Disability Guidance and Procedure for Requesting a Reasonable Adjustment (The Reasonable Adjustment Passport)

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Introduction to Disability Guidance and Procedure for Requesting Reasonable Adjustments (The Reasonable Adjustment Passport)

1 Rationale for Disability Guidance and Procedure for Requesting a Reasonable Adjustment (The Reasonable Adjustment PassportProcedure)

1.1 This document provides

- guidance on our obligations as an employer in relation to disability and
- the process which should be followed when a work place adjustment is requested or identified.

1.2 The document is set out in two sections:

Part 1: Disability Guide

Part 2: Procedure for requesting a Reasonable Adjustment (the Reasonable Adjustment Passport Procedure)

The Procedure for Requesting a Workplace Adjustment will be referred to in this document as the Reasonable Adjustment Passport/ Reasonable Adjustment Passport Procedure.

1.3 The Reasonable Adjustment Passportprovides a process for engaging meaningfully and constructively with employees who have a disability, ensuring that workplace adjustments are considered, and implemented, in accordance with PBNI's duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (the DDA).

1.4 A summary of the provisions of the DDA is included in Appendix 1 and other policies relating to disability and equality in PBNI are included in Appendix 2. In Appendix 3, the ECNI's guide to the matters to be considered when a workplace adjustment are set out.

2 PART 2: Disability Guide

2.1 PBNI supports the social model of disability. This model focuses on the ways in which society is organized and the social and institutional barriers which restrict opportunities for people with disabilities. The social model recognises that people with a disability may experience barriers within society, workplaces, systems and environments, and that these barriers, rather than an individual's impairment or condition alone, can restrict participation and inclusion.

2.2 The DDA recognises that to secure equality of opportunity for people with a disability, work may need to be structured differently, support given and barriers removed. It means that in certain circumstances people with a disability may **be treated more favorably** than people who do not have a disability to ensure equality.

2.3 PBNI recognises that barriers can make it impossible or very difficult for people to access jobs, buildings, or services, but the biggest barrier can be people's attitude to disability. Removing barriers is the best way to be inclusive for PBNI.

2.4 The development and adoption of the Reasonable Adjustment Passportdemonstrates PBNI's commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity as set out in its Equal Opportunities Policy and is a positive action measure.

2.5 PBNI recognize that stigma and fear of discrimination may deter employees from disclosing their health or other conditions so it is important that we all as colleagues, provide an open and supportive environment in which our colleagues with a disability will be treated with sensitivity, respect, and confidentiality.

2.6 Employees requesting workplace adjustments will be treated with dignity, sensitivity, respect and compassion. No employee will be treated less favourably for requesting support or disclosing a disability or health condition. PBNI is committed to providing an open, inclusive and psychologically safe environment in which employees can raise concerns and request support without fear of discrimination, stigma or retaliation.

2.7 PBNI recognises that individuals may experience disability differently based on their personal identities, backgrounds and lived experiences, including culture, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, neurodiversity, caring responsibilities, religion or belief, and managers should approach all discussions in an inclusive, person-centred and non-judgemental manner.

3 The Reasonable Adjustment Passport– what is it?

3.1 The Reasonable Adjustment PassportProcess is a means of developing and keeping a live record of the individual needs of an employee with a disability, and the adjustments in place which will allow them to function to their full potential in a supportive and encouraging environment.

3.2 The Reasonable Adjustment Passportcan be used by an employee to provide as information about their disability. They can also use it to

- let their manager know about the workplace adjustment(s) they believe would remove barriers to their full and successful participation at work; or
- to formally request a workplace adjustment. The employee can give as much or as little information as they want in the Reasonable Adjustment Passportform if it is used.

3.3 Information about adjustments may be made by the employee themselves as they will know what will work best for them. Other sources of information may be Occupational Health, or guidance from other expertise such as IT, Estates, Health and Safety, government bodies / initiatives such as Workable NI, or specialist bodies with expertise in relation to the disability.

