you have a disability or long term physical or mental health condition.

An Access to Work grant can pay for practical support to help you:

- Start working
- Stay in work
- Move into self-employment or start a business

How much you get depends on your circumstances. The money does not have to be paid back and will not affect your other benefits.

Your employer may also be responsible for some of the costs of your claim. Access to Work can also give practical advice and guidance to employers, to help them understand physical and mental health and how they can support employees.

The Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are not covered by Access to Work and there is a [different service in Northern Ireland](#).

How can it help me?

Access to Work can help pay for support you may need because of your disability or long term health condition, for example:

- 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 can't use available public transport, or if you need help to adapt 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 or a note taker or lip speaker

Access to Work partners will also work with your employer to advise them how best they can support you in the workplace.

How to apply

[Check you're eligible](#) and then [apply for an Access to Work grant](#).

97%

of people had approved elements of Access to Work in 2020/21

Eligibility

You can apply for Access to Work if you:

- Are normally resident in, and working in, Great Britain
- Have a disability or long term health condition that means you need an aid, adaptation or financial or human support to do your job (long term means lasting or likely to last for at least 12 months)
- Have a mental health condition and need support in work
- Are aged 16 or over

You must also:

- Already be doing paid work
- Be about to start work or become self-employed
- Have an interview for a job
- Be about to begin a work trial or start work experience under the Youth Contract arranged through Jobcentre Plus

Your condition

To receive support from Access to Work you must have a disability or health condition that means you need an aid, adaptation or financial or human support to do a job. For example, special computer equipment or travel costs because you can't use public transport.

Your mental health condition must affect your ability to do a job. It must also mean you need support to:

- Start a new job
- Reduce absence from work
- Stay in work

Universal Credit

[Universal Credit](#) is a single benefit paid to those in or out of employment. If you are claiming Universal Credit and have a disability or health condition, you will be able to apply for Access to Work for any paid work you do.

Exceptions

You might not get Access to Work if you get any of these benefits:

- Incapacity Benefit
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Income Support
- National Insurance credits

However, you may get it for a limited time if you are doing certain types of 'permitted work' to help you move off benefits completely.

Changing jobs

If you change employers, you may be able to transfer equipment to your new employer. You cannot automatically transfer awards for support workers or travel. You would need to contact the Access to Work team to discuss your new arrangements.

Working out of the country

If your job is normally based in Great Britain, but you are asked to travel out of the country as part of your duties, Access to Work support would be provided but may be limited.

European Union (EU) and outside the European Union

When your company is based in an EU country and you are sent to Great Britain to work, you can apply for Access to Work support.

If you are from a country not part of the EU, you need a visa to live and work here, which you will need to show if you apply for Access to Work.

A work permit or a leave to remain status also means you can apply for Access to Work support.

Supported internships and traineeships

Young people who start a work placement with an employer as part of the Department for Education supported internship programme or a BIS traineeship can apply for Access to Work support for the time of their work placement only.

Access to Work will fund additional travel, job coach and other support, including costs of equipment if appropriate, and promote the smooth transition into paid employment.

No other types of unpaid internships or traineeships will qualify for Access to Work support.

Get advice on your eligibility

If you're not sure that you're eligible, you can call or email our dedicated team.

Telephone: 0800 035 6670

Email: enquiries@hearingsupport.info

Eligibility

Paid work (employment)

For Access to Work purposes, employment means:

- Full or part-time paid work, whether permanent, casual or temporary
- A work trial arranged by Jobcentre Plus
- Work in an unsupported or supported environment
- Not volunteering
- Some councillor and other elected official positions
- Not training, except for training related to your current paid job and being done while you are in receipt of normal wages

To be eligible for support if you are employed, you must have a contract of employment and be paid at least the National Minimum Wage.

You can also apply if you have:

- A job offer letter
- A job start date
- A letter confirming your interview

Access to Work can help provide you with someone to help at a job interview. If you are registered with an agency, you must have a job to start before you can be eligible for support.

Civil Service and government agency employees

If you are employed by ministerial government departments, including the Department for Work and Pensions or one of its agencies, your department will pay for your support.

Members of the clergy

If you are a member of the clergy, no matter what religious denomination, you must be in paid employment. For example, Church of England clergy receive a salary or stipend while some other religious denominations work in a different way.

No other types of unpaid internships or traineeships will qualify for Access to Work support.

