We are now a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site. For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.
What is it?
Access to Work provides grants to help people to overcome barriers they may be facing when looking for a job, or when working. This means helping you to overcome any difficulties you are facing because of not hearing at work.

Employers must make certain changes, known as reasonable adjustments to make sure you are not substantially disadvantaged by your hearing loss. Access to Work recommend that you discuss reasonable adjustments with your employer before applying.

Who is eligible?
You must be 16 or over and normally resident in Great Britain with a permanent hearing loss which affects your ability to do a job.

You can apply if:
- you have an interview
- you’re about to start a job or work trial
- you’re in a paid job or self-employed (you can’t get a grant for voluntary work)
- you’re getting New Enterprise Allowance
- you’re starting work experience

If you get other benefits
Certain benefits may affect whether you can get an Access to Work grant. If you receive Universal Credit, Jobseeker’s Allowance or Income Support you can still get help if you work more than one hour a week. If you receive Employment and Support Allowance you can only get help if you’re doing ‘permitted work’. (It is permitted work if all the following apply: you earn up to £131.50 a week, you work less than 16 hours a
How can they help?

You will be offered support based on your needs. The grant can help pay for items or services you need. Here are some examples of what they can provide:

- communicators for interviews
- note takers
- special equipment for the workplace such as FM systems
- alterations to existing equipment

Only non-standard equipment is funded. Phones are considered to be standard equipment and special fire alarms are deemed the responsibility of the employer for health and safety reasons.

What does it cost?

In some cases, employers need to share the costs involved:

- If you have recently started working or are about to start work Access to Work will pay 100% of the approved costs for special equipment. It is important to contact an Access to Work Advisor as soon as possible when starting a new job, in order to get 100% of the approved costs paid for. The application needs to be made within the first six weeks.
- If you have been employed for six weeks or longer, there is a sliding scale of cost share depending on the size of the employer.
- If you are self-employed, 100% of the approved costs will be paid for, no matter how long you have been self-employed.

All Access to Work grants are capped. The level of capping depends on when it was awarded or reviewed and range from £40,900 to £59,200 per year.
How do I apply?

The easiest way to apply is online at www.gov.uk/access-to-work.

You can also apply by calling the Access to Work helpline Monday to Friday 08:00 to 19:30:

- Telephone: 0800 121 7479
- Textphone: 0800 121 7579

You can also contact them using NGT text relay or British Sign Language video relay service.

In your application, you may need:
- Your National Insurance number
- Your workplace address, including your postcode
- The name, email address and work phone number of a workplace contact, e.g. your manager
- Your unique tax reference number (if you’re self-employed)
- The name of your New Enterprise Allowance mentor (if you have one)

What happens once I have made an application?

- Once you have applied, an Access to Work adviser will contact you to discuss what help you could get.
- An advisor may also contact your employer to discuss how Access to Work can support you. They will not contact your employer until they have agreed this with you first.
- An assessor may visit your workplace to assess your needs
- You may get an offer of support, which could include a grant. If it does, you’ll be told how much you’ll get and for how long.
- You or your employer will buy the items or services you need. Access to Work will pay the money back, up to the amount of the grant (any employer contribution will be deducted)

What if things change

If you change employer or job role you need to inform Access to Work. If you change employer you may be able to transfer equipment to your new employer. You cannot automatically transfer awards for support workers or travel. If you change role or employer you can also ask for your award to be reviewed. You can do this as often as your situation changes

Further information

Further information is available from www.gov.uk/access-to-work

Access to Work produce detailed factsheets for those seeking support and for employers. You can also contact Access to Work if you are not happy with how your case has been handled or you would like your award to be reconsidered.

Access to Work contact details:

- Telephone: 0800 121 7479
- Textphone: 0800 121 7579
- Operational Support Unit
- Harrow Jobcentre Plus
- Mail Handling Site A
- Woverhampton
- WV98 1JE

If you need any further advice please contact the audiology department on 01223 217797