

Access to Work Guidance

Purpose

1. Access to Work assists disabled people who are in paid employment or with a job or a Work Trial to start by providing practical support with overcoming work related obstacles from disability. There is an employer cost share involved in some cases.
2. AtW may contribute to additional employment costs resulting from disability over and above those considered to be reasonable adjustments.
3. Access to Work advisers work closely with customers and can draw on the expertise of independent specialist assessors to identify appropriate solutions to the customers needs.
4. Access to Work advisers work with customers and their employers to deliver the support required, and reimburse some or all of the costs as agreed in advance.
5. Any reimbursements made under Access to Work are not liable for Income Tax.
6. All VAT queries must be signposted to HMRC.
7. AtW funding encourages employers to recruit and retain disabled people by offering practical financial help towards the additional cost of employing a disabled person.
8. Disabled people who are employed, self employed or applying for or starting a job or Work Trial can be eligible for AtW help.

Overview

9. The main steps involved in providing Access to Work support are shown below. Links are provided to more detailed guidance for each step.

STEP	ACTION
1	During Initial Contact provide information and answer general questions, check Eligibility and complete the Application
2	When application received from Customer ensure the applicant is aware of the Elements available, Assess their requirements, and complete a Business Case including agreements on Cost Sharing to secure the required funding. Notify the customer of the award decision.
3	When requirements agreed and procured. Manage the Case ensuring suitable Delivery of Support on time; deal with any Changes of Circumstances . Record key dates for use in Management Information
4	When Costs Incurred. Review claims and evidence and authorise for Payment processing or record Overpayment and consider Fraud referral

Eligibility

Eligibility

Step	Action
1	Confirm the customer has a disability or health condition that affects their ability to work.
2	Confirm the customer in, or about to start, paid employment (including self-employment) or need help with a job interview?
3	Confirm the customer works and resides in Great Britain ?
4	Check if the job supported by or provided through any other JobcentrePlus programme ?
5	Check if the customer currently in receipt of Incapacity Benefit ?
6	Ask if the customer continue receiving Incapacity

Benefit when employed?

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 7 | Will the customer be engaged in <u>Permitted Work Higher Level or PCA exempt or Supported Permitted Work</u>? |
| 8 | Advise customer of their eligibility to <u>apply</u> for Access to Work |

Eligibility conditions for Access to Work

10. For customers to receive Access to Work (AtW) help the following eligibility conditions must be satisfied. Customers must:
- be disabled or have a health condition that impacts their ability to work.
 - be 16 or over; there is no upper age limit for support as long as the employment is likely to continue;
 - be in need of help at a job interview with an employer; or
 - be about to start employment; or
 - be about to start a Work Trial, or
 - be in employment, whether as an employed or self-employed person; and
 - not be in receipt of Incapacity Benefits/ESA and/or NI credits only (or will cease to claim whilst in work) unless the customer is about to start a Work Trial. This includes Severe Disablement Allowance and Income Support (where paid as a result of Incapacity for work). The only other exception to this is where the customer is on Permitted Work Higher Level, Permitted Work (PCA exempt) or Supported Permitted Work; and
 - be resident in Great Britain, excluding Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, with a job based in Great Britain, help can, however, be used to cover customer's visits overseas for work purposes.
11. The DiSC3 eligibility screen asks if customer will 'earn a living'. This is no longer a test of AtW eligibility. If the customer is in or about to start paid employment then you should confirm that they will be paid at least the National Minimum Wage. The answer to the question 'paid NMW?' should be recorded as the answer to the 'earns a living question' The DiSC3 system will be corrected as soon as possible.

Definition of disability

12. For Access to Work (AtW) the Equality Act 2010 definition is used to determine eligibility. People falling within the Equality Act 2010 definition are eligible to apply for support.
13. Sometimes an individual's disability does not substantially affect their normal day-to-day activities but does have a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to do their job. These people should be considered eligible to apply for AtW in the same way as those covered by the Equality Act 2010.

14. You must inform customers that Jobcentre Plus makes a judgement about disability for AtW purposes only and that this decision should not be regarded as proof that the individual would meet the Equality Act 2010 definition if tested in a court of law.
15. Employers have a responsibility under the [Equality Act 2010](#) to make reasonable adjustments. AtW may pay for additional employment costs that go beyond what is reasonable for an employer to provide.

Confirming disability

16. You will not usually need to obtain a medical opinion from a suitably qualified medical practitioner such as a GP or nurse to assess eligibility under AtW unless the application is for assistance under the [Travel to Work element](#).
17. AtW cannot be used to fund treatment for a disability or be used for diagnostic assessments for any type of disability or health condition.
18. At the initial contact stage if there is disagreement with an applicant or difficulty in determining whether the effect of an applicant's disability will introduce additional costs above those of a non-disabled person doing the job, ask them to send copies of any evidence they have with their application form.
19. Tell the customer that their Access to Work adviser may ask for a specialist assessment e.g. technical, ergonomic, or third sector specialist (RNID / RNIB) to help identify appropriate support.

What is employment?

20. For Access to Work (AtW) purposes, employment is:
 - full or part-time paid work, whether permanent, casual or temporary;
 - a Work Trial arranged by Jobcentre Plus;
 - work in an unsupported or supported environment. There are some exceptions in the rules for [Work Choice](#)
 - not [voluntary work](#)
 - some [councillors and other elected officials](#), or appointees who have applied for positions on public organisation's boards;
 - not [training](#) except for training related to the customer's current, paid employment and undertaken whilst the applicant is in receipt of normal wages for the job.
21. To be eligible for support employed customers must:
 - have a contract of employment;
 - be paid at least the [National Minimum Wage](#); or
 - where a customer is going for a job interview or has just started a job and payslips / contracts are not yet available, you may accept the job offer letter or letter confirming the interview or job start date as evidence.
22. During the initial contact with the customer it will not be necessary to verify employment for every case. If at this stage there are doubts about the employment, advise the customer to provide evidence with their application. The evidence will be considered by the AtW adviser who assesses the customer's requirements for support.

23. Where the employer is a [ministerial government department](#), including the Dept for Work and Pensions (DWP), or one of its agencies funding of adjustments will be made by the employing department.
24. All applicants who are registered with an agency must have a job to start before they can be eligible for support.
25. You must not approve any type of AtW support if you have evidence that a company is about to cease trading.

Civil Service and Government agency employees

26. Employees of ministerial government departments including the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) or one of its agencies will be funded by their employing department. A full list of the ministerial government departments is provided in [Appendix 1](#).
27. From 1st November 2008, the former Child Support Agency (CSA) became part of a non departmental public body called the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission and as such, qualifies for Access to Work Support.
28. AtW can give advice, arrange assessments and make recommendations about what support is required but each ministerial department will be expected to source and fund the support themselves.
29. AtW cannot assist in arranging assessments for employees of the Department for Work and Pensions or its executive agencies. Guidance for DWP employees can be found [here](#) and [here](#)

Members of the clergy

30. Applications from members of the clergy, regardless as to their religious denomination, should be dealt with in exactly the same way as any other application.
31. The customer must be in paid employment, for example, Church of England clergy receive a salary or stipend whereas some other religious denominations work on a voluntary basis.
32. If in doubt about a customer's employment status, contact their employer or the religious organisation they belong to. Most contact details can be found on the Internet.

Recording applications on DiSC

33. Applications from civil servants should be recorded on DiSC3 in the normal way. DiSC3 shows assessments as a separate element and the fact that Access to Work may be taking no action after the assessment will not affect MI and OA targets.

What is self-employment?

34. For Access to Work (AtW) purposes, self-employment is:
 - operating a business either on the customer's own account or in partnership, or working for an employer on a self-employed contractual basis;
 - operating a franchised business on a self-employed basis;
 - paying Class II [National Insurance](#) contributions.
35. If the applicant is employed by a company that they themselves own, but draw a salary taxed at source and pay Class 1 National Insurance

contributions, they are employed not self-employed. If they pay Class 2 or Class 4 they are self-employed.

36. Work can be done:

- from home;
- on their own premises; or
- on premises owned or leased by someone else; or
- on a travelling basis, for example a piano tuner.

37. If the applicant is over retirement age (and therefore no longer liable to pay National Insurance) you must be satisfied that the customer is self-employed by requesting a business plan approved by a bank or other financial authority.

38. Access to Work cannot pay for the costs of setting up a business such as standard items of equipment, support for fact-finding, attending courses, seminars or similar events while the business is being formed.

Pyramid Sales and Trading schemes

39. The Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) has enforcement responsibility for Trading Schemes legislation and will investigate schemes which appear to be breaking the law. For more information about the rules for Trading schemes and Pyramid sales jobs, see the [BERR website](http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file24757.pdf). Customers are working in or considering working in a trading scheme should be advised to read the BERR Trading Schemes guide, which can be found at <http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file24757.pdf>.

HM Revenue and Customs checks for self-employment

40. To ensure consistency in determining whether an applicant is self-employed, you can rely on the HM Revenue and Customs treatment of the applicants employment circumstances :

- if someone is employed, they will be taxed under PAYE rules and their employer will pay Class1 National Insurance contributions under the same PAYE rules, self-employed people will be taxed under the Self Assessment rules and have a Unique Tax Reference (UTR) number for that purpose. They will also be managing their Class 2/4 contributions through arrangements with the HMRC National Insurance Contributions Office;
- for Access to Work purposes, all applicants who state they are self-employed must provide proof of self-employment. This may be in the form of:
 - Their UTR - a unique 10 digit Tax Reference;
 - a National Insurance bill (or other correspondence) for Class 2 NICs from HM Revenue and Customs;
- for cases where an applicant is unable to provide either of the above, the HM Revenue and Customs National Insurance Contributions Office should be contacted on 0845 915 6734 with details of the applicants name, address, date of birth and National Insurance number. **This number must only be used by Jobcentre Plus to ascertain if a customer is registered as self employed and not to investigate their self employed status.**

Profitability

41. There is no requirement for a self employed customer's business to be profitable within a specified timescale. Their business must have a history of, or a reasonable prospect of generating income, but there is no lower limit on that income.
42. If an adviser has doubts about the customer's prospects in self employment, they can decide to put AtW support in place for a limited time eg 3 months and then review the case to confirm that it still has a reasonable prospect of generating income.

VAT

43. All VAT queries must be signposted to HMRC.

Great Britain residency

44. Access to Work (AtW) can be applied for by anyone who is normally resident in, and working in Great Britain and meets the eligibility criteria.
45. AtW does not cover Northern Ireland, which has its own Disablement Advisory Service, The Channel Islands, or the Isle of Man.

Workers Posted from the European Community

46. Workers who are posted to Great Britain by a company that is based in another European Community country are entitled to apply for Access to Work support. The EC Posted Workers Directive (96/71/EC) requires equality of treatment for EC posted workers and local workers.
47. In the case of European Community posted workers, Access to Work should not apply the normally resident and employment based in GB rules, all other eligibility criteria apply.

European Economic Area

48. Nationals of the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland can work in the United Kingdom without a visa or work permit. However it is necessary for nationals of the following member states to obtain a worker's registration certificate if they wish to work for more than one month:
 - Czech Republic;
 - Estonia
 - Hungary;
 - Latvia
 - Lithuania
 - Poland
 - Slovakia; and
 - Slovenia.
 - Romania
 - Bulgaria
49. If an individual does not register within 30 days of starting a job they may be working illegally.
50. Workers who have worked legally in the UK for a continuous period of 12 months gain full rights of free movement and are no longer required to have a Workers Registration certificate.

51. On starting a job an individual must register with HM Revenue and Customs for National Insurance purposes.
52. Adviser's must seek verification of the individual's legitimacy for work by:
- ensuring the customer has a current and appropriate passport with immigration stamps indicating type of and period of leave to stay;
 - asking for details of time and length of employment contract;
 - requesting evidence of application for a National Insurance number and registration with HM Revenue and Customs for tax purposes;
 - requesting evidence of registration with the Home Office Borders and Immigration Agency under the worker's registration scheme. Further information can be found at <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk/>

Temporary residents

53. Temporary resident customers learning a trade under "special government arrangement" schemes who are employed but only receive lodging and pocket money are not eligible for AtW support.

Outside the European Economic Area

54. Customers from outside the European Economic Area need a visa to reside in the UK and this may also give them the right to work here, but they will not be issued with a National Insurance number until they start getting paid. Confirmation that the visa allows the customer to work in Great Britain is sufficient to meet the residency requirement. Ask the customer to send in the visa documents with their AtW1 application. If the customer does not want to send important documents by post, advise them to get the documents copied and endorsed at their nearest Jobcentre, we will accept a verified copy of the document.

Immigration Employment Document (IED)

55. Some customers will have an Immigration Employment Document (IED) that gives them the right to work in this country. Ask the customer to send their IED in with their AtW1. If the customer does not want to send important documents by post, advise them to get the documents copied and endorsed at their nearest Jobcentre, Access to Work will accept a verified copy of the document.

Asylum seekers and refugees

56. Asylum seekers who have made an application for recognition as a refugee and are awaiting a decision are not allowed to work and have no access to the mainstream welfare benefit system.
57. Applicants who have a work permit or a leave to remain status do not need to hold a British passport, and are allowed to work in GB and receive AtW support. These cases must be closely monitored and, where the leave to remain is time limited, any support should be similarly time limited and subject to review.
58. Leave to remain is normally granted for five years after which the person can apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain. As soon as a person has been granted leave as a refugee they have immediate access to the labour market and to all key mainstream benefits.

59. Applicants who have been given leave to work in Britain but with 'No recourse to public funds' are still eligible to apply for Access to Work. For the definitive list of all relevant public funds see the [Borders Agency website](#).
60. Ask the customer to send their notification of leave to enter or remain in with their AtW1. If the customer does not want to send important documents by post, advise them to get the documents copied and endorsed at their nearest Jobcentre, Access to Work will accept a verified copy of the document.

Applicants working abroad

61. If the applicant's job is normally based in Great Britain, but they are required to travel abroad as part of their duties, AtW support can be given for up to three months. This will include, for example, the extra costs of a support worker.
62. After this period AtW support can only be extended in exceptional circumstances and following agreement with the National Tier policy team.
63. Applicants are also able to take equipment supplied through the programme abroad if it is required in the course of their duties providing the "owner" of the equipment has no objections.

Applicants in receipt of benefits

64. People in receipt of one of the following benefits are not normally eligible for Access to Work (AtW).
65. These benefits are:
- Incapacity Benefit (IB), including the award of National Insurance credits only
 - Employment Support Allowance (ESA) including the award of National Insurance credits only
 - Severe Disability Allowance; and
 - Income Support paid as a result of disability.
66. Exceptions to the above are where someone in receipt of these benefits:
- is going for an interview, or
 - starting a Work Trial, or
 - has a job to start, and will cease claiming when employment begins; or
 - is on Permitted Work Higher Level, Permitted Work PCA Exempt or Supported Permitted Work.
67. Applicants in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) Contributory or Income Based are eligible for support if in a part-time job. Customers must declare this work when signing.
68. If customers are receiving any other benefits, for example Council Tax Benefit, Housing Benefit they are still able to apply for AtW, provided they satisfy the eligibility conditions.

Work Trials

69. From 6th April 2009, customers starting a Work Trial will be eligible to apply for Access to Work Support.

70. Work Trials are used to establish an individual's suitability for a particular job vacancy by giving them an opportunity to try out the job for a short period.
71. Work Trials can last between 1 day and 6 weeks but must only be used when there is a genuine job vacancy that the employer wants to fill.
72. Customers' can continue to receive their benefits whilst on a Work Trial plus in addition, travel expenses and a meal allowance. Payment of these expenses will be arranged by the Jobcentre. **Travel to Work costs must not be paid by Access to Work for the duration of the Work Trial.**
73. All Work Trials must be arranged in accordance with [Jobcentre Plus guidance](#) prior to Access to Work support being authorised.
74. Access to Work staff must follow the process for dealing with Work Trial customers as detailed in the [AtW SOM](#).

Access to Work customer identified by frontline (non AtW) Adviser

75. When a Work Trial customer is identified as potentially needing AtW support, the Adviser must:-
- Explain to the customer that they need to make an application for AtW and that their application needs to be made promptly
 - Explain to the customer that they must inform the Operational Support Unit that they are starting a Work Trial rather than starting paid employment
 - Explain to the customer that travel to work costs will be paid locally and not by Access to Work
 - Provide the customer with the appropriate AtW Operational Support Unit [phone number](#)
 - Email the appropriate AtW [Operational Support Unit](#) immediately, putting 'Work Trial' in the subject line plus customer name and national insurance number. A named contact at the company/organisation the customer is about to start the Work Trial for plus Adviser/Work Trial coordinator details must be included in the main body of the email.
 - Avoid giving advice to a customer with regards to any aspect of AtW as **advice must only be given by AtW Advisers**

Customer contacts Operational Support Unit and makes an application

76. When a Work Trial customer makes an application the contact team member must:-
- Type 'Work Trial' in the free text box next to the Job title question on the AtW1.
 - Annotate the top of the AtW1 with the words 'Work Trial' before the application is posted out

Application returned and Adviser allocated

77. When an application is returned, the allocation team member must:-
- Access their generic OSU inbox.
 - Find the email that relates to the Work Trial customer.
 - Copy and paste the email into the notes space of the customer detail screen in DiSC.

Adviser assesses customer requirements and completes business case

78. Access to Work Advisers must:-

- Assess customer needs to the same standard as non Work Trial applications
- Consider cost effective temporary solutions, such as the hiring or loaning of equipment for the duration of the trial
- Refer for independent assessment if the level of support cannot be determined or agreed with the customer
- Inform the Work Trial employer that it is their responsibility to purchase, hire or loan any equipment required by the customer.
- Not include TTW costs in the assessment as these will be paid directly to the customer from the Work Trial budget
- Align support with the start date of the Work Trial

Follow up

79. Access to Work Advisers' must:-

- Monitor closely a customer on a Work Trial in order to ensure the support matches the duration of the trial and to enable the reassessment of support if the customer secures employment.
- Close the Work Trial job down on DiSC if the customer secures employment at the end of the trial. A new job can then be opened up for a new assessment period.

Permitted Work

80. There are four situations where you can get Incapacity Benefit and do some permitted work:

- You can work and earn up to £20.00 a week for as long as you are getting Incapacity Benefit (Permitted Work Lower Level).
- You can work for less than 16 hours a week and earn up to £102.00 a week for up to 52 weeks (Permitted Work Higher Level). After your first attempt at a fixed period of permitted work, if you cannot move into work of 16 hours or more a week, you can try again after a gap of 52 weeks. These subsequent periods of permitted work will last for 52 weeks from the date that work starts.
- You can work for less than 16 hours a week and earn up to £102.00 a week for as long as your illness or disability is considered sufficiently severe that you meet the threshold of incapacity without undergoing a medical assessment. (Permitted Work PCA Exempt)
- You can work for an unlimited period and earn up to £102.00 a week if you are doing work which is supervised by someone who is employed by a public or local authority, or a voluntary organisation, and it is their job to arrange work for ill and disabled people (Supported Permitted Work).
- Customers on Permitted Work Higher Level and Supported Permitted Work and Permitted Work PCA Exempt are eligible for Access to Work. Support will be limited to a maximum of 52 weeks in line with Permitted Work Higher Level time limit. After a 52 week break, customers can re apply for Access to Work support for a further 52 weeks. Every 52 weeks of support must be followed by a 52 week break. This can continue indefinitely.

81. Customers on Permitted Work Lower Level are not eligible, as this type of work does not demonstrate a real intent to move towards full time paid employment.
82. There are four situations where you can get ESA and do some permitted work
- You can work and earn up to £20.00 a week for as long as you are getting ESA (Permitted Work Lower Limit - PWLL).
 - You can work for less than 16 hours a week on average and earn up to £102.00 a week for up to 52 weeks (Permitted Work Higher Limit - PWHL). After your first attempt at a fixed period of permitted work, if you cannot move into work of 16 hours or more a week, you can try again after a gap of 52 weeks. These subsequent periods of permitted work will last for 52 weeks from the date that work starts.
 - You can work for less than 16 hours a week for an indefinite period and earn up to £102.00 a week if you have been treated as having limited capability for work related activity. (Permitted Work Limited Capability for Work Related Activity - PWLCWRA)
 - You can work for any number of hours for an indefinite period providing you earn no more than £102.00 per week and are receiving ongoing regular support by a support worker (Supported Permitted Work – SPW). The support worker must be employed by a Public or Local Authority or a Voluntary Organisation.
 - Customers on Permitted Work Higher Limit, Supported Permitted Work and Permitted Work Limited Capability for Work Related Activity are eligible for Access to Work. Support will be limited to a maximum of 52 weeks in line with Permitted Work Higher Limit time rules. After a 52 week break, customers can re apply for Access to Work support for a further 52 weeks. Every 52 weeks of support must be followed by a 52 week break. This can continue indefinitely.

