

# How to talk to your employer about your health and get the best response

## It's your right!

You have a fundamental right to ask your employer to help you to do your job. You can't be sacked for asking for their support. So long as what you are asking for can be reasonably accommodated then you can expect to be supported. Find out more here: <https://www.gov.uk/reasonable-adjustments-for-disabled-workers>

Nowadays you can ask for more flexibility as the technology exists to help you. Whether it's working from home, using speech to text software or collaborating using cloud based applications - there are many ways to ensure employees can work better around their health needs.

## Have a plan

Be clear about what the problem is, what needs to change and what your suggestions are for adjustments. You could go the extra mile and put together a draft business plan or weekly action plan. Outline costs or benefits, or activities that you'll undertake and when, in order to accommodate the needs of your job and the needs of the employer, as well as your own needs. This thoughtful prepared approach means you already have a response to objections. It can help your employer reach a decision more easily. It shows your commitment.

Clear, practical thinking will take the emotion out of the situation, making it easier for you to cope with.

### **Less is more**

You don't need to give your employer your life history. Just stick to simple facts. They need to know what the important issues are so that they can make a decision.

Give some thought to whether you want to request an occupational health assessment to help you find the best support. These are usually only deployed when you have been off sick for some time and need help to get back to work. But you may feel you need support to stop you getting more ill.

Show you are trying to come up with solutions, not problems.

### **Face to face works best**

It might feel difficult to talk through your request in person, but it really is the best option in most cases. They will be better able to see that you genuinely want to be able to work well. They can ask questions and have a dialogue which would be more difficult over email. You can reassure them of your sincerity and commitment.

### **Keep it real**

Don't take advantage of their good will! If your employer has gone out of their way to support you, then stick to the spirit of the agreement. You will lose trust if you don't.

Keep a record of how your health has (hopefully) improved. Update your employer at your regular meetings to let them know that their support is working. Demonstrate how your productivity is improving, or how you have taken less time off. They will be more than happy to make other adaptations in future if you show how much it helps.

**Be clear. Be proactive. Be confident.**