

Reasonable Adjustments in the Workplace

Session Workbook

A practical session for managers, HR teams and business partners

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Name:

Role / Team:

Date:

How to use this workbook

This workbook follows the session in order. Write in it as you go — there are no right answers. The lines are for your thinking, not for copying slides. Keep the final toolkit page. It is the part most useful after today, when a real situation comes up.

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Toolkit	Your personal take-home summary

How to Use This Workbook

This workbook is yours to write in. It follows the session in order — each section maps to what is being covered on screen. You do not need to copy information from the slides. This is the space to record your own thinking, questions and observations.

Three things to know:

- 1. There are no right answers.** Some pages ask what you currently think. Others ask you to apply the frameworks to situations you know.
- 2. Keep what you write.** The toolkit page at the back is designed to be useful after today — something you can refer back to when a real case comes up.
- 3. No names needed.** When pages ask about real colleagues or cases, write enough to be useful to yourself. You do not need to identify anyone.

Carry this workbook with you and bring it to any follow-up sessions. Session content and your personal notes together form your practical toolkit.

What this session covers

Before We Start	True or false
1 Scene Setting	Legal foundations
2 The Full Picture	All conditions together
3 Case Law	What goes wrong
4 EEES™	Spotting strain early
5 WMW™	Better conversations
6 Your Scenarios	Real application
Toolkit	Take-home summary

Before We Start — True or False

Eight statements. Tick based on what you currently believe.

Work through these before the answers are covered on screen. There are no trick questions. This is about noticing where your assumptions sit.

- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| 1. | An employer must only consider reasonable adjustments once an employee has a formal medical diagnosis. | ☐ True ☐ False |
| 2. | Reasonable adjustments are intended to remove disadvantage, not to give someone an unfair advantage. | ☐ True ☐ False |
| 3. | Employers are required to agree to any adjustment requested by an employee if it relates to their disability. | ☐ True ☐ False |
| 4. | Cost alone is enough to justify refusing a reasonable adjustment. | ☐ True ☐ False |
| 5. | A workplace policy or standard process can still be discriminatory if it puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage. | ☐ True ☐ False |
| 6. | The duty to make reasonable adjustments is ongoing and should be reviewed if circumstances change. | ☐ True ☐ False |
| 7. | Reasonable adjustments only apply to employees, not job applicants. | ☐ True ☐ False |
| 8. | If an employer offers a different adjustment than the one requested, this can still meet their legal duty. | ☐ True ☐ False |

Hold onto your answers. We will revisit these at the end of the session. If any of them change, note in the margin why your thinking shifted.

1

Scene Setting

The legal landscape — without this being a law lecture

You know the Equality Act. This section is about what happens when it is applied — or not. Use this page to note anything that lands differently than you expected.

The duty in plain terms

Under s.20, employers must make reasonable adjustments where a PCP, physical feature or absence of auxiliary aid puts a disabled person at substantial disadvantage. **The duty is to remove the disadvantage — not treat everyone the same.**

The three duties

PCP (s.20(3))	Any rule, policy, requirement or practice — written or unwritten — that puts a disabled person at substantial disadvantage.
Physical Feature (s.20(5))	A physical feature of the workplace that creates a barrier — must be removed, altered or worked around.
Auxiliary Aid (s.20(4))	Where the absence of an aid or service creates disadvantage, the employer must provide it.

"Reasonable" has no fixed definition. Tribunals ask: did you genuinely consider the adjustment and document your reasoning — or did you dismiss it without proper thought?

My notes from this section

Something that surprised me or landed differently than expected:

A question I want to come back to:

2

The Full Picture

Physical, mental health and neurodivergent conditions — all together

Reasonable adjustment obligations cover all qualifying disabilities. Physical, mental health and neurodivergent conditions all attract the same legal duties.

ADHD Autism / ASC Dyslexia Dyspraxia / DCD Dyscalculia Tourette Syndrome	Anxiety disorders Depression PTSD Bipolar disorder OCD Stress (when clinical)	Musculoskeletal / MSK Chronic pain Autoimmune conditions Cancer (from diagnosis) Progressive conditions Sensory impairments	Brain injury Long COVID Stroke Conditions in remission Past conditions Conditions expected to recur
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Why it is never just one thing

Conditions rarely present in isolation. ADHD and anxiety co-occur in the majority of adults. MSK pain and depression are strongly correlated. PTSD almost always co-presents with anxiety. **The implication: ask about experience, not diagnosis.**

"We never get presented with this. It's always this, this and this — and you don't know which is a symptom or a cause until you investigate further."

Think of a case where you now wonder whether there was more going on than was visible at the time. What might the other conditions have been?

What might have been done differently if this had been recognised earlier?

3

Case Law in Practice

What goes wrong — and what every case has in common

Seven cases covering neurodivergent conditions, mental health and physical needs. For each one, note what stands out and what it means for your organisation.