Overlaps with other Jobcentre Plus programmes

83. There are limitations on the use of Access to Work with other Jobcentre Plus programmes.

Work Programme

84. The Work Programme went live from 1st June 2011.
85. Element support restrictions apply for the full 104 week duration whilst the customer is a participant on the Work Programme
86. Applications from participants on the Work Programme will not have a specialist or dedicated referral process and will be dealt with in the normal way
87. The following table lists the elements which are/are not available via AtW

Types of Access to Work Support	Available to customers who are on the Work Programme?
1. Communication Support at Interview	NO
2. Travel to Work	YES

3. Support Worker in these categories:	
<i>BSL Interpreter</i>	YES
<i>Carer</i>	YES
<i>Counsellor</i>	NO
<i>Driver</i>	YES
<i>Job-Aide</i>	NO
<i>Job Coach</i>	NO
<i>Lip Speaker</i>	YES
<i>Note Taker</i>	YES
<i>Palantypist</i>	YES
<i>Personal Reader</i>	YES
<i>Travel Buddy</i>	NO
4. Adaptations to Equipment	YES
5. Special Aids and Equipment	YES
6. Travel in Work	YES

Work Choice

88. The Work Choice programme went live from 25th October 2010. For those customers who have transferred from WORKSTEP to Work Choice and who are already in receipt of AtW support, the support already in place will continue.

89. For those customers who are referred to Work Choice after 25th October 2010 and who begin participating in the programme, an AtW application will be completed by the Work Choice provider.

90. A specialist advisory team has been set up to handle any queries raised by prime providers. The specialist advisory team will only be able to discuss an application with the prime provider if a Third Party Permission Form has been completed.

91. The following table lists the AtW elements which are/are not available via the Work Choice provider.

Access to Work Element	Available whilst on Work Choice programme		
			Cost share may be required
Communication Support at Interview		NO	
Travel to Work		YES	
Support Worker in these categories:	BSL Interpreter	YES	
	Carer	YES	
	Counsellor	NO	
	Driver	YES	
	Job-Aide	NO	
	Job Coach	NO	

	Lip Speaker	YES	
	Note Taker	YES	
	Palantypist	YES	
	Personal Reader	YES	
	Travel Buddy	NO	
Adaptations to Premises and Equipment		YES	YES
Special Aids and Equipment		YES	YES
Miscellaneous including Travel in Work		YES	YES

Application Process via Specialist Advisory Team

92. A specific Work Choice AtW1 form has been created to ensure Work Choice participants are easily identifiable. The Work Choice AtW1 and all supporting information must be returned to the specialist advisory team within 6 weeks of employment or cost share rules may apply (see table above).

93. If any OSUs receive an AtW1 form from a Work Choice provider / customer (the form will have Work Choice on the top) it must be re-directed to:

Access to Work
2nd Floor
Neath Jobcentre Plus
1 Windsor Road
Neath
SA11 1LY
Telephone: 01639 664462

94. The specialist advisory team will only accept forms from those customers participating in Work Choice. A formal assessment will not normally be required for every customer. The Work Choice providers will have been working with the customer for a substantial period of time and have a clear understanding of support the customer needs once in work. If a specialist assessment is required, only AtW approved assessors can be funded by AtW. Work Choice prime providers have a list of AtW approved assessors.

95. Work Choice providers can choose to use their own assessors if they wish, but in that case, AtW cannot fund.

Business Case Approval via Specialist Advisory Team

96. Decisions regarding applications will be made by the specialist advisory team on receipt of eligibility check list, Work Choice AtW1 application form, Third Party permission form, assessment report (if required) and invoice for assessment if undertaken by an AtW approved assessor. The AtW specialist advisory team will be responsible for approving or rejecting applications. Once a decision is made notification must be issued to the participant, provider and employer.

97. Support should not be purchased until approval has been received. Therefore if the provider or employer decides to purchase any support before approval is received it is at their own risk. If eligibility is not met at the approval stage the application will be rejected.

If the customer is unhappy with the decision, the standard AtW complaints procedure should be followed, i.e. the customer should write to the AtW

Work Choice Manager at the specialist advisory team's address. Although the provider may be responsible for completing the application any complaint should be made by the customer and not the provider; the provider may wish to support their customer during this process.

Reimbursement via OSU

98. Once the support has been purchased payment will be reimbursed following the standard AtW process. If the AtW specialist advisory team receives any claims for reimbursement, they will be re-directed to the relevant OSU.

Reviews by Provider Resulting In Change

99. While customers are participating on Work Choice they will have regular reviews with their provider. If during these reviews any change of circumstances regarding support requirements is identified the provider will notify the AtW Specialist Advisory Team.
100. Changes in a customer's personal details – using form DP228JP – will be dealt with by the local OSU.

Modules 1- 3 of Work Choice and Access to Work

101. There are limitations on Access to Work (AtW) support for applicants who are participants on Work Choice. Within Work Choice Module 1 (job entry support – 6 months with occasional extension to 9 months), AtW is **only** available for those who are AtW eligible and taking part in either Permitted Work or a Jobcentre Plus Work Trial.
102. In Module 2 of Work Choice (in work support – up to 2 years) and Module 3 (longer term in work support with no time constraint) AtW is only available for those who are AtW eligible, who have moved into supported work of 16 hours or more and are being supported by the Work Choice Provider, and where the support required is **not** short term support, for example special aids and equipment, travel to work.
103. Short term support is support that embeds the customer in their employment, for example travel buddy. Short term support is the responsibility of the Work Choice Provider. Once the Work Choice participant is comfortable handling the journey to their supported employment, i.e. embedded in their employment, short term support from the Work Choice Provider would cease. See table at paragraph 92.
104. All current AtW rules apply, including employer / provider purchase and cost sharing where the individual has been in Work Choice supported employment more than six weeks. Either the employer or the Work Choice provider may contribute to AtW costs; it is for the employer and Work Choice provider to come to an agreement.

Exiting Work Choice

105. Once the customer is ready to leave the Work Choice programme and enter unsupported employment the provider will explain the standard AtW process, providing them with appropriate telephone numbers.
106. Providers also need to inform the Specialist Advisory Team that their participant is leaving Work Choice, as they will need to amend records

ensuring that the customer will be picked up in the AtW standard review process if they have been receiving AtW support already

Additional Job Coaching Support

107. This type of help is not available to Work Choice participants in supported factories, or for embedding them into their supported employment, but can be used to help people exiting Work Choice into unsupported employment.
108. As these customers may not have received any AtW assistance whilst participating on Work Choice it is important that they are identified by the AtW OSU. These applications must be processed urgently and where possible the same job coach should be used for continuity. Providers have been asked to try and ensure a seamless transition by alerting participants to standard AtW processes as soon as a start date in unsupported employment is known. .

Remploy Mirroring Work Choice

109. As Remploy are mirroring Work Choice Provision in the majority of Work Choice contract package areas, paragraphs 89 to 109 also apply to Remploy.

Supported factories/businesses

110. Applicants working in Supported Factories/businesses are not eligible for Adaptations to Premises and Equipment or for some types of Support Worker help.
111. Occasionally people working in Supported Factories/businesses are placed on a work placement with another employer with a view to them progressing from Work Choice. In these cases Adaptations to Premises and Equipment can be considered but the likely duration of the placement must be taken into account. Note: Where the applicant has been in their Work Choice supported employment for more than six weeks cost sharing will apply.

Travel to Work

112. In some areas Remploy makes a contribution to the Travel to Work costs. These payments should be added to the normal public transport costs, and this total deducted from the total costs of travelling when calculating payments.

Blind Homeworkers Scheme

113. Applicants working under Blind Homeworkers Scheme (BHS) are not eligible for Adaptations to Premises and Equipment or some forms of [Support Worker](#) help.
114. There is a separate capital budget to cover adaptations available via BHS.
115. Help under all other elements of Access to Work may be available subject to usual eligibility conditions.
116. Always check the evidence of employment before authorising support.
- Note:** Some local authorities may withdraw assistance when the individual reaches 65.

Training and Further Education

117. Access to Work (AtW) cannot be used for:

- Skills Build / Training for Work / Work Based Learning for Adults programmes where the individual remains on benefit or receives a Training Allowance;
- training for skill enhancement where the individual remains on benefit or receives a Training Allowance;
- student access to education.

118. AtW can be used for –

- Skills Build / Training for Work / Work Based Learning for Adults programmes where the individual is in paid employment;
- training in connection with the applicant's job including skills development and career progression or training that any other employee could be expected to attend, and the individual continues to be employed;
- day release from work to attend college or time off for study provided the training or study is connected to the applicant's work and they continue to be employed.

119. In all cases you must establish what support the employer would normally provide for training courses. These are not additional costs and cannot be supported through AtW.

Job related training

120. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on both employers and service providers to make reasonable adjustments. AtW can help out with anything that could be considered 'unreasonable' due to financial constraints. For example, if a visually impaired employee was sent on a training course it would be their employer's duty to ensure that the provider was aware that the person needed any handouts in large print. It would also be the service provider's responsibility to provide these, however, they may well come to some agreement with the employer around any extra costs this might result in. This would be seen as a reasonable adjustment.

121. However, if someone who worked for a small employer went on a course and needed very expensive BSL support, this could be unreasonable for both the employer and the provider due to financial reasons. It is in this type of scenario where AtW **can** help.

Induction training

122. AtW can be considered for a short period of paid induction training as part of the job application process.

123. Support must be limited to the length of the induction period and reviewed if the individual is successful.

Redundancy training

124. In cases where employees are being made redundant some employers will offer courses prior to leaving.

125. Additional support to attend such courses can be approved providing the individual remains in paid employment during the period of redundancy training.

Test Trading and Enterprise Rehearsal

- 126. From April 06 customers doing Test Trading or Enterprise Rehearsal under [New Deal Provisions](#) will be classed as undertaking a Jobcentre Plus training provision so normal training rules apply.
- 127. Help can be offered in the same way as [Permitted Work](#) where an individual remains on benefit.

Apprenticeships

- 128. People serving apprenticeships are eligible for AtW support as they receive a wage and have a contract of employment. National Minimum Wage rates do not apply to people on apprenticeships.
- 129. If the apprentice stays with the same employer when qualified, cost sharing status will remain unchanged for the whole of the AtW period of three years from the beginning of the apprenticeship.

European Social Fund Programmes

- 130. AtW support cannot normally be agreed for customers on European Social Fund (ESF) programmes as the ESF contract of employment will usually cover all costs.

Voluntary work

- 131. Access to Work (AtW) support cannot be offered to people in voluntary work.

Payments in kind

- 132. AtW support cannot be given unless the customer is paid at least the national minimum wage. Payments in kind **do not** count as contributing towards the NMW, however, accommodation is an exception to this. If accommodation is provided you can allow up to **£31.57 per week** of this to count towards the NMW.

Local councillors and elected officials

- 133. Councillors are not required to meet the national minimum wage requirements as they are not defined as workers in the National Minimum Wage Act 1998
- 134. Councillors elected to office in Scotland since 2007 have been paid a salary rather than an allowance and are able to claim Access to Work providing all the other eligibility conditions are satisfied excluding the NMW requirement.
- 135. In England and Wales, Councillors who receive reimbursement of travel and meal allowances only, continue to be treated as voluntary workers and are not eligible for Access to Work.
- 136. Where Councillors receive allowances over and above this amount, for Access to Work purposes, they are treated as in employment and may be eligible for Access to Work support provided they meet the other eligibility conditions excluding the NMW requirement.
- 137. Other elected officials, for example tribunal members, political party workers, volunteer groups, clubs, for which allowances and expenses are paid, are not generally regarded as in paid employment.

138. HM Revenue and Customs have confirmed that although subsistence and other similar payments are made and attract Tax/National Insurance, these are not treated as paid employment where they are paid as reimbursement for expenses incurred in carrying out duties.
139. Local Councillors and other volunteers who have AtW equipment supplied for use in other jobs may use this equipment in their council or voluntary duties, provided the owner of the equipment (their employer) agrees.

Insurance

140. The equipment owner should confirm that there is adequate insurance cover for equipment being used for voluntary work. If additional insurance cover is required it is the customer's responsibility to get the insurance. The customer should seek financial support from the 'voluntary' employer to cover the insurance costs. AtW advisers can help the customer to negotiate with the voluntary employer if necessary.

Application

Application

Step	Action
1	Complete DiSC3 application screens and advise customer of evidence required
2	Produce AtW1 and send to customer for checking, signature, and required evidence
3	If Signed AtW1 is not received within 20 working days treat Application as Not Pursued
4	If the AtW1 is not signed and fully completed. Return AtW1 to customer
5	Update DiSC3 with additional information provided by customer
6	Contact customer and ask about missing evidence .
7	Update DiSC

Check Eligibility

141. See [Eligibility](#) in this guide for more information. The DiSC3 system supports the eligibility test. See the DiSC3 user guide Chapter 2 for more information.

Retrospective Application

- 142. All applications for Access to Work must be made in advance.
- 143. Retrospective applications will only be considered if there is reason to believe that misdirection by Jobcentre Plus may have occurred.

Deferred Application

- 144. A customer may check if they are eligible for Access to Work support before they decide to proceed with the application. Advise the customer to contact us again when they wish to apply for support. Advise the customer that we will review their eligibility when they apply.
- 145. When the customer contacts us again, review the information held on DiSC3 and ask the customer if their circumstances have changed. If there has been a change update DiSC3 before producing the AtW1 application form.

Application for replacement item

- 146. Any application for a replacement item due to loss of the original should be treated in exactly the same way as any new application. Consideration should be given to the circumstances surrounding the loss such as negligence, or whether the loss was avoidable when assessing any cost share. Replacement can only be considered if the item(s) was uninsured.

AtW1 Application Form

- 147. The AtW1 form is completed online using the DiSC3 system. See the [DiSC3 user guide Chapter 2](#) for more information. The customer must be asked about their ethnic background, and their response recorded on DiSC. The information must be recorded during the initial eligibility assessment as the relevant fields are not visible to most users at later stages of the application process. The information is required to enable AtW to confirm that it is equally accessible to all ethnic groups.

Produce AtW1 Application Form

- 148. When the DiSC3 application screens have been completed with all relevant information, including ethnicity and the primary health condition, the record can be saved and an AtW1 application form printed off. The AtW1 is sent to the customer to check that the information shown is correct and to add further detail where appropriate.
- 149. The customer or their representative must check that the details on the AtW1 are accurate; if the details are accurate the customer signs it and returns it to their AtW Operational Support Unit. If the information on the AtW1 is incorrect the customer should correct it and sign the corrections, before returning it to their AtW Operational Support Unit.
- 150. The customer's signature is required on the application form. Where the customer has requested communications in an alternative format this should be supplied in addition to the printed AtW1. Details of how to order forms in [alternative formats](#) can be found on the DWP Finance and Commercial Intranet site.

151. The customer's declaration on the AtW1 includes reference to referring customers to non [JobcentrePlus assessors](#), by signing the declaration customers apply for AtW support and allow relevant information to be sent to independent assessors.

Application Returned by Customer

152. When the customer returns the AtW1 confirm that they have signed it. Check all the entries and identify any that have been corrected or where additional information has been provided by the customer, update the DiSC3 record to show the correct information. If the customer has not signed the AtW1 declaration, return the form to the customer. Contact the customer and explain that AtW cannot provide support until an AtW1 signed by the customer is received at the Operational Support Unit.
153. The applicant should also return the EM1 form. DiSC3 must be updated with the customer's information about their ethnic group.
154. If the customer has not returned the EM1 form or returned it incomplete record this as 'prefer not to say'. Applications without a completed EM1 should be processed as normal.

Evidence

155. You will not usually need to obtain a medical opinion from a suitably qualified medical practitioner such as a GP or nurse to assess eligibility for Access to Work unless the application is for assistance under the [Travel to Work element](#)
156. At the initial contact stage the customer may be asked to supply any relevant evidence that they hold. Confirm that the customer has supplied the evidence agreed. The Access to Work adviser will decide if the evidence is sufficient to confirm eligibility.

Missing Evidence

157. If the customer has been asked to supply evidence but it is not received with the AtW1 form, contact the customer and discuss the requirement.
- If the customer has forgotten to send the evidence, ask them to send it immediately.
 - If the customer does not have, or disputes the need for evidence, advise them that the adviser will review their eligibility and may request an independent assessment.
158. In all cases note the case file and DiSC3 with a summary of the action taken.

Application Not Pursued

159. If the customer has not returned the completed AtW1 20 working days after it was issued the case should be recorded as 'Not Pursued' on DiSC3.
160. It is also appropriate to record a case as not pursued if the customer contacts us to say that they will not proceed with the application. A case can also be recorded as not pursued if the employer decides that no AtW contribution will be required, provided this is before any assessment costs have been incurred.

Elements

Elements

161. Before assessing the customer's support needs, ensure that they understand the range of elements that AtW includes. The following paragraphs provide a brief description of the purpose and scope of each AtW element. More detailed guidance on the rules for each element is provided in the individual assessment sections. There is a links to the detailed assessment guidance are at the end of each brief description.

- [Communication Support at Interview](#)
- [Travel to Work](#)
- [Support Worker](#)
- [Adaptations to Premises and Equipment](#)
- [Special Aids and Equipment](#)
- [Miscellaneous including Travel in Work](#)

Communication Support at Interview

162. Communication Support at Interview (CSI) helps with the costs of employing an interpreter or communicator to accompany a customer attending a job interview, where the customer would experience difficulties in understanding or making themselves understood.

163. This element is used primarily by hearing-impaired customers, but is open to anyone with a disability affecting their ability to communicate.

164. CSI is available for all job interviews, including a new job with a new employer and internal promotion. Assistance is available irrespective of whether the vacancy is Jobcentre Plus notified or not.

165. CSI cannot be used for:

- communication support within the job such as induction and job reviews, see the section on [Support Workers](#) for these cases;
- support for customers attending interviews with Disability Employment Advisers or other Jobcentre Plus staff;
- support for people attending other Jobcentre Plus programmes.

166. More information about how to recruit CSI support can be found in the [Assessment CSI section](#).

Travel to Work

167. Travel to Work can provide short or long term financial assistance to disabled people who incur additional costs in travelling to and from work because of their disability. The Travel to Work element is used to reimburse an agreed portion of the costs of taxis or adaptations to vehicles.

168. Travel to Work costs must not be paid for customers on a Work Trial as these will be paid by the Jobcentre.

169. Customers will be expected to contribute towards the cost of adaptations to vehicles or purchase of vehicles that give a social or domestic benefit outside work.

170. Some travel costs are covered under other elements/programmes:

- travel within working time is covered under [Miscellaneous](#)

- payments to a relative or friend for travel cost other than mileage rate are covered by the [Support Worker](#) element;
 - purchase of specialised vehicles specifically for work, for example tractors, should be dealt with under [Special Aids and Equipment](#);
 - special arrangements apply to adaptations to vehicles bought or leased through [Motability](#);
 - Access to Work does not contribute to fares to interviews [The Fares to Interview Scheme](#) for disabled people may be able to help, see Business Delivery Guidance by A-Z.
171. More information about the Travel to Work element can be found in the [Assessment Travel to Work section](#).

Support Worker

172. The Support Worker (SW) element of AtW offers financial assistance to cover the full cost of providing a SW in the workplace and can also be used to pay for a SW to help the customer get to and from work.
173. In all cases, support is provided to help the customer to do their job, the SW should not be doing the work of, or replacing the disabled person. The only exception to this is where we are providing a Job Aide SW, and then the SW support should be limited to 20% of the customer's job.
174. There are many different types of SW who can provide different types of help; some will be ad-hoc or short term whilst others will be needed on a more regular basis.
175. Access to Work customers may need more than one type of support worker to cover their support requirements. The following list shows the types of support workers typically provided to AtW customers.
- British Sign Language (BSL) Interpreter
 - Carer
 - Counsellor
 - Driver
 - Job-Aide
 - Job Coach
 - Lip Speaker
 - Note Taker
 - Palantypist
 - Personal Reader
 - Travel Buddy
176. More information about the types of support worker and how to recruit them can be found in the [Support Worker](#) section.

Adaptations to Premises and Equipment

177. Adaptations to Premises and Equipment (APE) helps to pay the additional costs of modifications to an employer's or self-employed person's premises or equipment, to enable them to employ or retain a disabled employee.
178. Adaptations can take many forms, including ramps for wheelchairs installation of lifts, widening of doors, disabled toilets or wash facilities, upgrades to computers or other equipment.

179. APE applies to enhancements to existing equipment, where an entirely new piece of equipment is required it will be acquired under the Special Aids and Equipment element.
180. More information about APE can be found in the [Assessment APE section](#).

Special Aids and Equipment

181. Special Aids and Equipment (SAE) helps provide people with an in-work disability need with specialised aids and equipment for employment purposes.
182. A special aid is any item that a person with a disability needs to do a job that a person without a disability would not need to do the same job.
183. Equipment is any tool that our customer requires to do the job, which most people would not need.
184. If the equipment to be provided must be physically attached or linked to existing equipment before it can be used then this is an adaptation to equipment not SAE.
185. More information about SAE can be found in the [Assessment SAE section](#).

Miscellaneous

186. The Miscellaneous category of Access To Work should be used to record only:
- short term or one off support which cannot be classified under other Access to Work elements;
 - extra in work travel costs because of disability.
187. Few applications will fall into the first category. You should consider carefully whether the costs are associated with other Access to Work elements; for example, consultancy costs for adaptations to premises should be recorded under the APE element; a communicator or interpreter at a job interview within work should be classified under CSI.
188. Only use Miscellaneous for travel costs that are incurred within working hours.
189. More information about the miscellaneous element can be found in the [Miscellaneous section](#).

