



Inclusive
Change

ACCESS TO WORK

A MANAGERS GUIDE



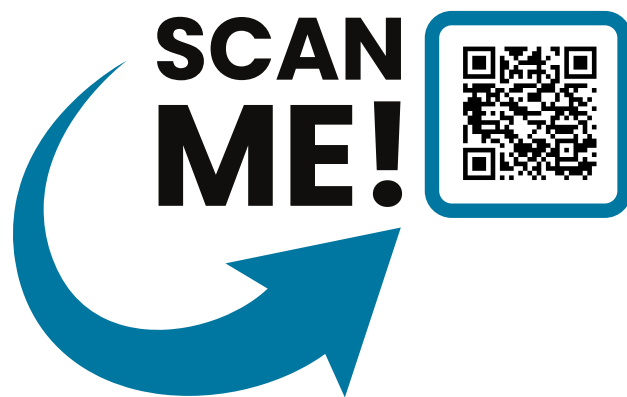
LUCY SMITH

[INCLUSIVECHANGE.CO.UK](https://www.inclusivechange.co.uk)

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Thank's for picking up this quick guide to Access To Work for managers produced by Inclusive Change Ltd in partnership with Inclusive Change At Work CIC.

This guide is intended to be used alongside our video "A managers guide to access to work". We update this video regularly so to find the most up to date version please visit icaw-cic.com and click on Events or use this QR Code to go straight to our replay page.



inclusivechange.co.uk.

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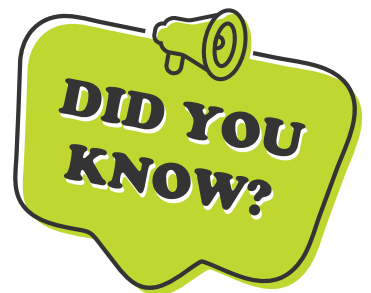
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"The right support doesn't just help you work; it empowers you to thrive and unlock your full potential."

The workplace is constantly evolving, and one of the most important shifts is the growing focus on inclusivity for people with disabilities and neurodivergence. This guide will introduce the Access to Work scheme, an invaluable government resource that helps ensure everyone can participate fully in the workplace.

By the end of this guide, you'll know how to start conversations about Access to Work with your team, what support is available, and how to guide your employees through the application process.

It makes good business sense to create organisations and services with neurodiversity in mind.



Access to Work can provide support for disabled employees, covering everything from specialist equipment to travel assistance, ensuring no one is held back from thriving at work!





Meet

THE AUTHOR

Hi There!

I am Lucy, owner and founder of Inclusive Change.

I talk about neurodiversity A LOT and I am on a mission to make change happen by raising awareness and understanding of neurodiversity in the workplace.

I am part of a neurodivergent family - and grew up within a neurodivergent family where diversity and inclusion was just how things were.

I have had a varied career with experience across public service, education and voluntary sector. I now consider myself a social entrepreneur and my work now is all about building the future of work with neurodiversity in mind.

Lucy



Click for my virtual
business card





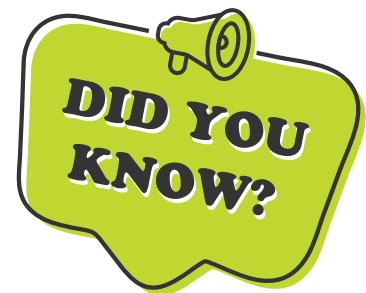
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Neurodiversity is the diversity of human minds

Neurodiversity celebrates the natural variations in how human minds think, learn, and process the world - bringing unique strengths to every organisation and community

Some of us are neurodivergent - this is an umbrella term that covers a range of differences including (but not limited to):

- **Autism**
- **ADHD**
- **Dyslexia**
- **Dyspraxia**
- **Dyscalculia**
- **Tourettes**



Embracing neurodiversity can lead to:

- Improved diversity and inclusion
- Competitive advantage
- Improved staff and customer engagement
- A greater sense of value and loyalty from customers & staff
- Improved reputation

Inclusive Change: Building the future of work with neurodiversity in mind

Get in touch enquiries@inclusivechange.co.uk



01

Understanding Access To Work



Access to Work is a government-run scheme that provides financial support to disabled employees and self-employed individuals to help overcome barriers to working. It offers assistance with specialist equipment, workplace adjustments, and even mental health support.

