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Workplace adjustments guide for executives and people managers

How to support your team members with workplace adjustments and the use of the workplace adjustments and arrangement passport.

About the guide

This 5 step guide helps you to make workplace adjustments easy, effective and inclusive for your team members.



As a people manager or executive, making an adjustment could mean changing regular workplace practices, schedules, the environment, or other tools to support an employee's needs.

Workplace adjustments help remove barriers and make the workplace more accessible for people with disability and others who might require accommodations, such as a

carer. See [workplace adjustments advice for public sector organisations](#) for definitions of workplace adjustments, disability and carers.

We know that many people with disability worry about asking for adjustments for fear of negative treatment, so this guide provides conversation prompts and case studies to help you have easy and effective discussions with your team members.

You should use this guide with your organisation's workplace adjustment policy. If you need support or guidance, reach out to your People and Culture or Diversity and Inclusion teams.

Workplace adjustment and arrangement passport

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

This guide also outlines how to use the workplace adjustment and arrangement passport, which is an optional tool where your employee records their workplace adjustments and arrangements. You can refer to this log to help understand their needs better and guide your adjustment conversations.

Step 1: Understand your role

As an executive or people manager, you must raise awareness about the availability of workplace adjustments with your team. This ensures all employees have equal access to support and is key to creating an accessible workplace.

Don't forget that as an executive or people manager, you can have adjustments too.

As an executive or people manager, you have a responsibility to ensure that employees with disability have adjustments to support them in their roles.

Increasing your understanding of disability and why adjustments and these policies are important will help you make adjustments standard practice.

Your legislative and confidentiality responsibilities with adjustments

Not giving an adjustment to an employee with disability or carer could put you or your department at risk of discrimination or unfair treatment.

Information shared during discussions about adjustments is private and confidential.

This includes when engaging People and Culture or Diversity and Inclusion for support. Make sure to de-identify the employee or request permission from the employee before you engage them.

In most cases, requesting proof of disability is inappropriate. However, medical information sought should relate to the employer's genuine and reasonable concern regarding the employee's health and safety or the ability to perform the inherent requirements of their role. If there is a valid request for this information, it should be relevant to the barrier or the core duties of the role and not be overly intrusive of the employee's personal information.

The [Victorian Public Service Enterprise Agreement 2024](#) at clause 8 sets out various mechanisms to request flexible work, however requests must be made in writing. For people with disability a flexible work arrangement may be a type of reasonable adjustment.

While all approved flexible work requests should always be documented within the passport as a reasonable adjustment, the process by which flexible work is considered should align with the [Flexible Working Arrangements – Specific Circumstances Common Policy](#) and the [VPS Flexible Work Policy](#). Your employer may have a particular process or policy in place to give effect to this. Using the correct policy ensures that everyone knows their rights and responsibilities.

Risks to health, safety and wellbeing of employees are proactively managed.

Decisions and actions must be made in accordance with the [Code of Conduct](#) and the [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006](#).

Case study: Bob

Bob shares with his manager Yusra that he has recently learned he is Autistic. He's feeling nervous to share this information but thinks it will help Yusra understand how he works better.

Bob explains that he only wants Yusra to know he is Autistic for now, as he is still discovering his identity and isn't ready to share with others. Yusra reassures him that his personal information will stay confidential. She also lets him know that if he decides to request adjustments, he won't need to provide diagnostic information, just details about what would help him in his role.

After the conversation, Yusra reflects on how valuable it was and decides to ask all her employees, regardless of disability status, if there are any adjustments that could

support them. She wants to normalise these conversations, reduce the nerves others might feel and show that adjustments are a routine part of how the team works.

Bob is glad his first experience sharing this information was positive and respectful. He feels reassured knowing he doesn't need to share overly personal information to receive support.

Step 2: Identifying adjustments and having discussions

There is no fixed way to find or discuss adjustments. Instead, consider the person's needs and what the role requirements are. Think outside the box to find solutions to the barriers that have been raised.

Identifying adjustments

This may be the first time an employee is asking for an adjustment. They may have a fear of stigma or discrimination. They may not be familiar with what they can request or what they might need.

The following supports can help your employees identify the adjustments they need.

Workplace assessment

This is when your employee's workplace and workstation are assessed to find any suitable adjustments. Talk to your People and Culture team to get one conducted for your employee.

Job Access Employee Assistance Fund

Check if your employee is eligible for the [JobAccess Employee Assistance Fund](#) (EAF). The EAF pays for adjustments and conducts workplace assessments. Some departments have internal funding arrangements that may be more suitable, so check on your organisation's intranet or consult with the People and Culture team first.

A workplace assessor can help decide what changes a workplace needs to support an employee with disability. They can also assess an employee's productivity. Assessments are free through the Employee Assistance Fund or the Supported Wage System.

