

Access to Work

**A guide to support available
in the workplace for disabled
people and employers**



Access to Work (AtoW) is a Government funded scheme. Its purpose is to

- help employ and retain disabled staff
- offer advice
- help with additional costs of employing a disabled person (See 1-5 below)

Eligibility

You can apply for AtoW if you are

- disabled
- over 16 years old
- in or about to start employment
- not claiming any benefit (except DLA)
- **paid** employment at minimum wage or above

Employment can be temporary or permanent.

There is no upper age limit.

Self-employment is included.

Assessments

AtoW assessments are carried out by experts who identify what support is needed to help you fulfil your role.

The assessments are usually carried out at the place of work, but this is determined by information on the application form.

Types of support

1. Special needs and equipment

eg chairs, specialist software

2. Adaptations to premises

eg ramps, accessible toilets

3. Travel costs - If you have extra travel costs, over and above normal travel costs, because of your disability then AtoW can reimburse you with the extra costs. Assistance is also available for travel within work.

4. Interviews - AtoW can reimburse the cost of communication support (eg interpreters) for interviews. As soon as deaf clients know they are having an interview, and they need communication support, they must apply to their Operational Support Unit (OSU) immediately. AtoW will forward a form to the client for completion by the client and the interpreter. AtoW will pay the interpreter. There is no limit to the amount of interviews a client may have but they should contact the OSU for each interview.

It is the employer's responsibility to book interpreters. The Deaf Service team can offer assistance in this area if necessary.

Successful candidates may not be starting their placement or employment for several months after the interview (and they are therefore advised to contact AtoW and let them know of their success and start date immediately). Just before the placement or employment is due to begin the student should contact the OSU to apply for support so that an assessment can take place and appropriate support recommended.

5. Support Workers - such as interpreters, personal assistants, note-takers.

Applying for AtoW

Ideally employees and prospective employees should apply for AtoW before or within the first six weeks of their employment.

Any support is approved for a maximum of three years, after which time the client must apply again. A review date is usually set at the time of assessment.

Reimbursement of costs for equipment and adaptations

If an application is made before or within the first six weeks of employment AtoW can fund up to 100 per cent of additional costs. Where the equipment or adaptations are of benefit to the company or individual the amount of funding is negotiated.

After the first six weeks, for equipment and adaptations, employers pay the first £300 and then a minimum of 20 per cent of the rest of the cost dependant on the benefit to the company.

How to apply

Clients contact their Operating Supporting Unit (Wales, Scotland or London)

OSU **Cardiff** will deal with cases from East Midland, South West, West Midlands Regions and Wales

Phone 02920 423291
Minicom 02920 644886
Fax 02920 423342
E-mail atwosu.cardiff@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

OSU **Glasgow** will deal with cases from North East, North West, Yorkshire and Humberside Regions, and Scotland

Phone 0141 950 5327
Minicom 0845 602 5850
Fax 0141 950 5265
E-mail atwosu.glasgow@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

OSU **London** will deal with cases from South East, East of England and London

Phone 020 8426 3110
Fax 020 8426 3134
Minicom 020 8426 3133
E-mail atwosu.london@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

Further contacts

Jobcentre Plus has AtoW advisors and disability employment advisers
www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Disabled Student Support

Phone 0114 225 3964
E-mail disability-support@shu.ac.uk

This information can be made available in other formats.
Please contact us for details.