Madden v Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis (2024)

ADHD · Anxiety · Disciplinary Process

Training Principle

Consider disability before initiating disciplinary action — it is a legal requirement

What struck me about this case:

What this means for my organisation:

Ferraro v DWP

Physical Condition · All Three s.20 Duties

Training Principle

Physical conditions trigger all three duty types simultaneously

What struck me about this case:

What this means for my organisation:

Name: _____

Williams v Royal Mail Group Ltd (2023)

Autism · PCP · Start Times

Training Principle

Operational objections must be evidenced — assertion is not enough

What struck me about this case:

What this means for my organisation:

Ziga v Anglian Windows Ltd

Depression + Anxiety + Physical · PCP · Four-Day Week

Training Principle

Three co-occurring conditions can all be addressed by a single structural adjustment

What struck me about this case:

What this means for my organisation:

Name: _____

Case Law in Practice (continued)

Aderemi v London and South Eastern Railway (2012)

Physical Condition · Functional Test · s.6

Training Principle

The legal test is functional, not diagnostic — what can this person not do?

What struck me about this case:

What this means for my organisation:

Walker v Sita Information Networking (2013)

Functional Overlay · Effect Trumps Cause · s.6

Training Principle

The cause of an impairment is legally irrelevant — only the effect matters

What struck me about this case:

What this means for my organisation:

Name: _____

Linsley v Commissioners for HMRC (2018)

Ulcerative Colitis · Parking · Employer's Own Policy

Training Principle

Breach of your own policy requires a cogent reason — managers must know and follow RA policies

What struck me about this case:

What this means for my organisation:

The common thread: no framework, no structured conversation, no adjustment. Every case was avoidable.

Discussion: PCPs in Your Organisation

Think about the written policies and unwritten expectations in your organisation. Use this page during the group discussion.

Question 1

What PCPs exist in your organisation that you have never examined for potential disadvantage? Think about both written policies and unwritten expectations — “always being visible”, “responding within the hour”, “back-to-back meetings with no breaks”.

Question 2

Are there processes that work fine for most of your workforce but would structurally disadvantage someone with anxiety, PTSD, chronic pain or a neurodivergent condition? Name one.

Question 3

If a tribunal asked you to justify one of those PCPs tomorrow, what would you say? Could you explain why it is necessary and proportionate?

Bring real examples. Names stay in the room. The goal is to identify risk before it becomes a claim.

4

The EEES™ Framework

Spotting what is beneath the surface

EEES is a universal framework — not a diagnostic tool. These lenses apply to everyone. They become visible as strain signals when someone is struggling and does not have the words or the courage to ask for help.

E

Executive Function

Planning, prioritising, initiating, sequencing, working memory. The cognitive architecture of getting things done.

Under strain: Missed tasks · Difficulty starting · Appearing disorganised despite effort · Forgetting conversations

What this looks like in my team:

E

Emotional Regulation

The ability to manage emotional responses in real time, particularly under pressure or uncertainty.

Under strain: Disproportionate responses · Emotional flatness · Difficulty recovering from setbacks

What this looks like in my team:

E

Environment

The physical and social conditions in which work takes place: layout, noise, predictability, social demands.

Under strain: Avoidance · Reduced performance in specific settings · Inconsistent output

What this looks like in my team:

S

Sensory Processing

How the individual processes sensory input: light, sound, touch, smell, movement, introspection, proprioception.

Under strain: Fatigue · Overwhelm · Difficulty concentrating · Physical discomfort affecting focus

What this looks like in my team:

Name: _____

If you notice one or more of these and they relate to changes in performance, communication or what appears to be attitude — it is time for a supportive conversation.

EEES™ — Applying the Framework

Think of a colleague, team member or situation where, looking back, one or more EEES areas was probably under strain — even if not recognised at the time.

The situation (no names needed):

Which EEES area(s) do I now think were involved?

☐ Executive Function ☐ Emotional Regulation ☐ Environment ☐ Sensory Processing

Why do I think that?

What might have helped at an earlier stage?

The escalation pathway

EEES strain → Masking increases → Overwhelm → Burnout → Time off sick → Possible ET claim. This often looks like anxiety or shutdown that arrived from nowhere. It rarely did. The earlier it is interrupted, the easier it is for everyone.

One thing I will do differently when I next notice EEES strain:

5

Which Means What™*Having better, more structured adjustment conversations*

WMW is a person-first, non-judgemental way of discussing support and adjustments. It does not start with the diagnosis. It starts with the experience.

The five questions

Instead of: "Are you finding this difficult because of your ____?" we ask:

What	What specifically is harder? What is the actual impact on your work, your day, your experience?
When	When does it happen? All the time, or in specific situations, times of day or meetings?
Who	Who is affected or around when it happens? Everyone or specific relationships or dynamics?
Where	Where does it happen? Which site, space, team or setup?
How	How does it affect you? What does it stop you doing? What have you already tried?