3.4 If an employee would like PBNI to agree a workplace adjustment, because of their disability, the process set out in the Reasonable Adjustment PassportProcedure should normally be followed, which would normally include meeting with the employee to find out what their disability is, what adjustment is being requested and how it will remove any barriers for them. A decision can then be made as to what can be agreed and what review periods should be put into place so as to be sure that the employee is benefiting from the adjustment, or if there are further supports potentially needed.

3.5 Managers should always consider and implement appropriate temporary or informal supports where needed while the formal process is underway.

3.6 This process and associated documentation can be provided in accessible formats and adjusted to meet communication or access needs. For further information on accessible information or formats, contact a HR Manager or Partner or human.resources@probatin-ni.gov.uk

4 What is a reasonable adjustment under the DDA?

4.1 The DDA imposes a reasonable adjustment duty on employers, in certain circumstances. These circumstances normally occur where a job applicant or employee who has a disability has been placed or would be placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other people who are not disabled by any provision, criterion or practice applied by PBNI as the employer, or by the physical features of PBNI's premises.

4.2 This is the duty to make reasonable workplace adjustments. It aims to make sure that, as far as is reasonable, an employee with a disability has the same access to everything that is involved in doing and keeping a job as a non-disabled person.

4.3 When the duty arises, PBNI, as the employer (or person representing the employer, i.e., manager) is under a positive and proactive duty to take steps to remove, reduce or prevent the obstacles an employee or job applicant with a disability faces.

4.4 These workplace adjustments can be:

- The way things are done (policies and practices)
- Physical features of the workplace
- Providing specialist equipment or services

This list is not exhaustive.

4.5 An impairment which would substantially affect a person, but which is controlled by medical treatment or other support, is still covered by the definition of disability. This includes cancer, HIV/AIDS, and Multiple Sclerosis, effectively from the point of diagnosis.

4.6 Conditions that are expected to be temporary (such as broken limbs) will not normally be considered a disability in themselves unless indicated otherwise by medical advice and evidence. Temporary workplace adjustments may be discussed and agreed locally, in consultation HR and any other relevant parties, to ensure that the individual is supported in their role. Any workplace adjustment expected to last for 4 weeks or more or be of a significant nature, should be recorded by the line manager in writing with the employee and held on the employee's record.

4.7 While acknowledging the medical definition of disability given above, in practical terms, PBNI follows the social model of disability which focuses on addressing and removing barriers to participation among disabled individuals.

5 Examples of Workplace Reasonable Adjustments

5.1 Workplace adjustments are always bespoke to an individual's circumstances, role, the nature of their disability, and how their disability impacts on their ability to do their job. What is reasonable in one situation may not be applicable in another.

5.2 In making any adjustment, the following questions should be asked of the person with a disability at the earliest stage:

- Will the adjustment remove or reduce the disadvantage for the individual with the disability?
- Is the adjustment practical to make?
- Is the adjustment affordable (taking into account funding available through PBNI and external sources, e.g., Access to Work)?
- Could introducing the adjustment harm the health and safety of the employee or others?

5.3 Employees should be actively involved in identifying barriers and exploring potential adjustments, recognizing that they are often best placed to describe the impact of workplace barriers on their role.

5.4 Decisions about reasonable workplace adjustments should be taken by line managers, but more normally, they will be considered with the help of expert guidance from HR and where appropriate, Occupational Health, or guidance from other expertise such as IT, Estates, Health and Safety, government bodies / initiatives such as Workable NI, or specialist bodies with expertise in relation to the disability.

5.5 Decisions should be evidence-informed, proportionate, consistent and focused on removing workplace barriers wherever reasonably possible. Effective workplace adjustments are most likely to succeed where employees, managers, HR and relevant professionals work collaboratively.

5.6 All workplace adjustments must be kept under review in a timely way and in consultation with the employee themselves and HR, to ensure that they continue to be appropriate in removing barriers in the workplace for employees who have a disability.

5.7 It is reasonable to expect that reviews would occur at least every 12 months if not more regularly. Review meetings should provide an opportunity to reflect on what is working well, what barriers remain and whether further support may assist the employee.

5.8 The ECNI's guide checklist on what might be considered in making a decision about a work place adjustment is in Appendix 3.

