



## Making your Work Club Accessible

We have been running a specialist UK online centre and Work Club for 4 years and support disabled people, their carers and anyone over 55. We use a variety of different assistive technology: some of it can be expensive but some of it can be free. Below are examples of good practice and what we use. Please note prices are just a guide.

### **Attending your work club:**

To enable your disabled clients to attend your work club you will need to ensure the building is accessible to your clients: they need to be able to get in! Access doesn't just mean level access for wheelchair users. It is also about having accessible parking, accessible toilets and clear signage. Some of the changes you can make can be effective but very cheap. For example, you can make your own black on yellow signs so someone with a visual impairment can find their way or have signs with pictures on them for users who have difficulty reading.

### **Supporting your client:**

You will need to ask your client if they have any access requirement so you can be sure they are able to access your computers and room/building. Some people may not know what the phrase "access requirements" means, so you should have a chat with them to discuss what support they might need to use the computer. For example, a visually impaired person might need to know how to change the text so it is larger and uses a san serif font.

### **Your environment**

- Provide extra space to accommodate wheelchair users or someone who uses a walking frame.
- Provide extra space for support workers.
- Make it a friendly environment so clients can chat to you about their goals
- Give clients time to use the computer. Many find they need longer than non-disabled people (which means that centres with strictly timed sessions are not ideal)

## Useful Hardware

- Ergonomic mice/keyboards
- Large letter keyboards
- Wide monitor screen
- Height-adjustable desks
- Monitor riser
- Switches instead of a keyboard
- Headphones

## Useful Software

- Windows 7 and more recent Windows has a wide range of access options.
- Dragon Naturally Speaking (speech to text) £80+
- SupaNova screen reader enlarges computer text on the monitor. £295
- NVDA (Non Visual Desktop Access) screen reader download cost minimum of £3 (compulsory donation)
- WordWeb (free download for Word) is similar to a dictionary and thesaurus and can help with spelling.

iPads have a number of inbuilt accessibility features that can be customised. Many disabled people find these useful.

### Ergonomic mice:



There are many different types of ergonomic mice suitable for a range of requirements. They make it easier for someone with limited motor skills in their hand/arm to use a mouse.

### Switches:



These can look like buttons which are pressed instead of using a mouse. They are suitable for someone with very limited dexterity.

### Large letter keyboard:



Used by visually impaired people.

## Height adjustable desk:



Might be required if you have a client who has a back problem and needs to stand at their desk or if you have a wheelchair user who needs a higher desk.

## Links

Aidis Trust: Free support and advice (via a helpline and training) on computer related assistive technology for disabled people and their carers. [www.aidis.org](http://www.aidis.org)

Emptech: Provide information resources on assistive technology [www.emptech.info](http://www.emptech.info)

Iansyst: Assistive technology and disability services. [www.iansyst.co.uk](http://www.iansyst.co.uk)

Inclusive Technology: provide a wide variety of assistive technology. <http://www.inclusive.co.uk/>

MANY PRODUCTS CAN BE PURCHASED VIA OTHER ONLINE ORGANISATIONS (SUCH AS AMAZON) AT A REDUCED COST.