

Guide to Reasonable Adjustments



A practical guide to support the inclusion of people with disabilities in everyday life



What are Reasonable Adjustments?

According to the Equality Act 2010 a reasonable adjustment may include 'provisions, criteria and practices', 'physical features' and the provision of other helpful items including digital aids.

Reasonable adjustments can aid disabled people to access employment, health

services and opportunities within their local communities. Small changes can make a big difference.

Many people with learning disabilities and/or autism can experience severe challenges within 'unfriendly' environments.

This can mean that a person may have problems with sensory input from the world around them.

This may affect them in a variety of different ways, from being distracted, unable to concentrate and having mild to acute pain and worsening in function.

How is disability defined?

The definition of disability is set out in section 6 of the Equality Act 2010.

It says you're disabled if:

- you have a physical or mental impairment
- that impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities



Adjustments for people with learning disabilities and/or autism

Reasonable adjustments can reduce anxieties and enable people with learning disabilities and/or autism to access their local communities, health and support services.

Straight forward and low or no cost adjustments can be made. There are five key factors that should be considered:

Time: In the case of accessing the GP or dentist, this could involve offering an extended appointment to allow additional time to explain procedures or an early appointment when the waiting room is quieter

Environment: Are there environmental factors that could be altered. This could include offering to visit the adult at home or in another location with which they are familiar or meeting the person in casual clothes, for example at a job interview

Attitude: Treating everyone with dignity and respect and as an individual, including the individual when talking, slowing down when speaking if necessary and being aware of the tone used

Communication: Providing information in an accessible format e.g. Easy Read leaflets, pictures, symbols, or sign language and materials in Plain English, and avoiding the use of jargon

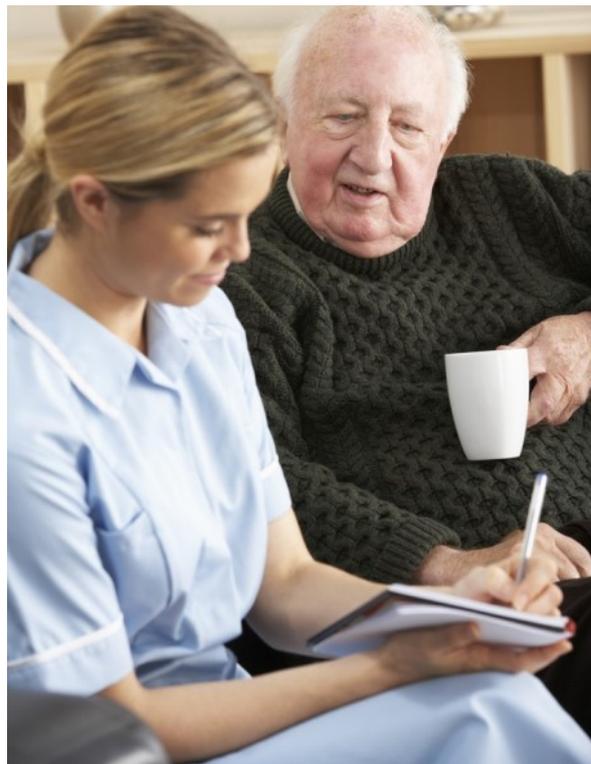
Help: Consulting with family members/carers to consider what reasonable adjustments might make a difference

Example of Reasonable Adjustments - health services

A man in his late 40s with a learning disability and with associated complex needs was trying to cope with several health issues which were impacting on his behaviour.

A multi-disciplinary meeting was convened with the outcome that the man's GP agreed to write to the secondary health services to request that instead of three separate health appointments, that all necessary

examinations and treatment were undertaken during one planned admission. Subsequently this reduced the amount of travel time for the man, and reduced the time spent attending health appointments and receiving examinations and treatment. The process was much leaner and easier for the individual and prevented behaviours escalating whilst health issues were being addressed.



Example of Reasonable Adjustments following injury and surgery

Jane suffered a kneecap fracture which needed wiring.

After her surgery and a long stay in hospital, she had potential to improve mobility and to return to her baseline before the accident.

