



# ThinkNeurodiversity Reasonable Adjustments Toolkit.

## Module 1: Introduction & Purpose

This toolkit has been developed to support individuals and organisations after attending the ThinkNeurodiversity Reasonable Adjustments training course. It is designed to make implementation easier by providing real-world, evidence-informed tools rooted in lived experience, legal precedent, and best practice.

It's also designed to fill a gap: while there are many adjustment lists available, few explain how to move from problem to solution, how to structure conversations, or how to balance risk, reasonableness and performance. That's where this toolkit comes in.

You don't need to be an expert in disability or neurodivergence to support colleagues well. What you do need is a framework, clear responsibilities, and practical examples you can adapt. This document provides that foundation.

### What this toolkit includes

- Key legal duties explained in plain English
- Common adjustment pitfalls and how to avoid them
- Conversation starters and confidence tools for managers
- Templates for planning and reviewing adjustments
- Access to Work tips
- Guidance on trial periods and review cycles
- Role-specific advice for Managers, HR, and Employees

### Who this toolkit is for

This toolkit is intended for:

- Managers and team leads responsible for staff support
- HR and People teams managing policy and documentation
- Employees navigating their own adjustment needs
- Inclusion, Access, or Occupational Health professionals

### How to use it

Each section is standalone and designed to be picked up as needed. Feel free to adapt templates, annotate as you go, and integrate this into your organisation's broader EDI or wellbeing resources.





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## Module 2: Legal Duties – Equality Act & Case Law

### 1. The Equality Act 2010 – At a Glance

The Equality Act 2010 is the key piece of legislation that underpins the legal duty to make reasonable adjustments in the workplace. It protects individuals with a disability from being placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled people.

Under the Act, a person is considered disabled if they have:

- A physical or mental impairment
- That has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities

The Act requires employers to make 'reasonable adjustments' where:

- A provision, criterion or practice (PCP)
  - A physical feature of the premises
  - Or a lack of auxiliary aid
- places a disabled person at a disadvantage.

### 2. Why Case Law Matters

Case law helps us understand how the Equality Act is interpreted in real-life situations. The following cases highlight critical lessons for managers and HR teams when applying the concept of reasonable adjustments.

### 3. Key Legal Cases

Here are some pivotal decisions that have shaped how reasonable adjustments are understood in practice:

- **Mallon v Aecom Ltd** – A neurodivergent applicant was unable to complete an online form. The employer's refusal to offer an alternative application method was deemed discriminatory. Lesson: Systems must be adaptable.
- **Walker v SITA** – Reinforced that the *\*impact\** of a condition matters more than a diagnosis label. Lesson: Don't dismiss someone's needs based on unclear or absent diagnosis.
- **Cox v Royal Mail Group** – A neurodivergent employee was subject to standard performance management without adjusted processes. The tribunal found this discriminatory. Lesson: Process adjustments are just as important as physical ones.





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- **\*\*City of York v Grosset\*\*** – A teacher's misconduct was influenced by unadjusted disability-related stress. Lesson: Consider whether lack of adjustments contributed to outcomes before taking action.
- **\*\*Hibbert v Thames Valley Police\*\*** – Emphasised that adjustments must be reviewed regularly to remain valid. Lesson: What worked 6 months ago might not work now.

### 4. What This Means for You

- Adjustments must be proactive, not reactive
- Employers must consider impact, not just diagnosis
- Policies and systems must be flexible by design
- Failure to act or review may lead to legal challenge

The next module will help you identify common pitfalls that lead to these types of failures.





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## Module 3: Common Adjustment Pitfalls

Despite good intentions, many adjustment processes break down in practice. This module outlines common pitfalls seen in case law, lived experience, and organisational audits – and how to avoid them.

### 1. Waiting for a diagnosis before acting

You do not need a formal diagnosis to offer or implement adjustments. The Equality Act protects people based on the \*impact\* of their condition, not the label. Delaying action while waiting for confirmation can lead to unnecessary harm – and legal risk.

### 2. Assuming what someone needs (or doesn't)

Managers sometimes guess or apply past experiences without checking. Every person is different – ask first, use the 'Which Means What' framework, and never rely solely on generic checklists.

### 3. Relying on Access to Work without local action

Access to Work is valuable but often delayed. Managers must still consider \*interim\* support, trial adjustments, and workplace flexibility without waiting months for funding.

### 4. Confusing 'equality' with 'treating everyone the same'

Providing the same desk, tasks, or schedule to everyone might feel 'fair', but equity requires flexibility. Reasonable adjustments are about removing barriers, not enforcing uniformity.

