

Disability Confident Employment: Workplace Adjustments



A workplace adjustment is any form of assistance or possible adjustment in a process, practice, procedure or environment to maximise the opportunity for an individual to demonstrate their full capabilities in a role.

Adjustments allow a person to:

- Perform the inherent requirements of their role and/or work safely
- Have equal opportunities for recruitment, promotion and ongoing development
- Experience equitable terms and conditions of employment.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, employers are obligated to make adjustments to accommodate an individual's disability, unless that adjustment would result in unjustifiable hardship. The Federal Government provides support to employers, via Job Access, to assist in determining the best solution for each individual situation (refer to notes below).

When exploring adjustments in the workplace, you may want to consider:

- The impact the adjustment will have on an employee and the way they can perform their role
- The practicalities of the adjustment, including the costs and funding available via the JobAccess Employment Assistance Fund
- Accessing support or information from the employee's Disability Employment Service (DES) provider if they have one

The best way to determine what adjustment/s an employee requires is to ask them - everyone is different. If they don't know what would support them in the workplace, employers are encouraged to contact JobAccess.

Examples of adjustments in the workplace could include (but are not limited to):

General adjustments

- Flexible work arrangements such as part time/job share, adjusting start and/or finish times, working from home opportunities or employment programs such as purchased leave
- Job role modification, redistributing minor duties (not inherent requirements of role) that the employee finds difficult to do
- Implementation of a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)
- Providing time off during work hours for rehabilitation, assessment and/or treatment
- Additional training, mentoring, supervision and support.

This project is a NDIS Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) initiative.



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For a person with a physical disability, including mobility impairment

- Physical modifications to a building such as ramps, stair lifts, elevators and automated doors
- Height adjustable work stations and kitchens
- Modified work vehicles and adapted furniture
- Accessible bathrooms
- Handrails
- Moving furniture so people can get around comfortably and safely
- Hosting meetings virtually

For a person who is deaf or hard of hearing

- Provide assistive technology such as an amplified telephone
- Live captioning and subtitled video content
- Vibrating or visual alarms
- Hearing loops, amplified telephone or other devices to support hearing
- Australian Sign Language (Auslan) interpreting and training opportunities
- Video phones or software
- Visual notification of emergencies
- Review of seating plan to eliminate background noise
- Use of Microsoft Teams or similar to allow for digital workplace communication

For a person who is blind or has low vision

- Screen reading and screen magnification software, including on mobile phones
- Braille machines and printers
- Documents and signage produced in Braille
- Tactile Ground Surface Indicators (TGSIs)
- Large or magnified monitors
- Audio notification of emergencies
- Modification of lighting, including offering a high contrast in work space
- Use of an assistance dog in workplace

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For a person with a mental health issue or condition

- Changes in communication, dependent on the employee's needs, including the use of to do lists or checklists
- Additional 1:1 meetings for support from manager
- Manager and employee to monitor mental health, with an agreed-upon action plan
- Private spaces to reduce noise and distractions
- More frequent breaks
- Reallocation of tasks into small projects

For a person with a learning disability (e.g. Dyslexia)

- Smartphones or other technology to assist with planning and to do lists
- Verbal or visual instructions
- Private spaces to reduce noise and distractions
- Speech-to-text dictation or other suitable software
- Additional support or training of the tasks of the role
- Additional 1:1 meetings with manager to identify areas of need early and identify need for further training, assistance or equipment
- Change in communication, dependent on the employee's needs

For a person with a long term or chronic health condition

- Physical building modifications including air conditioning or heating
- Height adjustable work stations and kitchens
- Modified work vehicles and adapted furniture
- Modified lighting
- Planning for degenerative health conditions

Notes:

The Australian Government provides funding through the **JobAccess' Employment Assistance Fund (EAF)** to cover the costs of making workplace changes for eligible people with disability. This can include buying equipment, modifications or accessing services for people with disability. Other items often covered under the EAF include communications technology, Auslan interpreting, disability awareness training for staff, and specialist support for people with mental health conditions or learning disorders.

As the Employment Assistance Fund is a reimbursement program, equipment, items or services should not be purchased until an application to the EAF has been approved in writing.

National Disability Services recommends that employers speak to candidates and employees about adjustments they require during a recruitment process, as well as during employment, as the individual is best placed to identify what will help them to succeed. If required, the Employment Assistance Fund will conduct a free workplace assessment to identify any barriers and recommend changes in the workplace, they can be contacted on 1800 464 800 or www.jobaccess.gov.au.

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