The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) will ensure employees and applicants who require adjustments to their work practices and arrangements due to a disability are treated in compliance with the Equality Act. The policy defines the OPCC’s obligations in relation to the Equality Act when considering and making reasonable adjustments.

All employees of the OPCC

This document is not part of the formal policy. Instead it provides additional information to help you as the manager in the practical day to day application of the policy.

It is expected that you will have an understanding of the Reasonable Adjustments Policy prior to using this guide.
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Roles and responsibilities

As the manager you are responsible for:

- applying the Reasonable Adjustments Policy accurately
- completing the relevant risk assessment
- referring the employee to the Health and Wellbeing Team where relevant
- considering reasonable adjustments and deciding whether to implement where reasonable
- considering the impact of any reasonable adjustments on the wider team and managing appropriately
- tracking and progressing the implementation of adjustments where agreed
- completing the decision sheet
- arranging relevant funding
- reviewing adjustments, or a decision not to implement adjustments, with the employee and Health & Wellbeing on an annual basis
- supporting the Access to Work assessment
- maintaining appropriate standards of confidentiality
- arranging meetings as necessary
- liaising with other departments if applicable

All employees/applicants are responsible for:

- advising you of their disability
- discussing with you any reasonable adjustments they wish to be considered
- submitting applications to Access To Work if appropriate
- engaging with the Health and Wellbeing Team if a referral is made
- applying the Reasonable Adjustments Policy accurately

The HR person who is supporting you is responsible for:

- advising on policy application
- supporting with case management
- advising and supporting the completion of letters, reports and relevant documentation
- attending meetings in an advisory capacity
- HR does not perform a decision making role

The trade union representative or OPCC work colleague is responsible for:

- supporting their member/colleague
- attending meetings or ensuring meetings are covered and not delayed

They may make representations, submit papers, ask questions
and address a meeting on behalf of the employee. They may not answer questions on behalf of the employee.

The Reasonable Adjustments Policy provides you with the information that you need when supporting an employee who may require a reasonable adjustment.

It may be that you have not managed an employee with a disability or an individual who requires reasonable adjustments before. This section aims to provide you with some general guidance about the types of skills and behaviours you will need and some of the factors you may need to consider.

As a manager you are pivotal in ensuring your employee is supported if they inform you of a disability or if they have an existing disability that requires reasonable adjustments. The following skills/behaviours may be valuable in achieving a positive outcome for the employee, your team and the organisation. They include the ability to:

- empathise
- adapt your style to meet the needs of the employee
- focus on practical solutions
- adapt your communication skills – with the employee and with the wider team
- consider the wider organisational context e.g. work styles and how this positively or negatively impacts on the employee and the wider team
- consider the team in terms of the workload impact, maintaining effective communication, addressing team issues or conflict and other matters that may arise

It is important that you manage conversations with the employee who has approached you about a disability or reasonable adjustment sensitively as the employee may find it difficult to talk about their circumstances or may feel concerned about how it will affect their job.

Timely and effective management support from you and careful consideration of reasonable adjustments will help to ensure the employee feels valued and able to perform their duties to their full potential.

If the employee feels unsupported it may lead to them experiencing;
- reduced motivation and job satisfaction
• reduced efficiency and effectiveness
• sickness absence
• reduced involvement within the team
• exclusion from relevant information being shared
• low opinions of managers
• disappointment with the organisation
• feelings of depression and anxiety
• fear of losing their job

Prevention of the employee experiencing the types of issues identified above is a key management activity and will involve you:
• using the policy and how to guide to support the process
• addressing any issues that employee raises with you as soon as possible and managing the process effectively
• seeking support from a colleague or HR Operations where required
• considering the skills/behaviours provided as examples of good practice
• reviewing the reasonable adjustments decision form on a regular basis to ensure the adjustments remain effective

You will also need to consider how any reasonable adjustments impact on the rest of your team. To provide a workplace that is inclusive for all of your team you can:
• provide training on the Reasonable Adjustments Policy to ensure employees have a clear understanding of the policy provisions and to raise awareness within the team
• hold regular team meetings to ensure your team feel included and informed and to share messages
• hold regular 1:1 meetings to provide employees with an opportunity to discuss issues in a confidential environment
• conduct yourself in an appropriate way during the course of your work, adapting behaviours and approach where needed, to ensure inclusion of all employees
• address any issues that you identify within the team as soon as possible.

Where you believe an employee may be experiencing difficulties you must approach them to discuss it at the earliest opportunity. Being proactive in recognising when employees may need to discuss something that is bothering them, having an open approach to talking things through and working together to resolve issues can prevent many concerns from escalating. This applies to the individual where reasonable adjustments may be/
are applicable or a colleague who may subsequently be affected by any reasonable adjustments that are in place.

**Duty to consider and where reasonable to make adjustments**

Where an employee or applicant discloses that they have a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act, the OPCC’s obligation is to consider all adjustments and to make them where reasonable.

