

**Understanding your rights
and advocating for yourself
in the workplace
- a guide for people with MCAS**



WELCOME

Welcome to our guide designed to help you to understand your rights and advocate for yourself as someone affected by MCAS.

We hope the information in this pack will help you to be able to communicate your needs to your employer, enabling you to better manage your MCAS at work.

MCAS is complex and each person experiences unique triggers and symptoms and will have differing management techniques.

The information in this pack will help you to understand your rights under the law and how 'reasonable adjustments' could be put into place to support you in working with MCAS.

There are further resources to support people living with MCAS available to download for free on the Mast Cell Action website.



CONTENTS

Communicating your needs to your employer can help to make your workplace a safer space for you to work in.

1

Understanding your rights under UK law

The legal requirements for employers when employing people with disabilities and chronic illnesses.

2

What are reasonable adjustments?

What are reasonable adjustments and what changes can be made to help support you in the workplace.

3

Requesting reasonable adjustments

Tools and information to help you identify your needs and ways of communicating these to your employer.

4

Tools and templates

Tools and templates to support you in requesting reasonable adjustments and challenging refusal of requests.

1

Understanding your rights under UK law



Understanding your rights under UK law

In the UK, people with disabilities are protected under the Equality Act 2010.

Under the Act, someone is considered to have a disability if both of these apply:

- they have a physical or mental impairment
- the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities

This definition means that many people with MCAS would be considered disabled under the Equality Act. It's important to recognise that you don't need a formal diagnosis in order to be considered disabled either, as the impact of your 'impairment' is what matters.

The Equality Act requires employers to make "reasonable adjustments" to accommodate employees with disabilities, such as providing flexible working hours, making physical changes to the workplace, or providing additional support.



2 What are reasonable adjustments?



What are reasonable adjustments?

Reasonable adjustments are accommodations made by employers to remove or reduce a disadvantage related to someone's disability. Reasonable adjustments can include:

- making changes to the work environment
- making changes to working arrangements
- finding a different way to do something
- providing equipment, services or support

Under the Equality Act, employers have a duty to provide reasonable adjustments for employees, workers, contractors, self-employed people hired to do the work, and job applicants.

What is 'reasonable' will vary depending on the circumstances surrounding the request, including the size of the employer and the nature of the job. However, if they couldn't accommodate an adjustment, they would need to work with you to find other ways to support you.

For example, if an employee requested a room for themselves within an office in order to avoid exposure to scented products worn by colleagues, a small organisation may not have the means to provide this. Instead, they may agree to implement a policy that inhibits scented products being worn in the office.



Reasonable adjustments are accommodations made by employers to remove or reduce a disadvantage related to someone's disability.

3 Requesting reasonable adjustments



Requesting reasonable adjustments

1. Identify your needs

The first step in advocating for yourself is to identify your needs. You'll need to identify how your symptoms impact you and what adjustments could help reduce or remove the disadvantage you face. This will help when requesting adjustments as a candidate during a job application, as well as as an employee in the workplace.

You can use our Reasonable Adjustments Reflection Template to identify your symptoms and triggers, and what adjustments could potentially help you. This may help you communicate your needs to your employer, or potential employer.

Adjustments that could be helpful for MCAS

Changes to the work environment

- Reducing exposure to triggers like strong scents or chemicals
 - asking cleaning staff to use a scent free cleaning range
 - asking colleagues to kindly avoid spraying fragrance
 - removing any scented candles, reed diffusers or air fresheners in the space
 - removing scented hand wash and air fresheners from the work toilet
- a pet-free workspace
- the option to work in a safer space within the office
- an air purifier with an Ultra Hepa filter in the communal working space
- asking colleagues to refrain from bringing in foods that you are allergic to
- lower lighting environments without fluorescent lights and warmer uplighters instead if light sensitivity is an issue

The first step in advocating for yourself is to identify your needs. You'll need to identify how your symptoms impact you and what adjustments could help reduce or remove the disadvantage you face.