6 Assistance for staff from agencies outside PBNI

6.1 Any employee who is experiencing health conditions, wellbeing concerns or support needs is encouraged to seek help and assistance from a range of organisations.

6.2 PBNI can offer employees with access to a wide range of services that they may contact. These include an Employee Assistance Programme through which employees can access six confidential counselling sessions, among other counselling and support interventions.

6.3 The full range of services provided in our Employee Assistance Programme and other organisations can be found in the link below:

6.4 The external agencies who can provide assistance include:

- **Recovery Colleges:** There are five Recovery Colleges currently operating within Northern Ireland, one within each of the Health Trusts and each offering a range of inspiring courses and workshops. They are a new initiative within the Province but have been operating within the rest of the U.K., very successfully for a number of years.

  People do not have to be referred by a GP or therapist to Recovery College courses, they are open to anyone, who has an interest in a particular topic. They can join classes by completing a simple registration form.

  These Colleges offer education rather than therapy as a route to Recovery from Mental Health Challenges. Everyone has challenges, everyone can learn. These courses provide the opportunities to encourage individual recovery, wellness, empowerment, progress and life-long learning. To find out more information please contact a local Recovery College in your area, open the appropriate link:

  NHSCT area SHSCT area WHSCT area BHSCT area SEHSCT area

- **Access To Work**: Access to Work (NI) can help people with disabilities who wish to take up employment or who are in work and experience difficulty related to their disability. It can also help employers who wish to recruit or retain people with disabilities in employment. To find out more, open the link: Access to Work - practical help at work | nidirect

- **Condition Management Programme:** The Condition Management Programme helps you manage your health condition to allow you to progress towards, move into and stay in employment. The programme is led by healthcare professionals, such as occupational therapists, physiotherapists and mental health nurses. To find out more, open the link: Condition Management Programme | nidirect

  Workable NI: Workable (NI) offers a flexible range of support to help disabled people who have barriers to employment to keep stay and progress in work. Workable (NI) tailors support for individuals with a disability to meet their specific needs in the workplace, including:

    - specialist one-to-one help from an employment support officer to help the employee address and overcome barriers they face in work because of their disability
    - specific skills training for disabled people and setting goals to help them progress in work and reach their full potential
    - extra training and support for the employer which can include delivering disability training awareness to colleagues.

To get support through Workable (NI) an employee will normally:

- have a disability recognised under the Disability Discrimination Act (NI)
- be aged 16 or over
- be starting a new job or are having difficulties in your existing job
- work 10 hours or more on a minimum of a six-month contract

Employees mut contact Workable NI themselves and Workable NI will then normally contact PBNI if adjustments for example are recommended.

- To apply for Workable (NI) employees can contact USEL for example who are one of the providers who will be able to provide more information about the programme and complete the application form with our employee and PBNI.
  Once an application is approved USEL will support our employee and PBNI and track your progress against an agreed action plan.

  Further details about Workable NI are in the link below:

  Workable (NI) | nidirect

APPENDIX 1 – Summary - Disability Discrimination Act 1995

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) (the DDA) defines a disabled person as someone who has "a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities".

Physical impairment - this includes, for instance, a weakening of part of the body (eyes, ears, limbs, internal organs) caused through illness, by accident or from birth. Examples are blindness, deafness, paralysis of a leg or heart disease.

Mental impairment - this includes mental ill health and what is commonly known as learning disability.

Substantial - put simply, this means that the effect of the physical or mental impairment on ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities is more than minor or trivial. It does not have to be a severe effect.

Long-term adverse effect - the effect has to have lasted, or be likely to last, overall for at least twelve months and the effect must be a detrimental one. People who are diagnosed with cancer, HIV and multiple sclerosis are deemed to be disabled from the point of diagnosis rather than from the point when the condition has some adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
A normal day-to-day activity is something which is carried out by most people on a fairly regular and frequent basis, such as washing, eating, catching a bus, or turning on a television.

Section 49A duties of the DDA require PBNI as a public authority, to have due regard to the need to:

Promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability and encourage participation by people with a disability in public life.

