

Appendix 11 - Accessibility Grants

Background

The Equality Act 2017²⁰ (which replaced the Disability Discrimination Act 2006) imposes an obligation on businesses to make adjustments to its services that allows disabled people to access its services as close as is reasonably possible as non-disabled people to access that service. A business must anticipate the different types of disability experienced by customers and therefore consider how to overcome the barriers that create a disadvantage to customers can be achieved. There is a significant benefit to making a business more accessible as the potential customer base is increased however the Department recognises that compliance with this legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people is a cost to business. Consequently, the Department may be able to offer a grant for those businesses which aim to improve accessibility to their services for disabled people.

The [Business Improvement Scheme](#) also provides consultancy advice (legislation compliance consultancy) related to the Equality Act 2017.

The Cabinet Office will shortly publish further guidance on compliance with the Act's obligations for service providers in a Code of Practice on Services, Public Functions and Associations. This follows the Code of Practice on Employment and the Code of Practice on Equal Pay.

Assistance Available

For all existing and new businesses, the Department has the following support available through a simplified application process:

- Up to 50% towards permanent modifications required to premises, which may include signage, handrails, step edges, door handles, automatic doors, ramps, lifts, lighting, contrasting floor coverings, low counters, stair lifts, accessible facilities (i.e. toilets/washrooms/quiet spaces) etc
- Up to 50% of plant and machinery costs which may include specialist furniture, counter or room induction loops with testing device, portable payment terminals etc
- Up to 50% towards website modifications for accessibility purposes
- Up to 50% of other reasonable adjustments at the Department's discretion

The total grant available is capped at a maximum of £7,500 per business.

²⁰ <https://legislation.gov.uk/uk/acts/2017/15/section/18>

Eligibility to apply for assistance

The business

- Must have a permanent establishment / place of business in the Island
- Must be an eligible business under the Regulations (see sections 1 and 2 of the main [FAS guidelines](#))
- Must be up to date with all tax (including VAT) and National Insurance obligations including returns and payments

Assessment criteria

The following criteria is considered when an application is assessed:

- How the project will improve access to the premises for disabled people
- If the business has received consultancy advice regarding compliance with the Equality Act 2017
- If the business has considered a range of impairments which may include mobility, visual, hearing, limited dexterity and hidden disabilities (i.e. mental health; autism, dyslexia, epilepsy, cancer, dementia, bowel disorders)

Information to be supplied

All applicants must provide a fully completed and signed application form which will include;

- Details of the business
- Details of assistance sought
- The Department's standard declarations

The following should be supplied in addition to the application form:

- Short business case
- Details of the proposed project
- Number of part time, full time, permanent or temporary staff employed A copy of the latest accounts and management accounts

The Department reserves the right to request further information.

It is suggested that the applicant speak to their Business Development Manager before applying to ensure that the proposed project is within recognised accessibility standards.

Application Process

Information about the application process is available on the Department's web site www.iomdfenterprise.im