

Withdrawn

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Annex 3: The Access to Work Programme

Note: The Access to Work Programme (AtW) is not applicable to SES. This Annex is published to assist SES providers at the point a customer moves into work, following SES participation.

General Principles

- A3.1. The underlying principle of [Access to Work](#) is to fund support, over and above that which is reasonable for an employer to fund, to enable someone with a disability to overcome practical disability-specific obstacles in work and enable them to do their job.
- A3.2. [Access to Work](#) does not fund normal business running costs or general costs that every employer and employee has.
- A3.3. [Access to Work](#) can support the additional costs of disabled people in self-employment and home working, but only in relation to a disability-specific need, not for the normal set up or running costs of a business.
- A3.4. An individual is eligible to apply for [Access to Work](#) when they have secured paid employment, self-employment or have a firm offer of paid employment. Support is also available for young disabled people to enable them to take up an offer of a Work Experience placement. This includes apprenticeships but you should be clear - support is only available for the placement, not for any educational establishment.
- A3.5. There are a number of elements (or types of support) usually available within [Access to Work](#), subject to an approved application, some of which are one-off payments and some on-going funding:
- adaptations to equipment
 - specialist aids and equipment
 - travel to work
 - travel in work
 - support workers of many kinds e.g. job coach
 - communication support at job interview
- A3.6. Applications for [Access to Work](#) should be made by the individual themselves. Please be aware that that the ultimate decision on the eligibility of customers for Access to Work and, if eligible, the types and level of support they should receive will rest with the Jobcentre Plus Access to Work Team.

Assessing support needs and requesting Access to Work

- A3.7. You (or an expert with whom you contract) should assess the support requirements of the individual Specialist Employability Support customer, as they move toward work, this should include:

- discussing and agreeing reasonable adjustments and Equality Act 2010 responsibilities with the employer before any Access to Work applications are made, considering the best value-for-money solutions;
- discussing with the individual how their support needs may reduce over time, e.g. need may decrease as they become used to the job;
- making the employer aware that they will be responsible for any normal mandatory cost share;
- discussing with the employer how they might take on more responsibility for support in the future;
- negotiating voluntary contributions from the employer and customer.

A3.8. You should note: applications for certain types of support, e.g. taxi fares, will require three quotes.

A3.9. Please be aware that that the ultimate decision on the eligibility of customers for Access to Work and, if eligible, the types and level of support they should receive will rest with the Jobcentre Plus Access to Work Team.

Access to Work Application Process

Employer Contact

A3.10. All Access to Work applications are job specific; applications can only be made if the customer is in paid employment, self-employed, taking part in a Jobcentre Plus Work Trial or has a job to start. You will be responsible for liaising with potential employers, acting as advocate for your customer and ensuring that the required support is available. You must provide information to employers about Access to Work, discussing issues such as reasonable adjustments. Once the job has been secured you may need to discuss voluntary contributions, if appropriate.

Eligibility

A3.11. If you believe your customer would benefit from Access to Work support, you must first ensure they satisfy basic Access to Work eligibility conditions. The Customer must:

- be disabled or have a long term health condition that impacts their ability to work;
- be 16 or over;
- be employed or self-employed or taking part in a Jobcentre Plus Work Trial or have a job to start; and
- not be in receipt of Incapacity Benefits / Employment And Support Allowance and/or National Insurance credits only (or will cease to

claim once in work), unless on Permitted Work - only available for a maximum of 52 weeks – (see [Annex 7 for details](#)); and

- be resident in Great Britain, excluding Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, with a job based in Great Britain.

Third Party Permission

A3.12. You should note that the Access to Work Specialist Advisory Team will only discuss the application with you if Third Party Permission has been granted. Your Third Party agreement will be discussed with you by the Advisory Team at the application stage.

Application

A3.13. If support is required, you should telephone the Access to Work Contact Team on 0345 268 8489. This number can be used by the customer, the Prime Provider or any sub-contractor acting as the customer's Specialist Employability Support Adviser, when supporting the customer. (You should note that form AtW1 has been discontinued.)

A3.14. Please note: whilst the dedicated phone line, above, is the preferred means of contact, for customers with a disability which precludes use of a phone there is an email address: atwosu.london@dwp.gsi.gov.uk or a text in-box – 0845 608 8753.

A3.15. The application must be made following consultation with your customer and their employer (taking into account the customer's disclosure wishes). You will be required to consider how the customer's disability will affect their job and what adjustments they believe will be needed.

