



**Victorian  
Public Sector  
Commission**



# Workplace adjustments guide for employees

**Step-by-step guide to requesting workplace adjustments and how to use your workplace adjustment and arrangement passport.**

## About the guide

This guide is a 5 step explanation of the workplace adjustment process, from identifying adjustments to having conversations with your manager. It also explains how to use the workplace adjustment and arrangement passport to record your adjustments and arrangements.

[Workplace adjustment and arrangement passport \(116 kB\)](#)

The passport can travel with you throughout your career in the Victorian Public Sector (VPS), helping communicate how you work best when you change teams or departments. Together, these tools help you put in place the right supports and make the workplace more inclusive.

Every employee has their own way of working that helps them to work their best. Adjustments remove barriers for people with disability and others, such as carers, and make the workplace more accessible. See [workplace adjustments advice for public sector organisations](#) for definitions of workplace adjustments, disability and carers.

You should use this guide with your organisation's workplace adjustment policy. If you

need support or guidance at any time, reach out to your People and Culture or Diversity and Inclusion teams.

## Step 1: Understand your role

### Understand your workplace adjustments rights

Workplace adjustments can be requested by all employees, at any time to support diverse ways of working. For employees with disability, the default position should be to implement adjustments. These adjustments help ensure everyone has the same opportunities to perform and advance in their role.

Not providing an employee with disability reasonable adjustments or reasonable accommodations for carers may be considered discrimination or unfair treatment. Additionally, adjustments must not unreasonably be refused for carers to accommodate their responsibilities. Internally, you can speak to your People and Culture team or externally you can [make a complaint to the Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission](#) or the [Australian Human Rights Commission](#) when they are denied.

At any time throughout the adjustment process, you can have a [trusted person](#).

By law, there are some instances where an employer does not have to provide adjustments for people with disability. For example, if the change could lead to serious financial problems, cause technical issues, or if council rules block any building changes. This process should be conducted in a fair and transparent way.

You usually don't have to share details about your disability. This is health and personal information, and your manager must follow privacy laws with your information. There may be some legal situations where you may be asked to do so. This could be if there are risks to your safety and others if your condition worsens at work. There could also be considerations like affecting your future workers' compensation claims.

If you are requested to provide this information, you can ask what information is needed, why it is needed, and how it will be used or stored.

Read [workplace adjustments advice for public sector organisations](#) for more information on privacy, rights, and responsibilities with workplace adjustments.

## Case study: Jin

Jin is Autistic and usually doesn't share this information at work, as he is worried about negative treatment.

Lately, he is finding it difficult to keep up with the fast paced nature of online meetings as his auditory processing takes longer. Jin prefers written communication but knows that is not always possible in team settings.

Jin shares this with his manager, Maya and that he doesn't want to share this information further. He also doesn't want to make the team stop having online meetings. Maya reassures Jin that his information will stay confidential. She says she wants to focus on the barrier Jin is experiencing rather than a diagnosis.

To support Jin, Maya introduces using a shared meeting document with dot-point summaries, available to all team members to contribute to and use before and after meetings. Maya finds that other team members benefit from this change too and their team communication improves.

This small change Maya made in how meetings are run makes the workplace more accessible for Jin, without singling him out. He appreciates that the focus was on making meetings inclusive for everyone, not just on his disability. Now, Jin feels more confident about requesting adjustments in the future.

## Step 2: Identifying adjustments and having discussions

### Identify the adjustments you need

You don't need to know exactly what adjustments you need to have a conversation with your manager about supports. They can be modified over time to meet your changing needs.

If you are not sure what adjustments you need, some things to consider include:

- any barriers that prevent you from doing your job, which could be physical, environmental, cognitive and executive functioning, or sensory
- specific parts of your job where you might need changes
- things that you do in other areas of your life that could be useful in the workplace

- getting a workplace assessment through [Job Access](#) or your organisation to identify what adjustments that will help you in your job
- if you need specific evacuation assistance during an emergency such as a [Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan](#) (PEEP), you can check your intranet for the relevant warden to help with this.

## Example conversation prompts

### Identify the adjustments you need with your manager

- I find this part of the task, software or workplace challenging, but I don't know what we can change.
- I need some different support, but I am not sure what. Can we go through the workplace adjustments policy together?
- I am interested in having a workplace assessment done, can you help me with the process?

## Having discussions with your manager

Start off by asking your manager for a meeting. You can discuss with your manager how you prefer to have your conversations on adjustments, you may prefer an informal in-person meeting or to do it online.