Requesting reasonable adjustments

Changes to working arrangements

- flexible working to accommodate medical appointments or times when you may be experiencing symptoms. This might include:
 - leaving early or starting late, and making up the hours elsewhere in the week/month
 - time off for appointments that doesn't need to be made up elsewhere
 - compressed hours eg. 10 working days completed over 9 working days, allowing one day off a fortnight for medical admin
 - working from home during the summer months to avoid going outside
- hybrid or remote working
- phased return to work after an absence
- reduction in contractual hours
- regular breaks to allow for movement and fresh air
- finding a different way to do something
- a slower working pace
- flexibility around targets and deadlines
- adapting the role to reduce mental or physical task demand
- distributing the workload differently across a team
- providing virtual training rather than in-person
- avoidance of heavy lifting or strenuous activity like high-intensity exercise that can increase histamine
- work instructions being given in writing rather than verbally
- providing more time to complete a test during a job interview
- providing a written copy of questions during a job interview



Requesting reasonable adjustments

Providing equipment, services or support

- assistive technology
 - voice-to-text software to reduce the use of a keyboard for those with joint pain in hands and wrists
 - screen reading software for those with visual impairments such as blurred vision
 - reminder systems to reduce the impact of memory issues
 - note-taking systems to support processing large amounts of information provided in meetings
- blue, amber and red light-blocking glasses
- noise-cancelling headphones to help with noise sensitivity
- emergency buzzer for further support from colleagues
- access to medical facilities, such as a private space to administer medication or rest if needed
 - a shelf or cupboard with all emergency medications that others are briefed on and trained how to use in case they're required
 - suggesting that your employer allocates a room free from all triggers with an UltraHepa Air Purifier for you to use as needed
- support from colleagues or management, such as providing assistance during a reaction, sharing the workloads and being flexible at the last minute if a reaction occurs
- staff to be trained in using an epi-pen and have first aid training
- taking taxi's to work if you can't take public transport (funded through Access To Work)
- adjustments to trigger points within the absence management policy



Requesting reasonable adjustments

2. Communicate Your Needs

Once you have identified your needs and reflected on what adjustments could support you, it is important to communicate them as early as possible. Ideally, it might be best to have at least some of your reasonable adjustments in place before you join an organisation, although this may not always be possible.

Communicating your needs can be done in several ways, including:

Requesting adjustments during the recruitment process

When applying for a job, you may be asked if you require any adjustments at the start of the application process. This is your opportunity to outline what your needs are and how the employer can accommodate you. Alternatively, if you are not prompted to share this information, you can do so by contacting the hiring manager or any other contact within the job advert.

Don't be afraid to give the organisation a call to understand more about the adjustments they are able to provide; they may be able to let you know about an adjustment you'd not previously considered.

MCAS Support groups can be a good place to learn what has worked for others.



Once you have identified your needs and reflected on what adjustments could support you, it is important to communicate them as early as possible.

Requesting reasonable adjustments

Requesting adjustments when starting a new job

When starting a new job, aim to get the offer in writing before discussing adjustments. Once you've formally accepted the offer, you could request a meeting with your HR department or new line manager to discuss your needs. You may want to use our Reasonable Adjustments Request template to let them know in advance that you'd like to discuss reasonable adjustments.

After introductions and finding out a bit more about the company and the role, you may want to broach the topic of reasonable adjustments if they don't bring it up.

- You could begin by disclosing your condition or the symptoms you experience, along with triggers, outlining how these impact you at work.
- You could then outline some of the reasonable adjustments you think could support you, explaining how they reduce the impact of your condition and will allow you to better carry out your role.

Your employer may not be able to agree to reasonable adjustments immediately as they may need to consult with other teams such as HR, Health and Safety, Estates and IT. However, they should aim to consider your request and put adjustments in place as soon as possible.

You should send a follow-up email outlining what was discussed and consider providing a letter from your healthcare provider outlining your diagnosis, symptoms, and recommended accommodations, as these can help support your request.



Requesting reasonable adjustments

It's also worth asking for a copy of your organisation's HR policies and procedures to get familiar with. These may cover things such as sick absence management and reasonable adjustments. Not all employers have HR policies but they are still required to follow the law.