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan

Check if your employee requires a [Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan](#) (PEEP). A PEEP specifies what additional or specific assistance a person may need to evacuate during an emergency. Refer to your organisation's intranet, your Fire Warden or OHS representative for more information.

Case study: Carla

Bailey's employee Carla has a vision impairment. Carla asks Bailey if they can discuss adaptive software as she isn't sure what type she needs or what hardware she needs to run it. Bailey mentions they aren't familiar with adjustments for vision impairment, but they will see what support is available before they meet.

In the meeting, they share that [Job Access](#) has specialists that can help identify the right tools for Carla. So, with Carla's permission, they contact Job Access to arrange this review.

The specialist recommended changes included buying:

- OpenBook scanning and reading software,
- ZoomText Magnifier/Reader software
- ZoomText Large Print Keyboard
- a larger monitor than what the organisation offers
- wireless headphones
- an iPad (to sync camera images from meeting presentations).

Carla's adjustments meet the Employment Assistance Fund criteria, so her adjustments are paid for through the fund. Bailey was happy they learnt of a new support service that could help Carla.

Starting discussions with your team members

Check in with all employees by asking if there are any adjustments that can help them with their work. This is even if they haven't mentioned a disability. Asking everyone builds a workplace where everyone feels safe to be themselves.

Ask during recruitment and onboarding if any adjustments are required and include it in

regular one-on-ones, or after any injury or illness.

Some people with disability may need time to build trust before sharing their needs. Build a safe space by keeping conversations private, being an active listener and being open to change. Invite employees to bring [a trusted person to support them through the adjustment process](#) if needed.

Ask your employee how they would like to communicate in your conversations about adjustments. This shows you understand everyone has different needs and that you are willing to accommodate them. Your employee may prefer informal meetings over coffee, having it online or through written format.

Example conversation prompts

Starting a discussion with your employee

- What support do you need with your work or in the workplace?
- Do you have a workplace adjustment and arrangement passport you would like to share?
- What is your preferred communication method when discussing your workplace adjustments with me?
- How can I help you identify any adjustments you may need in this role?
- I will send you some information on the workplace adjustment policy and workplace assessments. Next one-on-one we can chat about any supports you might need.
- When and where do you feel like you work best?

Having discussions with your team members

Remember that you don't need disability details to help with adjustments. You should focus on the barrier that has been identified and how the adjustment can remove it so the employee can participate equally at work. This includes not requesting onerous medical information or asking questions that intrude into the employee's personal life.

It is okay if you don't have a solution straight away. Open and ongoing conversations

where an employee can try different adjustments and share barriers will help find the right supports for the employee to work their best.

Every person with disability experiences and relates to their identity differently. If this information has been shared with you, the employee is demonstrating they trust you. Ask them if and how they want to share this in the workplace with other colleagues or the team. If it's relevant, you can also ask them how they would like to be contacted when they're on extended personal leave.

We created a [tipsheet for executives and people managers](#) that is short, actionable and easily accessible to help set you up for successful adjustment conversations.

Open allClose all

Example conversation prompts

Having a discussion with your employee

- What is going well in your role and what areas are not going so well?
- When and how do you feel like you are working your best?
- Are there some specific challenges you are coming across?
- What would help you feel more confident to do your role?
- I want to identify ways that I can best support you.
- Let me talk to the People and Culture or Diversity and Inclusion team and I will get back to you with some options.

Speaking to your People and Culture or Diversity and Inclusion team

- My employee is asking for an adjustment that I've never done before, can you give me some information so I can update my employee?
- My employee needs a software adjustment and has said I can share their information with your team, so I have copied my employee into this email to work this out.
- Can you take me through the options and processes for workplace adjustments?
- Do you have some tools or advice for adjustments for this type of role?

3. **Case study: Margaret**

Margaret requests a one-on-one meeting with her manager Ishwar. During the conversation, she shares she is Audhd (Autistic and ADHD) and has dyslexia. This can affect her productivity in different ways, and her experience can vary from day to day.

While Ishwar has experience with workplace adjustments, this is his first time supporting someone with multiple forms of neurodivergence. He reminds himself to ask open questions, be respectful and supportive in identifying adjustments and the conversation will be effective.

He thanks Margaret for sharing and asks how he can best support her, including what she might need on those harder days. Rather than trying to solve everything on the spot, Ishwar framed the conversation as a starting point and suggests they speak to their Diversity and Inclusion team about any adjustment ideas they might have too.

Before ending the discussion, Ishwar asks Margaret if she wants to share her neurodivergence with the team, making it clear it's her choice but offering to support the process if she wants.

Both left the conversation feeling positive. By focusing on creating a safe space and practical supports, Ishwar helped Margaret figure out adjustments to make the workplace more accessible for her.