The recommendation was for Jane to be discharged to a rehabilitation facility.

However due to a learning disability, anxiety and challenging behaviour, there was a high risk this would cause her distress and have a negative impact on recovery.

Instead arrangements were made for Jane to be discharged back to her placement.

She had one to one support from carers that she was familiar with.

The community physiotherapist visited her at home daily and reduced their frequency of visits.

The physio provided Jane's carers with advice and guidance on what to do to support with recovery.



Example of Reasonable Adjustments - accessing GP appointments

A young man's challenging behaviours would usually escalate when he was undergoing medical appointments or waiting for medical appointments.

He needed three carers to support him on those occasions and has

historically been distressed and has caused damage to furniture in the GP waiting room.

The GP surgery made a reasonable adjustment and arrange extended appointment times so that he no longer has to wait to

be called for his appointment.

If the GP is running late, the reception contact support staff to inform them so that they can leave later for the appointment or take a slower journey, to avoid having to wait in the waiting room.

Other Reasonable Adjustments

- Dentist appointments offered at quieter times
- Lighting softened and not harsh or fluorescent in GP practices and health centres
- Furniture arranged to the side of the room to minimise visual stimuli
- Avoidance of bright strong colours and patterns on walls and floors
- Encouraging individuals to bring along something to an appointment to distract them or calm them down — for example headphones or notebook to gather thought or feeling
- Televisions in waiting areas muted or on low volume
- Fragrant air fresheners avoided and instead air neutralisers are used
- Entrance and exit signage are large and bold
- Stairs, ramps and steps are clearly marked to avoid trips and falls.

Example of Reasonable Adjustments - finding employment

A young man living in Supported Living who was quite able but highly anxious.

He wanted a job and to have a life like his peers and wanted to attend training at a garden centre, to learn skills to progress towards his goal of employment.

He did well and was supported by an inclusive employment service to produce a CV, apply for jobs and prepare for interviews.

He was supported with conversations with his parents who had hesitations around his aspirations for employment.



Example of Reasonable Adjustments - employment

Under the Equality Act 2010 it is required that employers and service providers make 'reasonable adjustments' to allow disabled people access to the same services and opportunities as non-disabled people.

The Equality Act 2010 places a legal duty on employers to make these reasonable adjustments for disabled employees.

The approach taken may vary from one disabled individual to another and will be dependent on circumstances.

The adjustments must be effective, practical and significant.

Reasonable adjustments must be made for both employees as well as job applicants.

Identifying what is required in employment

The individual who may require reasonable adjustments needs to be listened to and consideration given to their specific needs, as well as other factors such as work pattern, tasks required and work environment.

Government guidelines state that reasonable adjustments for employers can include:

- Changing the recruitment process so a candidate can be considered for a job
- Doing things another way, such as allowing someone with social anxiety disorder to have their own desk instead of hot-desking
- Making physical changes to the workplace, like installing a ramp for a wheelchair user or an audio-visual

fire alarm for a deaf person

- If possible, removing elements that might have a negative impact on the individual such as very bright lights above their desk
- Arranging for a disabled person work somewhere else, such as on the ground floor for a wheelchair user
- Changing equipment, for instance providing a special keyboard if they have arthritis
- Changing working arrangements, for

example the employee's shift pattern

- Allowing employees who become disabled to make a phased return to work, including flexible hours or part-time working
- Offering employees training opportunities
- Adapting the induction/onboarding process
- Having more frequent one-to-one meetings
- Simplifying instructions and making adjustments to deadlines
- Allocating a workplace buddy



Useful information

Additional useful links and resources used:

[AbilityNet – What are Reasonable Adjustments?](#)

[ACAS - Asking for](#)

[Reasonable Adjustments](#)

[Government guidelines on Adjustments for Disabled Adults](#)

[Improving Healthcare](#)

[Access for Disabled Adults](#)

[National Institute for Health care and Excellence - checklist for Autism-Friendly Environments](#)



This booklet was co-produced by the Meaningful Lives team on behalf of Essex County Council

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