Assessment

Assessment

Step	Action
1	Confirm that the customer's disability or health condition will impact on the way they do their job. If in doubt request Assessment of the Impact of the Disability
2	Suggest reasonable adjustments to the employer
3	Consider Independent Assessment
4	Identify need for Communications Support at Interview
5	Identify need for Travel during Working Hours
6	Identify need for Travel to Work support
7	Identify need for Support Worker
8	Identify need for Adaptations Premises or Equipment
9	Identify need for Special Aids or Equipment
10	Identify need for Miscellaneous support
11	Review Alternatives and agree effective solution with Customer and Employer
12	Complete Business Case for confirmed requirements

Assess the Impact of the Disability

190. For some customers it may not be clear how their condition will impact on the way they can or will do their job. An assessment by a specialist should be arranged for these customers to make an objective analysis of the impact of the disability. The purpose of an assessment is to identify the effects of the customer's disability on the way they do their job; it does not identify or diagnose the disability or its causes.
191. Access to Work funds must not be used for diagnosis of disabilities or health conditions.

Work Psychologist

192. Jobcentreplus Work Psychologists provide a case conferencing service that may help Access to Work advisers
- to support analysis of complex customer needs
 - to provide a lead in defining the requirements and scope of external assessments
193. Background information about the case conferencing service can be found [here](#).

Independent Assessment

194. Where there is disagreement with an applicant or difficulty in determining whether the effect of an applicant's disability will introduce additional costs above those of a non-disabled person doing the job, the adviser can ask for an independent assessment.
195. Different AtW elements will need different types of assessment.
196. The speed of response required to put Communicator Support at Interview (CSI) support in place means that there is not time to independently assess the need.
197. A medical opinion can be helpful for Travel to Work cases where the suitability of available transport is in doubt. Requests for a medical opinion must be made using the [Medical Request form in Appendix 2](#).
198. Other types of specialist assessment include:
- Technical – for Adaptations to Premises or Equipment
 - Ergonomic – Desk, chair, keyboard
 - Impairment Specific – 3rd sector organisations can provide expertise about special aids and equipment and adaptations to premises.
 - Product Specific – suppliers and manufacturers of special aids and equipment can provide expertise about the use of their products and may be able to arrange trial periods for customers.
- This is not an exhaustive list and advisers should familiarise themselves with the range and scope of specialists in their area.
199. The costs of specialist assessments are met from general Access to Work budgets. External assessment or consultancy costs are recorded as expenditure under the element being applied for and are not subject to cost share.
200. If the appropriate element has not been identified when the assessment is made, record the costs under the [miscellaneous](#) element.
201. All advice received should be clearly recorded in the customer's case file, with supporting documentation.
202. All action taken must also be recorded as supporting evidence for approval and audit purposes, and any technical reports attached.

Miscellaneous

203. The Miscellaneous element cannot be used for consultancy fees where these can be placed against a single element of Access to Work support. For example:
- consultancy costs because of a task analysis to establish how many hours Support Worker provision is required should be allocated to the Support Worker element;

- the cost of establishing which special aids are required comes under the SAE element;
204. The cost of establishing what is required which results in several elements of support being identified should be allocated to Miscellaneous.

Considering Alternatives

205. When more than one effective solution is identified they should all be recorded on the Business Case (AtW2) with the pros and cons of each alternative.
206. The adviser should discuss the options with the customer and employer with the aim of identifying the most cost effective solution that fully meets the customers employment related needs.
207. If the customer or employer wants to use an option that is more expensive than an alternative that also meets the customers' needs, take this into account when negotiating contributions. Explain to the employer and the customer that the AtW contribution will be based on the cost of the cheapest option that fully meets the customer's employment related needs. For example when three quotes have been received for a service, if the customer decides not to use the cheapest quote, Access to Work will only pay the agreed costs based on the lowest quote that meets the customers needs.

Vehicle Purchase

208. Under normal circumstances Access to Work will not fund the purchase of vehicles. There are exceptional circumstances when purchase of a vehicle may be considered because it is the most cost effective option.
209. Before considering if an exception applies, first identify the correct Access to Work element to fund the customer's support. Different rules and considerations apply depending on whether the vehicle is work equipment or a means of travelling to work.
210. Vehicles such as taxis for taxi drivers, tractors for farmers or lorries for hauliers are standard work equipment for these occupations. Access to Work does not purchase [standard equipment](#), but could fund adaptations to the customer's vehicle using the APE element. The guidance on APE awards must be followed.
211. In exceptional circumstances, Access to Work may make a contribution to the purchase of a non standard vehicle where the standard vehicle cannot be used for example a 'mule' instead of a standard quad bike. The contribution will be limited to the difference in cost between the standard vehicle and the specialist vehicle with further deductions for business and social benefits. Use the SAE element to fund the contribution and apply all standard SAE guidance.
212. Travel to Work and Travel within Work are distinct Access to Work elements.
213. For these elements there is extensive guidance about how to determine,
- the customers additional costs
 - the most cost effective solution.

214. The 'Purchase of a vehicle' subsection in the Actual Cost of Travel to Work section of the Access to Work guidance describe the circumstances when the purchase of a vehicle could be the most cost effective solution to a customer's travel to work needs.
215. Appendix 7 outlines the circumstances when Access to Work Travel to Work funding can be used to adapt a customers own vehicle to allow them to travel to work.

Communication support at Interview

Communication Support at Interview

216. Communication Support at Interview (CSI) helps with the costs of employing an interpreter or communicator to accompany a customer attending a job interview, where the customer would experience difficulties in understanding or making themselves understood.
217. This element is used primarily by hearing-impaired customers, but is open to anyone with a disability affecting their ability to communicate.
218. CSI is available for all job interviews, including a new job with a new employer and internal promotion. Assistance is available irrespective of whether the vacancy is Jobcentre Plus notified or not.
219. CSI cannot be used for:
- communication support within the job such as induction and job reviews, consider a Support Worker instead;
 - support for customers attending interviews with Disability Employment Advisers or other Jobcentre Plus staff;
 - support for people attending other Jobcentre Plus programmes.

Type of support

220. Interpreters or communicators should be employed to interpret in a format understood by the customer, for example British Sign Language or Lipspeaking.
221. Other types of communication support, for example [Advocacy](#), can be provided for people with learning difficulties or mental health problems.
222. Approval is usually for up to two hours support. Applications for lengthier interviews can be approved in exceptional circumstances, for example where aptitude or trade tests form part of the interview. In these cases the employer should be asked to confirm details of the interview.
223. There is no limit to the number of interviews a customer can receive help for through Communication Support at Interview. However, to ensure value for money, if a customer has repeated interviews that do not result in employment you should consider whether other help is required, for example referral to a Disability Employment Adviser.

Sources for communication support

224. The following organisations can provide information about British Sign Language or Lipspeaking support available in your local area:

Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters,
Baltic Chambers, Suite 317-319
50 Wellington Street

Glasgow G2 6HJ
Telephone 0141 202 0791
TEXTphone 0141 202 0790
<http://www.sasli.org.uk/>

Scottish Deaf Association
Suite 222, The Pentagon
36 Washington Street
Glasgow, G3 8AZ
Email: scotland@signcommunity.org.uk
Videophone IP: glasgow.bda.bslphone.com
IP: 81.158.182.123
Text phone: 0141 248 5567
Telephone: 0141 248 5554
Fax: 0141 248 5565

Association of Sign Language Interpreters for England, Wales and Northern Ireland
Fortuna House, South Fifth Street
Milton Keynes
MK9 2EU
Telephone 0871 474 0522
Text Phone 18001 0871 474 0522
Fax 01908 325259
<http://www.asli.org.uk/>

British Deaf Association North
13 Wilson Patten Street
Warrington,
Cheshire, WA1 1PG
Email: xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxx.xx
Videophone IP: 81.6.233.219
Textphone: 01925 652529
Telephone: 01925 652520
Fax: 01925 652526

British Deaf Association Midlands
10th Floor, Coventry Point
Market Way
Coventry, CV1 1EA
Email: xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxx.xx
Videophone IP: 84.12.97.143
Textphone: 02476 550393
Telephone: 02476 550936
Fax: 02476 221541

British Deaf Association
London and South East
69 Wilson Street
London, EC2A 2BB

Email: london@signcommunity.org.uk
Videophone IP: 81.138.165.105
Textphone: 020 7588 3529
Telephone: 020 7588 3520
Fax: 020 7588 3527

Association of Lipspeakers
ALS Information Office
5 Furlong Close
Upper Tean
Stoke on Trent
Staffordshire
ST10 4LB
Tel: 01538 722482
Email: xxxxxxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xx.xx
<http://www.lipspeaking.co.uk/>

SIGNATURE
Durham University Science Park
Block 4
Stockton Road
Durham
DH1 3UZ
Tel: 0191 383 1155
Email: xxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx.xx
<http://www.signature.org.uk/>

Advocacy

225. Mencap can provide advice about advocacy for people with learning difficulties or mental health problems in England and Wales.

England - The Learning Disability Helpline
Telephone: 0808 808 1111
Email: helpline@mencap.org.uk
Textphone: 0808 808 8181

Wales Learning Disability Helpline / Llinell Gymorth Anabledd Dysgu Cymru
Telephone: 0808 8000 300
Email: helpline.wales@mencap.org.uk

226. VoiceAbility works with individuals and groups who have mental health problems, learning disabilities, physical or sensory impairments or are on the autistic spectrum.
Telephone: 01223 555800
Email xxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxx

227. The Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance website provides a directory of advocacy services in Scotland for people with learning difficulties or mental health problems. - <http://www.siaa.org.uk/>

Application procedure

228. All applications for communication support must be made before the interview takes place.
229. As interviews are often arranged at short notice it is important that applications are dealt with quickly and the customer given a decision at the time of application.
230. Access to Work pays 100% of all costs under Communication Support at Interview (CSI). There is no cost sharing.
231. If this is the first time the customer has applied for CSI help you must complete an Access to Work (AtW) application form AtW1 as well as the application for an interpreter or communicator to attend a job interview form DP221JP.
232. All subsequent applications within the three-year AtW period can be made on form DP221JP.
233. Advisers must:
- complete applicant and interview details in Part 1, including reasons if support is to last more than two hours;
 - obtain approval for support at Part 2;
 - where possible complete interpreter/communicator details in Part 3, including agreed rates of pay and other charges;
 - enter the AtW mileage rate at Part 4.

Applications made through Disability Employment Advisers

234. In some cases arrangements for support may be made by the customer's Disability Employment Adviser (DEA). A DEA must seek approval from an AtW Operational Support Unit before arranging the support.
235. In these cases the DEA will:
- contact the employer and confirm that an interview is taking place;
 - check with the AtW Operational Support Unit whether an AtW1 is required and that the customer is eligible;
 - if applicable, remind customers that they must sign and return the AtW1 to the AtW Operational Support Unit as soon as they receive it;
 - complete Part 1 and 2 of DP221JP, noting Part 2 with the name of the approving AtW adviser and the date approved;
 - complete Part 3 of DP221JP if the DEA is hiring the communicator/interpreter;
 - arrange for Part 4 to be completed by the communicator/interpreter;
 - arrange for the customer to sign Part 5 and the form to be passed to the Access to Work Operational Support Unit for payment.

Travel to Work

Travel to Work

Step	Action
1	Identify if suitable public transport available for journey
2	Confirm that disability prevents use of public transport ?
3	Check if customer is entitled to a concessionary fare or if season tickets are available.
4	Check if customer has been supplied with a Motability vehicle .
5	Decide cost of the journey for a non disabled person – normal cost
6	Consider Temporary Assistance
7	Consider Adaptations to the customer's vehicle
8	Can customer get a lift ?
9	Consider use of existing taxi contract or request quotes .
10	Identify most cost effective method of Travel to Work

Normal Cost of Travel to Work

236. All TtW applications must be supported by a medical opinion from a suitably qualified medical practitioner such as a GP or nurse unless it is clear from the customers' condition that they are unable to use public transport
237. Access to Work can pay the additional costs that arise as a result of a customer's disability or health condition.
238. To decide if there are additional costs for Travel to Work we must first establish a normal cost of the journey for a person without a health condition or disability.
239. If the customer is recently disabled and previously drove to work, the normal cost is calculated using the Access to Work mileage rate of 25 pence per mile. This rate also applies where suitable public transport is not available.

240. In other cases the normal cost is the cost to the customer of using suitable public transport.

Availability of public transport

241. If [suitable public transport](#) is available we use the [cost to the customer](#) of using the public transport as the normal cost.

Suitable Public Transport

242. If the public transport is not available at the times that the customer needs to travel it is not suitable.

243. If the journey by public transport would take more than 2 hours each way, it is unlikely to be suitable. Advisers can use their discretion to allow journey times of over 2 hours up to a maximum of 3 hours.

244. If suitable public transport appears to be available, the adviser should be sympathetic and flexible if the customer may have difficulty accessing the service.

245. If suitable public transport is available, and there is no obvious reason why the customer cannot use it, the adviser must get written confirmation from the customer's Doctor or other health professional, that they are unable to use public transport before agreeing to fund Travel to Work costs.

246. If suitable public transport is available, and the customer would use it if appropriate assistance or training was available, consider whether providing a [Support Worker](#) would be the most cost effective means of meeting the customers travel needs.

Cost to the Customer

247. Where suitable public transport is available, if the customer is entitled to concessionary fares or free travel, the cost to the customer is the reduced fare or nil. If season tickets are available you should assume that the customer would use one if it reduced the cost of their travel.

Private Transport

248. If suitable public transport is not available for all or part of the journey and you would not expect a non-disabled person to walk then the cost of private transport is the normal cost.

249. For Access to Work the cost of private transport is 25 pence per mile.

Adaptations to Customer vehicles

250. Disabled customers who drive to work can receive the cost of adaptations to their vehicle to allow them to continue to use it.

251. Assistance may also be available through the [Motability](#) scheme if the customer is in receipt of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance. Ask customers in receipt of DLA HRMC if they wish to be supported through the Motability scheme, the customer is free to choose whether or not they want to apply to Motability. A process map showing the relationship between the AtW process and the Motability process can be found at [Appendix 6](#). If the customer does wish to take up Motability support refer them to Motability and suspend assessment of the Travel to Work element of their Access to Work application until a response is received from Motability. The adviser should continue to

assess any other elements of Access to Work support the customer requires and put support in place as quickly as possible.

Motability

252. Customers who already have a suitable vehicle supplied through the Motability scheme should not require additional assistance from AtW. A Motability vehicle that is not suitable for travelling to work, for example a motorised scooter, should not be taken into account when considering a customer's travel to work costs.
253. Customers who are not applying for Motability, and do not have a suitable vehicle from Motability may be able to receive Access to Work support to adapt a vehicle if this is the most cost effective solution.
254. Advisers need to inform customers that:
- Access to Work is making a contribution towards costs;
 - the customer is fully responsible for ownership, repairs, maintenance and all running costs;
 - the customer must make arrangements for the adaptation to be carried out and reclaim the agreed costs when the work is completed.
255. Applications for adaptations to vehicles should be supported by:
- an assessment of driving needs, usually through a [Motability accredited centre](#). ; or
 - a written medical appraisal, for example doctor's support for a customer requesting an automatic gearbox or power assisted steering.
256. Consider providing alternative support on a temporary basis while the adaptations are being made.

Vehicles unsuitable for adaptation and purchases in lieu of adaptation

257. In cases where a customer's vehicle is unsuitable for adaptation, for example, due to age, or where it would be more cost effective to replace an existing vehicle rather than adapt it, for example, exchanging a manual transmission for an automatic, AtW may be able to provide a grant towards a vehicle that meets the customer's minimum needs. The principle of cost effectiveness must be taken into account in every case regardless as to the customer's social contribution, for example, it is hardly ever cost effective to pay taxi fares over a long period of time when considered alongside the approval of a grant towards a vehicle purchase. Some examples can be found at [Appendix 7](#). **Please note these examples are not exhaustive and are not meant to cover every scenario.**

Adaptation of lease/hire vehicles

258. Where adaptations are requested for a leased vehicle or one purchased via a finance arrangement, the customer must check the terms of the contract before approval can be given. Under normal circumstances the vehicle remains the property of a lease company (or finance company, until fully paid for). In either case permission in writing will be needed before adaptations can be made.
259. When assessing the cost of adapting a leased or hired vehicle account must be taken of the subsequent cost of removal of the adaptation, if appropriate. These costs should be included in the customer's profile.
260. Consider providing alternative support on a temporary basis while the adaptations are being made.

Support Worker

261. If a vehicle is available, and the customer would use it if appropriate assistance was available, consider whether providing a [Support Worker](#) would be the most cost effective means of meeting the customers travel needs.

Temporary assistance

262. For some customers it may be more cost effective in the medium term to fund travel training that will allow the customer to use public transport without assistance. The customer may be more willing to consider this option after they have become established in their employment. If this is the case, fund taxi travel for an initial few months and then review the customer's requirements with the aim of funding travel training until the customer is able to use public transport on their own. The social and domestic benefit of independent public transport use can be used to encourage the customer to take this option but should not be used as a reason for the customer to contribute to the cost.
263. Occasionally a customer may require temporary help, for example where the customer has an epileptic fit and loses their driving licence for 12 months.
264. Support should be considered on a case by case basis and reviewed regularly.
265. In cases where the customer has epilepsy, agree support for 12 months and then review. If a customer's licence is not returned then extend support as appropriate.

Work Choice

266. Travel to Work can be considered for Work Choice customers where they are eligible for Access to Work. If the only suitable Work Choice placement for an individual is beyond usual travelling distance, the normal cost can be reduced to the equivalent of the usual travelling distance.
267. In all cases specialist advisory team must check if the Work Choice provider is subsidising the travel costs. If travel is being subsidised, the subsidy must be added to the normal travel cost.

Actual Cost of Travel to Work

268. AtW Travel to Work funds the difference between the actual cost of travelling to work and the normal cost defined above.
269. The actual cost will depend on the method of transport used. AtW Travel to Work will fund the most cost effective solution that fully meets the customer's needs. If the customer decides to use a more expensive alternative AtW Travel to Work will only fund the difference between the normal cost and the most cost effective solution.

Travel by Taxi

270. In many cases the actual means of travelling to work will be by taxi. Access to Work may have a call off contract with a local taxi company to provide TtW for customers which should be used where possible. If this is not the case or if the customer's journey is outside the taxi company's

normal/licensed operating area, the adviser should confirm that the rate charged by the taxi company selected is reasonable.

Shared taxis

271. If taxis are shared, each Access to Work customer must contribute their public transport costs/mileage costs in full for the journey. Any other passengers sharing the taxi must contribute their share of the cost of the journey.
272. The combined contributions should be deducted from the taxi fare and the outstanding balance met by Access to Work (this cost should be apportioned between the profiles for the customers sharing the taxi).

Lift from a friend colleague or family

273. Where a friend, colleague or relative varies their journey to and from their place of work in order to give the customer a lift to and from work, Travel to Work can pay the additional mileage cost if it exceeds the normal cost of the customer's journey.
274. Calculate:
- the mileage for the driver's usual journey directly to work;
 - the actual mileage for the varied route;
 - deduct the usual mileage from the actual mileage for the varied route;
 - calculate the cost of the additional mileage using the Access to Work mileage rate;
 - deduct the normal cost of the customers travel.
275. If the driver is not varying their route then no Travel to Work cost applies.

Extra journey

276. Where a friend, colleague or relative makes two return journeys to take the customer to and from work, the following applies:
- if public transport is available,
 - the actual cost is the mileage cost for both return journeys
 - the normal cost is the usual public transport cost for a single return journey;
 - if suitable public transport is not available,
 - the actual cost is the mileage cost for both return journeys
 - the normal cost is the mileage cost for a single return journey .

Purchase of a Vehicle

277. In exceptional circumstances, purchase of a vehicle may be the most cost effective solution. Access to Work support is only available as a contribution to the costs of a vehicle supplied through Motability.
278. For example, this might occur if the customer had a high mileage journey between two locations with good public transport; the customer is unable to use public transport but is entitled to free travel. In this case the normal cost of travel would be nil and if the cost of taxi's exceeded £6000 per year, purchase of a suitable vehicle might be a more cost effective solution. Note that if suitable public transport is not available, the normal method of transport would be by private vehicle and so the customers normal cost would be calculated at 25pence per mile.

279. If purchase of a vehicle is being considered the adviser must confirm that the customer is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance – Higher Rate Mobility Component. The adviser should refer the customer to Motability who will assess the customer's circumstances and may be able to provide a suitable vehicle. The adviser must suspend assessment of the Travel to Work element of their Access to Work application until a response is received from Motability. A process map showing the relationship between the AtW process and the Motability process can be found at [Appendix 6](#).
280. If the customer requires any other elements of Access to Work support the adviser should continue to assess these and put support in place as quickly as possible.
281. Any decision to provide AtW support for the purchase of a vehicle must be approved in advance by an AtW Senior Operations Manager.

Learner Drivers

282. Customers can be considered for Travel to Work whilst they are learning to drive.
283. Driving tuition cannot be paid for. Access to Work cannot support the purchase or adaptation of a vehicle for a learner driver.

Customers with more than one workplace

284. Advisers must establish whether there is a set pattern of travel on which to base costs. If there is no pattern calculate the additional costs for each destination based on the availability of suitable public transport and profile costs based on previous work patterns where known.

