

HOW TO CONSIDER PROACTIVE ADJUSTMENTS

**A Practical Guide for Leaders
and Managers**

Why Proactive Adjustments Matter

Proactive adjustments involve anticipating needs rather than waiting until barriers have created problems.

When adjustments are planned and embedded into everyday systems, they become business as usual. This benefits disabled colleagues and improves the working environment for everyone.

Step 1: Ask the Right Questions

Leaders and managers can start by asking:

- What might stop disabled people from achieving in this role, team, or environment?
- Which systems, policies, or processes assume one right way of working?
- How do line managers know what to do if adjustments are requested?
- What signals are we giving about inclusion through our workplace design and culture?

Step 2: Focus on Outcomes, Not Obstacles

Consider the imperative outcomes. What genuinely needs to be achieved for success? This helps remove unachievable expectations and identify where adjustments can enable performance.

For example:

- If the outcome is delivering accurate reports. Does it matter how they are formatted, or just that they meet the required standard?
- If the outcome is effective client communication. Can alternatives such as written updates or video calls replace in-person meetings?

Shifting the focus to outcomes enables new and innovative ways of working. This ensures disabled colleagues can achieve without unnecessary barriers.

Step 3: Anticipate Common Barriers

Consider where barriers typically arise:

Workplace design – Are spaces physically navigable and accessible?

Technology – Do systems meet accessibility standards? Are captions, screen readers, or alternative formats built in?

Policies – Are flexible working options built into the norm rather than negotiated on a case-by-case basis?

Communication – Are meetings, documents, and intranet posts accessible to different needs?

Step 4: Build Adjustments into Practice

Turn proactive thinking into standard practice by:

- Offering adjustment discussions as part of every induction.
- Including accessibility checks in project planning and procurement.
- Creating simple, fast processes for managers to approve adjustments.
- Sharing examples of effective adjustments across teams to normalise inclusion.

Step 5: Measure and Refine

Adjustments are not one and done. Track progress by:

- Checking in with employees regularly about what works and what does not.
- Capturing lived experience feedback in staff surveys.
- Reviewing adjustment requests to spot patterns and gaps.
- Sharing successes to build confidence across the business.

Quick Checklist for Leaders

- ✓ Adjustments are offered proactively, not reactively.
- ✓ Outcomes of the role are the focus, not rigid methods.
- ✓ Policies are flexible and anticipate diverse needs.
- ✓ Managers are trained and confident to talk about adjustments.
- ✓ Systems, tech, and processes are tested for accessibility.
- ✓ Feedback is welcomed, acted upon, and looped back.

Proactive adjustments remove barriers before they arise. By focusing on the outcomes of each role and embedding inclusive practices, businesses create equitable opportunities for disabled employees, strengthen their culture, and ensure disabled people achieve on equal terms.

GET IN TOUCH

Are you ready to discuss what this means for your business and workplace? You can contact us in the following ways...

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