Self-employment

For Access to Work purposes, self-employment is:

- Operating a business either on your own account or in partnership, or working for an employer on a self-employed basis
- Operating a franchised business on a self-employed basis possessing a Unique Tax Reference (UTR) number

You can apply for Access to Work support if you are over retirement age (and now do not have to pay National Insurance) but you will need to have accounts for established businesses or a business plan of a standard acceptable to a bank or other financial institution, for example for new businesses.

In the case of self-employed applicants such as entertainers who do not necessarily see themselves as being a business, then a UTR and CV would be appropriate. This will help your adviser in determining whether the business is, or is likely to become, a viable business and therefore eligible for Access to Work support.

Access to Work cannot pay for the costs of setting up a business or cover costs while the business is being formed, this includes, but is not limited to:

- Standard items of equipment
- Support for fact-finding
- Attending courses, seminars or similar events

Company directors

If you are a company director, you can apply to get Access to Work support. However, you must prove that your company is registered with Companies House in Cardiff.

Get advice on your eligibility

If you're not sure that you're eligible, you can call or email our dedicated team.

Telephone: 0800 035 6670

Email: enquiries@hearingsupport.info

What you will receive



There is no set amount for an Access to Work grant. How much you get depends on your specific case. The grant will only cover the support needed to let you stay in work or self-employed.

The money can pay for things like:

- Changes to the equipment you use
- Special equipment
- Fares to work if you cannot use public transport
- A support worker or job coach to help you in your workplace
- A support service if you have a mental health condition and you are absent from work or finding it difficult to work
- Disability awareness training for your colleagues
- Someone to help you at a job interview
- The cost of moving your equipment if you change location or job

Maximum amount of grants

Access to Work grants awarded on or after 1 October 2015 are capped. The amount of the cap depends on when your grant was awarded or last reviewed.

Grant awarded or reviewed	Amount of cap per year
1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019	£57,200
1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020	£59,200
1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021	£60,700
1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022	£62,900
1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023	£65,180

Currently Access to Work grants awarded before 1 October 2015 are not capped.

Applying for an Access to Work grant

You can apply for Access to Work online or by phone.

You can apply online [here](#)
Telephone: 0800 121 7479

If you're a civil servant, your employer will provide support instead of Access to Work. Contact them directly to arrange this.

You'll need to give:

- Your contact details
- Your workplace address and postcode
- The name of a workplace contact who can confirm you work there (they will not be contacted without your permission)
- The email address or work phone number of your workplace contact
- Your Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR) number (if you're self-employed)
- Information about how your condition affects your work and what support you think you need

If you need the form in other formats, such as braille, large print or audio CD, call the Access to Work helpline.

The quickest and easiest way to apply for [Access to Work is online](#)

Get advice on your application

If you're not sure how to apply, you can call or email our dedicated team.

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After you apply for the grant

Someone from Access to Work will contact you to talk about your application.

If phone calls are difficult for you (for example, because you're deaf or hard of hearing), you can ask for all communication to be by email instead.

The person who contacts you may ask:

- For more information about your work and condition
- For permission to speak to your employer
- To arrange for an assessor to call you or view your workplace by video call or in person - to find out what changes might help
- You'll get a letter with a decision and explanation. It will tell you how much your grant will be and what it should pay for.

Assessments

You may need an assessment of your workplace to assess your needs.

If you know what support you need, you do not need to have an assessment. An Access to Work adviser will discuss the award with you and develop a tailored package of support.

If you need to rearrange or cancel an assessment, contact the organisation that has arranged the assessment with you.

Claiming money from your grant

Your decision letter will explain how to claim the money from your grant.

You or your employer might need to pay for the support you need at first. Your letter will tell you how to claim money back.

Keep your invoices and receipts as evidence.

For some services, Access to Work pays the provider directly. Your decision letter will explain how to set this up.

If your grant runs out

If your grant runs out and you need more money to pay for something your decision letter says you need, call the Access to Work helpline.

If you disagree with a decision or want to complain

If you disagree with the decision, you can call the Access to Work helpline to ask someone to reconsider your application.

You can also call the helpline if you're unhappy with how your case has been handled or the service you've received.



life is on

Since 1947, Phonak is dedicated to preserving life quality by opening new acoustic worlds. Already back then, in the days of our foundation, our company was driven by a formative conviction: We believe that well-hearing equates to well-being and thus is essential for living life to the fullest. In fact, the sense of hearing is directly linked to social, emotional, cognitive and physical well-being. Today as in future, we thrive to offer the broadest portfolio of innovative hearing solutions.

And, together with our hearing care professionals, we keep on focusing on what matters most: improving speech understanding, changing people's lives and having a positive effect on society as a whole.

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