

# Supporting disabled employees to work from home - adjustments

The Government indicated that only key workers and people whose jobs “absolutely cannot be done from home” should travel to work. This means that employers will need to make adjustments that they might normally have made in the office for disabled employees working from home. The following is guidance for:

- people and line managers
- facilities managers
- ICT professionals
- HR managers
- D&I experts
- external suppliers.

## Assistive Technology

If disabled employees work with adjustments such as assistive technology on their computers, specialist chairs, desks or other equipment then you should consider ways in which these can be transported to their home.

For some employees who need adjustments such as assistive technology, installing the software they need onto work laptops that they can take home will be sufficient. However, for others a laptop screen is going to be too small. If an employee uses a large screen monitor because e.g. they have a visual impairment and still need to see the screen as well as use speech to text software, you may need to transport their monitor to their home.

There might be issues around licences, which are often for specific computers not users. Some providers are being flexible about this, so get in touch with your provider. It might be, however, that you will need to buy additional licences for employees’ home computers or laptops that you provide them with so that they can work from home.

You might also need to install video conferencing apps – such as Teams, Zoom or Skype – so that they can join meetings remotely or provide them with mobile phones with such apps installed. Remember, though, that video and teleconferencing can be challenging – if not impossible – for employees who are deaf or have a hearing impairment. Check with your provider on the latest developments. Both Zoom and Microsoft Team have indicated that they will provide captioning (subtitling) shortly. It may also be possible for an interpreter to join the meetings as well, if sufficient notice is given.

For more detailed guidance and advice see this blog post from BDF Ambassador Joanna Wootten - [linkedin.com/posts/joannawootten\\_jo-wootten-tips-for-working-remotely-when-activity-6647794849431072768-HYQH](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/joannawootten_jo-wootten-tips-for-working-remotely-when-activity-6647794849431072768-HYQH).

AbilityNet also have advice on their website at [abilitynet.org.uk/](https://abilitynet.org.uk/).

## Office furniture

Office furniture such as adapted chairs can also be transported to employee's homes. Desks can be more of a challenge. You can explore with the individual if they have anything at home that might suffice, but you do need to ensure that it's safe. E.g. using an ironing board might be a DIY standing desk as the height can be adjusted, but is it stable or big enough to support the computer being used?

Many providers are now offering remote workplace (meaning the home "office" now) assessments via video conferencing platforms. These are not ideal as it isn't always easy for the assessor to see how the person works when this is done remotely, but in the current circumstances it is still worth considering to ensure employees are working as safely as possible. Check with your assessment provider or call the Business Disability Forum Advice Service (if you are a BDF Member or Partner) for more information.

## The "home office" environment

Internet connections can be an issue if a lot of people in the household are using the connection at the same time. You could provide guidance on usage: e.g. what can they do offline so they can timetable this with other people at home, as well as scheduling "quiet times" with other members of the household, so they can concentrate. This is particularly true of employees with children who are using the internet for home schooling or who live with someone else who is making video calls at the same time.

It might also be the case that employees with assistive technology (or indeed without) cannot access some of your systems remotely e.g. for security reasons. The work and job description of these employees may need to be temporarily adjusted to reflect this. You might be able to substitute some other work for the tasks they cannot perform remotely.

Key workers needed to maintain those systems may need to come into your premises. Consider providing taxis for these employees to provide them with additional protection from infection.

For more information about who qualifies as a key worker, see the resource 'Key workers' in this toolkit.



Business Disability Forum is committed to ensuring that all its products and services are as accessible as possible to everyone. If you wish to discuss anything with regard to the accessibility of this document please contact us.

Business Disability Forum  
Nutmeg House  
60 Gainsford Street  
London SE1 2NY

Tel: +44-(0)20-7403-3020  
Fax: +44-(0)20-7403-0404  
Email: [enquiries@businessdisabilityforum.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@businessdisabilityforum.org.uk)  
Web: [www.businessdisabilityforum.org.uk](http://www.businessdisabilityforum.org.uk)

**Business Disability Forum is a company limited by guarantee with charitable objects.**

**Registered charity number:** 1018463.

**Registered Office:** Nutmeg House, 60 Gainsford Street, London SE1 2NY.

**Registered in England under Company Number:** 2603700