Definitions of Disability / Disability Related Discrimination

Direct Disability Discrimination occurs where PBNI (an employee of PBNI) directly discriminates against a disabled person if, on the ground of the disabled person's disability, PBNI treats them less favorably than PBNI treats or would treat a person not having the disabled person's particular disability whose relevant circumstances, including the disabled person's abilities, are the same as, or not materially different to those of a comparator.

Disability Related Discrimination occurs where PBNI discriminates against a disabled person if, for a reason which relates to the disabled person's disability, PBNI treats them less favorably than PBNI treats or would treat other persons to whom the reason does not or would not apply and PBNI cannot show that the treatment in question is justified.

To be able to justify the treatment in question, PBNI must show that the reason for it is both material to the circumstances of the particular case and substantial. But PBNI will be unable to justify the treatment if it amounts to direct disability related discrimination. In addition, PBNI will be unable to justify the treatment if he or she has also failed to comply with the reasonable adjustment duty unless the treatment would have been justified even if PBNI had complied with the duty.

Failure to comply with the Reasonable Adjustment Duty would occur where PBNI discriminates against a disabled person ('Person X'), if he / she fails to comply with a duty to make reasonable adjustments imposed on him / her in relation to Y. A failure to complete the duty cannot be justified. The reasonable duty is imposed on PBNI where: *"a provision, criterion or practice applied by or on behalf of PBNI; or any physical feature of premises occupied by PBNI places 'Person X' at substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled. But the duty will not be imposed where PBNI does not know and could not reasonably be expected to know, that 'Person Y' is disabled and is likely to be placed at a substantial disadvantage by the provision, criterion, practice, or physical feature in question."*

The duty requires PBNI to take such steps as are reasonable, in all the circumstances of the case, in order to prevent 'Person Y' being placed at substantial disadvantage by the provision, criterion, practice or physical feature in question.

To meet the definition, a person must be affected in at least one of the respects listed in the DDA:

- mobility;
- manual dexterity;
- physical coordination;
- continence;
- ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects;
- speech, hearing or eyesight;
- memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; or
- perception of risk of physical danger.

People who satisfy the definition of 'disability' are covered by the DDA. This includes people who have had a disability in the past.

In addition, the DDA, as amended by the **Autism Act (NI) 2011**, recognises that a life-long condition like autism is a disability because of the considerable way in which it may hinder an autistic person from:

- taking part in normal social interactions,
- forming social relationships, and/or in
- concentrating on, learning or understanding information or how other people communicate or behave.

It is important to recognise that an autistic person may also have conditions that co-exist with their autism and that may interact with it. Those may also be "disabilities" for the purposes of the DDA; e.g. learning disabilities, mental health disabilities or physical disabilities.

APPENDIX 2 - Policies and procedures and action plans relating to disability

The **Equality Scheme** which sets out PBNI's duties on Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The **Disability Action Plan 2024-2029** which sets out PBNI's plans to continue to develop an inclusive working environment for people with disabilities.

The **Dignity at Work Policy** which applies to all employees and clarifies expectations of behaviour, as well as setting out the means by which inappropriate behaviour which falls short of bullying or harassment can be easily identified, addressed, and resolved.

Disability (Workplace Adjustment) Passport sets out the framework for requesting workplace adjustments for people with a disability.

The **Equal Opportunities Policy** which sets out PBNI wide commitments to promote equality of opportunity.

The **Code of Conduct for Employees** sets out core principles for behaviour that apply across PBNI.

The **Safeguarding Policy** where an individual with a disability may also be considered within a vulnerable group.

The **Health Safety Policy** sets out the arrangements for individuals with disabilities in the event of an evacuation.

Managing Attendance Policy and Procedure which sets out the framework for managing work place attendance.

Recruitment Policy and Procedure which sets out details of Guaranteed Interview Scheme for anyone with a disability applying for a role in PBNI.

7 Appendix 3: REASONABLENESS CHECKLIST FOR EMPLOYERS

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) lists a number of factors which may, in particular, have a bearing on whether it will be reasonable for the employer to have to make a particular adjustment. These factors make a useful checklist, particularly when considering more substantial adjustments.

