



# Guide to Reasonable Adjustments

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# About this guide

The information in this guide covers England, Scotland and Wales. It is intended as a brief overview of reasonable adjustments, with links to further information as needed.

If you would like information or resources about ME, or talk to someone about services and support available, contact Action for M.E. on 0117 927 9551 (choose option one to request a call-back), [send us an email](#) or visit [our website](#).

# What are reasonable adjustments?

Reasonable Adjustments are part of [The Equality Act 2010](#) which covers Great Britain and is a law which protects people from discrimination.

Under the Equality Act 2010, public services and other organisations in the UK are legally required “to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the disadvantage,” ie. remove barriers which disadvantage disabled people.

# Who is entitled to reasonable adjustments?

In the UK, disabled people as defined by the Equality Act 2010 are entitled to access reasonable adjustments. Public services also have an ‘anticipatory’ duty to make services accessible in advance.

People with ME are entitled to request reasonable adjustments because ME/CFS is noted in guidance to the [Equality Act 2010, Section A5](#) as an impairment which can give rise to a disability. By law, service providers must make reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled people are not at a substantial disadvantage due to their disability. Required adjustments could include changes to policies, physical features, or equipment that remove or reduce a barrier.

The [2021 NICE Guideline for ME/CFS](#) for health and social care professionals says (section 1.9.2) “Advise and discuss with people with ME/CFS that they may be able to access reasonable adjustments or adaptations (in line with the Equality Act 2010) to help them continue or return to work or education.”

# Examples of what constitutes “reasonable”

Any adjustments made must be reasonable, taking into consideration factors such as:

- cost – whether the change is affordable for the organisation or service.
- impact – how effective the adjustment would be in meeting the person’s needs.
- practicality – whether the adjustment can realistically be put in place.
- individual circumstances – the specific needs and situation of the person involved.
- type of service or organisation – what is appropriate given the nature, size, and purpose of the service or organisation.

This means it can vary from situation to situation. The Equality and Human Rights Commission define [what is meant by the term reasonable](#).

Appropriate reasonable adjustments vary according to the individual circumstances, below are some examples of reasonable adjustments (please note this is not exhaustive):

- Virtual or telephone appointments
- Quiet areas
- Low lighting
- Notes provided after meetings
- Changes to communication such as using email rather than phone
- Easy read documents
- Breaks
- Ramps
- Accessible parking
- Accessible toilets

# Who has a duty to make reasonable adjustments?

The following pages give a non-exhaustive list of examples, in alphabetical order, of service providers who have a duty to provide reasonable adjustments. We also include some key information and links to resources.

## Education providers

Education providers such as colleges and universities must provide reasonable adjustments to help students access learning. Disability Rights UK provides [guidance about reasonable adjustments for disabled students and apprentices](#).

## Businesses or service providers

Businesses and service providers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments, what is deemed reasonable depends on factors such as the type and size of the business or service and the cost and practicality of any adjustments. Businesses and service providers could include:

- Utilities such as energy and water providers
- Telecoms such as mobile networks
- Property such as estate agents
- Legal such as law firms and financial advisers

Citizens Advice offer guidance about [disability discrimination and energy suppliers](#).

Disability Justice Project offer an [accessible information and communication discrimination guide](#).

## Clubs and associations

Clubs and associations have a duty to make sure disabled people can join, participate in and use their services. Adjustments may include changing physical access to premises or providing information in accessible formats. The obligation to put reasonable adjustments in place is dependent on factors like the size and type of the club and cost. Clubs and associations could include:

- Sports clubs
- Trade unions
- Professional bodies

## Employers

Under Equality Act 2010 legislation, an employee does not need a diagnosis to request reasonable adjustments.

Employees and employers should work together to consider the most appropriate reasonable adjustments and to trial and review reasonable adjustments.

To support you to better understand your rights in the workplace, Action for ME's guide, [The rights of people with ME at work](#), outlines relevant acts such as the Equality Act 2010, The Health and Safety Work Act 1974 and Flexible Working Act 2004. It also includes information about the rights of carers who may be supporting you.

Action for ME's guide, [Support for people with ME at work](#), offers a "Challenges, needs, solutions" approach to thinking about reasonable adjustments. It also has information on Access to Work, phased returns after sickness absence, and occupational health.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS), provides detailed information about [reasonable adjustments at work](#), including making and handling requests, having a meeting, and reviewing/keeping records.

## Housing Associations and landlords

Housing associations and landlords have a duty to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010, making access and use of properties and services more accessible for disabled tenants. Reasonable adjustments that may be put in place depend on the practicality, cost and type of housing association or landlord.

