

Reasonable Adjustments *at Work*

Who counts as disabled, what employers must do, examples, and what to do if you're refused.



Last reviewed: October 2026



GOV.UK · legislation.gov.uk · [nidirect](https://nidirect.gov.uk) · Equality Commission NI



England, Wales & Scotland (Equality Act 2010), with Northern Ireland (Disability Discrimination Act 1995)

ukworkrights.co.uk

What employers must do

- Employers must make reasonable adjustments so that disabled workers are not substantially disadvantaged when doing their jobs.
- In GB this covers all workers, including trainees, apprentices, contract workers and business partners, and job applicants.
- Whether a change is reasonable depends on the situation, including cost and practicality. Only a tribunal can finally decide.

Disabled under the law

- A physical or mental impairment with a "substantial" (more than minor or trivial) and "long-term" negative effect on normal daily activities.
- "Long-term": has lasted, or is likely to last, at least 12 months, or the rest of your life. You do not have to wait 12 months.
- You count from the day you are diagnosed with cancer, HIV infection or multiple sclerosis (GB and NI).
- Recurring, fluctuating and progressive conditions can be covered. Some are not, for example addiction to non-prescribed drugs or alcohol (GB).

What adjustments can look like

- Doing things another way, such as your own desk instead of hot-desking for someone with social anxiety disorder.
- Physical changes: a ramp, or an audio-visual fire alarm for a deaf person.
- Working somewhere else, such as the ground floor for a wheelchair user.
- Different equipment, such as a special keyboard for someone with arthritis.
- A phased return to work, including flexible hours or part-time working.
- Changing the recruitment process.

ACCESS TO WORK

Access to Work can help towards the costs of support or adaptations. It does not replace the employer's duty.

Health questions

- GB: before offering a job, an employer usually must not ask about your health or disability, except for a few reasons in the law (Equality Act 2010, section 60), such as adjustments for an interview.
- Only the Equality and Human Rights Commission can enforce that rule — but treating you worse because of your answers can be disability discrimination you can claim for.

What you can do

- Raise it with your employer first, in writing if you can.
- A failure to make reasonable adjustments is a form of disability discrimination. A claim needs no minimum length of service.
- GB: notify Acas before most tribunal claims. Time limit: 3 months less 1 day, or 6 months less 1 day where the act happened on or after 1 October 2026.

Different law

- The Equality Act 2010 does not apply. The law is the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
- The duty applies where a disabled applicant or employee is at a substantial disadvantage because of a provision, criterion or practice, or a physical feature of the premises.
- Failing to meet the duty cannot be justified and is always unlawful.
- No NI law stops an employer asking about health before a job offer — but treating you worse because of your answers can be discrimination.
- Notify the LRA first. Most claims: 3 months less 1 day. Help: Equality Commission NI, Access to Work (NI).

Frequently asked questions

Q I was diagnosed with cancer last week. Am I covered?

Yes — from the day of diagnosis, in GB and NI.

Q Does Access to Work let my employer off?

No. It does not replace the employer's duty.

Q Do I need 2 years' service to claim?

No. A discrimination claim needs no minimum length of service.

FREE RIGHTS GUIDANCE

Check your *adjustment rights*

Get plain-English guidance on your rights and your employer's legal duties.

ACAS

0300 123 1100

[acas.org.uk](https://www.acas.org.uk)

LRA (NORTHERN IRELAND)

03300 555 300

Labour Relations Agency

EQUALITY COMMISSION NI

028 9050 0600

Northern Ireland

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT ADVISER

At your local Jobcentre Plus

England, Wales and Scotland

CITIZENS ADVICE / ADVICE NI

Free advice

citizensadvice.org.uk

UK WORK RIGHTS — FREE GUIDE

**Reasonable Adjustments
(England, Wales and
Scotland)**

ukworkrights.co.uk/guide-reasonable-adjustments-gb.html

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Discrimination at Work

ukworkrights.co.uk/toolbox-discrimination.html

TOOLBOX TALK

Mental Health & Stress

ukworkrights.co.uk/toolbox-mentalhealth.html

TOOLBOX TALK

Statutory Sick Pay

ukworkrights.co.uk/toolbox-sickpay.html

FREE GUIDE

Reasonable Adjustments (England, Wales and Scotland)

ukworkrights.co.uk/guide-reasonable-adjustments-gb.html

Also: [Reasonable Adjustments \(Northern Ireland\)](#).