

# Writing a reasonable adjustment policy for your workforce



This guidance is for anyone who:

- is about to write a reasonable adjustments policy for their workforce; or
- is reviewing a reasonable adjustment policy.

It contains some basic principles to think about as you write or review your policy and ends with an example of possible procedures for implementing the policy. Alongside the policies and procedures, it is essential that managers have the training and knowledge about how to make reasonable adjustments to minimise legal and reputational risks, as well as loss of disabled talent.

## Principles behind a reasonable adjustment policy

1. First identify who the policy is for. Is it for line managers or all colleagues including line managers?
2. Do you want to write a policy that is just about reasonable adjustments for disabled colleagues or would it be better to have a workplace adjustments policy which covers all adjustments for anyone who needs or wants to work differently e.g. carers, people who want flexible working, remote workers, pregnant women?
3. If you are writing a 'workplace adjustments policy' be clear that some staff are legally entitled to adjustments. If a manager intends to refuse a request for a workplace adjustment they need an easy to use procedure for checking that this is something that they can and should do i.e. it is both legally the right thing to do and in line with corporate policy. As a rule of thumb, if the manager has the authority and inclination to make the adjustment they should do so. If they feel they don't have that authority or are disinclined to say yes, they should check their decision with someone else. You need to find a way to communicate this procedure to all managers.
4. Keep it simple. Policies should be short and easy to understand i.e. written in plain English.
5. Remember that your policy is likely to be quoted back to you by colleagues requesting adjustments and also in any Employment Tribunal proceedings where it is alleged that adjustments have not been made by their employer.
6. Policies are only as good as the procedures to put them into practice. Ensure that the policy is backed up by a robust procedure that enables managers to implement adjustments in accordance with the policy. This is particularly important if you specify timescales for decisions and implementation.

7. A reasonable adjustment policy by itself is not enough. You need to ensure that you embed the principle of considering and making reasonable adjustments for disabled colleagues in your other policies e.g. sickness absence or attendance management policies, recruitment policies, redundancy policies and redeployment policies.

## Example procedure for making reasonable adjustments

Every organisation is different and so processes should be tailored to reflect the specific requirements of each organisation. Some organisations outsource some or all aspects of their adjustments process in which case please contact the Advice Service at 020 7089 2400 or [advice@businessdisabilityforum.org.uk](mailto:advice@businessdisabilityforum.org.uk) for more information.

Table one is based on a model where adjustments are coordinated in-house.

**Table one: Example workplace adjustments process**

1	Employee experiences difficulty at work due to disability or long-term injury or illness.
2	Line manager talks with employee to identify possible adjustments to overcome difficulty.
3	If solution is straight forward, manager makes the adjustment, records it and sets a time for a review.
4	If adjustments are difficult to identify, manager escalates the matter to HR.
5	HR offers advice and if necessary coordinates the involvement of experts to help identify adjustments.
6	The manager, HR and the colleague work together to decide if particular adjustments will be effective and are reasonable.
7	Reasonable adjustments are implemented and recorded and a date is set for a review in a Tailored Adjustment Agreement.
8	If adjustments are not reasonable, then final decision is escalated to a senior manager who has responsibility for disability on a global or national level.
9	If there are no adjustments that will enable the employee to continue in their original role, look for suitable alternative vacancies they can do (with or without adjustments).
10	If there are no suitable alternative vacancies, then employee's contract may be terminated.

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### Notes:

[3],[7]: You can use BDF's [Tailored Adjustment Agreement](#) to record details of adjustments once they have been agreed.

[5] This might be your occupational health provider, employee's own medical adviser, internal departments such as IT or facilities, a disability specialist organisation / charity or government programme depending on the country e.g. Access to Work).

[6] You can use BDF's [Reasonable adjustment request form](#) to help you decide whether an adjustment is reasonable.

[9] See BDF briefing on redeployment for further guidance