A3.16. In addition, information must be provided regarding what employer solutions and reasonable adjustments have been considered or tried, and what support Specialist Employability Support is providing for the customer.

A3.17. You should contact the Access to Work Team as soon as the job start is known, having obtained all relevant information, prior to contact, to progress the application.

A3.18. Where there is an imminent job start, you may wish to consider funding any initial payments. Please discuss this with your Contact Team.

A3.19. You must ensure your customer and their employer is aware that the application must be made before or within the first six weeks of employment; otherwise cost share rules will apply.

A3.20. When you telephone the contact team, they will take basic details which they will forward to the AtW Allocations/ Advisor Team. You should provide your contact details (phone and email) so that the AtW Advisor can call you back, as your customer's recognised Third Party, to take full details of the support

request. They will then consider the request and make a decision as to what support Access to Work may be able to offer.

A3.21. You should note: the AtW Allocations/ Advisor Team will make three attempts to return the call. If your sub-contractor is making the initial contact it is recommended they provide two alternative contact numbers and also give a named contact for their Specialist Employability Support prime provider, as a fall-back contingency.

Assessment

A3.22. A formal assessment of needs may not be required for every customer. If you have been working with your customer for a period of time you are likely to have formed an opinion of what support they may need once they start work. Once your customer has a specific job to start, their precise support needs can be further explored, involving their employer.

A3.23. Once the application is received, if the Access to Work adviser requires more specialist advice to determine the best support for the customer, then they will refer to a contracted assessor from the Access to Work list.

A3.24. If you choose to seek advice elsewhere you must pay for it yourself.

A3.25. Any assessment undertaken by an organisation not contracted by Access to Work and Jobcentre Plus should, as a minimum:

- explore reasonable adjustments;
- explore and consider all options;
- consider cost effectiveness;
- take into account social and business benefits;
- consider the tapering off of support.

A3.26. Once a decision has been made a Decision Notification and Customer's Declaration will be sent to you or to the customer and the employer, together with leaflets "Information for Customers" or "Information for Employers" if the application is successful.

A3.27. The customer will be required to sign and return the declaration. AtW funds or claim forms will not be released until the declaration has been returned.

A3.28. If the customer is unhappy with the decision, reconsideration can be requested; this information is included in the decision letters to customers. You may wish to support your customer during this process.

Purchasing Support

A3.29. Once the approval notification is received support can be purchased. Either the employer or your customer should submit claim forms, supported by

invoices, to the Access to Work Payment Centre, location as advised by the Access to Work Team.

- A3.30. Before any payments can be made, the support must be in place. Therefore you may wish to consider implementing target dates to assist in the monitoring of support.
- A3.31. The Access to Work Specialist Advisory Team will contact you for updates on delivery or any problems experienced.
- A3.32. Note: If your customer will require assisted travel to work, and uses taxis, Access to Work only meets the cost in excess of the usual public transport fare which a non-disabled person would pay for the same journey.
- A3.33. This excess is normally claimed by, and reimbursed to, the customer. Should your customer find it difficult to meet these reimbursable expenses prior to their first payday, and you wish to assist for a few weeks, you will be reimbursed in the same way
- A3.34. In this case the customer should still complete the required form (DP226JP, Claim for travel to work costs) which must be countersigned by their employer to confirm accurate information. The customer should then submit the DP226JP form and supporting information. If you have paid the taxi firm, the customer should input your details in the payee section and not their own. Following this period a DP228JP (New or amended details) must be completed by the customer to amend the payee details.
- A3.35. Your customer may wish to consider opening an account with the taxi firm for future payments allowing them to obtain regular invoices.

Reviews

- A3.36. Access to Work support must be reviewed as part of your Leaver Plan with your customer. You must ensure that the support is appropriate and adequate and record this in their Leaver Plan. You should raise any change of circumstances regarding support requirements via the Contact Team on 0345 268 8489 noting that, if a customer gets a second Access to Work support element after 6 weeks, cost share rules may apply.

Customer Exits Specialist Employability Support

- A3.37. Once the customer is ready to leave the Specialist Employability Support programme and enter unsupported employment the standard Access to Work process must be explained to them. This discussion must take place as soon as a start date is known.
- A3.38. Your customer needs to be informed:
- of relevant telephone numbers;
 - of required forms – when to complete and who to send them to;

- that their support will be reviewed by the Access to Work Team;
- of the process they should follow if they require any further AtW support

A3.39. Additionally you must inform the employer so they are aware that any queries they may have in the future should be referred to the Access to Work Contact Centre.