

Reasonable Adjustments Update 2026

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Purpose of Report

This report provides Members with an overview of the reasonable adjustments made to support employees in their work roles

2 Recommendations

The Strategy and Resources Committee is asked to note the report.

3 Background

The Equality Act 2010 requires Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFERS) to make reasonable adjustments to enable employees who have a disability to carry out their work.

This report provides Members with an overview of the number and types of adjustments the Service has made to support employees who have a disability in the past year, and the associated costs.

4 Reasonable adjustments – caseload

SFERS has supported 206 employees to date and currently has 49 live reasonable adjustment cases, most of which are for employees who are neurodiverse or have medical conditions. The duration of these cases varies according to each employee's needs, with support lasting from a few months to the whole of employment.

Cases will be closed when all support has been provided but then can be reopened if the individual's circumstances change, for example if they achieve promotion or move to a different type of role.

5 Reasonable adjustments – process

Depending on their needs, employees are referred to an appropriate expert for advice on adjustments to their work processes, and equipment may be provided to enable them to carry out their work role.

Initial referrals may include Occupational Health and Access to Work for specialist advice and/or potential funding for workplace support and equipment. Dyslexia accounts for the majority of cases, and employees who self-refer or are referred to the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Team are assessed by a professional psychologist who diagnoses whether they are dyslexic and if so, the probable level and the type of support and equipment they need.

Other reasonable adjustment cases have included back, neck and wrist problems, hearing and visual impairments, and foot support. These involve the provision of workplace equipment.

When an assessment is received the employee meets with the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Officer, and a manager to discuss and agree to an action plan. Only those recommendations agreed as necessary are put in place and may include combinations of equipment, tuition, training, support, mentoring, and training.

The Service are continuing to promote the 'Workplace Adjustments Passport' which can travel with an employee during their employment and have seen an increase in the last 12 months of employees requesting these.

6 Types of Adjustments

Read and Write software has now been in place for over 2 years for all employees to use, with a particular focus for our neurodiverse employees.

The need for adjustments depends on individual circumstances. Among the more common are:

Employees who are Neurodiverse

In addition to our dyslexic employees, we have also seen an increase in the numbers of referrals for ADHD support.

- In 2025 we recruited new ADHD and Autism voices reps to support our employees
- ADHD employees given support with concentration, time management and ways of learning.
- Created a specific area on our employee intranet to support employees to use the Read and Write Software
- One to one coaching with a member of SFERS
- Providing training presentations or notes in advance
- Allowing extra time to discuss and clarify training on an individual basis

- Specialist external dyslexia strategy training to help with areas such as spelling, grammar, organisation skills, and memory techniques (mind mapping)
- Adapting teaching styles to suit employees' needs – the training and development teams are notified in advance
- Software such as Grammarly to help with spelling grammar and with writing long documents.
- Specialist noise cancelling headsets or Earplugs.
- Different coloured paper, notepads, overlays and highlighter pens
- We have a dyslexia Voices rep to support our employees

Employees who require other adjustments:

- We use an external organisation to undertake chair assessments for employees who require a specialist chair.
- High/low desk, to enable individual to work standing up.
- Computer equipment, such as a specialist keyboards and mouse
- Specialised chairs and seat inserts (e.g. heat pads).
- Changes in rest times and/or working hours.
- Noise cancelling headsets and earplugs.
- Desk fans

7 Costs

Every employee assessed is asked to contact Access to Work (ATW) to see if they can provide funding. ATW will only contribute towards tuition and a percentage of equipment or software costs, but the Service has to pay for the majority of these, they do not support the cost of professional assessments. ATW currently have a long waiting list for assessments and so this has meant in urgent cases providing support before funding is obtained.

From 1 March 2025 to 28 February 2026, SFRS spent £8,216.23 on reasonable adjustments for employees. The Service also reclaims a proportion of these costs from ATW, particularly for the strategy training.

Year-on-year total costs of Reasonable Adjustment programme (excluding ATW funding)

Year	Cost	
2008 - 09	£555.62	
2009 – 10	£3,146.33	
2010 – 11	£5,528.69	
2011- 12	£6,612.94	
2012 – 13	£7,984.64	
2013 – 14	£9,088.73	
2014 – 15 (up to 28 Feb)	£11,233.28	
	£12,254.50	(annualised)

2015-16 (up to 29 Feb)	£19,637.72
2016-17 (up to 16 Feb)	£9,431.37
2017-18 (up to 28 Feb)	£5,613.00
2018-2019 (up to 28 Feb)	£2,517.50
2019-2020 (up to 13 Feb)	£5,949.75
2020-2021 (up to 24 Feb)	£2,390.43
2021-2022 (end of Feb)	£8,832.73
2022-2023 (end of Feb)	£11,089.21
2023-2024 (end of Feb)	£10,654.69
2024-2025 (end of Feb)	£9,642.47
2025-2026 (end of Feb)	£8,216.23

In addition to these year-on-year costs, the Service has now purchased a site licence for Read and Write.

8 Conclusions

The Service has a slight decrease in spend over the last year, caused by a slight reduction in the requests for specialist chairs and a pause in Dyslexia assessments while a new assessor is recruited.

9 Fire Alliance / Collaboration / Partnership Working

The Service has shared its practices and policies in this area with a number of UK fire services.

10 Financial Implications

All financial implications have been considered as part of the Business Planning process. Any new actions will be considered at the time and either absorbed into current workloads or included within next year's Business Plans.

The costs for year 2025 – 2026 are slightly lower than last year, however some of this drop will be offset once a dyslexia assessor is found, and the waiting assessments are completed.

Should ATW funding be withdrawn in future, costs of meeting the Authority's statutory obligations will increase. There may also be an increase in costs due to the length of time employees are waiting for assessments

11 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

12 Equality Impact Assessment

This report contains merely statements of fact / historical data. An Initial Impact Assessment is not, therefore, required.

All the actions contained in this report provide a positive impact to employees and the Service

13 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

14 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.