Support Workers

Support Workers

Step	Action
1	Consider other options
2	Identify appropriate type(s) of Support Worker
3	Identify the tasks a support worker will perform.
4	Check if help is already available within the business.
5	Confirm support worker will not replace more than 20% of core duties ?
6	Determine whether the employer recruit or employ the SW
7	Confirm that rates charged are reasonable and that holidays and sick leave are covered
8	Consider additional support required for customer as employer
9	Determine AtW contribution to employers costs

General Considerations for all Support Workers

285. The Support Worker (SW) element of AtW offers financial assistance to cover the full cost of providing a SW in the workplace. It can also be used to help the customer get to and from work.
286. In all cases, support is provided to help the customer to do their job; the SW should not be doing the work of, or replacing the disabled person. The only exception to this is where we are providing a Job Aide SW, and then support should be limited to 20% of the customer's job. Support not directly work related, such as care facilities in the workplace, is not replacement of duties, and can be ignored in assessing whether the customer is being helped to do the job.
287. Identify the tasks that the SW will perform on behalf of the customer and confirm they are all work related.
288. A support worker cannot be provided for nursing care, or help to get the customer up and ready in the morning etc. Access to Work support starts 'at the front door' – i.e. when a person is ready to go to work.
289. Is the customer doing at least 80% of the core tasks of the job?
290. Is the customer capable of carrying out least 80% of the core tasks within their job or is the SW doing their job for them? Do the support

workers actions allow the customer to access and complete the task or does the Support Worker complete the task?

291. If the SW is carrying out core tasks within the job that the customer cannot do we can only pay the SW costs for up to 20% of a person's job. This rule should not be used to limit support in cases where the SW is providing help that allows the customer carry out their job, for example, a communicator. This can be sometimes difficult to determine, and a flowchart has been devised to help you decide what help might be appropriate, see [Appendix 4](#) – Support Worker 20% limit.
292. There are many different [types of Support Worker](#) who can provide different types of help; some will be ad-hoc or short term whilst others will be needed on a more regular basis.

Assessment of Need

293. For each SW application you will have to consider whether the provision of a SW is the most appropriate and cost effective solution that can be put in place to meet the minimum needs of the customer.
294. It may be that some equipment, such as a loop induction system or use of a video relay system for someone with hearing difficulties, may be a more cost-effective solution than providing a SW for communication support in some cases.
295. If there are only limited duties in which the customer is having difficulties, then you should discuss job restructuring with the employer, which might avoid the need for a SW.
296. Once you have decided that we can help with a SW, decide what type of SW is most appropriate, look at the [Types of Support Worker](#) section to find out what other things you might need to consider for each type of SW.
297. If you are unsure what level of support should be put in place, you may wish to consult a Work Psychologist who can help you identify what support to put in place for complex cases.

BSL Tutors

298. Occasionally customers who are working as sign language tutors request AtW support with communication in the classroom. All qualified BSL tutors have the skills to teach students without additional assistance. AtW interpreter support should be limited to the teachers first day in post and to meetings and events outside the classroom, such as an induction day.

Work Choice

299. Customers who cannot do at least 80% of their core tasks may be more suited to Work Choice. The adviser should facilitate this with the help of the local DEA.
300. If a customer is currently working for less than 16 hours a week, but indicates an intention to increase their hours over time, the AtW adviser should consider if the ongoing provision of a job coach or job aide will help the customer to achieve this objective. With the approval of their Regional Manager, advisers can extend support beyond the normal short period.

Does the SW replace the need for another employee?

301. Support is provided to meet the customer's needs, not the employer's. AtW should not be used to help the employer avoid taking on other staff where needed.

Example:

302. Someone in a Chief Executive role would be expected to have some type of Personal Assistant or Secretary, and therefore, we would not provide a SW to carry out tasks such as filing or photocopying, as these would not usually fall within the job description of someone working at Chief Executive level.

Is there a general benefit to the employer?

303. If a SW is needed regularly, or needs to be available at all times, but may not be working all of that time, and is able to take on other duties, does this give any general benefit to the business or firm? If there is some benefit to the employer, you should negotiate a business benefit contribution.

Is there an overlap of support?

304. If a customer is receiving funding from Disability Living Allowance or Independent Living Fund, you should ask more questions to find out how this might overlap with AtW funded support. You should not assume that there is an overlap with AtW, each case should be considered on its own merits.
305. DLA is provided to people who need help with personal care or have walking difficulties.
306. ILF is dedicated to the financial support of disabled people enabling them to choose to live in the community rather than residential care. If a customer is receiving ILF, you should ask about their 'social care' package and negotiate with Social Services, who may continue to fund their personal care in work or contribute to the cost of additional support that is required while the customer is at work.

Does Deadweight Apply?

307. Under AtW, we cannot provide help in situations where an employer has been providing support for an employee and then withdraws help as a money saving strategy. Employers have a legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments, and if adjustments have already been made, employers cannot withdraw them just because AtW funding may be available.
308. If you have any doubts, you should request written evidence from the employer as to why support that was previously offered has been withdrawn.
309. Deadweight can also apply to help previously offered on a voluntary basis by a friend, relative or colleague if there has been no other change of circumstance, other than the withdrawal of help previously supplied voluntarily.
310. If deadweight applies you should not offer AtW support.

Example:

311. A Technical Design Teacher has been receiving help from a Classroom Assistant to help with the lifting/carrying parts of the job. Due to the

Teacher's disability, the Assistant has also been helping to set up some of the equipment under the Teacher's supervision. The school has funded this for the last twelve months, but following a review of LEA budgets, they cannot afford to fund the Assistant's post and an application for AtW has been place. This is purely deadweight, so AtW help could not be offered.

Recruitment of Support Workers

- 312. Unless there is a regional call-off contract in place, it is the employer's responsibility (or the customer's if they're self-employed) to recruit a SW.
- 313. If a call-off contract is in place in your region, but the customer or employer wishes to use a different provider, this is acceptable, but AtW support will be limited to the cost of providing support through the contracted route.
- 314. If the employer needs to recruit externally, you should advise them to do so through a recognised professional agency, for example members of the Federation of Recruitment and Employment Services (FRES). Other local sources of advice include Local Authorities, social workers already working with the customer, organisations or clubs working with disabled people.
- 315. If a Support Worker is required full time, for example 30 hours or more a week, Access to Work will normally fund on the basis of an annual salary rather than an Agency worker employed on an hourly basis
- 316. More information about organisations that can help with the recruitment of suitably qualified [interpreters](#) and [advocates](#) can be found in the CSI section of this guidance.

What if the employer wants to provide the support through an existing employee?

- 317. This can often be the most suitable and cost effective solution for all concerned. If the employee is being used to provide full time support, AtW can reimburse: full salary, NI, pension, leave and sickness payments. We cannot, however make a contribution towards costs that the employer would have to meet anyway, such as heating, lighting and other building costs.
- 318. If the employee is only providing support for one or two hours a week, or on a more ad hoc basis you can reimburse the employer the standard going rate for that type of support in the local area. This is to ensure that we achieve value for money from programme funds.
- 319. However, if you agree to pay the employer an hourly rate, you will need to confirm that the total profiled costs over the year will not exceed the SW's full salary. If it will, you should limit AtW funding to the full salary costs.
- 320. When employers use their own existing employees to support customers it is not appropriate to pay a booking fee.

Example:

- 321. A customer needs 25 hours support per week and the employer has a suitably qualified employee who can provide the necessary support. The employee's current salary (including all on costs) is £27,000 per year.
- 322. The 'going rate' for support of this type is £28 per hour in the local area.

323. In this case you would need to work out the cost of support over the year – ie: 25 (hours per week) x £28 (rate per hour) x 52 (weeks per year).
324. As this total cost would be £36,400, which is significantly higher than their salary, you should restrict the AtW grant to £27,000.
325. However, if the same customer needed only 15 hours support per week, then using the average rate, it would work out at a cost of £21,840 per year, which is less than their salary, and therefore the most cost effective option. It is this amount that we should pay.

What if the customer or employer wants to recruit a new employee as a SW?

326. Access to Work can reimburse: full salary, National Insurance, leave and sickness payments and recruitment costs including advertising.
327. If requested by the employer, AtW can also pay management costs up to 5% of the SWs gross salary, to cover the cost of adding the new employee to the payroll and any other HR activities. Where an employer provides evidence to show that they have had to pay an amount greater than this percentage, AtW will reimburse the full cost.
328. Redundancy and notice payments costs can be paid, do not profile redundancy or notice payments into the applicant's profile; these costs should be profiled when, and if, they occur.
329. Provide an approval letter, outlining the agreed support including the number of hours, rate of pay, etc. You will need to agree a fixed period for which we will pay to cover unexpected absences such as sick leave. It is usual to agree to pay for the SW if they or the customer are sick, for up to 4 weeks.
330. If a customer accepts the responsibilities of being their SW's employer they might need additional support to fulfil this role properly. These costs can be approved through Access to Work where the need is related to their disability. You should agree an additional number of hours initially, but keep this under review. Do not meet this need through an increase in the hourly rate paid to the SW.
331. Rates of pay should be reviewed at the annual review or if the level of support changes.
332. Customers and SWs who wish to establish their employment position should be advised to contact their local HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) office.
333. HMRC operates a Helpline for new employers. The number is 0845 60 70 143, and a [new employer pack](#) is issued to people who register through the helpline.
334. If any financial liability is incurred as a result of a customer being deemed an employer by the HMRC, you may arrange for the customer to be reimbursed from this element. In all such cases, notify the National Tier policy team of the details immediately.
335. Customers who use family or friends to provide SW help are equally subject to the considerations above.

What if the SW is booked through an agency?

336. For infrequent and ad hoc requirements this is usually the most suitable option. Access to Work may have a call-off contract for this type of support which you should use if available.

337. If the customer or employer wishes to use an alternative supplier confirm that the rate quoted is reasonable. All quotes should be a total amount, including all support, travels costs and any necessary booking fees. This allows the AtW Adviser to see which agency offers the most cost effective solution for the entire service. If the alternative supplier's charges are greater than those that would be incurred from using the call off contract, limit the AtW support to the cost of providing suitable support through the call off contract.

Payment

338. Payment for a SW will only be made for the days on which a customer would usually work, and other days (such as leave) as specified in the SW's contract of employment. The adviser should request a copy of the SW's contract and store it in the customer's case file to help verify future claims.
339. You should profile all costs over a 52-week period as the SW may be entitled to holiday/sickness payments from the customer/employer under the Working Time Regulations introduced in October 1998.
340. Under the regulations a worker is entitled to four weeks' leave. This is not in addition to contractual entitlements.
341. Access to Work will pay for these weeks leave, as it is an additional cost that would not have been relevant had they (employer or customer) not needed to employ the SW.
342. Specific advice should be obtained from the Health & Safety Executive Infoline on 0845 345 0055 or local [ACAS](#) office. [Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform](#) produces '[A Guide to Working Time Regulations](#)'. You should phone 0845 015 0010 to obtain a copy.

Additional support worker costs / travel expenses

343. SW travel expenses should be included in the hourly rate quoted for support. Doing this will ensure that we agree the most cost effective solution for the entire support.
344. If you have existing cases where we have agreed to pay travel expenses, then you should reimburse costs of either standard class public transport or the AtW mileage rate (25p per mile) if they have driven to the assignment. Car parking charges cannot be reimbursed.

Additional support worker costs /Customer visiting overseas

345. You will need to carefully consider any application for SW help overseas. The visit must be part of the customer's actual job and not be a developmental activity or career development opportunity. If you are happy that the support is linked to the job and necessary, you can authorise help. Any requests for travel or accommodation costs should be scrutinised to ensure that we are achieving value for money. You can use Expotel or the Internet to research the likely costs of this and should authorise the most cost effective option. Support for people working abroad should be limited to 3 months in any one (rolling) year.

Additional support worker costs /SW attending meetings/conferences/training as a delegate

346. Funding does not apply where a SW attends meetings, conferences or training sessions as a participant. The SW is engaged to provide full support to the customer, and cannot do this at the same time.

Additional support worker costs /Overnight support

347. Where support is required overnight, for example attendance at conferences, the approved costs should be based on the Expotel hotel rates. Reimbursement of necessary travel costs should also be considered and should be limited to standard class public transport rates or the AtW mileage rate (currently 25p per mile) if the SW will drive to the event. However, if the SW drives the customer to the event, you will need to consider whether this is actually an additional cost, as the customer or their employer would have had to have met these costs as usual business travel.

Additional support worker costs /Meal allowance

348. Additional SW meal costs incurred for visits/trips outside their normal working pattern can be reimbursed providing a valid receipt is produced. Costs will be limited to the same restrictions and rates specified within the current [Departmental Business Travel/Expenses](#) guidance.

Additional support worker costs /Cancellation fees

349. In some circumstances there may be a claim from a SW for a cancellation fee. Such claims can be considered if the cancellation of the required support is unavoidable and not caused by the actions of the SW or by the improvidence of the employer.

Example:

350. An AtW customer has a SW for two hours each week for a team meeting, the AtW customer phones in sick on the day of the meeting, and notifies the SW that they will not be required; as a result the SW claims a cancellation fee. This would be acceptable for us to pay. However, if the employer cancelled the team meeting several days before but forgot to inform the SW, then the employer should take responsibility for this and meet any resulting costs.

Types of Support Worker

[British Sign Language \(BSL\) Interpreter](#)

[Carer](#)

[Counsellor](#)

[Driver](#)

[Job-Aide](#)

[Job Coach](#)

[Lip Speaker](#)

[Note Taker](#)

[Palantypist](#)

[Personal Reader](#)

[Travel Buddy](#)

British Sign Language (BSL) Interpreter

351. BSL Interpreters are people who have undertaken specialist training to be able to interpret English into BSL for Deaf people or those with hearing difficulties.
352. There are varying levels of qualification that Interpreters may have achieved. You should ensure that customers, who require BSL interpreter support, understand the types of work situation that each skill level of interpreter can support. The customer must be able to make an informed decision about the level of BSL skill they require.

Table of recommended levels of Interpreter for different types of assignment

Type of event or meeting SW is needed for	Recommended minimum		
	JTI	TI	MRSLI
Team meeting	X		
Training session – desk based	X		
Training session – technical		X	
Staff meeting – appraisal		X	
Staff meeting – disciplinary			X
Legal meeting (tribunals, court)			X
Conferences – known subject		X	
Conferences – unknown or technical			X

A Junior Trainee Interpreter (JTI)

353. Qualified at NVQ level 3, and registered with SIGNATURE, the national registration body.
354. This level of interpreter qualification does not exist in Scotland, the next level (TI) will be the minimum for supporting Scottish customer's team meetings and desk based training.
355. JTIs are competent to practice in some employment related environments, but should work under supervision.

A Trainee Interpreter (TI)

356. Qualified at NVQ level 4, has completed a recognised interpreter qualification and is working towards becoming a fully qualified interpreter. TIs will have several months work experience and be registered with SIGNATURE, the national registration body.
357. TIs are competent to practice in most employment related environments.

A Member of the Register of Sign Language Interpreters (MRSL)

358. Qualified at NVQ Level 4 or has a recognised post graduate diploma.
359. MRSLIs have several years experience of regular usage of BSL and are registered with SIGNATURE, the national registration body. They have complete fluency in English and BSL.
360. MRSLIs are competent to practice in any employment related environment.

General Considerations for all Interpreters

361. Interpreters cannot be expected to work for more than two hours without a break, if an event will require continuous interpretation for more than two hours two interpreters will be required.
362. There are a number of issues you will need to consider before agreeing what interpreter support needs to be put in place:
363. The event/environment
- Is this linked to the customer's actual job?
 - Have the employer/event organiser made all reasonable adjustments?
 - Is the setting informal or formal?
 - Are there structured breaks in place?
 - Will there be 'break out' or syndicate exercises?
364. The participants
- Is it a straightforward one-to-one meeting?
 - Is there a large audience?
 - Are there several people attending who will require a BSL Interpreter?
365. The content
- Is the topic straightforward or will it require specialist knowledge?
 - How important is the content?
 - Will there be a rapid change over of speakers that could make interpreting more difficult?
 - What are the implications for the customer or others if there is a misinterpretation?

Carer

366. A carer is someone who helps a customer overcome physical barriers for example, assistance with mobility or toilet use at work. You will need to check with the customer whether they are receiving help from elsewhere for this type of support, as there could be some [overlap with other benefits](#) such as Disability Living Allowance or Carers Allowance.

Counsellor

367. For customers with problems of anxiety, panic attacks or mental health-related difficulties, an appropriately qualified counsellor may be useful to offer support and talk about coping strategies at work.
368. A counsellor could also be used to negotiate with an employer when a customer is experiencing difficulty coping with the job. This support could be made available either at the customer's home or place of work. This type of help is not available to Work Choice participants.

Driver

369. A SW Driver could be authorised to drive the customer to and from work, or travel during their working day. It should not be used when someone varies their journey to drive a disabled person to work, or friends and relatives who are paid a mileage fee for the duty – as these applicants should be considered under the Travel to Work (TtW) element.
370. If a customer will need a SW Driver on an ongoing basis, you may wish to advise the employer or customer to go through a recruitment agency.
371. If the SW will be required to make a return journey, but it is unlikely that they could return home and get back to collect the customer within two

hours, then we can pay an amount for 'downtime'. This payment should be limited to the National Minimum Wage rate. Details of the current NMW rate can be found on relevant page of the HMRC website.

372. This type of support is available for people on Work Choice.

Job-Aide

373. If there is a small proportion (up to 20%), of the job that the customer is unable to do owing to their disability, but a helper can do under supervision, then a job-aide SW may be used. This type of help is not available for people on Work Choice.

Job Coach

374. A Job Coach is a person who provides specialised on-site support to an employee who is disabled and has a job to start. Typically, a Job Coach will help the employee find a job, learn the job and keep the job.

375. Access to Work customers will already have found a job by the time their application is taken or have a Work Trial to start and so coaching for job search will not be funded by Access to Work

Learning the job

- A Job Coach will analyse every task, break them down into component parts and identify skills and knowledge required to do the job. The coach will then show the employee how to perform each task efficiently, safely and in a systematic way. The coach will, if necessary, teach the employee the right amount of soft skills to enable him/her to assimilate to the working environment and understand the culture of the company. The coach will remain with the employee until their learning needs have been fully met and levels of support can be safely reduced. This type of help is not available for people on Work Choice as the Work Choice Provider will help them embed themselves in the job.

Keeping the job

- The Job Coach will evaluate an employees progress, initially at pre-agreed intervals and then on an ad hoc basis when requested by either the employee or employer. This may be necessary when a change of job or personal circumstances occurs or when an employee's performance or behaviour gives cause for concern. The Job Coach will aim to support and encourage an employee to become as independent as possible, taking into account individual circumstances, until the level of support required has been reduced to a minimum.
376. Job coaches work primarily, though not exclusively, with the learning disabled and those with mental health conditions. Job coaches can also be used to help and support other groups of people such as the physically disabled. An example of where their help could be used is if an employee, as a result of an illness or accident, needs to change the way they do their job or re-learn their job. This support can include settling in; help with learning or re-learning their job, coping strategies and travel training. As the role of the Job Coach is extremely flexible, their duties may include some or all of those contained within the generic job description as outlined above. Additional duties, not included, may also form part of their job.

377. In order to reflect the flexible nature of job coaching, Access to Work advisers must ensure that the support put in place is tailored to the needs of the individual. It is essential that advisers draw up an action plan with the customer and job coach during the first weeks of support that identifies how the job coaching support will taper off over time to a point where support is no longer needed on a regular basis. Once the action plan has been drawn up, advisers will need to review it regularly to ensure that support is tapering off as planned.
378. Job coaching will always be more intensive during the first weeks or months of work. By intensive, we mean the Job Coach working actively with the customer for all or part of each working day. This intensive period will vary accordingly to individual needs but should not last longer than 26 weeks.
379. Exceptionally, an individual may require intensive support for longer than 26 weeks. The adviser has the discretion to allow up to a further 13 weeks provided they consider that an extension will allow support to begin to taper off. For example, a problem or crisis in someone's personal life may mean that they take longer to settle in work than expected or their work activities or line manager have changed during their first weeks at work.
380. At the end of the intensive period of support, job coaching should begin to taper off as recorded in the action plan. The tapering off period is not fixed and will need to take account of individual needs but the aim should always be that the individual will be working unaided (i.e. without a job coach) within an appropriate period of time.
381. If support is not beginning to taper off by the end of the 26 weeks (plus the 13 week extension if appropriate) the customer should be advised that referral to Work Choice is appropriate. The adviser should facilitate this with the help of the local DEA.
382. It is recognised that, even after an individual is working unaided, there may be times when further job coaching support will be needed, for example if the work they do changes or they have a change of line manager or location. Job coaching support should be flexible and the customer should be told that they can ask for further support at anytime without the need to make a new application. In these situations, the adviser should simply confirm with the customer and Job Coach the reason for the request and how many hours of job coaching are required and fund accordingly. However, a new application will be needed if the individual moves to a new employer or if the last contact from them was more than 3 years ago. If the number of requests for additional support suggests the need for long term continuous support, the customer should be advised that referral to Work Choice is appropriate. The adviser should facilitate this with the help of the local DEA.
383. Job coaches are employed by a variety of organisations, including charities and local authorities. Some also work on a self-employed basis so it is essential that advisers make appropriate checks to avoid double funding taking place. Deadweight also needs to be taken into consideration.
384. The employer may be able to provide a Job Coach with suitable knowledge and experience of the role from within his existing workforce. In

some cases, the individual will already have a Job Coach who has helped them secure the job and it is usually sensible to allow this coach to continue in the role.

