

How to find out if you're entitled to 'Access to Work'

A guide aiming to help find out if you're eligible for the scheme and what your next steps should be.



Firstly, what is it all about?

Access to Work is a great initiative for those who require support to start working, continue working or go into self-employment and start a new business. The amount of support you will receive is based on your own personal circumstances and needs, but Access to Work is an additional help to any benefits you may already be receiving.

It focuses on your particular impairment or condition, and how it affects you in the workplace. To be entitled to Access to Work, your additional needs must affect your ability to do a job, or mean that you are in need of equipment or support in order to do the work. For example, you may require voice recognition software, or need to use adapted and accessible transport in order to get to and from work.

Your impairment must also be relatively long-term, and last at least twelve months. These regulations also apply to those with mental health conditions who may require Access to Work in order to support them in work. Certain benefits you may receive may stop you from qualifying for Access to Work. These include:

- Employment Support Allowance (ESA)
- Incapacity Benefit
- Income Support
- NI Credits
- Severe Disablement Allowance

If you change jobs, just let Access to Work know. It's likely that they will be able to transfer equipment, support and travel arrangements to your new workplace. Similarly, if you start a new job, be sure to let Access to Work know within 6 weeks so that you can receive everything you need in good time.



What can I get from them and how do I claim?

What you *can* receive from Access to Work varies. It could be disability awareness training for your colleagues, or a support worker to help you with your job for example.

From the 1st October 2015, ATW grants have been limited to just over £40,000 per year.

How to Claim if you think you are Eligible:

Access to Work are open Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm. Call them on 0345 268 8489 or use this textphone number: 0345 608 8753. A BSL Video Relay Service is also available.

Keep these things handy for the call:

- Your National Insurance number
- Your work address and postcode
- The name, email address and work phone number of a work contact
- Your unique tax reference number (UTR) if you're self-employed
- The name of your New Enterprise Allowance mentor, if you have one

You will then be directed to an eligibility letter which, if you are employed or going to an interview soon, your employer or potential employer will have to sign. The process for those who are self-employed is slightly different and will be discussed over the phone. An adviser from Access to Work will then call you (and your employer, if you have one), to discuss your needs. We hope this helps, good luck!