While incredibly helpful, Access to Work does have its limits.

It is not:

- A substitute for reasonable adjustments, which are required by law under the Equality Act 2010.
- Applicable for short-term conditions like a temporary injury.
- Immediate – the process can take up to 24 weeks, so plan early!



How much is it worth?

Access to Work provides funding based on individual need to support someone to stay in or return to work. While there used to be an annual cap, the scheme now assesses each application on a case-by-case basis, with many awards reaching significant levels depending on the support required.

This is a resource every manager should know about!

02

Why managers need to know about Access To Work?



Supporting neurodivergent and disabled employees is not just about compliance, it's about building a more productive, innovative, and diverse workforce. Employees who feel supported are more engaged and loyal.

Increased Productivity

Diverse teams bring varied perspectives and problem-solving skills.

Legal Compliance

Supporting employees aligns with the Equality Act and reduces legal risks.

Reduced Staff Turnover

Access to Work helps retain valuable talent by ensuring employees can continue to work with the right support.



03

Who is eligible for access to work?



Access to Work is available to people with a disability or health condition that affects their ability to do their job. This includes physical, mental health, sensory and neurodivergent conditions. Support is based on the impact of barriers at work, rather than requiring a formal diagnosis. Access to Work is intended to support longer-term conditions and is not typically used for short-term or temporary needs.

This Includes

- Physical disabilities (mobility issues, chronic health conditions)
- Mental health conditions (e.g.: PTSD, anxiety)
- Learning disabilities
- Sensory impairments (hearing, sight)
- Neurodivergence (e.g.: autism, ADHD, Dyslexia)

Applicants must be 16 or over and in, or about to start, paid employment (including self-employment).

“A formal diagnosis is not always required, support is based on the impact of barriers at work.”

Encourage your team to apply even if they don't have a medical diagnosis yet.”



Are you or your team eligible for access to work?
Get in touch enquiries@inclusivechange.co.uk

04

Starting conversations with your team



One of the most challenging aspects of introducing Access to Work is starting the conversation, especially when an employee hasn't disclosed their disability or neurodivergence.



Nobody is obliged to tell their employer that they are disabled and many prefer not to disclose, often for fear of discrimination.

When an employee does disclose the employers have a legal duty to consider reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.



An employee should talk to their manager about their disability when:

- they need support
- there's a health and safety risk to them or other people
- they feel that telling them now might prevent problems later

It may be helpful to include this information in employee your handbook or neurodiversity policy

Want help to develop your own neurodiversity policies and guidance?

[Get in touch enquiries@inclusivechange.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@inclusivechange.co.uk)

04

Starting conversations with your team



Talking about disability does not mean asking intrusive questions. You should focus on the support you can give. So here some conversation starters.



“I understand you might be facing some challenges at work due to [condition]. There’s a government programme called Access to Work that could help. Would you be open to discussing it further?”

“We aim to create a supportive environment for everyone. If you need adjustments or support, Access to Work could help. Let’s talk if you think it might be useful.”



“[acas.org.uk](https://www.acas.org.uk) has excellent resources on the topic of supporting disabled people at work.”

Visit [ACAS Website](https://www.acas.org.uk)



Looking for training for managers & supervisors?
Get in touch enquiries@inclusivechange.co.uk

05

What support can access to work provide



Access to Work can provide a wide range of support, tailored to individuals needs

- **Specialist Equipment:** Screen readers, adapted keyboards, or mobility aids.
- **Workplace Adjustments:** Changes to the physical work environment, like accessible parking or considering where a desk is placed.
- **Support Workers:** Job coaches, personal assistants, or BSL interpreters.
- **Mental Health Support:** Workplace strategy coaching and structured support.
- **Travel Assistance:** Taxi fares for employees who can't use public transport due to their disability.