Advisers must:-

- Assess and agree initial levels of support with both customer and Job Coach.
 - Check for evidence of any pre existing funding streams by asking the customer, employer and Job Coach
 - Check that deadweight doesn't apply
 - Establish the period of intensive support likely to be required up to a maximum of 26 weeks
 - Agree an action plan with the Job Coach at around the 3 week stage which should clearly give an indication as to how and when the amount of support is likely to taper off, for example, full time intensive support for the first 2 months followed by a week by week reduction, if appropriate, until support has been reduced to a minimum.
 - Agree a review date two thirds of the way through the intensive activity period of support
 - Review the action plan with the customer and Job Coach to confirm that the need for support is tapering off
 - Exceptionally, agree an extension of up to 13 weeks if the need for further intensive support has been clearly identified with the customer and Job Coach.
 - Set a review date before the extension period has elapsed to check that support is tapering off. If it becomes apparent that the customer is unable to work unaided after an extension period has been granted, refer to Work Choice as an urgent retention case.
385. Any reduction or withdrawal of support should normally be agreed with the customer and Job Coach.
386. A customer can ask for further help at anytime if their circumstances change.
387. This type of help is not available to Work Choice participants in supported employment but can be used to help people on Work Choice placed in unsupported employment.

Lip Speaker

388. Lip speakers are specifically trained so that their speech is easy to lip read. They are mainly used in conferences or meeting where the speakers are not trained to lip speak. A lip speaker will repeat silently what is being said by the speaker, using clear lip patterns. This type of support can be put in place for people with hearing difficulties who do not use BSL. As with BSL interpreters, if the event is likely to last more than a couple of hours, you may need to consider the provision of two lip speakers.

Note Taker

389. A Note Taker provides workplace support for customers who have a hearing impairment or have dyslexia (excluding support at interview which is covered through the CSI element). An example would be a customer who is hearing impaired may need a note-taker at meetings and conferences, or both. Before authorising help for a note taker you will need

to discuss this with the employer, as in most office environments, there will usually be someone else at the meeting who is taking notes or minutes, which will negate the need for a SW note taker. This type of support is available for people on Work Choice.

Palantypist

390. A Palantypist allows someone with hearing difficulties to access meetings and conferences. They do this by taking down spoken words and inputting them to a machine using Palantype chords. The information is then rapidly converted into full written English and can be either displayed on a screen, or produced in transcript.

Personal Reader

391. This type of support is available for anyone who needs help with reading such as dyslexics, blind and visually impaired people who need access to text that cannot be provided by scanners or other special aids. It is likely to be used in conjunction with special aids but the two forms of assistance should not overlap. It can also be used as an interim measure where a customer is awaiting delivery of equipment or other support. This is available to people on Work Choice.

Travel Buddy

392. This is someone who accompanies the customer when travelling to and from work; for example where a customer has epilepsy, a visual impairment, or a problem connected to the fear of travelling such as agoraphobia and who cannot manage travelling alone. You may wish to consider this type of support for a short and decreasing period to allow someone newly disabled to become confident with travelling on public transport, rather than offer long term TtW support. This type of support is not available to people on Work Choice.

Adaptation to Premises or Equipment

Adaptations to Premises or Equipment

Step	Action
1	Confirm APE is appropriate
2	Discuss job restructure with employer
3	Visit customer's place of employment
4	Arrange appropriate technical expert to assess adaptations required.
5	Confirm employer has met all necessary statutory obligations .
6	Confirm employer/customer have relevant permissions
7	Confirm proposed solution is fit for purpose/ value for money
8	Consider business benefit and Daily living needs
9	Consider providing Temporary Support

Confirm that Adaptations to Premises or Equipment is Appropriate

393. APE applications involve making modifications to premises or equipment that will change them from how they were originally manufactured or built, rather than an SAE case, which is around providing the equipment. Adaptations to new premises cannot be funded through AtW. Adaptations to existing premises will only be allowed in exceptional cases and will have to be reviewed by the National Delivery Manager in cases of exceptional hardship.
394. Adaptations to customers' own vehicles should not be put under either APE or SAE, as they sit within the Travel to Work element of the programme. The purchase of specialised vehicles used solely for work, such as a 'mule', should be put under SAE. Adaptations to a specialist vehicle provided by the employer such as a mechanical digger are put under the APE element.
395. It is sometimes difficult, particularly with equipment, to decide whether an item should be under APE or SAE. This can be made easier, by thinking about the equipment being used by the customer and whether you

could purchase it, or each piece of it, in its eventual state. If you could, then it's more likely that the item will be an SAE.

396. For example, providing a split keyboard for someone may initially seem like an APE, because you are adapting the customer's PC, however, you can buy a split keyboard from a retailer that can be used without any further modification, so in this case, it should actually be counted as an SAE.
397. Providing specialist software for a computer should, again, come under SAE. However, if you need to have the software re-scripted to work fully with other software that the customer uses, then it should come under APE.
398. Where a relevant piece of equipment already exists at the place of employment or self-employment and is expected to remain serviceable throughout the AtW award, it may be adapted to meet the customer's needs. AtW (APE) will contribute to the cost of making the adaptations provided the other conditions for making an award are met.
399. If the equipment is not in place at the place of employment / self-employment or is unlikely to remain serviceable throughout the full AtW award period the application should be dealt with under the Special Aids and Equipment (SAE) element.

Technical Experts

400. A range of external technical experts are available to assist the AtW adviser in assessing support requirements. The adviser should consider:
- the customer's disability,
 - the adviser's own areas of expertise and
 - the probable type of adaptation; eg building or employer's equipment, when deciding if and what type of additional expertise they may require to fully assess the support requirements.
401. Expert Assessments should be booked using the [DiSC3 referral form](#). (DiSC3 User Guide Chapter 8)

Visit the place of Employment

402. In all cases where an adaptation to premises is needed a visit to the place of employment should be made, either by an adviser or the appropriate expert. For self-employed customers, visit the home or registered premises.

Employer's legal responsibilities

403. Employers must make adequate provision for disabled people who may be present on their premises. This duty is anticipatory and applies to both employees and visitors and takes into account all forms of disability. AtW advisers must be satisfied that employers have taken action to discharge their statutory responsibilities before ATW funding is authorised.
404. Employers have a number of legal responsibilities under the:
- Factories Act, 1961;
 - Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act, 1963;
 - Building (Fourth Amendment) Regulations, 1985;
 - Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons (Amendment) Act, 1976;

- Building Regulations, Part M, or in Scotland, Technical Standards, Part T;
 - Health and Safety Acts and other Regulations;
 - Equality Act 2010,
 - England and Wales – regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and Fire Safety (Scotland) regulations 2006.
 - Other European Union Regulations.
405. These regulations cover access to premises, sanitary facilities, parking and other aspects of a disabled person's needs on working premises and buildings to which the public has access.
406. Local Authority Planning Departments, the Health and Safety Executive, Equality and Human Rights Commission and Fire and Rescue Authorities can advise employers on current regulations.
407. Under Health and Safety requirements employers have to undertake regular workstation assessments. Advisers should request sight of the formal workstation assessment report and make sure its recommendations have been addressed before agreeing to AtW assessments.
408. Under Fire safety requirements employers have to carry out fire safety risk assessments and implement appropriate fire precautionary and protection measures, and maintain a fire management plan.
409. AtW funding cannot be used where there is a duty on the employer to provide facilities for disabled members of the public on their premises, for example disabled access to public areas in a building. This applies even if there are disabled employees who also need the facilities.

Employer's Equality Act 2010 obligations

410. Jobcentre Plus cannot give legal advice on Equality Act 2010 obligations.
411. If employers are unsure about their legal responsibilities they should be referred to the [Equality and Human Rights Commission website](#) or asked to phone the helpline, details are on the website.
412. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on an employer to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees. Access to Work funding cannot be used to support these adjustments. Before agreeing AtW support, confirm that the employer is taking steps to support these adjustments. The fact that Jobcentre Plus agrees to provide AtW support does not mean that an employer has satisfied their duty under the Equality Act 2010.
413. Detailed advice for employers can be found at the [Equalities and Human Rights Commission website](#)
414. A fact sheet with information about landlord and property managers responsibilities can be found on the [Office for Disability Issues website](#)

Government buildings

415. AtW support cannot be given for adaptations to Crown premises. A crown building is one owned by a Government Department, including those leased to another Government Department or Agency.

Remploy business sites

416. Adaptations to Premises cannot be used if the customer is employed in a supported factory or Remploy business site. These factories have been set up specifically for the employment of disabled people and any support should be provided as part of the working conditions.
417. Customers placed with employers through Remploy Interwork are able to apply for help via AtW.

Planning permission

418. In some cases employers will need to apply for planning permission or need the landlord's permission prior to an adaptation being made.
419. Wherever possible the customer should have quotations for building work and relevant permissions in advance of the adviser's visit. Estimates of costs should include installation and training in use where appropriate.
420. If additional cost will be incurred, for example Architect's fees, these can be agreed in advance in order for the permissions to be sought.
421. Where the Local Authority owns a building for which they are being asked to approve a planning application, advisers should request a statement of assurance that the Local Authority has complied with its legal obligations before any AtW funded alterations are made.
422. If AtW is not able to fund APE because relevant permissions are being sought, consider providing alternative [temporary support](#).

Value for money

423. Before agreeing support advisers must consider whether it would be more cost effective to replace equipment rather than making an adaptation.
424. Considerations should include:
- whether the adapted equipment is likely to need replacing within the period of agreed support;
 - if it would be more cost effective to supply new equipment that, although above present requirements, would present a cheaper long term solution;
 - any plans the employer may have to upgrade equipment in the near future;
 - the three quotes obtained before any planned work takes place.
425. If the Adviser decides that it will be more cost effective to buy new equipment than to adapt existing equipment then the award should be made under the [Special Aids and Equipment](#) element.
426. Decisions must be clearly documented in the business case.

Leasing and renting

427. Leasing or renting equipment is usually expensive. It may also cause problems if further adaptation is needed at a later date, such as penalty clauses for early termination or the need to negotiate a new lease or rental agreement.
428. Before entering into lease or rental agreements all other possibilities should be investigated.

429. There may be some circumstances in which leasing or rental is the best option, for example where an employee is on a short fixed term contract. Value for money must be the over-riding factor in deciding which course of action to take.

Preferred contractors

430. Employers may wish to use contractors of their choice to make adaptations, rather than the contractor who has supplied the cheapest quote. They may also choose to have some other work done at the same time to minimise disruption to the workplace.
431. Unless the company has an exclusive contract, AtW will only pay the agreed costs based on the lowest estimate that satisfies the customer's needs. The employer is responsible for any excess costs as well as any cost sharing arrangement.

Business benefit

432. Advisers must consider whether customers of the business, or non-disabled colleagues in the course of their work will use the adaptation, and if this will be of general benefit to the company. If there is a general business benefit a contribution must be sought, in addition to any compulsory cost share.

Adapting home premises

433. If an adaptation to a customer's own home or premises is requested, advisers must ensure the adaptation is primarily for employment needs, not daily living needs. It may be that an adaptation is incidentally useful for daily living needs, or will increase the value of the property, in these cases this should be taken into account when discussing cost sharing.
434. Where customers request adaptations that exceed the minimum requirement for their needs, AtW will only meet the costs of the minimum requirement.

Temporary support

435. Adaptations to premises may be delayed by the need to obtain quotes or for a contractor to schedule the work into their plans. In these cases a short-term interim solution, for example a support worker, should be considered so that customers are inconvenienced as little as possible.
436. Any temporary support must be taken into account when preparing the business case for approval.
437. If planning permission is refused temporary support may be extended whilst advisers work with employers to consider alternative options, for example resubmission of amended proposals, re-location of employee.
438. Costs of temporary support should be allocated to the relevant account code for the support, not against Adaptations to Premises and Equipment.
439. Complete an ATW2 for the temporary support that you recommend and get it authorised as soon as possible within the next 5 days.

Special Aids and Equipment

Special Aids and Equipment

Step	Action
1	Adviser considers customer's request for Item(s) required.
2	Refer for Independent Assessment
3	Consider if item is standard equipment for the job.
4	Confirm item is essential to in work disability needs ?
5	Decide if the aid or equipment should be provided by the NHS ?
6	Consider Options
7	Obtain Quotes
8	Is item most cost effective /value for money?
9	Consider providing Temporary Support

Agreeing on the Item(s) Required

440. When dealing with an applicant's request advisers should take into account the customer's knowledge and awareness of possible solutions as this can be helpful and accurate when identifying need.
441. Managing customer expectation is crucial to the AtW process when a customer expresses a preference for, or awareness of, a specific item. Advisers must also consider issues of compatibility, usability, technological development and value for money.
442. AtW aims to provide a fit for purpose and cost effective solution and this often requires exploring a range of options and, if appropriate, rejecting a preferred choice in favour of an alternative.
443. AtW does not prevent the customer obtaining the preferred option but will only contribute the cost of the most cost effective solution which meets the customer's employment needs.

In work disability needs

444. Access to Work meets the additional costs arising from disability. When considering applications advisers must:
- be sure that the equipment is essential and that the job cannot be performed in some other way without the special aid;
 - give careful consideration to the type of aid requested. AtW does not provide aids of a medical nature. The term 'medical aids' encompasses

anything used or worn about a person, which would effectively treat or improve someone's disability or health condition and which they would also use outside of their working environment. This includes items such as glasses, contact lenses, insulin pumps, cochlear implants, etc. Applications for aids such as wheelchairs, digital hearing aids, specialist walking sticks etc. should only be considered if there is a clear work related need, not just a social need. Aids requiring invasive surgery cannot be supported under any circumstances;

- be satisfied that the item is not part of the standard equipment used by anyone doing this job;
 - be satisfied that there is no Health and Safety requirement for the employer to provide the equipment other than for the disabled employee;
 - ensure that, if appropriate, a workstation assessment has already been planned or completed and that the report recommendations will be addressed wherever possible. AtW will only help in meeting additional costs that arise from disability;
 - check that an employer is acting on their responsibilities and making all reasonable adjustments;
 - take into account any aids the customer already has that may still be of use. AtW cannot be used to replace any help voluntarily provided in the past unless there has been a change of circumstance.
445. Note that where an employer has not yet completed or fully acted upon health and safety, workstation assessment or Equality Act 2010 responsibilities, this must not delay the AtW assessment process.

Assessments

446. It may be necessary to obtain medical, specialist or technical advice, or advice from suppliers or manufacturers before recommending a customer's application for a special aid. Advice should be sought where there is difficulty in determining whether a disability will result in additional difficulties over and above those of a non-disabled colleague doing the same job.
447. Expert Assessments should be booked using the [DiSC3 referral form](#). (DiSC3 User Guide Chapter 8)
448. Medical assessments should be booked using the template in Appendix 2 of this guide.
449. All advice received should be clearly recorded in the customer's case file, with supporting documentation. All other action taken must also be recorded as supporting evidence for approval and audit purposes, and any technical reports attached.
450. Technical or medical assessment costs are met via general Access to Work assessment budgets. External assessment or consultancy costs are met from the Access to Work budget and are not subject to cost share.

Considering options

451. In some cases customers will have a clear idea of what they feel is the best solution for their needs. Before recommending the application advisers must ensure that all options have been fully explored, including arranging any specialist or technical assessments where appropriate.

452. Advisers should consider:

- Whether the job could be restructured in some way which removes the need for the special aid or equipment;
- if the proposed option meets the minimum suitable requirement and offers the best value for money;
- whether the employer could be reasonably expected to provide the equipment for other non disabled employees;
- whether the employer should provide the equipment as a reasonable adjustment
- if supplying the special aid will give a general business benefit;
- whether the installation of the equipment affects other employees, for example if it will create a training need;
- if the employer would be prepared to fund the equipment without Access to Work help.

453. Record the options, their advantages and disadvantages, and information about costs on the AtW2 [Business Case](#).

Demonstrations and trial periods

454. Customers should be given an opportunity to try proposed equipment prior to purchase wherever possible. As well as an introductory demonstration a trial period may be necessary. If possible trial periods should be negotiated at no charge with the suppliers, if a fee is charged a maximum of two weeks trial should be agreed.

Standard equipment

455. Access to Work (AtW) will not fund items that are [standard equipment](#), standard business costs or Health and Safety requirements. These are items that would normally be needed to do the job, whether the person doing the job is disabled or not.

456. If a solution is identified that includes both standard and additional items AtW will only cover the cost of the additional items.

457. The same rules apply to both self employed and employed customers.

Medical Equipment (formerly Medical Aids)

458. Access to Work can help with a grant towards the cost of medical equipment providing

- the item(s) required is essential to enable the customer to carry out their job
- it has been identified as a solution following an assessment and does not pose any threat to the customer's health or condition
- the item is not available through the NHS or there is a significant waiting list which would put the customer's job in jeopardy
- it doesn't involve surgery/treatment

459. Items such as the K-Sonar ultrasonic echolocation device can also be considered if cost effective and would allow a customer to lead an independent lifestyle.

Cost effectiveness

460. Jobcentre Plus policy is to reimburse an agreed portion of the cost of suitable equipment to meet the minimum requirement of the customer to do the job.
461. DWP procurement policy should be used as a guideline when deciding how many quotes to request. The limits apply to the overall contract value with each supplier, rather than to each item individually. So the employer would need to provide evidence of written quotes for each supplier they are considering making a purchase from (e.g. one who supplies a package of a chair, table, and computer, and another from a separate supplier who provides software).
462. The limits are :
- £500 and under - no evidence of other quotes required.
 - £501 - £10,000 - evidence of a 2nd quote is required if we do not already have information about the normal cost in the locality.
 - Over £10,000 - evidence of 3 quotes is required.
463. Where there is a wide range of models, best value for money should be obtained and the most cost effective solution to fully meet the customer's minimum need should normally be agreed.
464. In cases where an external assessor recommends a particular item and supplier, advisers must check the internet for alternative suppliers and confirm that the recommended supplier provides the most cost effective solution.
465. If the customer or employer wish to purchase a higher value solution, which exceeds the customer's needs AtW support will be limited to the cost of the cheaper solution.
466. The cost of familiarisation training and the availability of support services in case of breakdown should be included when agreeing support.
467. Value for money is achieved by providing the right support for the customer's need; this does not necessarily mean the cheapest solution, if it does not fully meet the customer need or if there are hidden costs for training, delivery or installation.
468. In some cases costs may be lower if equipment is obtained from more than one supplier. However co-ordinating purchase, installation and maintenance of equipment from several suppliers can be difficult and could delay putting support in place. Advisers must consider how AtW can give best value for money, especially if temporary support is required whilst equipment is being arranged.

Temporary support

469. AtW aims to provide help as quickly as possible. Where there are unavoidable delays, interim solutions such as support worker help may be considered. Customers and employers should be informed of likely delays and advised of the reasons.
470. AtW will not fund expensive ongoing temporary support where an employer or customer fails to supply information or procure equipment previously agreed.
471. The costs of the temporary solution should be recorded under the appropriate AtW element eg Support Worker.

Miscellaneous including Travel in Work

Miscellaneous including Travel in Work

472. Examples of the support to be classified under Miscellaneous are:
- extra, in work travel costs because of disability;
 - short term or one off support which cannot be classified under other Access to Work elements e.g.
 - the cost of disability awareness training for close colleagues of a disabled person;
 - consultancy fees for establishing what are standard costs for a business, or where the element of support is not known at consultancy stage.
 - the additional costs to provide work related training at home for a customer who is unable to travel to a training centre
473. Other miscellaneous costs. Other costs should be attributed to Miscellaneous only when they cannot be applied to any other specific element of support.

Travel costs within work

474. Access to Work can be used to pay the extra costs of travel within work if the customer would normally be expected to use a company car, their own vehicle or local public transport and is unable to do so because of their disability.
475. If the customer needs to travel by air/train it is reasonable to expect the service provider to ensure suitable facilities are available and to bear the cost of any necessary upgrade.
476. Examples of the support to be classified under Miscellaneous (Travel in Work) are:
- costs of using a taxi for in-work travel needs, where public transport or a company car cannot be used;
 - the cost of supplying a vehicle on a temporary basis where the customer's own vehicle is being adapted or repaired and Travel to Work cannot be applied;
477. When establishing extra costs, take into account all in-work travel costs that the employer would normally pay; for example, mileage allowances or contribution to the cost of a vehicle or the cost of a vehicle they supply.
478. If the customer would normally be expected to pay some costs, you must deduct these, using either the actual fare, the Access to Work public transport rate or mileage rate as appropriate to determine the extra cost.

Specialist Vehicle

In some cases it will be appropriate for AtW to help with the purchase of a specialist vehicle eg a 'mule' for a farmer who can no longer walk to access his land. This would be funded from the SAE element, not Miscellaneous.

Cost effectiveness

479. If the nature of the work requires the customer to travel to a variety of sites and there is no default location provided by the employer, for example a piano tuner, Travel to Work should be used.

480. Before agreeing the support advisers must consider whether the proposed solution is practical and cost effective. For example, if the customer would normally be expected to use a company vehicle to do their job, such as a company rep, identify if a Support Worker driver is more cost effective than taxi fares.
481. You should also consider whether it is more appropriate and cost effective to adapt the company's vehicle (using the APE element) or the customer's own vehicle (using the Travel to Work element). If adapting a company vehicle the costs of removing the adaptation should be included in the profiled spend.
482. As an alternative to taxis for customers who are expected to use public transport during the working day, consider if appropriate training will enable them to use the public transport.