Requesting adjustments with your current employer

You may be in a position where you already work for an employer and need to request reasonable adjustments due to a change in your health or a change in the job role. You can communicate in a similar way as outlined above.

If you or your employer needs support

If you or your employer are not quite sure of what challenges you may face in the workplace, or what adjustments could help remove or reduce these, your employer may want to look into one of the following:

Access to Work

This is a free service provided by the UK government that helps people with health conditions and disabilities get or stay in work. They can provide workplace assessments to let your employer know what support an employee may benefit from.

Occupational Health Service

Some employers may use an Occupational Health service, either in-house or through an agency. Occupational Health services can carry out assessments of employees health conditions, allowing them to provide recommendations to your employer on what reasonable adjustments may help you.

Lauren asked her line manager to support her at work. Lauren has MCAS and was struggling with fatigue. Her line manager approved hybrid working to reduce Lauren's commuting time, allowing her to avoid triggers while travelling to work and also get a little more rest. Lauren feels much less tired and is able to focus more on completing her work!

Requesting reasonable adjustments

Advocacy

You may feel more comfortable with support in attending these meetings and discussing your needs, in which case you can ask your employer if someone can join you. For example, this could be someone from your network of friends and family, a union representative or a member of the HR team.

You could also find an advocate. Advocacy involves getting support from another individual who can help empower you to express your views and get them heard in order to make a positive change in your life. You can find a number of advocacy organisations below:

[POhWER](#) - Offers independent advocacy services throughout England. pohwer.net

[WinVisible](#) - A multi-racial grassroots group, offering collective self-help information, support and advocacy. winvisibleblog.wordpress.com

[The Advocacy People](#) - An independent charity that offers a free and confidential advocacy service in locations across the South of England.
theadvocacypeople.org.uk

There may also be a number of advocacy services in your local area which you could consider getting in touch with. There is further information about advocacy on our website here: mastcellaction.org/advocacy

In all discussions around reasonable adjustments, be sure to keep a note of what was discussed and when.

Follow up each conversation with an email and ask those involved to confirm they agree with the points covered.

Requesting reasonable adjustments

3. Follow Up and Document Your Progress

After you have agreed reasonable adjustments with your employer, it is important to create a record of these. You could use our Workplace Adjustments Passport template to outline key details of your condition/s, what adjustments are in place and when these will be reviewed.

Initially you may want to review fairly often, such as once a month, to understand if the adjustments are working as intended. Once you are sure they are effective, you could choose to review less often.

You may also need to share some of your adjustments with your colleagues as the adjustments may require support and flexibility from them. You could choose to raise this in a team meeting, in 1:1 catch ups, via email or through your manager.

Whichever way you choose, don't worry about what they may think; hopefully, your colleagues will want to support you and will be more than happy to adjust their behaviour so that they can reduce the symptoms you experience at work.

If there are any changes to your health before the next review, you can still raise these with your line manager and consider if any adaptations are needed. Remember to keep a record of all conversations.



Whichever way you choose, don't worry about what they may think; the majority of people will want to support you and will be more than happy to adjust their behaviour so that they can reduce the symptoms you experience at work

Requesting reasonable adjustments

Employers duty

Employers have a duty to provide reasonable adjustments promptly so as not to leave you at a disadvantage due to your disability. If you feel that things are moving slowly, raise this with your line manager and outline the importance of getting them in place as soon as possible.

If an employer refuses your request

An employer may refuse your request if they feel it is not reasonable. Reasons for this may include because they cannot afford it, it's not practical, or it impacts the health and safety of other employees. In this situation, your employer must explain why they feel it's unreasonable and work with you to understand what other adjustments could support you. They may suggest alternative adjustments that you've not considered before. It's worth trialling these for a set period and reviewing them. Keep notes of the trial so that you can clearly demonstrate to your employer if they're not suitable for you.

