



Department
for Work &
Pensions



Access to Work – Overview & Future Direction

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AtW – What it is

- AtW is a discretionary grant scheme in operation since 1994 to help with the extra disability related workplace costs beyond the reasonable adjustment required by employers in the Equality Act.
- In addition to helping around 1% of working disabled people with the greatest needs directly, its very existence de-risks the recruitment and retention of all disabled people by employers – even if it is not ultimately needed.
- It is demand-led and last year spent £104m - up from £97m in 15/16. Numbers who had AtW support approved last year rose 8% to over 25,000 – in addition further customers received payments for support agreed in previous years
- AtW can deliver grants to deliver varied support – equipment, support workers, transport and mental health support.
- We look to continuously improve the scheme – eg by launching digital channels last year. We have secured a real terms increase in funding until 19/20 and are engaged in target marketing to promote the scheme.
- The focus of this activity is traditionally under-represented groups – Learning Disabilities, Mental Health, Young People and Scottish & Welsh customers.

AtW – How it is administered

- Customers generally apply online upto 6 weeks in advance of a job start – taking around 20 minutes. An adviser – from a specialist team if the customer has specific needs, will then make contact with the customer to discuss the case and potentially arrange a workplace assessment to take place – 90% of which should be concluded within 8 working days.
- Following any recommendations arising for the assessment and subject to any further information eg medical evidence and potentially an employers agreement to contribute to costs, an Adviser can then make an award offer. The target is to do so in 85% of cases within 20 working days.
- As a discretionary provision AtW is not appealable however we do have a “reconsideration” process if people disagree with the original decision and a complaints process if people believe their claim has been mishandled for example.
- Grants are then payable in arrears to whoever puts in place the relevant support – often the employer but sometimes the customer themselves.
- There is a limit on the annual value of awards that can be agreed. This is currently 1.5x the average salary and will rise to £43,100 from April 2018.

AtW – Continuous Improvement

AtW is an evolving scheme and needs to remain relevant to changing workplaces and customer needs. In recent years we have made significant changes to the scheme:

- Introducing digital channels;
- Streamlining self-employment rules;
- Introducing specialist teams;
- Enabling deaf customers to communicate with us via Video Relay Services.

However we are looking at further improvements:

- Expediting claims & payment processes;
- Considering alternative sources of evidence;
- Helping those who have been traditionally harder to help;
- Managed personal budgets.

There are specific challenges we need to address:

- A welcome increase in supported Internships but a much steeper rise in costs;
- The “3 quotes system”;
- Interaction with broader landscape of support.

AtW – Discussion and Q&A



This is an opportunity for us to gain very valuable feedback and suggestions from expert stakeholders and would welcome your views on what you have heard today or any new areas you wish to raise.

If there is insufficient time to fully address the points, please feel free to contact me at Stuart.Edwards1@dwp.gsi.gov.uk