# Employment and Reasonable Adjustments

## What is a Reasonable Adjustment?

A reasonable adjustment is an adaptation or alteration in the workplace to allow a person with a disability to do their job safely and effectively.

The aim of implementing reasonable adjustments is to reasonably remove any disadvantage that a person with a disability has in comparison to their colleagues.

A reasonable adjustment can be made in many different ways. Examples could include purchasing specialist equipment, flexibility around hours of work or working pattern or changes to an employee’s job description.

It is important to understand that there is not an exhaustive list of reasonable adjustments; each case is specific to the individual.

### What defines reasonable?

Before implementing an adjustment in the workplace, your employer will want to consider if the adjustment is:

* effective in terms of reducing disadvantage
* practical
* reasonable in terms of cost
* reasonable in terms of the organisation size and resources
* reasonable in terms of the support available to implement the adjustments.

### Am I entitled to a reasonable adjustment/s in my workplace?

Yes, if you have a disability, then your employer should consider adjustments to remove any disadvantage you may face in the workplace.

The Equality Act 2010 (DDA in Northern Ireland) defines a person with a disability as having ‘a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities’. In this instance, long term refers to 12 months or longer. If you are not registered as severely sight impaired or sight impaired, your employer may still need to consider putting reasonable adjustments in place.

### Who decides what reasonable adjustments should be implemented?

There are specialist professionals who can identify what adjustments should be made. Your employer may request that you meet with an Occupational Health professional. They can make recommendations on what adjustments would support you. Following this meeting, you should receive a report outlining recommendations that your employer should consider implementing. One recommendation may be that you engage with a specialist sight organisation to explore assistive technology solutions and other reasonable adjustments.

RNIB have a team of specialists who can carry out a work based assessment. The assessor will make recommendations that will support you in your role. Examples could include specialist equipment, changes to the office environment, flexibility around working ours or support to travel to work.

The Access to Work scheme can also arrange for a specialist to carry out an assessment of your needs.

Information on the Access to Work programme is available from the RNIB website or you can speak with the RNIB Sight Loss Advice team for more information.

A work based assessment will look at any specialist equipment that you may require to help you to do your job. You shall also receive a report following this assessment outlining the recommended adjustments.

You may already know what adjustments you need, and your employer might be happy to implement these without external support. If this is the case, it is a good idea to document the reasonable adjustments that are going to be put in place by your employer. This can be revisited if your situation changes in the future.

#### Examples of reasonable adjustments

It is important to understand that adjustments in the workplace vary from person to person; One size does not fit all. Employees with the same eye condition or level of sight working in similar job roles will not necessarily require the same adjustments.

Here are some examples of frequently implemented adjustments:

* flexibility around starting and finishing times
* swapping specific duties between colleagues
* review of seating to remove difficulties with lighting
* provision of assistive technology
* change of lighting
* review of targets
* provision of a support worker
* time off to attend assistive technology training or attend sight related appointments
* support when completing staff development and training sessions.

It should be noted that reasonable adjustments should be applied at all stages of employment, including the recruitment and selection process.

An employer should be able to:

* provide an application form in an alternative format
* ensure accessibility of online assessments
* provide extra time for recruitment assessments or aptitude tests
* if the recruitment process involves group assessment, ensure that any power point presentations or information given on hand outs are made accessible for the candidate.
* in a face-to-face interview, it is important that the candidate is asked prior to the interview if they have any specific requirements, for example, lighting or help with being guided.

## Can reasonable adjustments be changed or altered?

Yes, reasonable adjustments are not set in stone. If an employee’s sight changes or their job role changes, then adjustments that were first put in place may need to be revised. It may be case that only small changes need to be made and this can be decided between the employer and employee. For example, an adjustment to targets or change in seating. If what is already in place needs to be changed dramatically, an updated work-based assessment may be required.

## What if my employer doesn’t put in place a recommended reasonable adjustment for me?

Under legislation, your employer is required to implement reasonable adjustments to remove any substantial disadvantage that you may face. Failure to do so may result in legal action being taken against your employer. Only an Employment Tribunal can decide if an adjustment should have been put in place for you by your employer. Your employer's opinion may differ from yours, and there may be a need for further discussion about what is "reasonable". Let RNIB know if you need support with this.

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