



What employers need to know about Access to Work

In London, 200,000 people are blind or partially sighted, yet only a quarter of working age people with a visual impairment are employed. People with sight loss have the skills and abilities to succeed, but they need to be given the opportunity.



Vision Foundation
London's sight loss charity

Employing someone with sight loss

With the right equipment, support and some minor workplace adjustments, someone living with sight loss can be as much of an asset to your organisation as any other employee.

Access to Work¹ can help. It's a government funding scheme that supports people with disabilities to overcome workplace barriers, placing them on an equal footing to those without disabilities.

This factsheet outlines what Access to Work funding can cover, and how to apply for it.



ATW support with getting to and from work by taxi has meant that I have been able to work in London without worrying about using public transport!



About Access to Work

Access to Work provides financial support for blind and partially sighted workers so they can continue in or start work. The funding can help cover costs such as adaptations to work premises, specialist equipment, work-related travel costs and the provision of support workers.

How can it help my organisation?

By supporting blind and partially sighted employees, Access to Work can help your organisation to:

- Hire blind and partially sighted people with the skills you need.
- Retain an employee who develops a sight problem, keeping their valuable skills and saving both time and money recruiting a replacement.
- Show that you value and will support your employees by having good employment policies and practices.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>

Through Access to Work, your employees can get help paying for support they may need because of their sight problem, for example:

- Help and equipment in the workplace – such as screen readers (which read out what's on a computer screen), braille embossers and screen magnifiers.
- Adapting the office environment – for example, by maximising lighting to improve an employee's functional vision or marking stairs with a coloured strip.
- Travel to work and travel in work via taxi.
- Support workers to assist with administrative duties or guiding to meetings.

How much will the grant be for?

The level of grant will depend on:

- whether the person is employed or self-employed
- how long they have been in their job
- the type of help required.

Access to Work will consider paying grants of up to 100% for:

- self-employed people
- people who have been working for less than six weeks when they first apply for Access to Work
- support workers
- additional costs relating to travel to work and travel while in work.

Will my organisation have to pay?

As an employer, you may have to share the costs with Access to Work if the person has been working for your organisation for more than six weeks when they apply for a grant.

You will only have to share the cost for:

- special aids and equipment
 - adaptations to premises or equipment.
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What will my organisation's share of the costs be?

When cost sharing applies, Access to Work will refund up to 80% of the approved costs between a threshold and £10,000. The amount of the threshold is determined by the number of employees your organisation has:

- 0 to 49 employees: nil
- 50 to 249 employees: £500
- Over 250 employees: £1,000

As the employer, your organisation will contribute 100% of costs up to the threshold and 20% of the costs between the threshold and £10,000. Any balance above £10,000 will usually be met by Access to Work.

How can someone claim?

Your employee can apply for Access to Work funding if they need help and support to get them back to work.

The quickest and easiest way to apply is online at: www.gov.uk/access-to-work. They can also apply by phoning Jobcentre Plus on: 0800 121 7479.

Your employee will be asked what help and support they need when they apply. Access to Work will also contact you for more information.

About the Vision Foundation

The Vision Foundation transforms the lives of people facing or living with sight loss by funding projects that inform, empower and include.

Being blind or partially sighted shouldn't mean you're left out, isolated or held back. But too many people are. That's why we amplify the voices of blind and partially sighted people and inspire others to advocate and take action.

Our mission is to make London a shining example of a sight loss aware city.

Four ways you can make a difference...

Donate

Fundraise for us, make a donation or leave us a gift in your will to fund our life-changing work.

Shop

Visit your local Vision Foundation shop to donate and buy pre-loved clothes, books and toys.

Share

Do you have experience of living with sight loss? Share your story with us and together we'll change hearts, minds and lives.

Join

Become part of our expanding team of passionate volunteers and employees, working each day to make a difference.

Connect with us:

Call us: **020 7620 2066**

Email us: **hello@visionfoundation.org.uk**

Website: **www.visionfoundation.org.uk**

 **@Vision_Fdn**

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VF-FS-0001