If you feel that your request has been unfairly refused, and you cannot come to an agreement after discussing with your line manager, you may want to raise this formally through the channels that exist within your organisation. This may involve writing to your HR department or to a senior leader outlining the situation. You can use our template to help you with this. You should aim to get a response in writing that outlines the reasons that the adjustment has been refused, as this will be helpful if you need the records for future action.

If your employer continues to refuse your adjustments, and you're unable to get the adjustments you need to work, this may amount to disability discrimination. In this case, you may wish to obtain advice from a third party to understand what your rights are.

Alex's decision to request reasonable adjustments at work was a turning point in his life. His employer, understanding the importance of inclusivity, responded by implementing a 'Time in Lieu' policy so that Alex could work more hours when he felt well and rest more when he needed to. Alex's confidence and job satisfaction soared, which also help to increase his productivity.

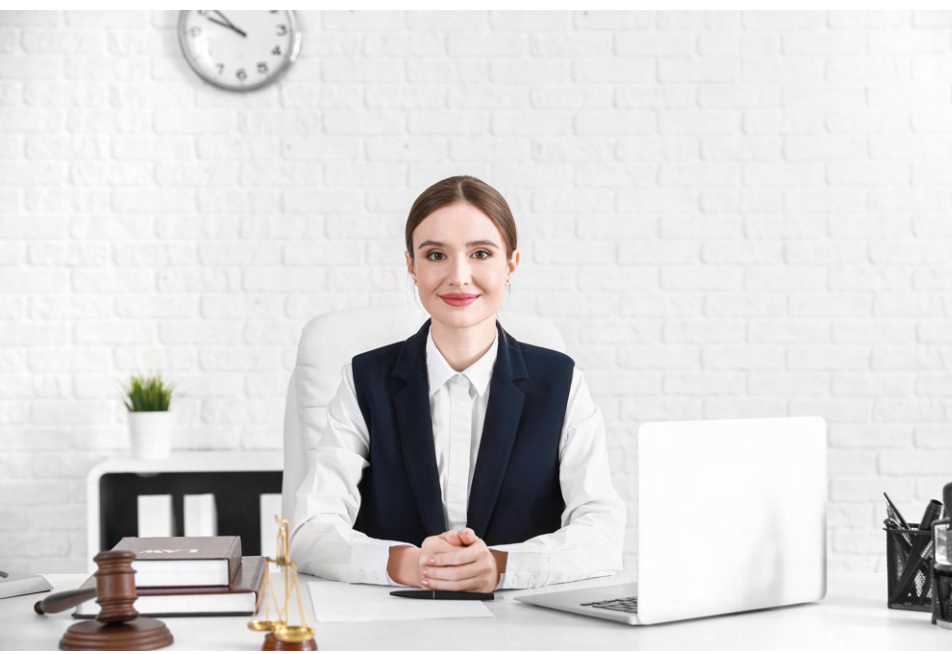
Requesting reasonable adjustments

Organisations that can offer support

A number of organisations can provide you with advice and support on obtaining reasonable adjustments, or taking an employer to a tribunal if your employer is not fulfilling its duties under the Equality Act. These include:

- [ACAS](https://www.acas.org.uk) - Can give free, impartial advice on workplace rights and employment law, including in relation to reasonable adjustments and discrimination. [acas.org.uk](https://www.acas.org.uk)
- [Citizens Advice](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) - Can provide free, independent and confidential legal advice on a number of issues including employment, housing and debt. [citizensadvice.org.uk](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)
- [Equality Advisory Support Service](https://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com) - Can advise and assist individuals on issues relating to equality and human rights, including disability discrimination. [equalityadvisoryservice.com](https://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com)
- [Civil Legal Advice](https://www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice) - Can provide free and confidential legal advice to those eligible for legal aid. [gov.uk/civil-legal-advice](https://www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice)
- [Disability Law Service](https://www.dls.org.uk) - Can provide free advice on employment matters, including reasonable adjustments and discrimination. [dls.org.uk](https://www.dls.org.uk)

In summary, advocating for yourself at work as someone affected by MCAS can involve identifying your needs, communicating them to your employer, and following up to ensure that reasonable adjustments are being made. It is important to understand your rights under UK law and seek legal advice if necessary.