Why this matters

The traditional adjustment conversation starts with the employer needing to understand the diagnosis. WMW starts with the employer wanting to understand the experience. That shift changes the power dynamic, the psychological safety, and the quality of adjustments that result.

What about people who are not being honest?

Ask: "What does that mean to you?" Someone with a genuine condition can tell you exactly what it means, where it affects them, when it starts. Someone who cannot answer those questions with specificity — that tells you something too. WMW does not require good faith to work. It simply reveals whether it exists.

My first question before today would have been:

After today, I might ask instead:

WMW™ in Practice — Worked Example

Scenario: A colleague tells you they are finding it hard to concentrate and complete tasks since returning from a period of sick leave. You do not know what has been going on. Work through the five WMW questions below. What would you want to know?

What: What specifically is harder? What is the actual impact on your work, your day, your experience?

When: When does it happen? All the time, or in specific situations, times of day or meetings?

Who: Who is affected or around when it happens? Everyone or specific relationships or dynamics?

Where: Where does it happen? Which site, space, team or setup?

How: How does it affect you? What does it stop you doing? What have you already tried?

Possible adjustments — based on what the answers reveal:

Phased return with reduced workload	Written summaries of meetings
Adjusted targets during recovery period	Flexible start or finish time
Regular short check-ins (supportive)	Quiet workspace or remote option

Which of these adjustments would only be useful if you had asked the five questions first? Which could you have jumped to without them? The answers determine whether the adjustment actually fits the person.

6

Practical Application*Your real scenarios — applied to real cases*

Think of a colleague, team member or case you are currently aware of. You do not need to know what is going on. You do not need a diagnosis. Use the five questions to work through what you would want to understand before suggesting any adjustments.

The situation (briefly, no names needed):

What: What specifically is harder? What is the actual impact on your work, your day, your experience?

When: When does it happen? All the time, or in specific situations, times of day or meetings?

Who: Who is affected or around when it happens? Everyone or specific relationships or dynamics?

Where: Where does it happen? Which site, space, team or setup?

How: How does it affect you? What does it stop you doing? What have you already tried?

Adjustments I might suggest, based on the answers:

Name: _____

Once you have built a picture using WMW, the adjustment conversation becomes specific and personal. That is when it has the best chance of being both effective and legally defensible.

Support Across the Employment Cycle

Recruitment and job adverts

Inclusive recruitment starts before the interview, often before the application. Here is what the evidence suggests makes a real difference.

Inclusive language	Avoid jargon and acronyms. Use clear, straightforward language to describe the role and responsibilities.
Highlight commitment	Clearly state your commitment to diversity and inclusion, and welcome applications from people with disabilities and neurodivergent conditions.
Essential vs non-essential	Clearly distinguish between essential and non-essential tasks. This helps candidates understand where adjustments may be needed.
Flexible working	Highlight any flexible working options: remote, flexible hours, or part-time. Candidates often self-select out when these are not mentioned.
Accessibility statement	Include a statement encouraging applicants to request reasonable adjustments during the recruitment process.
Environment description	Describe the physical and social environment, including sensory considerations such as noise levels or open-plan offices.
Skills over qualifications	Emphasise skills and competencies required, not just traditional qualifications. Welcome applicants who may not match all criteria.
Multiple application routes	Offer more than one way to apply: video submissions, written submissions, or alternative formats.

Reflection

Looking at your current job advert template or recruitment process, which of the above is missing or could be stronger?

Support Across the Employment Cycle

Interviews

The interview is where the most avoidable disadvantage occurs. Most of the adjustments below cost nothing.

Offer adjustments upfront	Proactively offer reasonable adjustments: extra time, accessible location, alternative question formats. Do not wait to be asked.
Share detailed information	Send information about who will be present, the interview structure, and the types of questions in advance.
Share questions in advance	Share with all candidates, not just those who disclose. If sharing exact questions is not possible, share examples of the types instead.
Structured interviews	Use a structured format with standard questions. This improves fairness and consistency for all candidates.
Sensory environment	For in-person: choose a quiet, well-lit room. For online: ensure no distracting backgrounds or noise.
Rephrase question types	"Tell me..." questions can be rephrased as "Do you have examples of when..." to reduce anxiety and ambiguity.
Allow processing time	Let candidates take their time. Silence is not failure to answer: it may be careful thinking.
Offer breaks	Offer breaks during longer interviews, especially for candidates who have indicated they may need them.
Gather feedback afterwards	Ask candidates how accessible the process felt. This data is valuable for continuous improvement.

Reflection

Which of these does your interview process currently do well? What would you change first?