The goal of these conversations are to identify the right supports to help you fully participate in the workplace, while also considering the needs of the organisation. You and your manager will need to work together to find that balance.

When having these conversations, you don't have to make decisions about adjustments all at once or make them permanent. You can try out different adjustments to see if they work for you. Think creatively about what adjustments you need. A mix of adjustments might be the best option.

A good way to talk about adjustments is sharing what the barriers you experience are and why you think the adjustment will help remove it. That way, the focus is on the workplace barriers and not disability. This can also help your manager understand your

experience and learn how to make the workplace more inclusive for you.

You can share any extra information or documents that help explain your needs better such as reports from medical practitioners that suggest adjustments. This is not an obligation and is your choice.

If you are a person with disability or someone who requires accommodation, such as a carer, consider if you would like to share any information with your team or other colleagues. You can let your manager know what you decide.

Don't forget to let your manager know if you have a [trusted person](#) attending any meetings.

Open allClose all

## Example conversation prompts

### Starting a conversation

- Can I pop some time in your diary this week to chat workplace adjustments?
- I have a passport from my previous role, can I email it to you before we discuss adjustments and figure out the next steps?
- I have some adjustments I would like to discuss, can we arrange a meeting?
- Every department I have worked in does adjustments slightly differently. Can I send you a calendar invite to discuss adjustments and the process?

### Discussion points during conversation

- In my previous role, I had an adjustment that worked well in removing a barrier, I'd like to do that again.
- To support me in my role, I would like this adjustment.
- I'd like to trial some adjustments for online and in person meetings and see what works best.
- As this workplace is new for me, I am not sure what adjustments I will need. Can I have a trial period until I know what works in this role?

### 3. **Case study: Mateo**

Mateo's son Gabriel has cerebral palsy and so Mateo balances his caring responsibilities throughout the work week. He organises a meeting with his manager Judith to figure out what supports will work.

Mateo isn't sure exactly what adjustments he needs so he shares the challenges he is experiencing in caring for Gabriel:

- His partner is in the office 3 days a week, so he needs to provide care on those days
- When he works from home (WFH), sometimes he is away from his computer for longer periods to support Gabriel.

Judith suggests that they update Mateo's WFH days to when his partner is in the office. She also asks if they can have a meeting with either the People and Culture or the Diversity and Inclusion teams to see if there are technical solutions for the computer use at home.

In the meeting, they are told that IT can make the period before the computer screen goes to sleep longer. Mateo and Judith agree that this adjustment is worth trying to see if it helps. They update and add these adjustments to the passport.

Mateo is glad Judith was open and supportive to adjustment conversations and helping him find the best way to balance caring with work.

## **Step 3: Implementing adjustments**

Most of the time, implementation will be for your manager or your People and Culture team to action. You should actively participate and work together to make any adjustments.

Different legislation and policies specify different timeframes, but best practice is to implement adjustments within 2 weeks and no longer than 21 days.

Some adjustments like physical or technical fixes, might take time to implement. Find out how long this may take, as you may need interim adjustments.

## Case study: Layla

Layla has a hearing impairment and is experiencing difficulties in team meetings. She asks her manager, Amanda, what technology might be available to help her follow group discussions more easily.

Amanda mentions she isn't familiar with adjustments for hearing but will see what support is available before they meet. In the meeting, Amanda shares that [Job Access](#) has specialists to help identify the right tools for Layla. So, with Amanda's permission, they contact Job Access to arrange this review.

While they wait for the assessment, they put in place interim adjustments that the team will speak one at a time and live captions will be used for all online meetings.

Following the Job Access assessment, Layla is approved for an FM (frequency modulation) hearing system and speech-to-text captioning software. They continue with the interim adjustments until the equipment has been implemented.

Amanda and Layla are happy they could work together to find the best solutions for Layla to be supported in the workplace. They update the passport with the new adjustments.

## Step 4: Record and review adjustments on the passport

### Recording adjustments

We've developed a [workplace adjustment and arrangement passport \(DOCX 116 kB\)](#) for all employees to record their workplace adjustments and other [working arrangements](#) such as flexible work arrangements.

The passport stays with you throughout your career in the VPS. It helps you keep track of the supports you have had and communicate them effectively, especially when changing roles or departments.

Using the passport can support more consistent, meaningful conversations about how you work your best.

This passport is completely optional – you don't need to fill it out to request a workplace adjustment.

While it is a helpful tool, you still need to go through your departments policies and processes for adjustments and arrangements.

## Reviewing adjustments

You should regularly review your workplace adjustments to confirm they are working for you.