**It is important to
understand your rights
under UK law and seek
legal advice if necessary.**

4 Tools and templates



Templates

There are various templates which may be helpful in seeking reasonable adjustments in your workplace. You can use the following resources to support, monitor and discuss your original request.

Visit mastcellaction.org/resources for:

- Reasonable adjustments reflection template
- Template for requesting reasonable adjustments discussion
- Letter challenging a refusal for a reasonable adjustment template
- Workplace Adjustments Passport

For additional resources, and information about services and support, please visit mastcellaction.org

Sarah's journey to better work-life balance took a positive turn when she approached her employer for reasonable adjustments. With open communication and understanding, her workplace implemented small changes like allowing flexible work hours to accommodate her unpredictable symptoms. Sarah's productivity soared, and her commitment to her job became even more evident. The accommodating work environment not only improved her overall well-being but also inspired her colleagues to be more considerate and compassionate.

Further support



If you have found the information in this pack to be useful and would like to access further information, support and resources, please visit:

mastcellaction.org

This work has been made possible by an award from Postcode Places Trust, a grant-giving charity funded entirely by players of People's Postcode Lottery.

With thanks to Annisha Sidhu and Katya Kozary for making this project possible.



Mast Cell Activation Syndrome (MCAS) for employers

What is Mast Cell Activation Syndrome?

Mast Cell Activation Syndrome (MCAS) is a condition which can develop in children or adults. Mast cells are part of the immune system and play a crucial role in defending the body against infections and other harmful substances. In people affected by MCAS, chemicals called mediators are released by their mast cells too frequently or abundantly, and/or in response to triggers that are not typically considered to be harmful, for example; foods or chemicals in the environment. This can lead to a wide range of symptoms that affect multiple parts of the body.

In MCAS, mast cells can be triggered by a wide range of stimuli, such as stress, food, medications, environmental factors, and even changes in temperature or humidity. This can cause a variety of symptoms, such as flushing, hives, swelling, abdominal pain, diarrhoea, headaches, and difficulty breathing. Symptoms can be mild or severe and vary from person to person.

You can find out more and download our free resources at mastcellaction.org



How does MCAS impact people at work?

People affected by MCAS may experience difficulties in performing their work duties due to the unpredictable nature of their symptoms. For example, an employee may experience a flare-up of symptoms during a meeting or presentation, leading to decreased productivity or the need for time off work.

It is important for HR to understand MCAS and work with employees to make reasonable accommodations to ensure they can effectively perform their job duties. This may include flexible work arrangements, modified work schedules, or workplace adjustments to reduce exposure to triggers. Additionally, HR should be aware of any potential discrimination or harassment against employees with MCAS and ensure they are provided with appropriate support and resources.

As an HR department, it is important to understand how to support an employee with Mast Cell Activation Syndrome (MCAS). MCAS is a condition that can be considered a disability under the Equality Act 2010, and employers have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate employees with disabilities. Reasonable adjustments could include changes to the work environment, working arrangements, finding different ways to do something, and providing equipment, services, or support.



Identifying an individual's needs

Identifying an employee's needs is the first step in supporting them. This can help when considering adjustments during a job application, as well as when requesting adjustments for employees in the workplace. Adjustments that could be helpful for MCAS include reducing exposure to triggers like strong scents or chemicals, flexible working to accommodate medical appointments or times when the employee may be experiencing symptoms, a slower working pace, and additional support from colleagues or management.

You could provide the table below to help employees to organise their thoughts and prepare for a conversation with HR about reasonable adjustments that can be made to support them in the workplace.

Employees may wish to complete this for each symptom/issue to enable you to gain a more complete understanding of their individual needs.

Symptom/issue e.g. Headache, nausea, rashes, vertigo, difficulty breathing, asthma attack, etc.	
Known triggers e.g. Fragrances / scents	
How it can affect aspects of the role	
What reasonable adjustments could be considered?	

Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments can help to reduce the individual's exposure to triggers, provide support for the symptoms they experience and help them to be able to perform their work duties more successfully. Even simple measures can make a significant difference for someone living with MCAS.

Every individual with MCAS experiences different triggers and symptoms, so support will be unique for each person. However, reasonable adjustments that may be helpful for people with MCAS could include:

Fragrance

Requesting that scent-free cleaning products are used in the areas they work in, asking colleagues to kindly avoid spraying fragrance, removing any scented candles, reed diffusers, or air fresheners in the space, removing scented hand wash and air fresheners from the work toilet, the option to work in a safer space within the office, and provision of an air purifier with an Ultra Hepa filter in the communal working space.

Lighting

Lower lighting environments without fluorescent lights and with warmer uplighters, if light sensitivity is an issue.

Flexible working

Flexible working to accommodate medical appointments or times when the employee may be experiencing flares of symptoms, leaving early or starting late, time off for appointments that doesn't need to be made up elsewhere, compressed hours, working from home during the summer months to avoid going outside, hybrid or remote working, phased return to work after an absence, and reduction in contractual hours.

Pacing

A slower working pace, flexibility around targets and deadlines, adapting the role to reduce mental or physical task demand, distributing the workload differently across a team, providing virtual training rather than in-person, avoidance of heavy lifting or strenuous activity like high-intensity exercise that can increase histamine, work instructions being given in writing rather than just verbally, giving someone more time to complete a test during a job interview and providing a written copy of interview questions during a job interview.

Reasonable adjustments

Equipment, services, or support

Assistive technology, such as voice-to-text software to reduce the use of a keyboard for those with joint pain in hands and wrists, screen reading software for those with visual impairments such as blurred vision, reminder systems to reduce the impact of any difficulty with memory, note-taking systems to support processing large amounts of information provided in meetings, blue, amber, and red light blocking glasses, noise-cancelling headphones to help with noise sensitivity, provision of an emergency buzzer for further support from colleagues, access to medical facilities, such as a private space to administer medication or rest if needed, a shelf or cupboard with all emergency medications along with a plan for administering medications and who will be responsible if the employee is unable to do so, a room free from all known triggers with an UltraHepa Air Purifier for the employee to use, a comfortable space to lie down, support from colleagues or management; such as providing assistance during a reaction, sharing the workloads, and being flexible at the last minute if a reaction does occur or allowing the employee to work from home.



Reasonable adjustments

Communication

MCAS is a medical condition that affects individuals in different ways. To support an employee with MCAS, it is essential to communicate their needs to the HR department or their line manager as soon as possible. The employee may use different ways to communicate their needs, such as using our templates or requesting a meeting with the HR department or line manager to discuss their needs. Providing a letter from their healthcare provider outlining their diagnosis, symptoms, and recommended accommodations can help support their request.

Employers have a duty to provide reasonable adjustments to support employees with health conditions promptly. It is important to keep a record of what was discussed and when, follow up each conversation with an email, and ask those involved to confirm they agree with the points covered.

If, as an employer, you refuse an employee's request, you must explain why you feel it is unreasonable and work with the employee to understand what other adjustments could support them. You may consider suggesting alternative adjustments that the employee has not considered before.

The employee should document their progress and any issues that arise. They may need to share some of their adjustments with their colleagues, and it is important to raise this in a team meeting, in 1:1 catch-ups, via email, or through their manager where appropriate. If there are any changes to their health before the next review, there should be a plan in place of how these should be raised with their line manager and how this will be managed, especially if any additional adaptations are needed.

Ben spoke to his employer about MCAS and his need for reasonable adjustments at work. His symptoms were headaches, fatigue and nausea. His line manager helped him to implement a fragrance-free policy in the office, Ben is now thriving in his role and has recently been promoted!

Top tip for supporting someone with MCAS

Be understanding and empathetic: Understand that people with MCAS may have good days and bad days, and their symptoms may vary. Be empathetic to their situation, and provide support as needed.

Provide a safe environment: Ensure that the work space and work environment is safe for people living with MCAS. This can include avoiding the use of scented products or cleaning agents that can trigger symptoms.