Motability

483. If adaptation to the customer's vehicle appears to be the most cost effective solution, ask the customer if they are receiving the higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance. If they are, ask the customer if they wish to use Motability to assess and install appropriate adaptations.

Temporary Support

484. If a vehicle is to be adapted, consider putting temporary support in place until the adapted vehicle is available.

Cost Share

Cost Share

Step	Action
1	Confirm application is for APE, SAE support
2	Confirm the Customer currently employed in the job for which support is required.
3	Confirm the customer has been employed in the job for 6 weeks or more
4	Decide level of cost share based on size of employing organisation.
5	Contact the employer to agree voluntary and mandatory contributions

Principles of Cost Share

485. Mandatory Cost share applies to applications for APE, SAE or Miscellaneous (except Travel in Work) elements made by employed earners who have been in employment for more than six weeks at the time they make an application for AtW support. From 30th August 2010 mandatory cost share also applies to applications for APE, SAE or Miscellaneous (except Travel in Work) elements made by employed earners who have been in employment for less than six weeks when they made their current application for AtW support and then make a subsequent application for a cost share element more than six weeks after their employment has started because of a change of condition or work circumstances.
486. Cost share is applied because the employer will have additional costs whether or not they retain the employee. The AtW support provided encourages the employer to retain the employee rather than incur the costs involved in recruiting and training a new employee.

Circumstances where Cost Share does not apply

487. Mandatory cost share does not apply to applications made for APE, SAE or Miscellaneous (except Travel in Work) elements made by employed earners provided they are made within the first six weeks of starting employment. Subsequent applications attract cost share.
488. Mandatory cost share does not apply to subsequent applications for SAE, APE or Miscellaneous (except Travel in Work) made within an existing assessment period provided the current application for AtW support was made before 30th August 2010.

Circumstances where Cost Share applies

489. Mandatory cost share applies to all applications for APE, SAE or Miscellaneous (except Travel in Work) elements made by
- employed earners who have been in employment for at least six weeks at the time when they made their current application for AtW support
 - employed earners whose first application was made within six weeks of starting their employment and then make a subsequent application for support more than six weeks after their employment started, unless their current application for AtW support was made before 30th August 2010
 - employed earners who make a renewal application
 - employed earners who have made a current application for AtW support during the first six weeks of employment for a non cost share element **and then** make a subsequent application for a cost share element.
490. If an [employer](#) is not willing to cost share and no other cost-sharer can be found AtW help cannot be authorised.

Cost Share Applies

491. From 1st April 2010, where cost sharing applies, all requests for APE, SAE or Miscellaneous (except Travel in Work) elements will operate as follows:
- A threshold below which AtW pays none of the costs
 - a £10,000 ceiling below which AtW pays up to 80% of the approved costs and above which AtW pays all the costs over the 3 year AtW period
 - Micro employers (1-9 employees) nil cost share
 - Small employers (10-49 employees) £300 threshold
 - Medium sized employers (50-249 employees) £500 threshold
 - Large employers (250 employees or more) £1000 threshold
492. Customers who, in their current period of support, have been notified of a threshold amount (£300 prior to 1st April 2010) retain this amount for the remainder of their assessment period.
493. Voluntary workers should not be counted when calculating the number of employees an employer may have.
494. The number of hours an employee works must not be taken into account when calculating the number of employees an employer may have.
495. Where doubt exists as to how many employees an employer may have, advisers should use their discretion.

- 496. Advisers must identify the size of the company by recording micro, small, medium and large in the notes space on DiSC and change the cost share status and threshold, if necessary.
- 497. In all cases, the cost share marker status and AtW start date should be entered on DiSC3 jobs screen.
- 498. Details of the AtW application history must be entered on the customer record. This will ensure that there is a record of cumulative costs paid by the employer in the event of repeat applications, to which cost sharing applies, within the AtW period.
- 499. Once the end of the 3-year AtW period is reached the cost sharing period starts again.

Franchises

- 500. A franchise is a right granted to an individual or group to market a company's goods or services within a certain territory or location. Some examples of popular franchises are McDonalds, Subway, Domino's Pizza and The Body Shop.
- 501. An individual who purchases and runs a franchise is called a franchisee. The franchisee is the employer not the company whose goods and services are being marketed or sold.
- 502. When considering cost share, advisers need to establish how many people the franchisee employs in total as the franchisee may run one shop or many. If, after contacting the franchisee doubt arises, advisers should use their discretion but usually, the benefit of the doubt should be given to the franchisee.

Calculating the threshold and ceiling

- 503. The threshold includes Value Added Tax, even if you think the employer may be able to reclaim it at a later date.
- 504. Any contribution made by an employer, including voluntary contributions, paid by the employer should be deducted from the total cost before any mandatory cost share contribution is calculated.
- 505. Costs met by employers prior to the application being made cannot be counted retrospectively towards the threshold and ceiling.
- 506. Where support benefits a number of individuals, for example improved access to a building where there are several disabled employees, only one threshold should apply.
- 507. In cases where there is a "bulk application" for equipment a threshold per person should be applied depending upon the size of the company.

Employer involvement

- 508. In most cases the applicant's employer will be the cost-sharer. However there may be some occasions where a third party contributes some or all of the cost, for example a Work Choice provider. In these cases it is for the employer and provider to agree who will contribute, AtW advisers are not responsible for negotiating between the employer and the provider.
- 509. In all cases employers should be involved at as early a stage in the application process as possible. Where mandatory cost share applies, employers must agree to cost sharing before an application can be approved.

Contacting the Employer

510. Advisers must obtain the applicant's permission, in writing, to disclose information before the employer is approached.
511. In some cases an applicant will request that the employer is not contacted. This is only acceptable if:
- there is no requirement for the support to be used on the employers premises; or
 - the employer is not required to confirm details of support received on the claim forms.
512. Cost sharing criteria will still apply and the applicant will need to satisfy the adviser that they will meet the costs before the application can be approved. These cases must be monitored closely to avoid the possibility of fraudulent claims.
513. In all cases, irrespective of whether cost sharing applies or not, employers should be asked for a voluntary contribution. In many cases employers are willing to contribute to costs even where there is no mandatory requirement.
514. Any voluntary contribution made by the employer should be deducted from the total cost before any mandatory cost share contribution is calculated.

Multiple employers

515. Some customers have more than one employer at one time but require the same support for each job. If the customer's cost share status is the same for all jobs, advisers should calculate the total support costs (regardless of the number of employers) and negotiate a fair cost share for all employers whilst ensuring AtW pays no more than the share expected of it as part of the total cost.
516. Ownership of the equipment will depend on the type of equipment required, for example, computer software loaded onto the employer's system would be jointly owned, as both employers would require a licence to run it.

Freelance Workers

517. Other customers such as actors or people with technical jobs in the arts and media industries may have a series of employers or a series of short contracts with one employer. To avoid repeatedly approving support for each short contract with each employer these customers are identified as Freelance workers. If the adviser has doubts about whether the customer is genuinely working on a freelance basis they can request sight of supporting documents, for example the customer's membership of a relevant professional body or union as confirmation, an appointment letter from the employer or the customer's self employed tax reference. Copies of documents used to support the AtW application should be stored in the case file. Freelance workers are treated in the same way as self employed customers and should be recorded as self employed on DiSC.

Job movers

518. Applicants who are moving from one employer to another are not subject to cost share (even if there is no break between jobs) provided they apply within the first six weeks of starting the new job.

519. Applicants who move from one job to another within the same company, for example on promotion, must complete a new AtW1 application form and are subject to cost share. Treat as a renewal application and give a new AtW start date.
520. If the applicant's health condition or disability changes so as to create a new need a new AtW1 must be completed. Treat as a repeat application. Cost share applies.
521. If an applicant's job description changes and creates a new need, but there is no fundamental change of duties, treat as a repeat application within the existing AtW period. Do not give a new start date. Cost share applies unless the change occurs within the first six weeks of employment.
522. If a new employer has taken over a business and the applicant's job remains fundamentally the same, applications should be treated as a repeat application. There is no need for a new AtW1 because there have been no changes to the individual's circumstances. Cost share applies.
523. Where the new employer changes the applicant's fundamental duties so as to create a new need a new AtW1 will be required and a new start date given. Cost share applies.

Self employment

524. Customers who become self employed during the 3 year AtW period cease to be subject to cost share, but a voluntary contribution should always be requested.

Note: Customers who set up their own limited company and use PAYE are treated as employed.

Complete Business Case

Complete Business Case

Step	Action
1	Confirm all required details of each job and employer been identified and recorded on DiSC3.
2	Confirm all Assessments of Support Required for each job been agreed and recorded on DiSC3
3	Confirm all eligible costs are recorded on DiSC3 and supported by estimates where necessary.
4	Confirm any withdrawal of existing support been justified in writing.
5	Confirm any Business Benefit as a result of the AtW support has been taken into account.
6	Confirm any Social or Domestic Benefit as a result of the AtW support has been taken into account.
7	Confirm that all potential contributors to the cost of support been identified
8	Confirm that mandatory cost sharers have agreed their contribution.
9	Complete AtW2 Business Case and submit for Decision
10	Notify Customer and Employer of Decision
11	Agree follow up arrangements to confirm delivery of support .
12	Respond to customers request for reconsideration of decision.

Review Employer and Job information

525. Start the completion of the Business Case by reviewing the details held on DiSC3. Check the employer and jobs screens for the customer and confirm that all required information is recorded.

Expert Assessments

526. If the customer has supplied evidence from a doctor or other health professional, or if the adviser has requested independent assessments to identify or confirm the customers requirements, confirm that the assessments are recorded on DiSC3 and that any additional documentation is in the customer's case file.

Eligible Costs

527. The Business case authorises all foreseeable AtW spending for a customer over the three year AtW period. Ensure that all relevant costs are included.
528. Some costs over and above basic purchase are allowed as part of the AtW award. The following paragraphs give examples of other costs that may be incurred when meeting the customers support requirements. These costs must be identified or where necessary [estimated](#) and included on the ATW2 business case.
529. For Access to Work purposes the eligible cost is the cost of the lowest suitable estimate. If the customer or employer decides to use a different supplier, AtW will only fund the cost based on the lowest suitable estimate.

One off Costs

530. The installation or adaptation of equipment may incur additional one off costs, eg delivery charges, installation and user training. These costs must be included on the business case.

Support Worker Employment Costs

531. Access to Work must ensure that the employment of Support Workers, with AtW support, meets all relevant statutory obligations. Support Workers must be paid at least the national minimum wage and have the opportunity to take the breaks and leave defined in working hours regulations. Confirm that the amounts or rates shown in the business case are appropriate.
532. Interpreters should not be expected to work for more than two hours without a break. When a customer requires continuous translation for a longer period eg an all day meeting, the costs of two interpreters are eligible.
533. Support Workers and customers should not be expected to align their leave dates and so the cost of holiday and sick leave cover should also be included.
534. If the customer's employer is employing the Support Worker directly, AtW can reimburse: full salary, NI, pension, leave and sickness payments plus costs such as advertising for employers who have to recruit a SW from scratch. AtW can also pay for (if requested by an employer) management costs to cover the costs of adding a new employee on to payroll and any HR activities. This will generally be capped at 5% of the SW's gross salary. However, if an employer can provide information to show that they have had to pay over this percentage (such as a sole trader who has to use an agency), then we will reimburse the full cost.

535. If the customer chooses to employ the support worker directly, AtW can also provide support for this additional cost, but this should not involve increasing the support workers hours.

Support Worker Expenses

536. The Support Worker's normal travel to work costs should be included in their original quote. If the customer will require the Support Worker to make additional journeys to support the customer's requirements, an estimate of the mileage, paid at the standard mileage rate of 25p per mile, must be included in the business case. Car parking charges cannot be reimbursed.

Estimates

537. If the assessment includes any single items of spending with a single supplier of over £500 the costs must be supported by appropriate estimates. The number and type of estimates required depends on the expected level of expenditure as follows;
- For expenditure under £500. No evidence of other quotes is needed.
 - for expenditure between £500 and £1,000 two verbal quotes are required (which the adviser must record in the business case)
 - for expenditure between £1,000 and £10,000, two written quotes; and
 - for expenditure over £10,000, three written quotes

Ineligible Costs

538. The aids or equipment purchased with AtW support are the property of the purchaser, who could be the employer or the customer. The purchaser is responsible for all insurance, maintenance and running costs including the costs of consumables. The employer retains their responsibilities for premises and equipment adapted with AtW funding.

Deadweight

539. Under AtW, we cannot provide help in situations where an employer has been providing support for an employee and then withdraws help as a money saving strategy. Employers have a legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments, and if adjustments have already been made, employers cannot withdraw them just because AtW funding may be available.
540. If you have any doubts, you should request written evidence from the employer as to why support that was previously offered has been withdrawn.
541. Deadweight can also apply to help previously offered on a voluntary basis by a friend, relative or colleague if there has been no other change of circumstance, other than the withdrawal of help previously supplied voluntarily.
542. If deadweight applies you should not offer AtW support.

Example

A Technical Design Teacher has been receiving help from a Classroom Assistant to help with the lifting/carrying parts of the job. Due to the Teacher's disability, the Assistant has also been helping to set up some of the equipment under the Teacher's supervision. The school has funded this for

the last twelve months, but following a review of LEA budgets, they cannot afford to fund the Assistant's post and an application for AtW has been made. This is purely deadweight, so AtW help could not be offered.

Business Benefit

- 543. If the provision of AtW support gives the employer a significant business advantage advisers must negotiate with the employer an additional contribution to cover the cost of providing the benefit to the business.
- 544. The business benefit contribution is in addition to any compulsory cost share and should be deducted from the overall costs before any mandatory cost share is calculated.
- 545. Business benefit may be especially relevant in applications for Adaptations to Premises and Equipment, and Special Aids and Equipment elements. Advisers must consider whether customers of the business, or non-disabled colleagues in the course of their work will use the adaptation or equipment, and if this will be of general benefit to the company.
- 546. Business benefit should also be considered for [Support Workers](#), and all other elements.
- 547. Where Business Benefit is identified, the decision about Business Benefit contribution must be recorded as part of the Business Case on DiSC3.

Adapting home premises

- 548. If an adaptation to a customer's own home or premises is requested, advisers must ensure the adaptation is primarily for employment needs, not daily living needs. It may be that an adaptation is incidentally useful for daily living needs, or will increase the value of the property, in these cases this should be taken into account when negotiating a business/personal benefit contribution from the customer.

Business benefit of Support Workers

- 549. If a Support Worker is needed regularly, or needs to be available at all times, but may not be working all of that time, and is able to take on other duties, the adviser must consider whether this give a general benefit to the business or firm. If there is some benefit to the employer, you should negotiate an appropriate business benefit contribution.

Social and domestic contributions

- 550. If customers request support that has an obvious social or domestic benefit advisers should negotiate a contribution from the customer taking into account the proportions of time the equipment or support is used in work and outside work.
- 551. In the rare cases where purchase of a vehicle is approved, (note vehicle purchase must be approved at national level) customers will be expected to meet a high proportion of the costs as there is almost always a significant social and domestic benefit.

Contributors

- 552. In addition to the Employer and Customer other potential sources of contribution must be identified. The adviser must ensure that AtW is not

funding support that should be supplied by another organisation or JobcentrePlus programme.

Negotiate Contribution

553. Contact employers, providers and the customer to explain and agree the levels of mandatory and voluntary contribution that they will make. If an employer is VAT registered they will probably be able to reclaim VAT paid on SAEs, the adviser should ask the employer to voluntarily contribute this amount in addition to any other voluntary contributions. Record the decisions and the details of the contributions on the ATW2 business case.

Voluntary Contribution

554. In all cases, irrespective of whether cost sharing applies or not, employers should be asked for a voluntary contribution. In many cases employers are willing to contribute to costs even where there is no mandatory requirement.
555. Any voluntary contribution made should be deducted from the total cost before any mandatory contribution is calculated.

Employer Involvement

556. In most cases the applicant's employer will be the cost-sharer. However there may be some occasions where a third party contributes some or all of the cost, for example a Work Choice provider. In these cases it is for the employer and provider to agree who will contribute, AtW advisers are not responsible for negotiating between the employer and the provider.
557. If mandatory cost share applies but the employer is not willing to cost share and no other cost-sharer can be found AtW help cannot be authorised.
558. In all cases employers should be involved at as early a stage in the application process as possible.

Multiple employers

559. Some customers have more than one employer at a time but require the same support for both jobs. If the customer's cost share status is the same for all jobs advisers should calculate the total support costs (regardless of the number of employers) and negotiate a fair cost share for all employers whilst ensuring AtW pays no more than the share expected of it as part of the total cost. The customer has a single threshold and cost share level regardless of the number of simultaneous employers.
560. Ownership of the equipment will depend on the type of equipment required.

Freelance Workers

561. Other customers such as actors or people with technical jobs in the arts and media industries may have a series of employers or a series of short contracts with one employer. These customers are identified as Freelance workers. Freelance workers are treated in the same way as self employed customers and are recorded as self employed on DiSC. No compulsory cost share will apply and AtW will not have to renegotiate the cost share with each successive employer.

Decision

562. The completed ATW2 Business case must be submitted for approval before any support is purchased. The grade of the approving officer is determined by the amount of support to be funded; normally approval is given for the spending over the whole 3 year AtW period. The maximum amount that various AtW job roles can authorise is shown in the following table.

AtW Adviser	Up to £25,000* per applicant over 3 years
AtW Regional Manager	Up to £100,000* per applicant over 3 years
AtW Senior Operations Manager	All applications for support of over £100,000* in a 3 year period

(*)The amounts are decided by the AtW National Operational Manager and subject to review.

Approval

563. An Adviser can be the approving Officer for their own business case providing the costings remain within their Delegated Financial Authority for the 3 year period. An approving officer may request advice from a more senior manager if the case includes new, complex or unusual expenditure. An approving officer must have the agreement of the National Delivery team before approving the purchase of a car.

564. Where a business case includes several elements and it may take several days to provide the approving officer with the required information or advice about one element, they should approve the straightforward elements and consider a temporary solution for the element where approval is delayed.

565. When the approving officer is assured that all expenditure in the business case is reasonable, supports the customer's needs and that all other contributors and cost sharers have agreed appropriate contributions, they approve the business case. The decision is recorded on DiSC3

566. If the approving officer is not the owning adviser, they should notify the AtW owning adviser of their decision. The adviser notifies the customer, the employer and any other contributors, in writing, of the approver's decision using the DiSC3 letter.

High Cost Items

567. Where a business case includes expenditure of over £15,000 on a single item, for example a specialist vehicle, the approving officer should consider contacting the purchaser to negotiate appropriate actions if the support ceases to be required during the 3 year AtW award period.

568. If the purchaser is an employer, this could include terms for transferring the equipment to a new employer ie purchase by the new employer from the old employer at an appropriate discount. If the employer will wish to retain the equipment for other employees they may agree to reimburse some of the AtW contribution. If the purchaser is self employed, AtW should aim to agree reimbursement if the business is sold. If a self employed customer's business ceases trading for other reasons, it is likely

- that other creditors will have prior rights on the businesses assets, including the equipment that AtW reimbursed the costs of.
569. Any agreement reached should be recorded in writing; copies should be signed by both parties and the AtW copy stored in the customers case file.

Notification

570. The approving officer will notify the AtW adviser of their decision. The adviser notifies the customer, the employer and any other contributors, in writing, of the approver's decision using the DiSC3 letter.
571. The adviser should edit the notification letter to ensure it provides specific information about what has been approved,
- the calculation of the award,
 - the responsibilities of the purchaser
 - maintenance and supply of consumables eg paper or batteries,
 - insurance,
 - allowing the customer to take suitable equipment if the change job.
 - disposal of equipment when it is no longer required
 - the procedure for claiming reimbursement of costs.
572. It will also help the customer if you can provide appropriate contact details to deal with enquiries about payments or to report changes of circumstance.
573. The adviser must ensure that notifications sent to customers doing Permitted Work clearly state that the AtW support is provided for a maximum of 52 weeks.
574. Include the relevant forms for the purchaser of the support to claim reimbursement in the appropriate notification. For example; if a customer is paying for a taxi include DP226JPs with the customer's notification, or if an employer is adapting their premises include a DP224JP in the employer's notification.
575. A DP228JP should be issued with all approval notifications.

Follow up

576. The notification advises the employer or customer to proceed with the purchase or procurement of the support agreed. For some types of support such as adaptations to premises, or purchase of equipment, there can be long lead times before the support is in place. See the [Delivery of Support](#) section for more information.

Reconsideration

577. In rare cases the approving officer will decide that AtW support is not appropriate. Access to Work is not a statutory benefit and so there is no right of appeal against decisions.
578. If a customer is unhappy with the decision about their application for support they should make a written request for a review. The review should be carried out by an officer at the next level up from the original approver, eg a decision by an adviser should be reviewed by the Regional Manager while a decision by a Regional Manager would be reviewed by a Senior Ops Manager.
579. If a customer remains unhappy with a decision, further escalation is possible. The full escalation process is shown at [Appendix 5](#)

Delivery of Support

Delivery of Support

Step	Action
1	Confirm the required support has been ordered / procured ?
2	Identify the expected delivery date(s) for support
3	Check that the support is delivered / provided on the expected date ?
4	Confirm the support meet the customers needs ?
5	Confirm that any appropriate training has been undertaken.
6	Decide when to review the case.

