

Hartlepool Jobs and Skills Service



Reasonable Adjustments & Special Considerations Policy

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1. OVERVIEW

Fair access ensures that all learners have an equal chance of success by implementing appropriate reasonable adjustments. The adjustments must not advantage the candidate nor affect the integrity of the end-point assessment.

This policy sets out the principles Hartlepool Borough Council follows to ensure fair access. We are committed to ensuring that we meet the needs of an individual learner without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Our access arrangements ensure that we comply with the Equality Act 2010.

Those handling any requests for reasonable adjustments or special considerations should also refer to relevant quality assurance, assessment information and/or course documentation. (This may be provided by the qualification awarding organisation or other stakeholders such as the Tees Valley Combined Authority or Education and Skills Funding Agency).

This policy uses as its reference the Joint Council of Qualifications guidance on Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations.

2. PURPOSE

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places a learner at a substantial disadvantage in an assessment situation. Reasonable adjustments are made to an assessment for a qualification to enable a disabled learner to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding of the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification.

A special consideration is a post assessment adjustment which can be applied if there is reason a learner may have been disadvantaged during an assessment or examination, due to an unforeseen circumstance during or near to the time of that assessment or examination.

The items listed below are examples of reasonable adjustments and reasons why special considerations may be authorised by the Service and Awarding Bodies. These are not exhaustive, and the examples are only intended as indicative guidance.

Examples of Reasonable Adjustments:

The following are examples of reasonable adjustments which may be authorised:

- Revising usual assessment arrangements, e.g., allowing a learner extra time to complete the assessment.
- Adapting assessment materials, e.g., providing materials in Braille.
- Providing assistance during assessment, e.g., sign language interpreter.
- Reorganising the assessment room, e.g., removing adverse visual stimuli for an autistic learner.
- Changing the assessment method, e.g., from a written assessment to a spoken assessment.

- Using assistive technology, e.g., screen reading or voice activated software.
- Providing different coloured backgrounds to screens for onscreen assessments or using different coloured paper for paper-based assessments.

Examples for Special Considerations:

The following are reasons which may lead to a special consideration being authorised:

- Incapacitating illness
- Serious injury
- Terminal illness
- Recent bereavement of a family member or close friend
- Terminal illness of a parent, child or dependent
- Serious domestic crisis
- Serious accident or injury
- Flare up of congenital illness
- Physical assault trauma
- Illness at the time of the assessment
- Serious disturbance during the assessment

Examples not eligible for Special Considerations:

The following are reasons which are not eligible for special considerations to be considered:

- Minor disturbance during the assessment, e.g. a mobile phone ringing or momentary distraction caused by another learner.
- Long term illness unless the illness manifests at the time of the assessment.
- Bereavement which occurs more than six months before the assessment, unless there are any on-going implications because of the bereavement, such as a court case.
- General domestic inconveniences, e.g., moving house
- Lack of preparation on behalf of the centre, e.g., staff shortages, lack of facilities
- Failure to adhere to assessment timetables or conducting the assessment at the correct time and/or place

3. PROCEDURE

1. Access Arrangements: access arrangements are agreed upon before an assessment. They allow learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to:
 - Access the assessment;
 - Show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment.
2. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the needs of a learner without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are the principal way awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

3. Reasonable Adjustments may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available adjustments listed below.
4. Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on a number of factors which will include, but are not limited to the:
 - Needs of the learner;
 - Effectiveness of the adjustment;
 - Cost of the adjustment; and,
 - Likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.
5. Hartlepool Borough Council's policy on fair access will relate to industry-specific aspects such as the Driving Standards Agency requirements for drivers of large goods vehicles and specific features relevant to the logistics industry and road transport industry.
6. We aim to involve learners in any decisions about adjustments/adaptations. This will ensure that individual needs can be met whilst still considering the specified assessment criteria for a particular qualification.
7. As each learner's needs and circumstances differ, a request for a reasonable adjustment is reviewed on a case-by-case basis. We aim to do this at least six weeks before an assessment.
8. Record of the evidence and the agreed adjustment are to be stored and made available to the External Quality Assurance body.
9. Reasonable adjustments may include the following, but others may be available depending on the needs of the learner:
 - Supervised rest breaks
 - Extra time
 - Computer reader/reader
 - Read aloud and/or use an examination reading pen
 - Scribe/Speech recognition technology
 - Word processor
 - Prompter
 - Oral Language Modifier
 - Live speaker for pre-recorded examination components
 - Sign Language Interpreter
 - Practical assistant

It is important to note that all reasonable adjustment requests must be agreed and set in place before the assessment takes place. This agreement must be both from the Service via the Named Officer alongside the relevant Awarding Body which currently includes NCFE, Aim Qualifications & Assessments Group, Ascentis and Skills First.

4. TIMESCLES

Where permission is required, the Service will complete a Reasonable Adjustment or Special Consideration Form providing relevant details and, where appropriate, supporting evidence.

All requests for reasonable adjustments will be first reviewed by the below Named Officer and, if approved, will be submitted no later than 10 working days before the assessment to the relevant Awarding Body which currently includes NCFE, Aim Qualifications & Assessments Group, Ascentis and Skills First.

All requests for special consideration will be submitted using a Reasonable Adjustment or Special Consideration Request Form as soon as possible to the Named Officer and, if approved, will be submitted no later than ten working days after the assessment to the relevant Awarding Body which currently includes NCFE, Aim Qualifications & Assessments Group, Ascentis and Skills First.

5. NAMED PERSON

In line with the requirements of Awarding Bodies and Ofqual, the Service has a named individual responsible for Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations:

- Malcolm Yorke
Lead Officer Skills
Tel: 01429 868616
Mob: 07970172019
Email: malcolm.yorke@hartlepool.gov.uk

If the Lead Officer – Skills is unavailable then the alternative contact would be Scott Campbell as Service Manager who can be contacted on 01429 284487, 07773474725 or scott.campbell@hartlepool.gov.uk.

6. RECORD KEEPING

The Service will keep records of reasonable adjustments which have been approved and those that have been requested to a relevant Awarding Body. These records will be kept for three years following the assessment to which they apply in line with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.