Understanding Physical Accessibility at Work

Physical access includes entering, moving around and using a workplace comfortably and safely. Access needs can change over time.

Arrival and movement

Entrances, parking, doors, lifts, corridors and distances between spaces.

Workstations and equipment

Seating, desk height, positioning and equipment suited to individual needs.

Shared facilities and physical demands

Toilets, kitchens, meeting rooms, standing, lifting, pain and fatigue.

Which parts of my workplace are accessible and work well for me?

Where do I encounter barriers or unnecessary physical demands?

My Physical Access Map

Consider your journey through a typical working day. Record both barriers and arrangements that already help.

Arriving and entering

Parking, transport links, entrances, doors and lifts.

Moving between spaces

Routes, corridors, stairs, distance and obstacles.

My workstation

Seating, desk layout, equipment and positioning.

Shared facilities and leaving

Toilets, kitchens, meeting rooms, exits and the journey home.

Which parts of this journey are most difficult, and why?

Pain, Fatigue & Changing Mobility Needs

Mobility and physical comfort may vary from day to day. Consider the demands created by the workplace, not just the tasks themselves.

Pain and discomfort

Positions, repetitive movements, unsuitable equipment or long periods of standing.

Fatigue and recovery

Distances, repeated journeys, demanding schedules and opportunities to rest.

Fluctuating needs

Different levels of mobility, stamina or pain at different times.

Which activities place the greatest demands on my body?

What changes could reduce strain or support recovery?

Identifying Physical Workplace Adjustments

Adjustments may involve the environment, equipment, facilities or working arrangements. The right solution depends on the barrier.

Building access

Suitable entrances, ramps, lifts, routes and parking.

Workstations

Adjustable desks, supportive seating and adapted tools.

Working arrangements

Flexible breaks, adjusted duties, scheduling or alternative locations.

Facilities and safety

Accessible toilets, rest spaces and appropriate emergency arrangements.

Which barriers would I most like to address?

Which adjustments or previous solutions could help?

UK employers may have duties to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

Preparing to Discuss My Access Needs

You can explain the workplace barrier and its impact without sharing every detail of your medical history.

1. Identify the barrier

Describe the physical condition or arrangement that creates difficulty.

2. Explain the impact

Explain how it affects access, comfort, safety or participation.

3. Suggest a change

Identify an adjustment or alternative that could reduce the barrier.

4. Agree on next steps

Discuss who will consider the request and when it will be reviewed.

The barrier or difficulty I want to discuss:

How it affects my working day:

My Accessibility Conversation Notes

Use this page to prepare the details and questions that matter to you. You can take these notes into a workplace conversation.

The adjustment or support I would like to request:

Who I could approach, and why they may be helpful:

Questions I want to prepare or information I need:

My Physical Access & Mobility Plan

Bring together the barriers, adjustments and support that matter most.

My main physical access barriers

Which difficulties have the greatest impact?

My mobility and comfort needs

What helps me move and work comfortably?

Adjustments that could help

Which equipment, changes or arrangements might help?

Support and communication

Who could I approach, and how?

Next Steps & Reviewing Accessibility

Consider how to follow up and what to do if barriers remain.

My first manageable step:

Who will be involved and when might I follow up?

How will I know whether changes are working?

What will I do if the barrier remains or my needs change?