

ACCESS TO WORK GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYERS



Do you want to increase diversity in your workforce?
Do you want to be a Disability Confident employer?
Do you want to improve workplace Disability Awareness?

Specialist Employment Support

This booklet explains the support available from our team to enable organisations to recruit and retain staff



At Autism Plus Specialist Employment Support we recognise there may be obstacles and concerns for the employer and employee, therefore our team are offering employers training, mentoring and guidance on adjustments and advice on how best to operate in the workplace for the specific needs of those with Neurodiverse conditions.

This booklet explains the support available from our team to enable organisations to recruit and retain staff with Neurodiverse conditions, including those on the Autism Spectrum.

Through the governments Access to Work scheme we offer a range of personalised support to both employers and employees.

“Access to Work removes the obstacles facing disabled people in workplaces, helping to level the playing field and ensure businesses don’t see employing disabled people as a burden.”

Justin Tomlinson MP

Minister of State (Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work)

What is Access to Work?

Access to Work is a government funded employment programme designed to support disabled individuals to secure suitable employment at the stage of interview or starting out in a new role.

The support also aims to help people retain their job when difficulties arise which might be due to their condition, offering additional support to help them stay in work.

Access to Work can provide a grant specific to the individual employee that could cover support such as: training and awareness, support worker / mentor, physical equipment where required, as well as bespoke solutions to suit individual needs.



Autism Plus can help your employee access a range of support including:



A mentor for a set number of hours per week

Travel costs for your employee to and from work

Cost sharing of specialist aid and equipment needed in the workplace

One-off communication support for interviews

Specialist Training to suit individual needs

How Can We Help Employers?

We provide practical advice and guidance on appropriate support, adjustments, training and advice to overcome barriers which may be experienced by individual employees.



We can help you to retain an employee who is experiencing difficulties in work because of their disability or health condition, keeping valuable skills in the company saving both time and resources on recruitment

Support to keep your workforce equal, diverse, and inclusive for all staff through advising on appropriateness of policies and practices to meet the needs of disabled employees

Help facilitate effective communication between management and colleagues and support to resolve these difficulties and improve relationships

Reduce the impact of barriers faced by your employee and support you to make adaptations where necessary to improve at zero cost to your company

Increase your confidence in hiring individuals with Neurodiverse conditions

Guidance on how to work with your employee around how aspects of their condition may affect their job such as coping with change, organising, prioritising and managing deadlines

Train staff at any level in Autism Awareness and Neurodiversity in a strategy for managing and working with colleagues in the workplace

Work with your employee to train them to better understand their disability and how it impacts on them and their behaviour in the workplace, this is particularly useful for anyone who has recently been diagnosed

Support and advise you on how to communicate and provide appropriate support without fear or saying the wrong thing or causing further anxiety or concern

Personalised, ongoing support for you and your employee from a dedicated Specialist Employment Coach who will be available to discuss any concerns or queries

Our Services and Provision

In-Work Mentor Support

Mentor support is entirely person-centered. We will help the employee and yourself to develop a comprehensive support plan representing their needs, and will be used during our time working with them. Mentor support also includes:

A point of contact for yourself and the employee should any issues arise

Support to navigate to a positive and constructive outcome

Regular meetings between you and your employee to talk about each other's concerns

Support to help the individual work with others on your team and to grow in confidence

Free workplace training (this is available free as part of the Access to Work application)



"Thanks to Autism Plus I feel more settled at work and I am no longer needing to take days off when I am anxious."

Specialist Autism Training

Our Specialist training is based around individual or organisational needs and can be delivered at your workplace or virtually via video conferencing if you have individuals at multiple sites or would like to reduce travel time.



Our training aims to provide you and your colleagues with an insight into the needs of employees with autism and other Neurodiverse conditions. Training can be delivered over a half day which is an Introduction to Autism or a full day with the afternoon being bespoke to the needs of the organisation.

Examples of bespoke training could include “How to adapt recruitment processes to attract Neurodiverse Candidates” or “Effective workplace support for Neurodiverse employees”. Within this training we hope to help managers and colleagues to better understand the needs of the employee, whilst identifying strategies to support them going forward.

Our Workplace training is completely free where this is part of a package of support, including the one to one mentoring as an application will be made to Access to Work to fully cover the costs of the training as well as the one to one mentoring. If you require general Autism Awareness training that is not linked to an employee we can provide this for an extremely competitive fee.

“The support has really helped me understand my disability and how it affects me”

Workplace Assessments

Workplace Assessments are perfect for employers and employees who need specific guidance in a shorter period of time.

Our Workplace Assessments assess and identify needs, adjustments and support. You will receive guidance on the how to effectively support your employee in the workplace. This could be linked to specific issues and queries, or a useful tool for a new employee where you want to ensure you have provided all the support possible to ensure they are able to settle into the workplace effectively.



Workplace Assessments consist of a half day session, usually taking place at your workplace and involves a meeting the line manager and or HR, then a separate one to one with the employee. We also offer this service virtually via video call.

The assessment aims to provide you with specific guidance and recommendations on appropriate support based on both company and employee needs. Following the assessment we provide a detailed report covering summary of the meetings, key points raised and recommendations.

Our assessment fees are extremely competitive and we are usually available within 2-3 weeks of the initial request.



What do our services cost?

Our In-Work Mentoring and Training linked to an employee is completely free to you as part of the Access to Work application, following approval from both employer and employee.

Support can provide the reassurance needed to help individuals with disabilities successfully sustain employment. Please get in touch to discuss with us in more detail if you have any questions.



Eligibility for an Access to Work Grant

The individual requiring support needs to be:

In paid employment for at least one hour per week

Or be at interview stage / about to start a new job or have a confirmed job trial. The person could also be returning to their job after a period of leave or sickness

Otherwise, be self-employed or doing a paid apprenticeship or internship

Be 16+ years old

Have a disability or health condition which makes doing aspects of the job difficult and they need help with the difficulties they are facing. This can be a mental or physical condition (the person does not need a diagnosis)

The person with the disability or condition requires support to manage their condition in the workplace in the form of mentor support, reasonable adjustments or help to travel to and from work

Some benefits may affect eligibility to an Access to Work Grant, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/eligibility>

For more information contact us to find so we can help guide you through the process of applying and what you might be eligible for based on your circumstances and current situation.

How can someone access our services?

To access our services, or to find out more information contact:

Autism Plus Sheffield office on: 0114 3840284 and ask for the Autism Plus Specialist Employment Team

By email: employmentsupport@autismplus.co.uk

Visit our website: <https://autismplus.co.uk/employment-support>