Job Coaches & Support Workers

Finding the Right Support for You

A practical guide to understanding support roles, identifying what would help and agreeing an arrangement that respects your choices.

What is the difference?

Job coach and support worker titles can overlap. Access to Work, for example, lists a job coach as one kind of support worker. Providers may describe roles differently, so the job title alone may not tell you what support will look like. Agree the tasks, boundaries and goals with the service and the person who will support you.

SUPPORT TYPE	OFTEN FOCUSES ON	QUESTIONS TO CLARIFY
Job coach	Learning a role, practising tasks, building routines and reviewing progress.	What will we practise? How will support change as my skills or tasks change?
Support worker	A broader label for practical or specialist help linked to access needs.	What tasks will the worker support? What remains my responsibility?
Employer adjustments	Changes to recruitment, work arrangements, equipment, communication or environment.	Which changes should my employer consider, and who will arrange them?

Support should enable your work

The aim is to help you take part in work in a way that fits your goals. You should be involved in deciding what help is useful, what information is shared and when support is reviewed. A coach or worker should not take over your role or speak for you without your agreement.

Start with your own goal

- What would you like to do more easily or confidently at work?
- When or where does the barrier happen?
- What are you already able to do, and what change would help?
- Would coaching, communication support, travel support or task-specific help fit the situation?

Finding a good fit

A helpful support plan begins with the work task or barrier, not just the name of a service. Think through the kind of help that would make work more accessible while keeping your own preferences and responsibilities clear.

Possible reasons to explore a coach

- You are learning a new role or unfamiliar tasks.
- It helps to break tasks into clear steps or practise a routine in the workplace.
- You want support to communicate about priorities or expectations.
- You and the employer want to check progress and adapt the training approach.

Possible reasons to explore a support worker

- You need specialist communication support, such as an interpreter.
- A disability-related travel barrier makes getting to or around work difficult.
- You need practical help with particular work-related tasks.
- A named person could help with a specific access need that has been discussed and agreed.

These examples are not a checklist for eligibility. The support available depends on your role, circumstances, provider and any funding decision. Titles can overlap: explain the task and ask the service what its support worker or job coach would do.

Questions to ask before support begins

- What will the person help me do, and where will support happen?
- How will you take account of my communication and learning preferences?
- What will be shared with my employer, and can I agree this first?
- How will I stay in control of decisions and work conversations?
- Who can I contact if the arrangement is not working or the worker is unavailable?

My starting point

Work task or barrier: _____

What I can already do: _____

What support I want to explore: _____

Agreeing boundaries and reviewing support

A written plan can prevent misunderstandings. It can explain the purpose of support, the tasks involved, how information is shared and how you will review the arrangement.

Agree together

- The goal or barrier the support is intended to address.
- The tasks you will do yourself and where the coach or worker will assist.
- Where and when support happens, including travel or remote working.
- How the support person will communicate with you and with the employer.
- What information can be shared, with whom and for what purpose.
- Cover arrangements, contact details and a review date.

Job coach, support worker and employer adjustments

JOB COACH OR SUPPORT WORKER	EMPLOYER ADJUSTMENTS
Access to Work may fund practical support for eligible people. Its examples include support workers such as interpreters, job coaches and travel buddies. A grant is not guaranteed; check eligibility and current rules.	Employers must consider reasonable adjustments where a disabled worker or applicant would otherwise face substantial disadvantage. Access to Work does not pay for adjustments that are the employer's responsibility.

Plan a review

What will tell us the support is helping? Are tasks becoming easier, clearer or more manageable? What should change if the support is too much, too little or unavailable? Agree who will review the plan and when.

You can ask for your preferences and privacy to be respected. If your needs, role or working arrangements change, revisit the plan with the relevant people.

My support plan

Use these prompts to prepare for a conversation with a provider, employer or Access to Work. Complete only what feels useful.

My work goal or role

_____

_____

The task or barrier I want help with

_____

_____

Support I want to explore

☐ Job coach ☐ Support worker ☐ Communication support ☐ Travel support

☐ Employer adjustment ☐ Other _____ ☐ Not sure yet

What I want the support person to do

_____

_____

What I want to do myself and what should remain private

_____

_____

Who I will speak to and when we will review

Person/service: _____ Review date: _____

My first question: _____

Official information

GOV.UK · Access to Work: https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work

GOV.UK · Access to Work factsheet for customers: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-work-factsheet/access-to-work-factsheet-for-customers

GOV.UK · Reasonable adjustments: https://www.gov.uk/reasonable-adjustments-for-disabled-workers

General information only. Support roles and funding decisions vary; check current official and local guidance.