Discuss with your manager how frequently you want to review your adjustments. If you're trialling a new adjustment you may want to check in every month. If it's an existing and effective adjustment you may want to review it once a year.

You can record reviews and changes to adjustments in the passport.

## Data collection for adjustments

You may be asked questions about adjustments in a few ways such as:

- on forms when you are applying for a role and onboarding
- in Departmental workforce surveys
- in the [People matter survey](#) or other workforce surveys

This is often asked with disability information. We use disability and adjustment data to tell us who makes up the VPS workforce and if they have the right supports. It also helps us track if our policies and processes are working how they should.

Sharing this information can help improve workplace accessibility across the VPS. It is always your choice how you answer, and, in most cases, your answers are anonymous.

## Case study: Amir

Amir has a prosthetic foot. They had a workplace assessment when they started their role two years ago and their workstation was set up to suit their needs. The desk booking system was updated so no one else could book or adjust Amir's desk. This has worked well for Amir, and they recorded this adjustment in their passport.

Amir's department is about to move offices. Their manager, Peter, arranges a one-on-one to discuss the transition. Peter asks if Amir would like to view the new office early and complete a new workplace assessment. Amir agrees and suggests testing the new workstation for a period as a trial.

They decide to update the passport's next review date to one month after the move. The review dates will keep the discussions ongoing, so Amir feels supported and doesn't have to proactively request changes. Peter is pleased that he has a clear method for meeting his employee's needs.

## **Step 5: When you move to another role, department or agency**

If you change jobs, you can use your [workplace adjustment and arrangement passport] to show your new manager your past adjustments. This helps your new manager understand your needs and to support you with your workplace adjustments requests. This also minimises the sharing of personal information for people with disability.

Wherever practicable, your existing adjustments should stay with you throughout your VPS career. If you have tools or equipment, check with your People and Culture team if they can transfer the ownership of the adjustment to your new workplace.

It may not be possible to transfer some adjustments because of:

- building fixtures that can't be altered
- software that cannot be transferred between organisations
- other role specific factors like moving from a role performed in an office to a role that is operational.

Any current workplace adjustment funding should be transferred to the new organisation.

If equipment is provided through the [Employee Assistance Fund](#) (EAF), managers should check with you who the owner is. This must be confirmed in writing to EAF.

If you join the emergency management surge team, you should keep your adjustments. The surge workforce should fund any changes that standard purchasing practices can't cover.

You may be able to keep your equipment upon leaving the VPS, if policies allow it. For example, the organisation may not be able to reuse the equipment.

## Case study: Sandeep

Sandeep feels excited to start a new role as Senior Manager in a different department. But because of previous bad experiences, he is feeling anxious about how his dyslexia might impact the way his new colleagues see him. For example, in the past he had a hard time with group projects and his peers became frustrated by spelling mistakes or the time he took to learn new systems.

To help remove barriers, Sandeep wants his assistive tools; his Reading Pen, Screen Reader, and Dictation Tool software to move with him. Sandeep reaches out to his Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) team for advice, talks to his new Director and shares his passport. He often worries about disability stigma, so he asks that this information stay private or to let him know if it needs to be shared.

The current D&I team won't redistribute Sandeep's tools in the department right away, so it works for everyone to transfer the assistive tools as an asset transfer, to the new department.

Sandeep still feels anxious about adapting to the new role and systems. It will still take him longer to learn, but the adjustments will make the process easier. The Director's support helps Sandeep feel safe about sharing about his dyslexia and the tools he needs.

## How we wrote this guide and the passport

We developed this guide and the passport with the most up-to-date knowledge at the time. The case studies are loosely based on the people we consulted.

We consulted with a range of Victorian public sector employees, peer-led networks and governance groups in developing these resources.

Where a department is referenced separately, employees of that department provided individual feedback and are not members of the listed groups.

We also have a [workplace adjustments guide for executives and people managers](#).

## Consulted organisations

- Autism Success Network

- ADHD Growth Network
- Carer Reference Group
- Courts Services Victoria
- Department of Energy, Environment, and Climate Action
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
- Department of Government Services
- Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry, and Regions
- Department of Justice and Community Safety
- Department of Transport and Planning
- Deputy Secretary Disability Champion Roundtable
- Disability Employment Community of Practice
- Enablers Network, including their department chapters
- Human Resource Directors Committee
- OHS Executive Group
- Victorian Electoral Commission
- Victorian Equal Opportunity Human Rights Commission
- Victorian Public Sector Commission
- Victoria Police.