### 5. Letting the process become impersonal or rigid

Using templates or systems is helpful – but if these tools replace human conversation or become box-ticking exercises, trust breaks down. As the course slides say: \**"Treat every conversation as a personal one."*

### 6. Failing to review regularly

What works now might not work later. Personal circumstances change. Job demands evolve. Legal case law requires review of adjustments (e.g. Hibbert v Thames Valley Police). Set a review date from the start.

### 7. Not documenting adjustments clearly





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Inconsistency, confusion, or memory gaps can cause breakdowns in support. Use simple, shared documentation to track:

- What was agreed
- Why it was needed
- When it will be reviewed

### Summary Checklist

- Have we started with a conversation, not a form?
- Are we acting based on need, not diagnosis?
- Have we discussed short-term and long-term support?
- Is it written down clearly and agreed?
- Have we set a review date?





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## Module 4: The 'Which Means What' Framework

The 'Which Means What' framework is a practical tool designed to support meaningful, barrier-based adjustments. At its heart is a commitment to curiosity, context, and collaboration — not diagnosis or assumption.

### 1. Why This Framework Matters

Too often, workplace adjustments are based on generic checklists or assumptions about conditions. This framework encourages a better conversation — one that starts with:

- What's happening?
- When does it happen?
- Where is it most noticeable?
- Why does it cause a barrier?
- How does it affect the person or their work?

It focuses on understanding the **context**, not just the challenge. That context makes all the difference.

### 2. Asking the Right Questions

You don't need a script. But you do need a mindset of curiosity and support. Ask open, neutral, and specific questions such as:

- What tends to make this harder or easier?
- When do you notice it most?
- Where do you feel most able to focus?
- Why do you think that's a barrier — is it energy, memory, overwhelm, something else?
- How would a good day look different to a bad one in this context?





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### 3. The Framework Table

Use the table to go from surface-level challenge to practical insight.

| What's the challenge?             | Which means... (Impact & Context)                                                                            | What helps?                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Finds team meetings difficult     | Too much verbal information, struggles to filter what's important, can't process and contribute in real time | Summary notes in advance, slower pace, written follow-up or dual chat input          |
| Struggles with deadlines          | Has difficulty sequencing steps, loses track of time when hyperfocused or distracted, may delay starting     | Time estimations together, visual roadmap, regular check-ins                         |
| Overwhelmed by office environment | Noise, movement, and interruptions affect focus and emotional regulation                                     | Noise-reduction headphones, quiet desk location, hybrid or flexible working          |
| Avoids difficult tasks            | Task creates anxiety due to perfectionism, fear of failure or unclear expectations                           | Break tasks into small wins, clarify output expected, allow recovery time afterwards |

### 4. Use It Together

This tool works best when co-created. Invite the employee to help complete it. It isn't about catching someone out — it's about understanding what gets in the way and designing something more human in response.





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## Module 5: Step-by-Step – Implementing Adjustments

This module outlines the key stages of implementing reasonable adjustments in a clear, structured, and repeatable way. It complements the conversation and planning templates, ensuring nothing gets missed from first discussion to formal review.

### Step 1: Spot or Raise a Need

Adjustment conversations can be initiated by:

- The employee (disclosure or informal comment)
- A manager (observing changes in performance, behaviour, or distress)
- A third party (e.g. HR, OH, or Access to Work)

You don't need to wait for a formal diagnosis. Start with curiosity and care.

### Step 2: Start the Conversation

Use the Conversation Starter Guide or simple prompts like:

- "What's working for you and what's getting in the way right now?"
- "Is there anything that's making your job harder than it needs to be?"

Remember: This is a two-way discussion, not a box-ticking exercise.

### Step 3: Understand the Barrier

Use the 'Which Means What' framework to explore impact and options. Think about:

- Is it environmental? Social? Procedural?
- Is the issue constant, or does it vary with workload or time of day?
- What small change would reduce this disadvantage?

### Step 4: Agree the Adjustment(s)

Record:

- What the barrier is
- What's being trialled or implemented
- Who is responsible
- When it will be reviewed

Use the Adjustment Planning Template provided.

### Step 5: Implement + Communicate





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Communicate the change clearly with the individual and any relevant parties (HR, IT, Facilities, etc.). Be clear about expectations, timelines, and how success will be measured.

### **Step 6: Review and Adapt**

Schedule a review date from the beginning. Use the Review & Follow-Up Template.

Ask:

- Is the adjustment still needed?
- Is it working as intended?
- Have any new barriers emerged?

### **Step 7: Escalate if Needed**

If further support is needed (e.g. specialist equipment, coaching, significant job change), discuss Access to Work or internal OH referral. Ensure the employee is kept in the loop at all stages.

The next module will help you structure great adjustment conversations.





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## Module 6: Conversation Starters – Manager Guide

Starting a conversation about adjustments can feel awkward – especially if you're unsure what language to use, or if the individual hasn't disclosed a formal diagnosis. This module gives practical prompts and guidance to build your confidence.