Reasonable adjustments are a practical way to remove disadvantages faced by disabled applicants and employees. Examples of reasonable adjustments may include (this list is not exhaustive):

For applicants in the recruitment process:
- checking access requirements prior to the interview by letter or email
- using large print if appropriate or requested
- following up interview arrangements with telephone or text phone communication
- providing a hearing loop
- booking room with level access and good lighting
- providing a sign language interpreter. If an external interpreter and/or specialist facility is required for interview funding is available from Access to Work (ATW)
- providing interview questions in an alternative format at the interview, e.g. in written form.

If a test is being used during recruitment:
- providing a reader
- providing test material in a suitable format
- allowing more time
- finding another method to test for competence

For employee’s who acquire a disability or impairment:
- allocating some of the disabled employee’s duties to a colleague, with consideration of the wider impact on the individual and the team
- altering the employee’s hours of work with consideration of the needs of the service
- providing additional training
- assigning the employee to a different place of work or training
- allowing the employee to be absent during working or training hours for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment
- giving or arranging for training or mentoring (whether for
the disabled person or any other person)
- making adjustments to premises
- acquiring or modifying equipment
- modifying instructions or reference manuals
- providing a reader or interpreter
- providing supervision or other support
- altering or modifying the selection process according to the nature of the condition (including how interviews are conducted and how tests and equipment are used)
- supporting the employee through the redeployment process

It is essential when considering any reasonable adjustment that you fully consult with the applicant employee concerned as not all disabilities require adjustments to the workplace.

The OPCC is a two ticks employer and has therefore made the following five commitments:
- to interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and to consider them on their abilities
- to discuss with disabled employees, at any time but at least once a year, what you can both do to make sure they can develop and use their abilities
- to make every effort when employees become disabled to make sure they stay in employment
- to take action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make these commitments work
- to review these commitments every year and assess what has been achieved, plan ways to improve on them and let employees and Jobcentre Plus know about progress and future plans

**How to manage discussions**
You and the applicant/ employee can discuss the need for workplace adjustments and which aspects of their role create difficulties for them. Whilst applicants/ employees are encouraged to look at potential adjustments, it is ultimately for you to decide whether the proposed adjustments are reasonable. You must discuss your decision with the applicant/ employee.

**How to complete a health and safety risk assessment**
A risk assessment should be used to determine the likelihood and severity of risk to enable you to reach a decision.

The Health and Safety department can provide advice on
undertaking specific risk assessments.

You must conduct a risk assessment (whether or not the condition is covered by the Equality Act) to assess if there are any health and safety implications to the current role that need to be managed, including safety of colleagues or members of the public who may be affected. Risk assessments must have control measures which ensure;

- the employee to which the Equality Act applies has a healthy and safe working environment
- colleagues are not placed at an increased level of risk due to the reasonable adjustment
- if there is a requirement for a colleague to take on additional tasks within their role as a consequence of the reasonable adjustment, that this does not place them at increased risk
- there is a safe evacuation procedure for all employees

### How to arrange physical access adjustments

You can arrange physical access improvements by contacting the Corporate Health and Safety Adviser.

### How to arrange desktop or software adjustments

An employee should contact Access to Work to arrange a workplace assessment. Once an assessment has been carried out, the recommendations can be discussed in detail with the IT department who can provide advice on how these integrate with the OPCC’s systems and support with purchasing them.

### How to arrange a referral to the Health and Wellbeing service

You are encouraged to make contact with the Health and Wellbeing Team as it may not be necessary to undertake a full referral to gain the relevant advice.

The Health and Wellbeing Team provide:

- a medical view on whether they perceive that the condition falls under the remit of the Equality Act
- suggestions, from a medical perspective, on the types of adjustments that may support the employee

The Health and Wellbeing service are unable to give a definitive answer on whether the employee is covered by the Equality Act as this is not within their remit. This does not prevent you from facilitating reasonable adjustments where required.

It is important that you do not use medical advice as the sole factor in influencing decisions about the nature and possibility of adjustments.
Access to Work (ATW) is able to provide practical advice and information to disabled people and employers through a telephone or face to face assessment.

This programme, administered by Jobcentre Plus, is designed to assist disabled people into work or within the workplace. They consider requests for the funding of:

- communicator support, which meets the full cost of hiring an interpreter, to remove barriers to communication at job interviews
- a support worker, which allows the applicant to use the services of a helper, e.g. a reader for a visually impaired person or specialist coaching for someone with learning difficulties
- special aids equipment to help a disabled person function in the workplace
- adaptations to premises or existing equipment
- help towards the cost of getting to work if someone is unable to use public transport because of a disability

ATW become involved at the request of the disabled person and you are advised to encourage employees or applicants to use the support available. There can be a long lead in time for Access to Work. The employee should be advised of this to enable them to make early contact where necessary.

ATW assess what adjustments are required and may provide financial assistance to put these in place.

In the case of applicants or those employed for less than 6 weeks, the grant is up to 100% of the approved costs.

For individuals already employed, the grant is up to 80% of the approved costs over the first £1000 or 100% for approved costs over £10,000.