Procurement

580. Once the Business Case has been approved, procurement of the required support can start. Access to Work performance is assessed by measuring how soon after the customer's application is made, the appropriate support is put in place. The case manager should take action to ensure that the required support is in place as soon as possible, chasing progress, taking account of any unexpected delays and putting temporary support in place where appropriate.

581. In most cases the employer will recruit the support worker or pay for the adaptation of premises or purchase of equipment. When they have incurred costs they will claim reimbursement of the agreed amount from AtW.

582. Self-employed customers will procure support themselves.

Communications Support at Interview

583. The adviser and customer should agree between themselves how a communicator is to be recruited. In many cases it will be the Disability Employment Adviser (DEA) rather than the AtW adviser who will work with the customer to employ suitable support.

584. When engaging a BSL or Lipspeaking interpreter preference must be given to qualified interpreters registered with [SIGNATURE](#) or [SASLI](#). BSL or Lipspeaking interpreters who are not registered with either SIGNATURE or SASLI should not be engaged.

585. Professional Advocacy support should be arranged through [Mencap](#) or the [Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance](#).

586. You must take account of general Jobcentre Plus purchasing guidelines. There may be local call-off contracts in place. If you are using other sources of communication support, costs must not exceed the cost of using these contracts without good cause.
587. Where Communication Support at Interview support has been provided the adviser who arranged the support should follow up when the result of the interview is known to see if the customer has been successful and will require further support to take up the employment.

Support Workers

588. The method of recruiting and employing the support worker will have been agreed as part of developing the business case.
589. Some local partnership organisations and larger employers have call off contracts in place with organisations who supply support workers or interpreters. Where such a contract exists it should be used to recruit the required support worker.
590. If the customer or employer wants to use an alternative supplier, this is acceptable but the AtW funding will be limited to the cost of the most cost effective suitable option.
591. In some cases the employer will have decided that an existing employee is able to take on the support tasks, and this will be a suitable and cost effective option.
592. If the employee is providing full time support, the eligible cost for AtW will be the full salary costs including NI and pension contributions, providing this is no more expensive than employing an external support worker.
593. If the employee is providing support on a part time basis while also doing some of their original job, AtW can reimburse the employer at the standard rate for that type of support in the local area.
594. If you agree to pay the employer based on the standard rate for that type of support in the local area, ensure that the total cost over the year does not exceed the worker's full time salary. AtW will fund salary costs up to a maximum of the employee's current salary. Calculation of eligible costs for support workers must be based on the standard rate for those type of support in the local area you must not apply a pro rata calculation to their current salary.

Adaptations to Premises or Equipment

595. Adaptations to premises can have long lead times and additional unexpected delays can occur while work is being carried out. The case manager should monitor progress and provide or extend temporary support if required.

Preferred contractors

596. Employers may wish to use contractors of their choice to make adaptations, rather than the contractor who has supplied the lowest suitable quote. They may also choose to have some other work done at the same time to minimise disruption to the workplace.
597. Access to Work will only pay the agreed costs based on the lowest estimate that satisfies the customer's needs. The employer is responsible for any excess costs as well as any cost sharing arrangement.

Special Aids and Equipment

598. Where aids or equipment have been provided on a trial basis during the assessment stage the supplier can be expected to complete the sale quickly when the funding is approved. For other cases ask the employer when delivery of the aid or equipment is expected, and follow up to confirm delivery.

Training

599. Ensure that the equipment meets the customer's needs, and that they have received all relevant training. If other people need to be trained in relation to the equipment, ensure that they have successfully completed the training and that cover has been considered for holidays or sickness.

Ownership, Insurance and Disposals

600. The aids or equipment purchased with AtW support are the property of the purchaser, who could be the employer or the customer. The purchaser is responsible for all maintenance, insurance costs and for disposal when appropriate. **Under no circumstances give advice as to how unwanted items should be disposed of other than if appropriate, allowing the customer to take equipment with them to a new job.**

601. The employer retains their responsibilities for premises and equipment adapted with AtW funding.

Delivery Date

602. The adviser should identify the date that each element of support is expected to be delivered. The adviser should confirm that the support has been provided on the expected date and record the date that each element is delivered on the DiSC system.

603. As each element is delivered or implemented the adviser should check with the customer that it meets the assessed needs. If the customer's needs are not adequately met, this should be recorded as part of the case history and an updated business case will be required to secure any additional funding required for alternative solutions.

Delays

604. Advisers should continue to closely monitor delivery until all approved elements are in place. When delays occur in delivery, consider putting temporary support in place.

Reviews

605. Once all the required support is in place and has been confirmed as meeting the customer's needs, the adviser should consider how often they will review the case.

606. The adviser should tell the customer when they will review the case next and agree an appropriate date and method of contact or venue with the customer.

607. All customers must sign a renewal declaration as part of each review, see template in [Appendix 3](#).

Annual Reviews

608. As a minimum all cases must be reviewed annually.

One off Support

609. Where the customer was provided with one off support, the review can be completed using [the DiSC3 letter](#) and the [Appendix 3](#) template to:
- confirm that the customer's work related needs have been met
 - ask if there has been any change in the customer's circumstances
 - offer the customer the option to discuss any additional requirements with an adviser.
610. Issue the appropriate DiSC3 letter and the renewal declaration with a return envelope, if it is not returned within 14 days, phone or email the customer, explain the requirement for a signed renewal declaration and issue a duplicate renewal declaration.
611. If the customer has not returned the declaration within a further 14 days the adviser must arrange to visit the customer, note the case file and DiSC3.
612. If the customer indicates on their review declaration that all their requirements are not being met, arrange a meeting to review the requirements and put additional support in place if appropriate.

On Going Support

613. For customers who are receiving on going AtW support the adviser should consider if a visit or telephone review is required. If a visit is arranged the AtW renewal can be completed at the meeting. For other reviews the renewal declaration should be posted to the customer.
614. As part of every review the adviser must confirm that:
- the support is being provided
 - the support continues to meet the customer's needs
 - claims for reimbursement are being made promptly
 - the amounts claimed are in line with the spend profiled for the customer
 - any [changes in the customer's circumstances](#) have been reported
 - any additional requirements for support are identified
615. In all cases confirm that the customer is aware of their duty to notify Access to Work immediately if there is any change in their circumstances.

Shorter Review Periods

616. Shorter review periods will be appropriate where;
- the customer has a temporary job or,
 - the adviser has concerns about the long term viability of a business or,
 - it has not been possible at the initial assessment to define the exact level of support required or,
 - the level of support required is expected to reduce over time as the customer becomes more familiar with their job or more able to use public transport.
617. Shorter review periods are equally applicable to employed customers, self employed customers or Freelance workers. Where shorter review periods are required they should normally be quarterly, unless it is clear that employment will end earlier.
618. Where short review periods apply, a face to face meeting will probably be most effective but the adviser can agree a different type of meeting if appropriate. The adviser should contact the customer in advance of the meeting to confirm the purpose of the meeting and agree with the

customer what evidence, if any, the customer can provide at the meeting to confirm their continued employment or self employment.

619. At the review meeting the adviser should discuss the situation with the customer, review any evidence available and decide if AtW support can be continued.
620. As part of every review the adviser must confirm that:
- the support is being provided
 - the support continues to meet the customer's needs
 - claims for reimbursement are being made promptly
 - the amounts claimed are in line with the spend profiled for the customer
 - any [changes in the customer's circumstances](#) have been reported
 - any additional requirements for support are identified
621. In all cases confirm that the customer is aware of their duty to notify Access to Work immediately if there is any change in their circumstances.
622. The adviser can decide to extend the award for a short period, but the award should not be extended into a period when it is known that an employed or self employed customer will no longer be employed. Support for Freelance workers can be continued if the support is necessary for them to continue to secure employment, and it is reasonable to expect them to continue to secure periods of employment. Where the award is extended for a short period the adviser will arrange another review in 3 or 6 months.
623. Alternatively the adviser may decide that continuing employment is no longer an issue and set the next review for a year's time.

Change of Circumstances

Identifying changes of circumstances.

624. Access to Work customers must report any change in their circumstances to the Access to Work team. Advisers should remind the customer of the requirement to report changes whenever they are reviewing cases.
625. Customers may report changes by whatever means of communication they prefer. Customers who are in receipt of other Government benefits or credits may report changes through another government office. Access to Work should accept notifications from OGDs about changes in customer's circumstances. Where the change may have an impact on the amount of AtW support payable the AtW adviser should seek confirmation from the customer that the change has occurred. If the customer is on Work Choice notify the specialist advisory team.
626. The DiSC3 record for the customer must be updated with all relevant changes and support reassessed if necessary. If the change is likely to result in an increase in support from AtW, advisers can ask the customer to complete a new AtW1. Written notifications and copies of evidence should be stored in the customer's case file.

Authorising changes to approved support

627. A change in the customer's circumstances or a change in the rates charged for AtW support may necessitate an increase in the authorised

amount of AtW support. A leeway exists to allow small increases in support without the need for approval of a new business case.

628. In all cases the decision to apply the leeway must be confirmed by an adviser who has not been involved in assessing the customer's needs. The confirmation that leeway has been given must be recorded on the customer case file and the DiSC3 system.

629. The leeway cannot be applied if the total amount of increases (including the increase currently being considered) since the last signed authorisation is £500 or more.

630. The leeway cannot be applied if it would take the total amount approved into a higher approval bracket, for example if a Regional Manager has authorised expenditure of £59,900, increases of, or totalling £100 or more cannot be given leeway as this would take the total amount approved to the level where Senior Operations Manager authorisation is required.

Change to customers health

631. Some health conditions can switch unpredictably between periods when the symptoms are stable to periods of deterioration. When a customer's health deteriorates there is likely to be an impact on their ability to do their job, but it may not be possible to fully re-assess the customer's requirements until their health stabilises. Record details of the change in a note on DiSC3 and consider booking a review at an appropriate date in the future.

632. The adviser should consider whether temporary support could be put in place. This will enable the customer to retain their employment while their needs are reassessed or until they recover from the temporary change in their health or condition. Advisers must respond sensitively and flexibly to customers in these circumstances.

633. If increased support is required this must be supported by a revised business case and appropriately approved before additional AtW payments are made. The cost share decision that applied to the existing award will also apply to the additional requirements for elements where cost share applies.

634. A change in the customer's condition could also lead to a reduction in the support required. The adviser should record the change and advise the customer that their requirements will be fully re-assessed at the end of the current AtW period. The customer / employer can continue to claim reimbursement for elements of the AtW funding that are still required. If the customer has a Support Worker supplied by an agency, advise the agency of the changes in support required. Where the customer or their employer, employ the Support Worker, AtW can continue to fund the normal level of support for a maximum of 4 weeks. The profiled expenditure for the customer should be left unchanged, so that if the customer's condition deteriorates again the full amount of support originally agreed can be provided without delay. All claims should be properly checked to ensure that overpayments are not made.

Change in personal details

635. Customers or other government departments can report changes in the customer's personal details. The DiSC3 record for the customer must be updated with all relevant changes and support reassessed if necessary. The member of staff taking the report of the change should notify any other government department or agency that needs the information, and record their action in a DiSC3 note.
636. Most changes in personal details will have no impact on AtW support. Changes of address may have an effect on Travel to Work costs or on a Support Worker's activities.

Change of name

637. If the customer's name changes, update the DiSC3 record, verify the bank account details and update them if required. If the customer's signature is held to verify claims, request a new specimen signature from the customer.

Change of Address

638. If the customer moves to an address outside the AtW Operational Support Unit's area, identify the AtW Operational Support Unit appropriate to the new address and provide the customer with contact details. Ask the customer to contact the new AtW Operational Support Unit as soon as possible if they want to continue receiving AtW support.
639. When a customer in receipt of AtW support contacts a new AtW Operational Support Unit, the new location searches for the case on DiSC3, identifies the location of the case and contacts the old Operational Support Unit to request transfer of the DiSC3 record and the case file. The old Operational Support Unit transfers the DiSC3 record to the new Operational Support Unit and forwards the case file and any other relevant materials. The new Operational Support Unit should review the customers support requirements, if support requirements increase as a direct result of the change of address, the adviser should consider if deadweight applies. The DiSC3 user guide, System Administration chapter covers transferring cases.

Changes to Employment

Same employer, different job.

640. A customer who moves to a new job with the same employer may have different support requirements in their new role. Check that this is a new job rather than a re-badging of the old job by confirming the customer has different duties or a change in earnings.
641. For new jobs a new AtW1 must be completed, and the case treated as a new application. Create a new job entry and AtW start date on the customer's DiSC3 record and reassess all aspects of support. Identify any changes to the elements required. Cost share will apply. Create an updated business case for any additional expenditure and submit it for approval. If new elements of support are now being supplied, monitor their delivery and consider the need for temporary solutions until the required solutions are in place.

New employer (new owner of business), same job.

642. Under the [TUPE](#) regulations the new owner of a business is obliged to take on the contractual obligations of their predecessor, this includes the cost sharing agreements with Access to Work. If a customer contacts the adviser because a new employer has taken over their business, update the employment details on DiSC3 and contact the new employer to confirm that they will carry forward the existing support arrangements for the AtW recipient. Ensure that the new employer is aware of their ownership and maintenance obligations for any equipment provided.
643. If the employer wishes to renegotiate the support arrangements, for example providing a Support Worker from internal staff rather than ongoing cost share, review the business case. The change can be approved if it results in a reduction or no change in the AtW contribution. If the revised arrangements will result in an increase in the AtW funding, the issue of deadweight should be considered, AtW will not pay for support that appears to have been withdrawn to secure funding from AtW.

New employer, different business, same job.

644. If a customer starts work for a new employer doing the same job for which they previously received AtW support, the adviser should identify the elements that can reasonably be transferred to the new employer and negotiate with the previous employer for them to be transferred.
645. Some elements will not be transferable and others may not be required in the new job. The adviser must identify all additional requirements for support and their costs. Reconsider and agree cost share for additional support if appropriate. The adviser should create a new business case to include the revised requirements. If SAE or APE is being transferred from the previous employment, create nil cost elements for these, and submit the business case for approval. Monitor delivery of additional support.

Freelance Workers

646. Some customers have, or can reasonably expect, a series of short contracts with a variety of employers, doing the same job, in these circumstances the adviser should treat the customer as self employed. This allows the customer to take responsibility for their support requirements and saves the adviser from having to repeatedly negotiate with employers for the transfer of support.

New location, same employer, same job

647. An employer may ask an employee to work temporarily at a new location, and will be responsible for normal additional costs that result from the move. If AtW funds significant support for the customer for example a Support Worker, it may not be reasonable for the employer to bear all the costs of maintaining this support to the new location. The AtW adviser should negotiate with the employer, ensuring that they make all reasonable adjustments. Any requirement for additional AtW support must be shown on an updated business case and approved before additional costs are reimbursed.
648. If the new location is outside Great Britain, AtW support can continue for a maximum of 3 months. Where it is known that a customer will be working abroad set a review date on DiSC3 for 10 weeks time or the

expected date of return, whichever is the shorter. At the review date confirm that the customer has, or will return to working in Great Britain within the 3 month limit. If they are not expected to return before the end of the 3 month limit, advise the customer that support will end when the limit is reached, and that they will need to make a new application if they return to the Great Britain. If the customer has exceptional reason for continuing to work outside Great Britain these must be referred to the National policy team and approved before any extension of support beyond 3 months. When the 3 month limit has been reached end the AtW award so that further payments are not made.

Change in Employment Status

649. If an AtW customer is suspended from their employment but still employed, relevant AtW support can continue. This includes paying for support workers to allow the AtW customer to take a full part in meetings that may impact their employment. The DiSC3 system must be updated to ensure that payments are not made for support that is no longer required and that the case is reviewed regularly to determine if the customer has resumed their normal work or is no longer employed.

Changes to AtW policy

650. Occasionally there will be changes to the AtW policy that will have an impact on individual customer's payments. Unless the announcement of the new policy specifically states otherwise, payments to customers or their employers should not be changed until their current AtW agreement period, normally 3 years, is complete.

Changes to Available Support

651. Technological improvements may lead to more effective means of overcoming customer's barriers to employment. If an existing customer requests additional support, because a new form of support is available and their other circumstances are unchanged, the adviser should consider whether the new technology provides a more cost effective solution to the customer's support requirements. If the new technology will reduce the AtW costs, complete a revised business case and submit for approval. In other cases advise the customer that their requirements will be fully reviewed at the end of the current AtW period.

652. Advisers should keep up to date with the introduction of new products and services that may be beneficial to their customers. Any adviser or manager becoming aware of new products, whether via intranet, advertising, attendance at events, discussions with customer etc, should alert other AtW staff at communications meetings.

Management Information

653. Data about the delivery of Access to Work support is collected for a variety of purposes;

- To improve performance and customer service.
- To identify and understand performance trends and usage.
- To inform Ministers.

- To monitor and compare the performance of Regions.
654. Management Information is collected to monitor the performance of Access to Work in delivering support to its customers. All staff involved in receiving and assessing applications for support have a responsibility to ensure that their actions are recorded promptly and accurately on DiSC3 and in the case file.
655. Management Information is collated and analysed to assess and compare the performance of AtW regions for each of the AtW elements. There are benchmark performance levels defining the target time between a customer applying and the delivery of the required support element.
656. The requirements for Management Information are being reviewed by the National Delivery team. When all required data outputs are understood, the DiSC3 system will be updated to collect and report the required information.
657. In the short term the system for collecting performance data about Access to Work delivery is defined by the National Delivery team. If you have questions about collecting data for Management Information please ask your line manager.

Management Checks

658. Managers have important roles to play both in assessing and maintaining quality and consistency in AtW cases and detecting and deterring fraud.
659. On a weekly basis managers should select cases for detailed checking. The national operations manager will define the numbers and types of cases to be checked. Managers should also take account of local circumstances when selecting cases for review. Factors to consider include:
- Experience of advisers
 - Large AtW awards
 - Types of errors found in previous checks
660. Cases should be selected from across the live load, including new cases and those that have had, or should have had, an adviser review.
661. The manager should check all aspects of the case and confirm that current guidance has been complied with.
- AtW Process
 - Eligibility
 - Application
 - Assessment of Needs
 - Approval
 - Delivery of Support
 - Recording Information
 - Do details in the case file match the DiSC3 record
 - Do notes on DiSC3 adequately describe additional information held as notes or reports in the case file.
 - Follow up and Review
 - Have reviews been scheduled at suitable intervals
 - Have reviews been delivered by appropriate means (letter / phone / visit)

- **Profiled Spend**
 - Is expenditure within 5% of the amount profiled for the customer
 - Are claims for reimbursement received at appropriate intervals
 - Were claims adequately checked before payment was made
 - Was the correct amount paid promptly to the relevant person or organisation
 - Have all payments been reconciled.
662. Managers should record completion of the checks on the stencils shown at [Management check 1](#). If errors are found the manager should feedback to the adviser or the team leader of the initial contact or payments team as appropriate. The manager should agree the corrective action that will be taken, including updating the case and arranging for training, mentoring or monitoring of staff. The manager should also agree a further review date to confirm that the agreed action has been taken.

Review Claims for Payment

Customer Claims

663. Payment is made on a reimbursement basis on the receipt of correctly completed claim forms and original evidence of expenditure. Payment can be made direct to a customer, their employer or a third party payee

Pro forma invoices

664. Exceptionally, with the approval of the Regional AtW manager, if an employer or customer is unable to settle an invoice upfront due to cash flow issues, we can accept a pro forma invoice with a claim form to trigger payment direct to a supplier.

Frequency of claims for ongoing support

665. Customers should be encouraged to submit claims on a regular basis, ideally on a 4-week cycle although variations can be accepted if circumstances dictate.
666. Claims must not be made or submitted before the last day for which payment is claimed.
667. All claims must be submitted within 6 months of the date the original expenditure was incurred.
668. Do not issue pre-paid envelopes for return of forms.
669. All completed claim forms must be sent to the Operational Support Unit for authorisation

Process

670. All payments must be made in accordance with the process as outlined in the Access to Work [SOM](#)

Forms in alternative formats

671. Computer accessible claim forms in txt and Word formats for customers unable to complete printed claim forms can be found on the [Access to Work Intranet site](#) under F for forms

672. Details of how to order forms in [alternative formats](#) can be found on the DWP Human Resources Intranet site.

Specimen signatures

673. Signatures of applicant, employer contact, support worker or anyone involved in countersigning forms should be retained and used for verification purposes.
674. The signature on every claim form must be checked against the specimen signature(s) held

Retention of documents

675. Any paperwork relating to payments is retained for 18 months after the end of the tax year to which the payment relates. If there has been an overpayment or fraud interest paperwork must be retained indefinitely.

Incorrectly completed forms

676. Payment teams should not accept forms where amounts have been amended or overwritten. These should be returned to the customer with a covering letter explaining why processing is not possible and asking for them to be resubmitted with mistakes corrected and signed, not initialled, by the customer.
677. Claim forms signed prior to the last day for which assistance is being claimed should be returned for re-signing at the appropriate time.

Overpayments

Overview

678. Access to Work grants are paid under section 2(1) of the Employment and Training Act 1973. Payments under the 1973 Act are not social security benefits for the purposes of benefit legislation, and therefore overpayments are not recovered in the same way as general social security benefits.

