Withdrawn

This publication is withdrawn.
The publication is no longer current.

Annex 3: The Access to Work Programme

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

General Principles

A3.1. The underlying principle of Access to Work is to fund practical support, over and above that which is reasonable for an employer to fund, to allow someone with a disability or mental health condition to overcome work related obstacles 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
- adaptations to buildings
- specialist aids and equipment
- travel to work
- travel in work
- support workers of many kinds e.g. job coach
- communication support at job interview

Access to Work Application Process

Employer Contact

A3.6. All Access to Work applications are job specific; applications can only be made if the participant 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 participant 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

A3.7. If you believe your participant would benefit from Access to Work support, you must first ensure they satisfy basic Access to Work eligibility conditions The Participant 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 5** 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

A3.8. 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

A3.9. If support is required, you should encourage the participant to telephone the Access to Work Contact Centre on 0345 268 8489. However, this number can be used by the participant, the Prime Provider or any sub-contractor acting as the participant's Specialist Employability Support Adviser, when supporting the participant. (You should note that form AtW1 has been discontinued).

A3.10. Please note: whilst the dedicated phone line, above, is the preferred means of contact, for participants 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.

A3.11. The application must be made following consultation with your participant and their employer (taking into account the participant's disclosure wishes). You will be required to consider how the participant's disability will affect their job and what adjustments they believe will be needed.

A3.12. 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 participant.

A3.13. You should contact the Access to Work Contact Centre as soon as the job start is known, having obtained all relevant information, prior to contact, to progress the application.

A3.14. Where there is an imminent job start, you may wish to consider funding any initial payments. Please discuss this with the Contact Centre.

A3.15. You must ensure your participant 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.

A3.16. When you telephone the Contact Centre, they will take basic details which they will forward to the Access to Work Allocations/ Advisor Team. You should provide your contact details (phone and email) so that the Access to Work Advisor can call you back, as your participant'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.

A3.17. You should note: the Access to Work 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.

Participant Exits Specialist Employability Support

Reviews

A3.18. Access to Work support must be reviewed as part of your Leaver Plan with your participant. 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 Centre on 0345 268 8489 noting that, if a participant gets a second Access to Work support element after 6 weeks, cost share rules may apply.

Participant Exits

A3.19. Once the participant 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.

A3.20. Your participant 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 Contact Centre;
- of the process they should follow if they require any further Access to Work support

A3.21. 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.