Be aware of triggers: Be aware of the triggers that can cause symptoms in an individual with MCAS, such as certain foods, chemicals, or environmental factors. If you notice that they are experiencing symptoms, check if they have been exposed to any of their triggers.

Be flexible: Be flexible with work including and provide extra breaks if needed. This can help reduce stress and allow the individual to manage their symptoms better.

Recognise uniqueness: Understand that each person with MCAS experiences a unique set of symptoms and triggers and there is no 'one size fits all' approach.



Further support



If you have found the information in this pack to be useful and would like to access further information, support and resources, please visit:

mastcellaction.org

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An MCAS-friendly workplace - cheat sheet

Because MCAS is unique to each person affected, triggers and symptoms will be different for each individual. However, there are some adjustments that could be implemented to support a more MCAS-friendly working environment (and may have the added bonus of creating a healthier environment for others too!)

Allergen-free workplace: Ensure the workspace is free from common allergens such as dust, pollen, and pet dander.

Clean Air Filters: Use high-quality air filters to maintain good indoor air quality, reducing potential allergens and unwanted fragrances.

Scent-Free Policy: Implement a strict scent-free policy to avoid triggering fragrances.

Well-Ventilated Area: Ensure proper ventilation to reduce airborne irritants.

Flexible Hours: Allow for flexible work hours to accommodate fluctuations in symptoms and medical appointments, with the benefit of an improved work-life balance.

Remote Work Options: Offer remote work options for better control over environmental triggers.

Breakout space: Provide access to a clean and allergen-free break room or kitchen area.

Quiet Spaces: Designate quiet spaces for rest and relaxation during flare-ups.

Educational Resources: Offer educational resources about MCAS to promote understanding and support among coworkers. (Find resources at mastcellaction.org)

Template for requesting reasonable adjustments

Dear [name],

I have recently accepted a job offer for the role of [job title] at [organisation], and look forward to starting on [date].

In advance of joining, I would like to make you aware that I have a health condition that impacts me at work. *[Provide further details about your health condition as appropriate/that you feel comfortable with].*

I would welcome a conversation to discuss reasonable adjustments that could be put in place to support me in carrying out the role.

Please feel free to contact me on 'xxxxxxx or xxxx@xxxxx.com' to set up a time to discuss further.

Many thanks,

[name]

Reasonable Adjustments Reflection Template

Symptom / issue	What triggers it	How it can affect aspects of the role	Reasonable adjustments that can be made	Idea outcome and frequency of review
<i>e.g. headache, nausea, rashes, vertigo, difficulty breathing, asthma attack etc</i>	<i>Fragrances / scents / chemicals etc</i>	<i>Unable to continue working and need to rest</i>	<i>Avoidance of sprays in the office, communal toilets, from staff members, air purifier next to desk. Flexibility if a reaction does occur. Working from home</i>	<i>Less reactions due to reduced exposure to symptoms, improved health and wellbeing, improved focus and ability to work. Review quarterly.</i>

Reasonable adjustment passport

A workplace adjustments passport is a live record of all workplace adjustments agreed with your employer. This is a private document that you should hold and keep up to date. It can't be shared without your permission.

The passport can act as a helpful tool to help guide conversations and ensure you have in place what you need. It can also be shared with anyone you think needs to know about your reasonable adjustments, such as colleagues or a new line manager.

The passport should be reviewed at least once every 6 months, but more often if adjustments are being trialled or if the condition/job role has changed.

Details of your disability/condition, including symptoms and triggers
Details of how this impacts you at work

[illegible]

Details of reviews and amendments				
Review date	Amendments made	Reason for amendments	Date implemented	Date of next review

Employee name		Manager name	
Employee signature		Manager signature	
Date		Date	

Reasonable Adjustments Policy

Purpose

Our company is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment. We recognise that individuals with disabilities or chronic health conditions may require reasonable adjustments in order to perform the essential functions of their jobs. The purpose of this policy is to outline the process for requesting and providing reasonable adjustments to employees with disabilities in compliance with the law.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees and applicants for employment with our company. It also applies to individuals with disabilities who require reasonable adjustments in order to perform the essential functions of their jobs.