Vulnerable Customers

679. Before any recovery action is taken, voluntary or otherwise, customers individual circumstances must be taken into consideration.
680. Vulnerable customers may include those with mental health conditions, physical disabilities or learning difficulties. A customer's personal circumstances could also make them vulnerable.
681. All cases must be dealt with sensitively and in accordance with Jobcentre Plus policy [vulnerable customers](#)

Recovery Action

682. All overpayments are calculated by the National Access to Work team
683. Once calculated and regardless as to how they were incurred, all overpayments must be referred to the Accounts Receivable team in Norcross.
684. All recovery action will be undertaken by Norcross.

685. Access to Work must not enter into any agreement with the customer as to how the overpayment is to be recovered as this will be done by Norcross
686. The overpayment referral process can be found in the Access to Work SOM

Fraud

687. All cases of suspected fraud, where there are grounds to suspect that the customer/provider/employer may have acted dishonestly, deceived or attempted to deceive the Department into paying funding that they are not entitled to must be referred to FIS. Do not attempt to investigate a suspect claim yourself. The referral process can be found in the [Access to Work SOM](#)

Identifying suspect claims

688. Potentially fraudulent claims can be identified at any stage in the process; therefore, checks are essential to ensure that all claims are genuine.
689. Scrutinise all incoming claims carefully. A company invoice or receipt should, where required, accompany all claims. If an invoice is not available, ensure the claim is genuine by making alternative checks to confirm that the service or equipment has been supplied correctly.
690. The signature on every claim form must be checked against the specimen signature(s) held
691. When checking claims, look out for possible mistakes or evidence of possible fraud. For example: is the claim for items beyond the original terms of support agreed? Are there any anomalies in the claim - is it different from the usual claims received from the customer?
692. Does the pattern of claims seem unlikely - for example, if the customer is claiming for a support worker – is the claim for exactly the same amount and number of hours for every week of the year? If so, there may be a suspect claim as we might expect both customer and support worker to be absent occasionally, for example on Bank Holidays or for annual leave.
693. Are signatures illegible or omitted, do they appear to be in the customer's usual handwriting?
694. Does the claim cover a period of service - or item of equipment - already claimed for?
695. Indications such as these do not necessarily mean fraudulent intent. There may be an innocent explanation, such as a mistake. Where there is a doubt, discuss with FIS in order to establish if there is a potential fraud, genuine mistake or non compliance issue.

Voluntary disclosure

696. A customer may inform you that they have made a false statement in order to claim an Access to Work payment, even though you had no previous suspicions. In such circumstances, you must not do anything that would prejudice any future action Jobcentre Plus may wish to take. Stop the customer, repeat what you understand them to have said and say that you will take notes of anything further they say. Tell them that the matter

will be reported and an investigation may be set up to establish the facts and refer the claim to FIS

Suspending payment

697. FIS will liaise with the Operational Support Unit Manager to decide if payment should be suspended. If the Operational Support Unit Manager tells you to suspend payment:
- inform the client that you have suspended payment
 - Suspend payment of the suspect part of the claim only. Continue to pay other, genuine claims in the normal way.
698. If the customer asks why you have suspended payment, say simply that there is a query on their eligibility to receive Access to Work payments. Say that enquires will be completed as quickly as possible and that they will be informed of the findings. If the customer demands further explanation, speak to Operational Support Unit Manager or FIS for advice.

Appendix 1

Ministerial Government Departments

The following departments of the Westminster Government have agreed to fund all adjustments for staff directly employed by them and based at any location.

- Attorney General's Office
- Business, Innovation and Skills (Department for)
- Cabinet Office
- Education (Department for)
- Communities and Local Government (Department for)
- Culture, Media and Sport (Department for)
- Energy and Climate Change (Department of)
- Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Department for)
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- Government Equalities Office
- Health (Department of)
- Home Office
- International Development (Department for)
- Justice (Ministry of)
- Northern Ireland Office
- Office of the Advocate General for Scotland
- Office of the Leader of the House of Commons
- Office of the Leader of the House of Lords
- Prime Minister's Office (No 10)
- Scotland Office
- Transport (Department for)
- Treasury (HM)
- Wales Office
- Work and Pensions (Department for)

This list is subject to change and may not be exhaustive.
Further information can be found on the [Cabinet Office](#) website.

Exceptions and variations:-

Ministry of Defence

The Ministry of Defence will only fund adjustments for staff employed at their main building in Whitehall

Department for Work and Pensions

The Department for Work and Pensions will fund adjustments for all staff, including those employed by its executive agencies.

Home Office

The Home Office will fund adjustments for staff directly employed by them at any location and staff employed by the UK Border Agency (formerly Border and Immigration Agency). All other Executive agencies of the Home Office are eligible for Access to Work funded support.

Child Support Agency

The Child Support Agency is now part of the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission, a crown non-departmental public body, therefore, Access to Work funding is appropriate.

Executive Agencies

With the exception of the Home Office and the Department for Work and Pensions, Ministerial Government Departments will not fund adjustments for staff employed by their executive agencies. For example, the National Offender Management Service (HM Prison Service and the Probation Service combined) is an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice; therefore, adjustments required by their staff will be funded by Access to Work. Further information on executive agencies can be found on the [Cabinet Office](#) website

Non-ministerial Government Departments

Non-ministerial government departments have not agreed to fund adjustments for their staff, therefore, Access to Work is appropriate. Further information on non-departmental government departments can be found on the [Cabinet Office](#) website

Assessments

Access to Work can provide assessments for people employed in any Ministerial Government Department other than DWP. All assessments for DWP staff must be dealt with by [RAST](#).

Appendix 2

ACCESS TO WORK - REQUEST FOR MEDICAL OPINION

APPLICANT:

ADDRESS:

I, the above named, hereby authorise you to supply Jobcentre Plus with any information that will support my application for help through the Access to Work programme.

I have applied for assistance under the Access to Work programme, which provides funding for practical support to disabled people in or entering paid employment to help overcome work related obstacles resulting from disability. In order to progress my application could you please answer the following questions.

Applicant's signature:

Dated:

To be completed by medical practitioner / GP.

**(Delete as appropriate)*

Please tick, if in your opinion, due to his/her medical condition the applicant

- *Is unable to travel by public transport
- *Is unable to drive
- *Has a long-term (lasting over 12 months) condition that adversely affects his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities or affects them at work only.

☐☐☐

Please give further information that you may consider relevant

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Medical Practitioner/GP's signature:

Dated:

Print Name Please:

Medical Practice Stamp –

N.B. Costs incurred will be reimbursed on receipt of invoice

Your help in this matter is very much appreciated and I have enclosed an envelope for you to return the above information.

Thank you for your time and co-operation in this matter.

Access to Work Adviser
Jobcentre Plus

Appendix 3

CLIENT RENEWAL DECLARATION

I CONFIRM THAT I HAVE BEEN RECEIVING ACCESS TO WORK ASSISTANCE AS DESCRIBED SINCE _____.

MY DISABILITY NEEDS AT WORK ARE/ARE NOT BEING MET
(delete as appropriate).

I HAVE REPORTED ALL CHANGES IN MY CIRCUMSTANCES

I HAVE RECEIVED AND READ THE INFORMATION LEAFLET ON THE ACCESS TO WORK RULES AND MY RESPONSIBILITIES.

SIGNED

Date

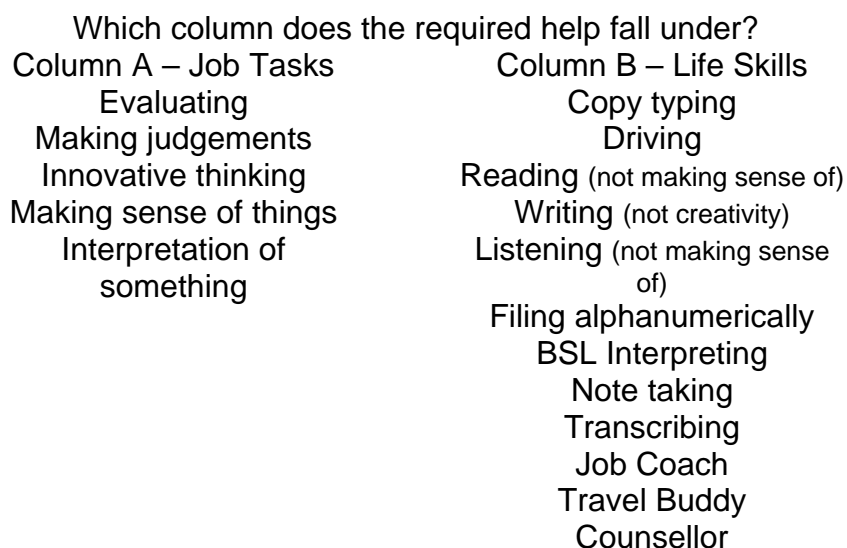
Name

Address

Please return this page to the Operational Support Unit.

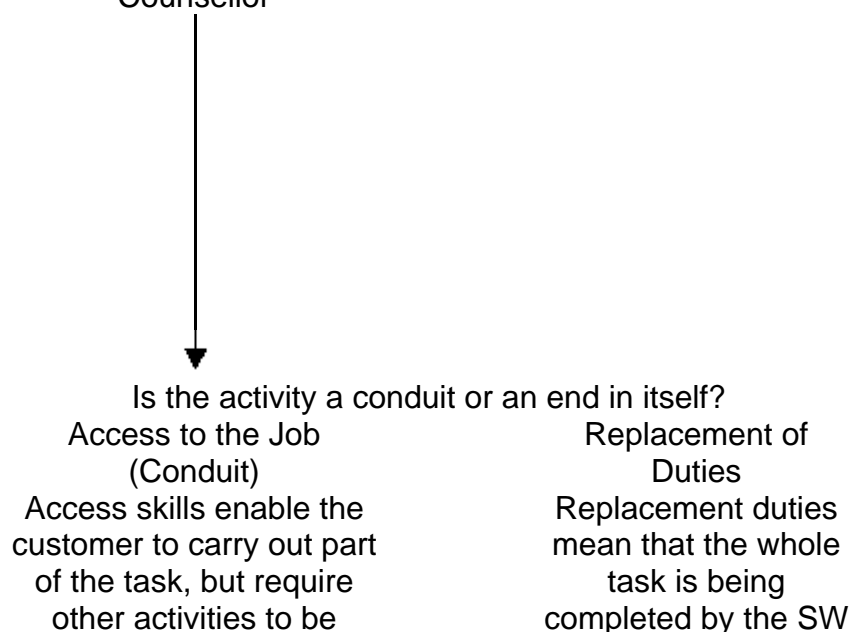
Appendix 4

20% Flowchart



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This is considered as 'replacement of duties'. AtW support should be limited to 20% of the overall job



carried out by the SW



This is considered as 'enabling' support to allow the customer to carry out their duties and full support can be approved up to 100%

without any input from the customer



This is considered as 'replacement of duties'. AtW support should be limited to 20% of the overall job

Appendix 5

Access to Work Review of Decision

AtW Decision Making-Escalation Process			
Customer not satisfied with Access to Work Adviser decision	Give the customer the contact details of the Regional Access to Work Manager. Advise customer to write to the Regional Access to Work Manager asking for decision to be reviewed.	Regional Access to Work Manager carries out review and sends response to Customer in writing within 7 days.	Customer satisfied – end of process
			Customer still not satisfied
Customer not satisfied with Regional Access to Work Manager decision	Customer advised to write to Senior Operational Manager	Senior Operational Manager carries out review and sends response to Customer in writing within 7 days	Customer satisfied – end of process
			Customer still not satisfied
Customer not satisfied with Senior Operational Manager decision	Customer advised to write to National AtW Delivery Manager (Pat Mangan)	National AtW Manager to research & review decision. Write to customer within 7 days	Customer satisfied – end of process
			Customer still not satisfied

Appendix 7

Adapted Vehicles

The guidance in this appendix only applies to vehicles required as the most cost effective solution to a customers Travel to Work needs as described in the ‘actual cost of travel to work’ section of the Travel to Work chapter.

Scenario	Policy/Process	AtW/Customer Contribution
<p>Customer already has their own vehicle that they can’t use as it needs adapting</p> <p>This would come under the Travel to Work/AV element of AtW</p>	<p>Policy: We can help with adapting a vehicle if this is the most cost effective solution.</p> <p>Customers will be required to make a contribution based on the number of days in the week when they do not work but will have use of the vehicle.</p> <p>Process: Arrange for an assessment to determine whether the vehicle is suitable for adaptation and what adaptations are required.</p> <p>Consider alternative support (such as taxis) if this is needed in the interim.</p>	<p>We will fund the adaptations but the customer will be asked to make a voluntary social benefit contribution. Calculate the maximum AtW contribution using the following formula:</p> $\frac{\text{cost of adaptation}}{7} \times \text{N}^{\circ} \text{ of days worked}$ <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adaptation cost is £2800 Customer uses the car to get to/from work five days per week <p>AtW contribution =</p> $\frac{£2800}{7} \times 5$

		<p>= Total AtW contribution of £2000</p> <p>= Customer's social benefit contribution of £800</p>
<p>Vehicle unsuitable for adapting or vehicle purchase in lieu of adaptation</p> <p>This would come under the Travel to Work/AV element of AtW</p>	<p>Policy: If a vehicle is unsuitable for adapting, for example, because it is too old or not large enough for the customers' needs then AtW can contribute towards the cost of a vehicle that meets the customers' minimum requirements. Sometimes, it is more cost effective to purchase a vehicle that meets the needs of the customer rather than adapt an existing one.</p> <p>Process: Advise the customer that they must contribute towards the cost by trading in their existing vehicle against the cost of the newer one. As it will usually be more cost effective in the long run to adapt a newer car, AtW can assist towards the purchase of a vehicle up to 2/3 years of age, regardless as to the age of the vehicle being traded in. Customers' must be advised that moving them up the market to a newer car should be seen as a one-off and no further grants will be provided to purchase a newer car than the one they already have. Customers should,</p>	<p>Use the formula as above but take into account the trade in value as part or all of the social contribution.</p>

	as far as possible, provide their own quotes.	
<p>Customer already has their own manual vehicle but now needs an automatic car</p> <p>This would come under the Travel to Work/AV element of AtW</p>	<p>Policy: We can help meet the additional cost of an automatic vehicle.</p> <p>When we fund the additional cost of an automatic, this should be based on a like for like swap (ie the same manufacturer, model and age of car).</p> <p>If it is not possible to find a similar vehicle with an automatic gearbox, the customer should look for the next available option that would meet their minimum needs.</p> <p>If a customer's current vehicle is much older than the required vehicle, they should contribute the trade in price of the old vehicle towards the newer car and, in addition, make a social use contribution using the 7th formula used above.</p> <p>When we have provided a grant towards a newer automatic vehicle, it should be stated to the customer that we have now 'moved them into the automatic car market' and we will not help with any further grants towards any subsequent</p>	<p>AtW can pay the difference between the car that the customer currently has, and a similar car which will meet their minimum needs.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer has a three year old manual Ford Focus which he can no longer use • He needs to use a car to travel to work four days per week • He has seen an automatic car of the same age and spec at a local dealer and would have to trade in his car plus an additional £450 <p>This is a clear 'like-for-like' swap, so AtW will pay the additional costs. The customer should also be asked to pay a social benefit contribution worked out using the 7ths formula – ie</p> <p><u>450</u> (extra cost) x 3 (days he doesn't</p>

	<p>automatic vehicle.</p> <p>In general, a second-hand automatic vehicle may cost up to £500 more than a manual of the same model, age and condition, although newer vehicles may cost more.</p> <p>Process: Advise the customer that we can help meet the additional costs of an automatic car of the same age/model as their existing vehicle.</p> <p>Costs of less than £500 can be authorised. Quotes must be obtained for anything over this amount.</p>	<p>work) 7</p> <p>This means that the customer should be asked to make a social benefit contribution of £192.85.</p>
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Management checks

Management check 1

Management Check 1 Regional Manager Check	
5% monthly check of all business cases approved at Adviser level – up to £10,000. Attach “Business Case authorised Below Regional Manager Level Report” from DiSC	<p><u>Reference</u> DiSC3 – select Business Information, select - Business Case authorised below Regional Manager Level Report.</p>

	11												
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Band D Regional Manager (this Management Check can be delegated to an Adviser to complete)

Procedure The Senior Leadership Team will consider RAD/ other reports and inform the Performance Manager/ Security Champion with details on the type/ how to complete the check, the percentage and timings of the check. The Performance Manager/ Security Champion will cascade these details to the Regional Manager to complete the checks and record the findings. The details of the findings to be sent to the Performance Manager/ Security Champion.

Reason: Need to target areas of risk e.g. Support Worker

Management Check 3

Management Check 3 Regional Manager Check													
100% monthly check of all SAE and APE business cases at 25 days from receipt of AtW1.		<u>Reference</u> DiSC 3- Select Business Information, select Reviews for Office, select review type as OTHER, Input dates of report Adviser Log – select Adviser Log and check that a 25 day date has been input and Adviser action is demonstrated											
	Yr	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Initial that 100% check of SAE and APE business cases have a 25 days date review.	10 11												

Band D Regional Manager

Regional Manager undertake a 100% check on SAE and APE cases at the 25 days from receipt of ATW1. Regional Managers to use the 25 Day Checks report from DiSC to identify the business cases. Then by using DiSC and the Adviser Log ensure Adviser action is demonstrated. When check is completed DiSC needs to be updated- Review completed.

Management check 4

[illegible]

Band D OSU Manager

5% managerial check of all claims received daily against the ATW2 (customer authority) details on DiSC.

Procedure: 5% of all claim forms to be checked before submitting to Shared Services. Check payment against the ATW2 details held on DiSC.

Reason: To ensure payment is correct and to deter and detect internal and customer fraud

Management check 5

[illegible]

completed.													
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Band D OSU Manager

5% managerial check of Transaction Listing payments monthly against relevant claim form or invoice.

Procedure: OSU Manager selects a 5% random sample of entries on the Transaction List. Admin/Payments Team Supervisor/Office Manager then checks these entries against DiSC record. (No need to check against claim form/invoice etc as this is a **validation** check to ensure the payment(s) originated from your location and appear on DiSC as they do on the Transaction Listing).

OSU Manager will then undertake a random check (suggested min 5%) of the completed checks as an additional safeguard.

Reason: To ensure that the payment(s) is a valid DiSC payment, that the entry on the Transaction Listing is the same as the DiSC entry and to deter and detect fraud

Management check 6

Management Check 6 (OSU) OSU MANAGER CHECK (NOT FOR DELEGATION)													
Updated Payment check (100%) monthly. Use Updated Payment report on DISC3.													
	Yr	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Initial that a 100% monthly check of updated payments has been completed	10 11												

Band D OSU Manager

Procedure: Run Updated Payments Report form DiSC, Check 100%

Reason: To validate the reason for the change and deter and detect fraud. Must not be carried out by person who updated payment, therefore may need to check DiSC3 authority access levels.

Management check 7

[illegible]

Band D OSU Manager

5% managerial check of all AtW1 application forms received daily against the details on DiSC.

Procedure: 5% accuracy check of all AtW1 application forms input against those held on DiSC and also a signed signature on the AtW1.

Reason: To ensure accuracy of application against details held on DiSC also a customer signature all applications to deter and detect internal and customer fraud

Management check 8

[illegible]

been completed													
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Band E Delivery Manager

The Band E Delivery Manager undertakes a **5% managerial check** of all cases approved at Regional Manager level to ensure applications and claims have been dealt with as quickly as possible and correctly. The Delivery Manager should keep a list of all cases authorised at Regional Manager level to complete this check and will need access to both the case file and the payment file. The Delivery Manager extracts a random 5% of case files from the list presented by the Regional Manager and conducts a 100% check on each case selected. A record of all checks should be retained as evidence.

Management check 9

Management Check 9 National AtW Delivery Manager Check													
10% monthly check of business cases approved at SEO level (over £60,000).													
	Yr	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Initial that a 10% check of business cases approved at SEO level has been completed.	10 11												

National Access to Work Manager

The National Access to Work Manager undertakes a **10% managerial check** of all cases approved by Delivery Manager and all sensitive/contentious cases or those that would have a national impact.

Standard Equipment

The following list provides examples of items that may be considered as reasonable for an employer to supply and will require an adviser decision if they are to be funded by Access to Work. The list is not intended to be exhaustive or be prescriptive.

Chairs
Desks/extendable/bridges/feet/desk raisers
Armrests
Gel rests
Perching Stools
Backrests/wedges/back friend/cushions/swivel pads
Monitor arms
Desk Top Computers
Screens
Screen Raisers
Keyboards (including overlays)
Mice
Printers
Scanners
Fax Machines
Copiers
Telephony
Document Holders /writing slopes
Flexdesk
Footstools
General office equipment (e.g. staplers, hole punches etc.)
Headphones
Mobile Phones
GPS devices/Sat Navs
Laptop /lapstands
I pad / i-mac tablets

Trolley cases
Drawer Pedestal
Stationery (e.g. pens etc.)
Clothing (gloves, boots etc.)
Walking aids (sticks, frames, Rollators)
Chair-ups
White Boards
Voice recorders
Internet connections/rentals for home working
Window blinds
Lighting (Daylight lighting, Helix Desk Lamp etc.)
Vehicles appropriate to the job role - such as tractors for farm work, fork lift trucks for warehouse work or taxis for hire