The effectiveness and practicability of a particular adjustment might be considered first. If it is practicable and effective, the financial aspects might be looked at as a whole - the cost of the adjustment and resources available to fund it. Other factors might also have a bearing. The factors in the Act are listed below:

- the effectiveness of the step in preventing the disadvantage;
- the practicability of the step;
- the financial and other costs of the adjustment and the extent of any disruption caused;
- the extent of the employer's financial or other resources;
- the availability to the employer of financial or other assistance to help make an adjustment;
- the nature of the employer's activities, and the size of its undertaking;

Further and more detailed information in relation to the factors listed above is available in Chapter 5 of the Disability Code of Practice (Employment and Occupation) which can be accessed at www.equalityni.org

PART 2: REQUESTING A REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT PROCEDURE (The Reasonable Adjustment PassportProcedure)

1. Requesting a Workplace Adjustment

This process should be followed where an employee is making a request for a workplace adjustment due to a disability or health condition; or where a recommendation is made, for example by OH. Variations to the request process can be tailored to suit the personal circumstances of the employee.

1.1 An employee with a disability may require workplace adjustments to remove workplace barriers because of environmental, attitudinal, or organisational issues and arrangements.

1.2 Employees may not want any workplace adjustments but may wish to give their manager, and potentially other colleagues an understanding of their disability or health condition; and how this might affect them at work. If they wish, they can use the Reasonable Adjustment Passportform to document this.

1.3 Employees may download the Disability Workplace Adjustment Request Form from the Intranet.

The link to the form is below:
Disability Workplace Adjustment Request Form

1.4 The employee can either complete the form or request a meeting with their manager to make the request. If the information for a workplace adjustment comes from an occupational health report or other source, a meeting should be arranged by the manager with their employee to discuss the adjustment requested. An initial meeting can be an informal meeting to start a conversation about a workplace adjustment. If there request is straightforward, it may not be necessary to hold any further meetings, however any work place adjustments should be recorded using the Work place Adjustment Record.

1.5 The Request Form should provide information relevant to understanding workplace barriers and identifying appropriate workplace adjustments.

1.6 Employees are not required to disclose more personal or medical information than they feel comfortable sharing. Examples of relevant information may include how workplace barriers affect day-to-day work activities, whether support needs fluctuate over time, any existing workplace aids or equipment, and any adjustments that may assist.

1.7 The Workplace Adjustment Request Form should be sent to the HR Manager and it will be held on the employee's personnel folder. Only information necessary to support workplace adjustments should be shared, and only with those who need to know and with the consent of the employee if shared outside line management (immediate and more senior line management) and HR and OH.

2. Considering Requests for Workplace Adjustment(s)

2.1 When a Work place Adjustment Request is made, the employee's line manager will normally:

- Arrange a meeting with the employee and HR to discuss what the adjustment requested is, and how it can help the employee, and any possible timeframes for consideration and thereafter implementation. The employee may be accompanied at the meeting by a Trade Union representative.

- Meetings should be conducted in a constructive, respectful, supportive and non-judgmental manner and should seek to promote collaborative problem-solving.

2.2 After this meeting, the manager should consider and record any adjustment (s) that were discussed and let the employee know that either:

- The decision has to be postponed, pending the need to seek more information on the adjustment and how it can positively impact the employee, for example with additional information from for example, OH, IT, H&S etc.
- That, due to the nature of the adjustment, for example where there is a cost to the implementation of an adjustment or significant operational impact which cannot reasonably be mitigated, a more senior manager must approve this.
- The request for the adjustment is declined but an alternative can be offered. Where this is to be the case, the line manager must consult with their more senior manager before a decision is made.
- Decline the request for the adjustment. Where this is to be the case, the line manager must consult with their more senior manager before a decision is made.
- The adjustment is agreed to, the date it is effective from, and a review date.

2.3 The reasons for any decision must be documented so that this process is recorded.

2.4 Where a workplace adjustments or an alternative to the original request is agreed this should be recorded, with review dates recorded and maintained by the line manager and employee. Where review dates are set, these should be placed in diaries.

