A disabled colleague asks for a change at work. Do you have to say yes?

Four things to keep from session two, on reasonable adjustments. For line managers, HR teams and anyone who receives, decides on or puts these requests into practice.

* **Five.** Is it reasonable? Four questions, and the same request at two employers.
* **Six.** When you don't know the answer yet. The first 24 hours, and four ways to answer.
* **Seven.** What to write down, and where it lives. The adjustment record, with an example.
* **Eight.** Interview questions in advance, for every candidate. Three worries answered.

Hugh O'Keeffe, Disability, Access and Inclusion Consultant.
hughokeeffe.com. Session two ran on 12 November 2026. Session three, on why good disability policies fail, is on 10 December. Resources one to four, from session one, are at hughokeeffe.com/resources.



Is it reasonable? Four questions

The law doesn't define "reasonable". Tribunals weigh up four things, and you can use the same four.

1 Would it help?

It doesn't have to be certain. A real chance that it removes the disadvantage is enough.

2 Is it practical?

Can you do it with the people, space and systems you have?

3 What does it cost, after funding?

Most cost little or nothing. Access to Work funding counts, and employers with fewer than 50 staff usually pay nothing towards equipment.

4 What can your organisation do?

A council can be expected to do more than a charity of twelve.

The same request at two employers. "Can I come off the 7am opening?"

	A council team of 30	A charity of 12
Would it help?	Yes. Mornings are hardest for them.	Yes, for the same reason.
Is it practical?	Thirty people share the opening rota.	Only three people can open, so two would take every early start.
Likely answer	**Yes.** Off the opening rota.	**Part yes.** Opening once a week instead of three times.

> **Weigh all four together, for this person and this job.** If one step isn't reasonable for you, look for another that removes the same barrier.

Going further. I run this session privately for teams, using your own situations and your own policy. hughokeeffe.com/work-with-me

From The Small Print, a free monthly session for managers and HR on what to do when disability comes up at work. Hugh O'Keeffe, Disability, Access and Inclusion Consultant. hughokeeffe.com. I'm not a lawyer and this isn't legal advice. Use it as a way in, and get advice on anything already in dispute.

When you don't know the answer yet

You don't need the answer on day one. Four things to do in the first 24 hours, and four ways to answer.

1 **Thank them, and take it seriously.**
"Thanks for telling me, I want to get this right." No questions about the diagnosis.

2 **Ask what gets in the way.**
"What's making it hard, and what would help?"

3 **Start what you can today.**
A temporary change, a trial, a quieter desk for now.

4 **Give a date, and say who decides.**
"I'll come back to you by Friday. If it isn't my call, I'll tell you whose it is."

Four ways to answer

Yes
Say when it starts. Then write it down.

Part yes
Agree what you can today. Set a date for the rest.

Not yet
A trial for a set time, with a review date.

A different step
Another step that removes the same barrier. Say why.

> **A no is only ever to one step.** The conversation about what would help carries on.

Going further. The Margin is a small paid working session on Wednesday 27 January 2027, for twenty people. You leave with your own adjustments process mapped and the templates to fix it. hughokeeffe.com/the-margin

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What to write down, and where it lives

Six lines, filled in the day you agree something, so the next manager isn't starting from scratch.

WHAT THE PERSON ASKED FOR, IN THEIR WORDS

WHAT YOU AGREED, OR THE PART YOU AGREED

ANYTHING YOU'RE TRIALLING, AND THE REVIEW DATE

WHAT YOU COULDN'T AGREE, AND WHY

WHO DECIDES IF YOU'RE AWAY

WHERE THIS LIVES, AND WHO CAN SEE IT

An example, filled in

WHAT THE PERSON ASKED FOR

"Could I work from home on Mondays? I have a hospital appointment every Monday morning."

WHAT YOU AGREED

Works from home on Mondays and joins the team meeting by video.

TRIAL AND REVIEW DATE

Six-week trial from 3 March. Reviewed 14 April, still working. Next review in October.

WHAT YOU COULDN'T AGREE, AND WHY

Nothing refused.

WHO DECIDES IF YOU'RE AWAY

Kamal, team manager. The head of service when Kamal is away.

WHERE THIS LIVES

The HR record. The person, their manager and HR can see it.

> **Look again** on the review date, and when the role, the manager or the person's situation changes. Ask "Is this still working for you, and has anything changed?"

Going further. If your records are scattered, or nobody is sure who decides, I review adjustments policies and processes and show you where requests get stuck. hughokeeffe.com/work-with-me

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Interview questions in advance, for every candidate

Three worries panels raise, answered, and four steps to do it.

OFTEN SAID	ACTUALLY
If we send the questions in advance, they'll memorise the answers, or use AI.	You're testing whether they can do the job. Follow-up questions on the day show you how they think.
If we do it for one candidate, it's unfair on the others.	Then do it for everyone. The law also allows you to treat a disabled candidate more favourably.
They seemed calm, so they were fine.	Don't judge someone's stress, or their ability, by how a neurotypical candidate would show it.

How to do it

1. **Send the questions to every candidate.**
   A few days before, at the same time for everyone.
2. **Ask follow-up questions on the day.**
   "Tell me more about that." "What would you do differently?"
3. **Score examples and reasoning.**
   Agree what a good answer contains before the first interview.
4. **Ask every candidate what else would help.**
   "Is there anything that would make the interview work better for you?"

> **A recent case.** In Bryce v Coventry City Council [2026] EAT 153, an appeal tribunal said an employer can't assume a neurodivergent candidate shows stress the way other candidates do.

Going further. I run this session privately for hiring managers and HR teams, using your own interview process. hughokeeffe.com/work-with-me

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