Shelter is a charity offering advice, support and legal services regarding housing. They offer [information on their website](#) about reasonable adjustments for disabled people.

## NHS services

The NHS must make it as easy for disabled people to use health services as it is for people who are not disabled. These include:

- General Practitioners (GPs)
- Hospitals (also see p 5)
- Home care agencies
- Dental services
- Pharmacies.

The NHS England website has [advice for NHS professionals about offering and making reasonable adjustments](#), including the Reasonable Adjustment Digital Flag.

The [Reasonable Adjustment Digital Flag](#) is a national record which indicates that reasonable adjustments are required for an individual. By 30 September 2026, all the following bodies must, by law, have a Reasonable Adjustment Digital Flag system in place:

- All providers of NHS care or treatment.
- All providers of publicly funded social care.
- Social care or services bodies (in their role as service providers).
- Independent contractors providing NHS services including primary medical services (GP practices), dental services, optometric services, and pharmacy services.
- NHS Foundation Trusts and NHS Trusts.
- Providers of NHS and/or social care from the voluntary and community or private sectors.
- Providers of public health services, including advice and information.

For people with severe ME or very severe ME considering reasonable adjustments that might be made during **hospital stays**, the [2021 NICE Guideline for ME/CFS](#) advises (section 1.17.7) that healthcare professionals:

- discuss with the person (and their family or carers, as appropriate) what to expect when they come into hospital
- aim to minimise discomfort and post-exertional malaise during transfer to hospital, for example by planning the route in advance, avoiding noisy areas and admitting them straight to the ward on arrival
- discuss the person's care and support plan with them, including information on comorbidities, intolerances and sensitivities, to plan any reasonable adjustments that are needed
- aim to provide a single room if possible
- keep stimuli to a minimum, for example by:
  - seeing them one-to-one
  - using calm movements and gestures
  - not duplicating assessments
  - being cautious about the pressure of touch
  - keeping lights dimmed
  - reducing sound
  - keeping a stable temperature
  - minimising smells.

## **Non-NHS health and care providers**

Non-NHS care providers, like all service providers in the UK, have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

This could include care homes and care agencies.

## **Public service providers including social care**

Public service provisions such as ambulance service trusts, public transport services and local councils – including social care services for children and adults – have a duty to provide reasonable adjustments to make their services accessible. The Equality Act places a specific duty on public authorities to comply with the [Public Sector Equality Duty \(Citizen Advice\)](#).

Under the PSED, public authorities are required to consider how their decisions and policies affect people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act.

All providers of publicly funded social care must be ready to implement the [Reasonable Adjustment Digital Flag](#) by 30 September 2026 (see p 4).

# How to request reasonable adjustments

If you wish to request Reasonable Adjustments, there are number of ways you can do so. It is recommended to communicate in writing and keep have a record of your request. However, you can make the request in the way which is most accessible to you. You may wish to have a family member or friend support you to communicate.

It is usually best to start with a brief, informal request outlining:

- the service you would like to access and
- how you are disadvantaged by a lack of reasonable adjustments

If you know what reasonable adjustment/s you would like to request, you can state these. Alternatively, you can ask what reasonable adjustments the organisation can offer. If needed, you can then make a more formal request for Reasonable Adjustments.

Citizens Advice has [advice including templates for letters](#) to request reasonable adjustments.

Action for ME provide a [template for an Impact Statement](#). An Impact Statement outlines the impact of ME on daily life and activities and help you communicate the adjustments which would best support you.

## If your request is refused

Citizens Advice provides advice for [if you have been refused reasonable adjustments](#). They also have an [online tool](#) to check what type of action is right for your situation.

If you your request for reasonable adjustments is refused, or you are not satisfied with the adjustments offered, you may wish to make a complaint using the organisation's complaints process. Organisations need to provide their complaints forms in accessible formats such as easy-read, larger font, different languages and formats which are compatible with assistive technologies.

If you would like to seek advice about facing discrimination you can contact the [Equality Advisory Support Service \(EASS\)](#). They offer a helpline and Live chat service which advises individuals on issues relating to equality and human rights across England, Scotland and Wales.

If you have experienced discrimination and wish to take legal action, there may be a limit on how long you have to take action. Citizens Advice gives more information on [time limits for taking legal action about discrimination](#).



**Registered office:**

Action for ME  
Unit 2.2 Streamline  
436-441 Paintworks  
Bristol, BS4 3AS




**Telephone:** 0117 927 9551

**Info & Support:** [infosupport@actionforme.org.uk](mailto:infosupport@actionforme.org.uk)

**Fundraising:** [fundraising@actionforme.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@actionforme.org.uk)

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