### 1. When to Start a Conversation

- When someone shares that they're struggling
- If performance, attendance or wellbeing suddenly shifts
- Following a return to work after absence
- During 1:1s, appraisals, or informal catch-ups
- After receiving a referral or Access to Work recommendation

You don't need to wait for a disclosure to offer support.

### 2. Useful Opening Prompts

Use one or more of these depending on your relationship and context:

- “I want to make sure you have what you need to thrive here. Is there anything that would help?”
- “What part of your role do you find easiest — and which bits tend to be more draining or difficult?”
- “Are there particular times or environments where things feel harder?”
- “We're reviewing ways to support our team better — is there anything that would make a difference to you day-to-day?”
- “Is there anything about your working set-up, schedule or communication that's making your role harder than it needs to be?”

### 3. What Not to Say

- “We all find that hard sometimes”
- “You don't seem disabled to me”
- “That's just part of the job”
- “I had a colleague with [condition] once and they were fine”
- Anything that implies disbelief or downplays the individual's experience





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### 4. Structuring the Conversation

1. Ask open questions without pressure
2. Listen actively and summarise what you've heard
3. Explore practical options together (using the framework)
4. Agree what will happen next
5. Set a review date — even if the outcome is 'we're still working it out'

Next, we'll explore how to trial and review adjustments without formality or delay.





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## Module 7: Adjustment Trial Periods & Review

Not all adjustments work perfectly the first time. That's why trial periods and regular reviews are not only practical — they're also part of best practice and legal expectation.

This module helps you structure an approach that's flexible, transparent, and keeps everyone involved.

### 1. Why Use a Trial Period?

- It gives space to test what works without long-term pressure
- It reduces hesitation from line managers worried about setting a precedent
- It helps build trust and shared problem-solving between employee and employer

### 2. How to Set Up a Trial

Agree the following:

- The specific change being trialled (e.g. adjusted hours, equipment use, task reassignment)
- What the goal is (e.g. reduced stress, improved focus, fewer absences)
- How long the trial will last (typically 2–6 weeks)
- When and how it will be reviewed
- Who is responsible for documenting progress

### 3. Reviewing an Adjustment

Use the Review & Follow-Up Template. Focus on:

- Is the adjustment being used as intended?
- Has it improved the employee's experience or performance?
- Are there any unintended impacts on others or the workflow?
- Does it need tweaking, replacing, or continuing?

### 4. Prompts to Use in Review Meetings

- "What's working well so far?"
- "Have you noticed any difficulties or things that still aren't right?"
- "Is there anything we could tweak to improve how this works?"
- "Would you like to keep this adjustment, replace it, or try something else now?"
- "Should we extend the trial or formalise it going forward?"





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### 5. Summary

Adjustment reviews should feel collaborative and constructive, not interrogative. Framing changes as flexible and testable can reduce fear, ease implementation, and ensure the support stays relevant over time.





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## Module 8: Planning & Review Templates Overview

Clear documentation helps everyone stay on the same page — literally. This module explains the purpose and use of the templates included in your toolkit. These tools aren't just paperwork — they reduce confusion, provide clarity, and support transparency and accountability.

### 1. Adjustment Planning Template

Use this to capture the agreed actions from a support conversation.

**\*\*Sections include:\*\***

- Barrier or need identified
- Adjustment(s) agreed
- Responsible person for implementation
- Review date

### 2. Review & Follow-Up Form

Use this after the trial period or at a scheduled review point.

**\*\*Sections include:\*\***

- Adjustment being reviewed
- Is it still effective? (Y/N + Comments)
- New needs or next steps agreed

### 3. Conversation Notes Template

This can be used informally to document any adjustment-related discussion.

**\*\*Prompts include:\*\***

- What did we talk about?
- What are the current challenges?
- What language or framing did the employee use?
- What are the possible directions forward?

### 4. Where to Find and Save Templates

Editable versions of each template are included with your post-course resources. You can adapt them to match internal systems, but we recommend keeping:

- One version for your notes
- One version for employee records (HR or secure document folder)





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### 5. Top Tip

Always agree at the end of a conversation what will be written down and by whom. Don't document sensitive needs without consent.





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### Module 9: Access to Work – Myth vs Fact

Access to Work (AtW) is a government-funded programme that provides financial and practical support for disabled and neurodivergent employees. However, there's a lot of confusion about what it is, who applies, and what it covers. This module clears up common myths with evidence-informed facts.

#### Common Myths and Clarifications

- Myth: Access to Work is only for people with a formal diagnosis.

Fact: You do not need a confirmed diagnosis. If you experience a barrier related to a physical, mental health or neurodivergent condition, you can apply.

- Myth: Employers have to pay for everything upfront.