Policy

Our company is committed to providing reasonable adjustments to employees with disabilities in accordance with the law. A reasonable adjustment is a modification or adjustment to a job or work environment that enables a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of the job.

Employees who require reasonable adjustments should follow the process outlined below:

Identify the need for adjustments: The employee should identify the need for a reasonable adjustment and communicate this to their supervisor or the HR department as soon as possible.

Engage in an interactive process: The company will engage in an interactive process with the employee to determine the appropriate adjustment. This may involve obtaining medical information from the employee's healthcare provider to understand the nature of the disability and the limitations it imposes on the employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the job.

Determine the appropriate adjustment: The company will determine the appropriate reasonable adjustment based on the employee's individual needs and the requirements of the job. The company will consider the employee's preferences and suggestions for adjustments but is not required to provide the specific accommodation requested by the employee if another effective accommodation is available.

Occupational Health: Occupational health is a team focusing on the health of employees in the workplace. Their role is to understand what impact work has on staff health and make sure that each employee is fit to undertake the role they are employed to do both physically and emotionally. Occupational Health may carry out an assessment on new employees and can give advice on adjustments in the workplace to support staff to remain in work. Occupational Health typically advises employees and their managers on what adjustments can be made to enable staff to undertake their role safely and effectively and wherever possible, focus on adapting the work to suit the health needs of the staff member.

Implement the adjustment: Once the appropriate reasonable adjustment has been determined, the company will implement it in a timely manner. The company will also communicate any changes in job duties or expectations resulting from the adjustment to the employee.

Review the adjustment: The company will review the adjustment at regular intervals, or where there is a significant change to the employee's circumstances or job role to ensure that it continues to meet the employee's needs and is effective in enabling the employee to perform the essential functions of the job.

Confidentiality

All medical information related to an employee's disability and request for reasonable adjustments will be kept confidential in accordance with the law. Only those individuals who need to know about the disability and the adjustments will be informed.

Retaliation Prohibited

Our company prohibits retaliation against employees who request reasonable adjustments in accordance with this policy. Retaliation includes any adverse action taken against an employee because they have requested a reasonable adjustment or participated in the interactive process.

Access to Work and Occupational Health Services

If an employee requires additional support to determine what reasonable adjustments may be helpful for them, our company will inform them of the Access to Work service provided by the UK government. If our company has an Occupational Health service, the employee may also request an assessment to determine what reasonable adjustments may be helpful for them.

Responsibility

All employees are responsible for cooperating with the reasonable adjustments process and providing the necessary information to determine appropriate adjustments. Managers and supervisors are responsible for engaging in the interactive process with employees and ensuring that reasonable adjustments are provided as necessary. The HR department is responsible for coordinating the reasonable adjustments process and ensuring compliance with the law.

Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary to ensure compliance with the law and best practices in providing reasonable adjustments to employees with disabilities.

Letter/email challenging a refusal to make reasonable adjustments

Dear [name],

I am writing to you regarding a request for reasonable adjustments.

I currently work as [job title] in [department]. I have a condition that impacts me at work [explain how the condition impacts you at work, focusing on specific symptoms and triggers].

I requested reasonable adjustments from [HR/my line manager] on [date]. Although some adjustments have been agreed such as [list agreed adjustments if relevant], some have been refused.

[Outline which adjustments have been refused and how they would help you to carry out your role. Refer to your medical letters if you are happy to share them]

My condition, and the impact it has on my ability to do day-to-day activities, means I'm covered by the Equality Act 2010. Under the Act, which legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace, employers are required to implement reasonable adjustments to any elements of the job which place a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled people.

I believe that the adjustments I've requested are reasonable and ask that these are put in place as soon as possible to allow me to carry out my role.

If my requested adjustments cannot be implemented, I would welcome a written explanation as to why they are not reasonable and your proposal of alternative adjustments which can be made to support me in the workplace.

I look forward to your response.

Thank you,

[name]