Supporting a Neurodivergent Employee: Steve's Journey

Steve, an employee with autism, struggled with public transport due to sensory challenges. By arranging for Access to Work to cover taxi fares, Steve's anxiety around commuting disappeared, and he became more productive and engaged at work



Ask us about work based assessments to identify needs & support?

Get in touch enquiries@inclusivechange.co.uk

06

How to apply for Access To Work



Applications can be made online or by telephone. Start by visiting the Access To Work Website: <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>

Apply Now >



0800 1217479 >



checklist

You Will Need

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



Inclusive Change can support you and your team to make their application
Get in touch enquiries@inclusivechange.co.uk

06

How to apply for Access To Work



The application process can be complex, so it's important to prepare your employee for what's involved.

1

It is an Employee-Led Application:

The individual must apply themselves via the government website or by phone. Access to Work may contact the employer after the application, but only with the employee's consent.

2

Prepare information in advance:

Employees will need their basic details (including their national insurance number), job description, examples of the challenges they face, and what support they need.

3

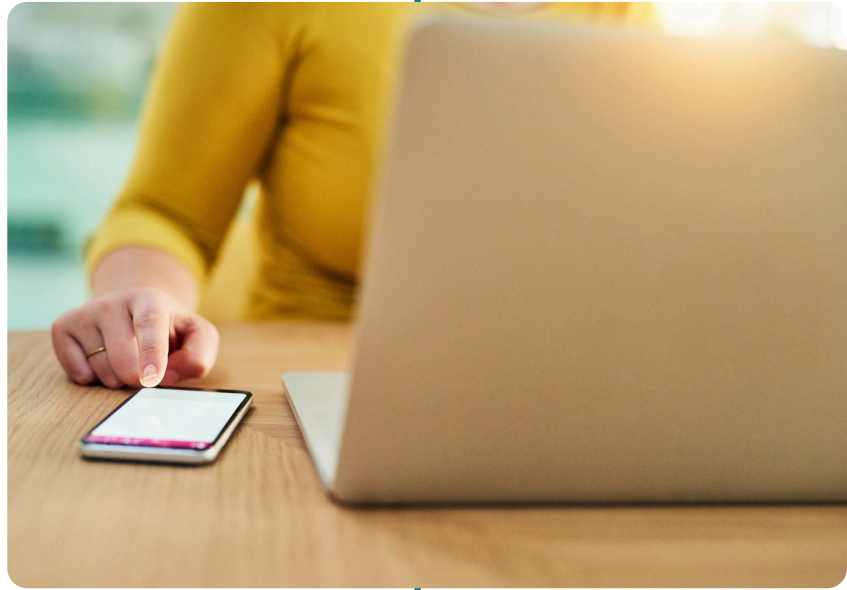
It takes time:

The process can take several weeks (and in some cases longer), so it's best to apply as early as possible. If starting a new role or need support with interviewing, wait times maybe quicker.



07

Further reading and resources



Access to Work is a powerful tool that can transform the workplace for disabled and neurodivergent individuals. As a manager, understanding how to initiate these conversations and support your team through the application process is key to building a truly inclusive environment.

Here are some helpful resources:

Watch the video that accompanies this handbook



Access to Work ([gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)): Official information and application form.

ACAS Guide to Reasonable Adjustments: Practical advice for making workplace adjustments.

Inclusive Change Resources: Visit [Inclusivechange.co.uk](https://www.inclusivechange.co.uk) for additional guides and toolkits for managers.





How can we help you?

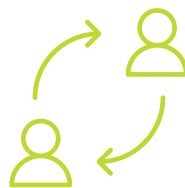
We are here to help you create inclusive services and support your team with training and consultancy



- Do you want help to apply for access to work or find suitable support for your staff?
- Do you want to develop your inclusive services?
- Do you want to enhance your own knowledge or help others develop greater awareness of neurodiversity at work?
- Are you a line manager or leader wanting to develop a neuro-inclusive culture in your team?
- Do you want to understand more about how to recruit and retain neurodivergent talent?
- Do you want to build the future of your workplace to achieve greater productivity and results?



Online
Courses



Support for
your team



Consultancy &
Training

Inclusive Change: Building the future of work with neurodiversity in mind

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