Fact: Access to Work reimburses the employer or provider. There is sometimes a small employer contribution, especially for long-established staff, but most costs are covered.

- Myth: You can't apply if adjustments are already in place.

Fact: Access to Work can fund additional or specialist support beyond what the employer can reasonably provide.

- Myth: Only the employer can apply.

Fact: The application must be made by the employee. Managers can and should support them — but they can't apply on their behalf.

- Myth: The process is fast and straightforward.

Fact: Application and assessment can take weeks or months. That's why short-term, internal support must not wait for AtW approval.

- Myth: It only covers physical equipment.

Fact: AtW covers coaching, job support workers, travel support, communication support, and digital tools — not just equipment.

#### What Managers Should Do

- Encourage eligible staff to apply early
- Offer interim support without waiting for funding
- Assist with paperwork, quotes, and coordination
- Don't make AtW a condition of adjustments — it's a complement, not a gatekeeper





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### Resources

Apply or find out more at: <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>





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## Module 10: Role Responsibilities – Manager, HR, Employee

Everyone has a role to play in making reasonable adjustments work. This module outlines the core responsibilities for employees, line managers, and HR/People teams — not to assign blame, but to clarify expectations and improve coordination.

### 1. Employee Responsibilities

- Share challenges where possible, even without a diagnosis
- Suggest what might help or describe the barrier in context
- Participate in discussions and reviews of support
- Apply for Access to Work if appropriate
- Communicate changes in need or effectiveness of support

### 2. Line Manager Responsibilities

- Create a safe environment for open conversations
- Initiate conversations when barriers are observed or disclosed
- Use the 'Which Means What' framework to explore needs
- Implement agreed adjustments promptly
- Record what was agreed and set a review date
- Monitor effectiveness and adapt if needed
- Liaise with HR or OH where escalation is appropriate

### 3. HR / People Team Responsibilities

- Maintain clear, accessible policy on adjustments
- Ensure line managers receive training and guidance
- Provide support in complex or escalated cases
- Help balance individual needs with operational feasibility
- Keep records compliant with data protection and confidentiality
- Lead on consistency, fairness, and inclusion across departments

### 4. Summary: This Works Best When...

- Employees feel safe to speak
- Managers know what to ask (and how to listen)
- HR supports systems and fairness — not red tape
- Reviews are routine, not reactive





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## Module 11: Useful Links & Resources

Below is a curated list of trusted sources and services to help you deepen your understanding, find support, or take the next steps in implementing reasonable adjustments.

### **Legal Advice & Support**

Talem Law

Specialists in disability and workplace discrimination law.

 <https://www.talemlaw.co.uk>

 [enquiries@talemlaw.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@talemlaw.co.uk)

 01245 363888

Thrive Law

Leading employment law firm with neurodiversity and mental health focus.

 <https://www.thrivelaw.co.uk>

 [enquiries@thrivelaw.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@thrivelaw.co.uk)

 0113 869 8101

### **Government Guidance**

Equality Act 2010: Statutory Guidance

UK Government's technical guidance on the Equality Act.

 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

Reasonable Adjustments Guidance (EHRC)

 <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/multipage-guide/reasonable-adjustments-practice>

Access to Work – Apply or Learn More

 <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>

### **Conflict Prevention & Resolution**

ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service)

Free advice on adjustments, employment rights, and resolving disputes.

 <https://www.acas.org.uk/reasonable-adjustments>

 0300 123 1100





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### **Workplace Needs Assessments**

To request a Workplace Needs Assessment:

- Employees can apply via Access to Work for a government-funded assessment.
- Employers can commission private assessments from trusted providers such as:
  - Remploy
  - Evenbreak
  - AbilityNet





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## Module 12: What Next? Reflections & Actions

This module closes the toolkit by offering a reflective space for action planning. Whether you're a manager, HR lead, or an employee yourself, these prompts and checklists are designed to help you keep the momentum going after the training.

### 1. Personal Reflection

- What did I learn that changed how I think about reasonable adjustments?
- What assumptions did I hold before this course?
- What am I most confident doing now?
- What still feels challenging or unclear?

### 2. Action Planning

- Who do I need to have a conversation with?
- What process needs updating in our team or department?
- Are our policies clear, current, and inclusive?
- What adjustment trial or review do I need to follow up on?
- What resources from this toolkit will I adapt and use immediately?

### 3. Suggested Team Follow-Ups

- Share the key tools with other line managers
- Build in a short discussion at your next team lead meeting
- Plan a review of current adjustments in place across your team
- Speak to HR about how this toolkit can be embedded more widely

### 4. Keep the Change Going

You don't have to fix everything at once. Start with one change, one conversation, or one improvement to your process.

Improving access and inclusion isn't about perfection — it's about intent, action, and follow-through.





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