In most circumstances the OPCC meets the cost of the adjustment and seeks reimbursement from ATW. You must contact ATW to request a form for reimbursement of costs. Funding is only available from the date that the application is completed, returned and accepted, no back-dated claims are awarded. Therefore, it is advisable to do this as soon as possible.

To check on the progress of an application please contact ATW and quote the applicant’s name. Even if the applicant is
unsuccessful at interview, funding can still be claimed if their ATW application had been accepted.

How to manage adjustments prior to a new employee’s start date

Prior to the new employee commencing employment you must:
- complete a personal emergency evacuation plan
- determine whether any reasonable adjustments may delay the new employee’s start date and discuss this with the individual

How to manage adjustments during the induction period

During the employee’s induction period you should:
- follow the usual induction procedure
- check the need for or effectiveness of adjustments
- regularly in first 6 weeks
- ensure a personal fire evacuation procedure is agreed in conjunction with Health and Safety if necessary
- inform and ensure understanding from other team members as necessary and in discussion with the employee

Management considerations

You need to review all of the information you receive from Health and Safety, Health and Wellbeing, Access to Work and any other agencies and should do this in conjunction with HR Operations.

Ultimately it is for you to make the decision about the reasonableness of any proposed adjustments with full consideration of the information provided.

You must ensure that you are familiar with existing adjustments when an employee transfers to your department, particularly if equipment needs to be relocated with the employee.

How to decide if the adjustment is reasonable

If an adjustment is reasonable to make, then you must do so.

Whether it is reasonable to make any particular adjustment will depend on a number of factors which have to be looked at in totality. You must consider the:
- effectiveness of the adjustment in preventing the disadvantage
- practicality of the adjustment
- financial and other costs of the adjustment including the disruption caused
- extent of the OPCC’s financial or other resources
- availability of financial or other assistance to help make an adjustment
• the nature of the OPCC’s activities and the size of it’s undertaking

Further detail relating to each of the above factors is provided in the sections below.

Effectiveness of the step in preventing the disadvantage

It is unlikely to be reasonable to make an adjustment which is of little benefit to the disabled person. However, if the adjustment is of marginal benefit, but is part of a number of adjustments, which together are effective, it is likely to be reasonable to make it.

There may be occasions when an employee has a condition that requires an adjustment both inside and outside of the workplace and therefore the adjustment is required to support normal day to day activities. In such instances you may consider financially contributing to the adjustment on a case by case basis. An example of this would be an employee who requires a hearing instrument which supports them both within the workplace and outside of work.

The practicality of the adjustment

It is more likely to be reasonable to take a step which is easy to take, rather than difficult. For instance, if needing to appoint someone urgently, it may not be practical to wait for an adjustment to be made to a building entrance. However it may be reasonable to consider a temporary adjustment for a short period, such as using a less convenient entrance, following consultation with the applicant/employee.

Financial and other costs of the adjustment

You should take into account:
• if an adjustment costs little or nothing and is not disruptive, it would be reasonable unless some other factor made it unreasonable
• what might otherwise be spent in the circumstances. For instance it would be reasonable to spend at least as much on an adjustment to retain the employee as you might on recruiting and training a replacement
• the significance of the value of the employee’s experience and expertise as well as the amount of resources (such as training) invested by the OPCC
• the employee’s length of service both with the OPCC and local government
• the employee’s level of skill and knowledge. If there is a significant cost attached to the adjustment(s), it is more likely to be reasonable where this is for an employee who is likely to be in the job for some time compared to a temporary employee
- the availability of external funding
- the OPCC’s resources as a whole

### Availability of financial assistance

If equipment has been supplied through ATW in a previous employment, it is reasonable to expect the employee to bring the equipment with them.

The employee is not required to contribute to the cost of an adjustment but if they are prepared to use a particular piece of personal equipment in their work, it would be reasonable to allow the use of such equipment and it might make it reasonable for you to consider another adjustments, (e.g. if the employee already has a piece of communication equipment which they bring it to work for work use, it may be reasonable to meet the cost of any repairs).

### Extent of the disruption

It is likely to be reasonable to make an adjustment which might cause only minor inconvenience to other employees, or the OPCC, than one which might prevent other employees from doing their job, or cause other significant disruption.

If making the adjustment would create a health and safety risk to the employee or any other person, then it may not be reasonable to make the adjustment.

### How to record your decision

You must complete the Reasonable Adjustments decision sheet which records the information that has been provided, the decision that has been made about the adjustments and timescales for reviewing adjustments.

You must complete the decision sheet whether reasonable adjustments are implemented or not as this provides the audit trail of how you arrived at your decision.

### How to review and record your decision

You must diarise to review the reasonable adjustments or the decision not to implement adjustments on an annual basis.

This allows you and the employee to discuss whether:
- their needs have changed
- any adjustments need to be changed
- adjustments that were previously not made, may now been possible
- adjustments are no longer reasonable due to team, organisational or workforce change

At this review it is important to update the decision sheet or to
complete a new decision sheet as a record of your discussions and decision.

Support
Managers:
Any queries can be directed to HR Operations.

How to guide
Governance

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