2.5 Any adjustments that can be agreed promptly without any further consideration or information can be agreed at the first meeting. Such adjustments may include varying the hours of work inside the contracted hours, and reorganization of some work tasks.

2.6 Approval may have to be sought for other adjustments that have a financial cost, for example, or impact on other staff, or work practices. Where agreement cannot initially be reached, further discussion, mediation, additional advice or facilitated problem-solving may be considered before a final decision is made.

2.7 If there is a need to engage with Occupational Health (OH) or any other party, this should be done in consultation with the employee. HR will provide advice in relation to the OH Referral.

2.8 It is important to note, that OH can make recommendations but PBNI will consider recommendations carefully, fairly and sensitively when determining what adjustments are reasonable and practicable to implement. Where an OH Referral is made, this should be made promptly and a meeting organized for discussion of the report when it is returned.

3. Where Implementing a Workplace Adjustment is delayed

3.1 Managers and should seek to ensure that workplace adjustments are considered and implemented at the earliest possible opportunity. Where a delay is unavoidable, managers should take all steps to ensure the time an employee is without their adjustment is kept to an absolute minimum. HR should assist the manager and employee in this process.

3.2 Additionally, where adjustments cannot be implemented immediately, managers should consider interim arrangements in consultation with the employee to reduce disadvantage, stress or disruption during the delay period.

3.3 Managers should also maintain regular communication with the employee regarding progress, expected timescales and any temporary support measures.

3.4 Where an employee is fit and able to attend work but they cannot be meaningfully employed in their normal role because a workplace adjustment is not yet in place, consideration may be given to alternative duties for a short period, or alternatively for an extension to any occupational sick leave and pay.

4. Support Mechanisms in PBNI

4.1 There are a range of support available for employees who may wish to discuss issues independently or to find out more information about managing workplace adjustments. These have been set out in Section 5 of the Guidance document.

Staff may always speak to their manager, HR or a trade union representative.

4.2 A link to full range of support is below:
PBNI Support pages

- Employees may also raise concerns, seek clarification or provide feedback on this process through HR or Trade Union representatives.

5. Training

PBNI is committed to ensuring that staff will have the appropriate training in relation to ensuring understanding and knowledge of disability and work place adjustments, and how a process for considering a workplace adjustment can be considered.

Mandatory training will be provided either in person of via our online Learning Hub, at regular intervals, as appropriate to the job role in PBNI.

Staff are encouraged to also look at developmental training that can be accessed via the Learning Hub, which includes a range of training modules on equality, diversity, inclusion and disability.

6. Confidentiality – disclosure

6.1 If an employee discloses that they have a disability, their verbal consent should be provided, as to what, if any information, can be shared with other team members or more senior staff. If a workplace adjustment is required, then it is likely that a more senior staff member may need to be involved.

6.2 Trade Union representatives must also maintain confidentiality in relation to the conditions and workplace adjustments of members.

6.3 Personal information about a health condition or disability is treated as sensitive information under the Data Protection legislation. HR will hold a record of an employee's disability if disclosed, and any workplace adjustments. However express consent must be given by an employee to share any information among colleagues for example. Where a manager considers it appropriate to that information is shared, the manager can discuss this with the employee explaining their reasons for the consideration. If an employee does not give consent, no information should be disclosed.

6.4 Whenever an employee moves roles or changes line manager, a Reasonable Adjustment Passportcan be used to ensure that new managers are aware of required adjustments or information relating to an individual's requirements. Managers and employees are expected to discuss the issues noted in the Reasonable Adjustment Passportand to ensure that any workplace adjustments are working and are up to date. An employee should advise any new manager of their Reasonable Adjustment Passport. HR will also have a record of this.

6.5 Reasonable Adjustment Passportis the formal mechanism for requesting, recording and reviewing workplace adjustments.

6.6 It is best practice to have a process whereby requests for reasonable adjustments can be recorded, and the decision making about what is agreed also recorded, along with a review period, which allows for an employee and their manager to assess if the adjustment is working and what if any alteration might be required to provide the employee with appropriate support.

Managers should consider any temporary arrangements to support an employee while an adjustment is being considered and a formal decision recorded in relation to the employee's request.

