

ADULT ADHD IN DAILY LIFE · 8.2

ADHD and the DSE Assessment: Reasonable Adjustments at Work

The UK has a strong legal framework for workplace adjustments and most adults with ADHD do not know how to use it. ADHD usually qualifies as a disability under the Equality Act 2010. Reasonable adjustments are a legal duty, not a favour.

FOR

Diagnosed adults with ADHD

AUDIENCE AGE

18+

REVIEWED

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PART OF

The NeuroFX resource library

IN SUMMARY

ADHD and the DSE Assessment: Reasonable Adjustments at Work

Where the law sits

- **ADHD usually meets the Equality Act 2010 definition of disability.** A mental impairment with a substantial, long-term effect on day-to-day activities. The substantial effect on attention, organisation, time management and impulse control is the lived reality for most adults with the diagnosis. A formal diagnosis is not strictly required but substantially strengthens the case.
- **The employer has a duty to make reasonable adjustments.** Not 'if it is easy'. 'If it is reasonable', which is a much higher bar. The duty kicks in the moment the employer knows or could reasonably be expected to know about the disability.
- **Enforcement runs through ACAS and the Employment Tribunal.** Internal grievance procedure first, then ACAS early conciliation, then Tribunal if needed. ACAS guidance is free, structured and worth using when conversations stall.

DSE assessments and ADHD-specific adjustments

- **A DSE assessment covers screen-based ergonomics.** Under the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 employers must assess workstations for anyone using a screen for a significant part of their work. The assessment covers screen, keyboard, chair, desk, lighting and posture.
- **DSE is a useful starting point, not the whole picture.** It is mandatory and already exists in most workplaces. Many ADHD-relevant adjustments (working pattern, meeting structure, communication style) sit outside the standard DSE remit. A workplace needs assessment via occupational health or Access to Work is the more complete route for ADHD-specific adjustments.
- **Useful ADHD-specific adjustments are often low or zero cost.** Quieter desk position, headphones permitted, written confirmation after verbal instructions, agendas in advance, larger tasks broken into smaller deliverables, flexible start times, structured one-to-ones with written action points. None require new equipment.
- **The duty applies to performance management.** Where ADHD has caused difficulty (missed deadlines, inconsistent output), the employer has a duty to consider reasonable adjustments before treating the difficulty as a performance issue. Difficulties should trigger adjustments, not punishment.

How to ask and where to get help

- **Ask in writing, with specifics.** Request a meeting with line manager or HR. Bring a written list of specific adjustments and why each is needed. 'Fortnightly one-to-one with written action points' beats 'more support'. Document the response, with a review date.
- **Use ACAS if the conversation stalls.** Free guidance, early conciliation and route into Tribunal if it becomes necessary. Citizens Advice and a disability rights solicitor are also useful where the situation is complex or contested.
- **Apply to Access to Work for funded support.** Government scheme that covers ADHD coaching, specialist software, kit and reasonable-adjustment funding. Often changes the financial picture significantly. Where assessment or prescribing is the next step, NeuroFX offers private adult ADHD assessment and prescribing.

WHEN TO SPEAK TO A PROFESSIONAL

Speak to your GP or NHS adult ADHD service if ADHD has not been formally assessed and work is being affected. Private adult ADHD assessment with a CQC-registered provider is a legitimate parallel route where the NHS wait is not workable. For workplace legal advice specifically, ACAS, Citizens Advice and a disability rights solicitor are the right routes. Seek urgent help via 111, 999 or A&E for any acute mental health crisis or significant safety concern.

SOURCES

Equality Act 2010; HSE DSE Regulations 1992; ACAS reasonable adjustments guidance; EHRC employment code; NICE NG87

NEXT STEPS

Speak to NeuroFX

Private ADHD and autism assessment for adults and children aged 6 and upwards.
CQC-registered. Bedford Consulting Rooms, 4 Goldington Road, Bedford MK40 3NF.

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