Coaching through Access to Work

A free step-by-step guide to applying for funded coaching

If you're neurodivergent, or live with a health condition, coaching can make a real difference to how you feel and work. Access to Work is a government grant that can help pay for it.

The application process can feel daunting, especially if form filling isn't your favourite thing. This guide breaks it down into clear steps, so you know what to expect and what to have ready.

What is Access to Work?

Access to Work is a grant from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). It pays for practical support that helps you start or stay in work, such as a support worker, specialist equipment or coaching.

It isn't a loan, and it isn't means tested, so your earnings and savings don't matter.

Can I apply?

You can usually apply if you:

- are 16 or over
- have a disability or health condition, including ADHD, autism or another neurodivergence, that makes parts of your job harder
- have a paid job, are self-employed, or are starting or returning to paid work within 12 weeks
- live and work in England, Scotland or Wales

> **You don't need a formal diagnosis to apply.** What matters is how your condition affects your work.

Please note: civil servants can't apply, as their employer provides support instead. Voluntary work isn't covered, and Northern Ireland has its own separate scheme.

Before you apply: what to gather

Having these ready will make the form much quicker:

1. Your contact details, plus your workplace address and postcode.
2. A workplace contact, such as your manager or HR, who can confirm you work there. They won't be contacted without your permission.
3. Your Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR), if you're self-employed.

4. Some notes on how your condition affects your work, and what support you think would help (see the next section).
5. A quote for coaching. This isn't always needed at the start, but your adviser may ask for one. I'm happy to provide this - just get in touch.

Describing how it affects your work

This is often the hardest part. Think about your everyday work and where things feel harder than they should. You might notice difficulties with:

- planning, prioritising and managing your time
- starting tasks, or getting them finished
- keeping track of emails, deadlines and details
- focusing with noise, interruptions or a busy office
- meetings, conversations and following spoken instructions
- overwhelm, energy and recovering after a busy day
- hormonal changes making existing difficulties harder

> **Tip:** describe your hardest days, not your best ones. Be specific. "I miss deadlines because I lose track of tasks across emails" is more helpful than "I struggle with organisation".

When you're asked what support would help, you can name coaching specifically. For example:

> *"Specialist ADHD and neurodiversity coaching, to help me develop strategies for planning, prioritising and managing my workload."*

Access to Work often funds 10 to 12 sessions or more, depending on your needs.

How to apply

1. Go to gov.uk/access-to-work and choose to apply online. Or call the helpline on **0800 121 7479** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).
2. Fill in the form using the information you've gathered.
3. If phone calls are difficult for you, ask for all communication to be by email. You're entitled to ask for this.
4. Make a note of the date you applied and any reference number you're given.

Textphone: 0800 121 7579. Relay UK: 18001 then 0800 121 7479. A BSL video relay service is also available.

What happens next

- An Access to Work adviser will contact you. They may ask more about your job and your condition, ask permission to speak to your employer, or arrange an assessment in person or by video call.
- During the assessment, say clearly that you'd like coaching. If they ask for a quote, I can send one to you.
- You'll then receive a decision letter. This tells you how much your grant is, what it covers and when it ends.

> **Be prepared to wait.** Waiting times are currently long. In my experience, it's often eight months or more from applying to receiving a decision, so it's worth applying as early as you can.

Using your grant

1. Once you have your decision letter, we can book your coaching sessions.
2. You, or your employer, may need to pay invoices up front and then claim the money back.
3. Claim online (you'll need an email address, a mobile phone, your National Insurance number and two forms of ID) or by post, using the claim form sent with your decision letter.
4. With each claim, include the dates of your sessions, the invoices, and the bank details of whoever is being repaid.

Your grant has an end date. If you'd like support to continue, you can apply to renew up to 12 weeks before it ends.

Helpful tips

- **If you feel comfortable, talk to your manager or HR first** about what would help. It can make the employer part of the process smoother.
- **Keep copies of everything** - your application, letters, invoices and claims.
- **Tell Access to Work about changes,** such as a new job, address or a change in your condition.
- **If you disagree with a decision,** call the helpline and ask for it to be reconsidered.

How I can help

I'm an ADHD and neurodiversity coach, and I welcome clients funded through Access to Work. I can:

- provide a quote for your application
- give you a short summary of how coaching could support you at work
- send invoices in a format that works with your Access to Work claims

If you'd like to talk it through, you can book a free discovery call through my website, sharonworthcoaching.com, or email me at sharon@sharonworthcoaching.com.

With warm wishes,

Sharon

Sharon Worth Coaching

This guide reflects the Access to Work process as of October 2026. Details can change, so please check gov.uk/access-to-work for the latest information. It is general guidance, not advice on your individual situation.