6.7 An employee's Reasonable Adjustment Passportwill be individual to each employee. A signed copy of the passport should be held by HR and both the employee and their manager. The Reasonable Adjustment Passport/ Record of Reasonable Adjustments will be passed to any new line manager, assigned to an employee.

6.8 The Disability (Workplace Adjustment) Passport must be regularly reviewed so that PBNI and the individual employee can be assured that the appropriate measures are in place to support the employee at work.

6.9 A manager or employee may also initiate a review of the Reasonable Adjustment Passportif:

- The employee's disability or health condition changes – either deteriorates or improves.
- The employee's personal circumstances change.
- The job requirements change.
- The employee changes post / location.
- There is a change to the working environment (e.g., office relocation).

6.10 All requests for workplace adjustments will be fully considered by the employer and responded to within an agreed time between the employee and PBNI. This should not be a prolonged period and should normally sit within the guidelines set out in Section 7.

However the sooner a decision can be reached in relation to a requested workplace adjustment, the better. The reason for any deviation from the time periods set out should be mutually agreed and documented.

6.11 The planned approach to considering adjustments is as follows but may be delayed by mutual consent or by way of requirements to consult or work with external partners.

6.12 If PBNI is considering the refusal of a request for an adjustment, written reasons must be given of the refusal being confirmed in writing in line with the timetable set out in Section 7.

6.13 However before any decision to refuse a request, or where agreement cannot be reached on the requested adjustment, there should be further discussion with a more senior manager, with HR or with the employee's trade union representatives to find a solution.

6.14 Further advice or guidance may also be sought from an external body such as Occupational Health, or organisations such as Employers Forum on Disability NI, or Workable NI, or any other relevant organisation.

6.15 Written reasons should clearly explain the factors considered, why the adjustment could not reasonably be implemented, and whether any alternative adjustments were explored.

6.16 Employees should also be advised of available support, the right to appeal, and any additional options for discussion or mediation.

7. Summary timeline - guide

7.1 A summary of timelines for managing a request for a reasonable adjustment are set out below. They may be varied in exceptional circumstances.

Action	Responsibilities and timeline
1. Request for Workplace Adjustment made	Employee asks manager / HR for a workplace adjustment to be considered. Information may not come directly from the employee and may for example come from OH about a workplace adjustment. A meeting should be set up by the line manager within 5 working days, or as soon as practical, of the request being made or the information becoming available. HR can send out the invitation, ensuring that the attendees include HR and that the employee has the opportunity to be accompanied by a trade union representative or a work place colleague.
2. Meeting with employee	Arising from this first meeting, further information may be required in respect of the requested adjustment, for example linking with IT, Finance, Estates, H&S, Workable NI etc. A time frame to meet again should be agreed so that the employee knows what is expected. The discussion about the adjustment should also include discussion about a timeframe for review, the opportunity for the employee to provide feedback on whether the adjustment is working or not, and if the employee consents to any information being shared, and if so what information.
3. Advising of decision	Once a final meeting has been held / all the information is available, the line manager will make a decision, setting out their reasons for agreeing or declining a request or offering an alternative. Before any decision is made to decline a request, alternatives may be considered by the employee and their line manager. HR will write to employee of outcome of decision and the review period within 5 working days of the meeting and whether the employee finds it acceptable. If the decision is to decline the request and no alternatives are available, HR will advise of appeal process.

Action	Responsibilities and timeline
4. Appeal must be received	Appeal must be received within 5 working days of the decision to decline a request being made.
5. Appeal meeting	This should be held within 10 working days of receipt of appeal. An appeal will be heard by a more senior manager than the manager who issued the decision, and normally not a manager in the line manager's department, who will be accompanied by a HR Representative.
6. Appeal decision	Appeal decision must be issued within 5 working days of the Appeal meeting.

6.2. Employees are encouraged to provide feedback on the effectiveness and accessibility of this process through HR, Trade Union representatives, staff networks or policy review consultations.

6.3. This policy should be subject to regular review in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including disabled staff, Trade Union representatives, HR and managers, to ensure that it remains effective, inclusive and responsive to employees' needs.