Step 3: Implementing adjustments

You should aim to make the agreed adjustments quickly. Keep the employee informed at each stage. Different legislation and policies specify different timeframes, but best practice is to implement adjustments within 2 weeks and no longer than 21 days.

Where funding is required arrange and fund adjustments as part of standard purchasing practices. You can find further information on your organisation's intranet page.

Other funding options available are from the Australian Government's Employment Assistance Fund, [Job Access](#). This option is useful for accessing larger items.

If the adjustments will take a while to implement, work with the employee to put in place some temporary measures until the adjustment are finalised.

Sometimes, you might face resistance when implementing adjustments for your employee. This can be difficult to navigate as a manager. Try to understand why there is

resistance so you can offer solutions and new ideas.

Case study: Craig

Craig is a Director who is returning to work after an accident and now has permanent limitations to his mobility. He requires ergonomic equipment, a sit-stand desk, and modified office access.

Craig's Executive Director, Narelle, arranges for Craig to work from home while the equipment is ordered and implemented. She works with the IT and facilities teams to make sure his return is safe and that the doors, lifts and bathrooms are accessible.

Narelle also seeks Craig's permission to share this update with the leadership team and sets their meetings to be hybrid from now on. This is the first workplace adjustment for Craig, so they log it in the workplace adjustment and arrangement passport.

Craig is grateful Narelle made his return to work seamless and takes the opportunity to check with his team members if they require any supports to work their best.

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.

The passport is how your employee records their adjustments throughout their VPS career. This can help them have continuity of their supports across different roles, organisations and situations. The passport is particularly important for employees with disability who require adjustments to participate fully in the workplace and in other individual cases such as for those with caring responsibilities.

As a manager, you should view the passport as a reliable source of how your employee works best. It also helps you keep track of their adjustments.

This passport is completely optional – your employee doesn't need to fill it out to request a workplace adjustment.

You can support the use of the passport by asking all your employees if they have a passport to share or offering to read through the passport before you have an adjustment conversation.

Reviewing adjustments

It is best practice to regularly review your employee's workplace adjustments to confirm they are working and beneficial.

You should reach a mutual agreement with your employee on the frequency of the reviews. This may be every month while trialing new adjustments or once a year if the adjustment is known to be effective.

You should schedule reviews whenever the employee needs it. Such as a change in circumstances, location or personal matters.

Having open and regular conversations helps create a safe environment where everyone feels comfortable to share what support they need in the workplace.

Case study: Arjun

Arjun is a Senior Policy Officer and the carer for his mother, who has early onset dementia. He and his manager Sophie meet regularly to discuss the balance of his carer responsibilities with his workload.

Initially, Sophie offers flexibility with start and finish times and working from home when needed. Sophie suggests modifying Arjun's tasks if this doesn't help. They trial this over three months and find it works well for both Arjun and the team.

Sophie suggests using the workplace adjustment and arrangement passport, so Arjun doesn't need to repeatedly explain his carer responsibilities if he changes teams. Together, they update the passport and agree to review it every six months, or sooner if his mother's care needs change.

Sophie is glad she can support these adjustments as Arjun is a valued member of the team.

Step 5: When employees move to another role, department or agency

When an employee joins your team, you can use their [workplace adjustment and arrangement passport \(DOCX 116 kB\)](#) as a communication tool of what has been effective throughout their career.

The passport acts as a great starting point for adjustment conversations to give you an understanding of their needs quickly. It's then about working together on how you can apply those to the new role or environment. This is a great way to welcome someone to your team.

Wherever practicable, existing adjustments should stay with the employee during their VPS career. This could be done through an asset transfer, so check with your People and Culture team.

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

- building fixtures that can't be altered
- software that is not transferable between government departments and entities
- 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 an employee joins the emergency management surge team, they should keep their adjustments if they can. The surge workforce should fund any changes that standard purchasing practices can't cover.

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

The organisation might let an employee keep the equipment when they leave the VPS, if policies allow it. For example, the organisation may not be able to reuse the equipment.

Case study: Quayn

Maxine's team member Quayn has ADHD and uses assistive software to write briefs and take minutes. After securing a promotion in another department, Quayn asks Maxine for

advice on whether the software can be transferred to her new role.

Maxine, with Quayhn's permission, asks the Diversity and Inclusion team for support. They state because the organisation is going through a restructure, they won't redistribute the software right away. They provide Maxine with information on how to do this as an asset transfer.

Maxine and Quayhn update her workplace adjustment and arrangement passport with this information and new review date for after she starts her role.

Quayhn shares the passport with her new manager, who is grateful for the clarity on what adjustments Quayhn needs to work her best. They begin the process of transferring and implementing the adjustment in the new workplace.

Quayhn is happy the passport was useful in streamlining her department transition.

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 employees](#).

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.