Support Across the Employment Cycle

Onboarding — first day and week

The first day is one of the highest-risk points for any employee managing a disability or neurodivergent condition. Too much information, an unclear environment, and the absence of a single named person to ask questions can all combine to create overwhelm before someone has had the chance to settle.

Have everything ready	Phones, laptops, ID passes, desk setup: ready on day one. The absence of basic kit is a loud signal about how prepared you are to support someone.
Welcome pack in accessible formats	Information about the organisation, team, role, and available support. Offer it in multiple formats, not just a dense document.
Assign a buddy or mentor	One named person who can answer questions informally, without the new employee needing to identify themselves as struggling.
Flexible training pace	Provide materials in various formats and allow flexibility in the pace and order of training. Not everyone absorbs best in sequence.
Sensory-friendly workspace	Ensure the workspace meets sensory needs: quiet areas, appropriate lighting, ergonomic furniture. Ask before assuming.
Scheduled check-ins	Plan regular, brief check-ins during the first few weeks. Make them easy to cancel if things are going well, but hard to skip if they are not.
Awareness for the team	Incorporate awareness for the receiving team, not just the new employee. The environment needs to be ready, not just the person.

Reflection

Think about your own first day in a role. What would have made it meaningfully easier for someone with significant sensory or executive function challenges?

Support Across the Employment Cycle

Inductions

The induction extends beyond the first day. It is the sustained period of settling, learning, and building relationships. Getting this right is where the gap between good intention and good practice is most visible.

Tailor the induction plan	Customise the plan to the individual's role and needs. One size does not fit all, and overwhelming someone in week one can set the tone for months.
Provide a clear schedule	Give a detailed schedule of induction activities, including who they will meet and what topics will be covered.
Multiple learning formats	Presentations, hands-on activities, e-learning, and written summaries. Different people retain information differently — build this in.
Introduce key contacts early	Arrange meetings with key contacts and team members in the first week. Knowing who to go to reduces anxiety significantly.
Set realistic expectations	Clearly outline expectations for the first few weeks and months. Ambiguity about what good looks like is particularly hard for neurodivergent employees.
Offer sensory breaks	Include breaks in the induction schedule to prevent sensory overload and allow time for reflection.
Create a personal passport	Begin building a document that captures what support the person may need, drawing on previous roles and their own input.
Continuous support beyond induction	Ensure check-ins and opportunities for feedback continue beyond the initial induction period. Support is not a one-off event.

Reflection

What is the longest induction process you have been involved in delivering? What made it effective, or what made it fall short?

Personal Passports

A tool for continuity of support

A personal passport is a document that captures what an individual needs to work at their best. It is created collaboratively, owned by the employee, and can travel with them as they move roles or managers. It reduces the need for someone to repeatedly disclose and re-explain.

It draws on previous roles, the person's own understanding of what helps, and the adjustments already in place. Done well, it shifts the conversation from 'what is wrong with you' to 'what works for you'.

Draft your own personal passport (or one for a colleague)

I work best when...

Things that are harder for me include...

Adjustments that have helped me in the past...

My preferred communication style is...

If I am struggling, the most helpful thing someone can do is...

Things that are not helpful, even if well-intentioned...

Revisiting the True or False

Go back to your answers from the start. Has anything changed?

Here are the correct responses. Tick whether your answer was the same or different.

1	False	The duty is triggered by knowledge of disability — not a formal diagnosis.	☐ Same ☐ Different
2	True	Adjustments level the playing field. They are not preferential treatment.	☐ Same ☐ Different
3	False	The duty is to consider what is reasonable — not to agree every request.	☐ Same ☐ Different
4	False	Cost is a factor in reasonableness, but alone it is not a complete justification.	☐ Same ☐ Different
5	True	PCPs applied equally can still be discriminatory if they create substantial disadvantage.	☐ Same ☐ Different
6	True	The duty is anticipatory, ongoing and must be reviewed as circumstances change.	☐ Same ☐ Different
7	False	The duty covers job applicants, employees and in some circumstances former employees.	☐ Same ☐ Different
8	True	An employer can offer a different adjustment — as long as it removes the disadvantage.	☐ Same ☐ Different

What surprised me most:

Name: _____

Your Personal Toolkit

Pull together what you have noticed today into something you can actually use.

One legal principle I will apply differently from now on

The law I already knew — landing differently now I see how tribunals apply it.

One PCP in my organisation I need to look at again

Something that may be creating disadvantage without anyone having named it yet.

One conversation I will have differently using WMW

A situation where I would normally have waited — or not started the conversation at all.

"You do not need to be a condition expert. You need to care enough to ask the right questions."

Name: _____

One cultural shift I want to influence

Something we do that makes it harder for people to ask — and how I could change it.

One question I still have

Something I want to follow up on or discuss with the team after today.

Name: _____

Additional Notes

Use this page for anything that does not fit elsewhere.
