# Employment and Reasonable Adjustments

## What is a Reasonable Adjustment?

A reasonable adjustment is an adaptation or alteration in the workplace to allow an employee with a disability to overcome workplace barriers. This should allow an employer to remove any disadvantage that a person with a disability has in comparison to their colleagues.

Reasonable adjustments vary. Examples could include purchasing specialist equipment, flexibility around hours, working patterns or changes to an employee’s work tasks.

There is no exhaustive list of reasonable adjustments. Each situation is specific to the individual and their employer.

### What defines reasonable?

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

* effective in reducing disadvantage
* practical
* of reasonable cost

### Am I entitled to reasonable adjustments in my workplace?

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 twelve 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?

Only an Employment Tribunal can reach a decision on what is legally reasonable. It is therefore important to talk with your employer about your needs in work. Specialist external advice may be needed.

#### Examples of reasonable adjustments

It is important to understand that adjustments in the workplace vary from person to person, as 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 software and equipment
* change of lighting
* provision of a support worker
* time off to attend assistive technology training or attend sight related appointments

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 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.

## 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. If your employer fails to do so, you might decide to take legal action. 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.

August 2023

End of document