What is ‘reasonable’?

The process below is to help you make an evidence-based decision about whether or not an adjustment is ‘reasonable’.

The law does not require employers to make adjustments that are not reasonable. However, to determine whether or not a requested adjustment is reasonable for your organisation, you need to go through some steps to ensure that you have considered this thoroughly. There are two parts to doing this: (i) deciding if the duty to make a reasonable adjustment is required, (ii) deciding if it is reasonable.

Is an adjustment required?

➢ Is the person disadvantaged or experiencing a barrier at work?
➢ Are they experiencing this disadvantage/barrier because of their disability?

If the answer is ‘yes’ to both of these, you then need to consider:

Is the adjustment 'reasonable'?

➢ Effectiveness – how well does the adjustment in question remove or at least minimise the disadvantage?
➢ Practicality – how practical is the adjustment? For example, how long will it take to implement, will anyone need extra training, etc?
➢ Cost – for example, how much will it cost, what are the financial resources available to the organisation (include schemes such as Access to Work, for example), can your organisation afford it?
➢ Disruption – how disruptive to the business, to others, and to the needs of the organisation would it be to make this adjustment?
➢ Risk – would making this adjustment cause any risk to others? (Note: An adjustment will not be ‘reasonable’ if anyone’s health and safety would be compromised by making that adjustment.)

Ensure that you consider all information available to you when answering the above – for example reports from occupational health, medical professionals, or other workplace assessments – and ensure that you document both your decision-making process and the decision.

Further information

You can also contact our Advice Service on advice@businessdisabilityforum.org.uk or 020-7403-3020.