To improve and strengthen the Supported Internship customer journey, Access to Work (AtW) has carried out a review of the current Supported Internship and Traineeship processes.

From September 2020, AtW is introducing a number of changes to the supported internship process to ensure supported intern information is protected and enable us to work with stakeholders to test, learn and evaluate what works and strengthen the process further.

The initial changes AtW will be testing from September include:

* A revised application form that is customer focussed aimed at the Access to Work customer to be submitted via the post;
* Improved Access to Work staff guide enabling greater clarity and consistency;
* Additional steps to ensure consent is obtained from the Access to Work customers regarding the processing of their personal information; and
* Agreement and acceptance of the terms and conditions of the grant to comply with Cabinet Office grant management procedures.

Adopting a test and learn approach will enable us to continue to adapt and update the supported internship customer journey, and enable us to deliver a customer experience that is secure and user friendly for both customers and Education/ Training providers.

**Questions and Answers**

**Why is AtW making these changes now?**

* To protect intern / trainee personal data and ensure the process complies with Cabinet Office grant management procedures. In addition, we have listened to stakeholder feedback and recognise the need to provide clear and consistent guidance.
* AtW is adopting a ‘Test and Learn’ approach aimed at making the route-way into AtW more accessible for young, disabled people. This is to ensure that young people familiarise themselves with the AtW process so that when they complete their training programmes and enter paid employment, they are aware of the support that is available to them.
* These changes will also work to ensure that young people are receiving personalised support that is tailored to their workplace needs.
* During the Test and Learn, we will continually evaluate what works and what can be further improved based on stakeholder input.

**What about if an application has already been submitted on behalf of the young person?**

All interns / trainees in the 2020/21 cohort applying for AtW will be required to complete, sign and submit the new application form and submit the application form to AtW by post (unless their disability necessitates the use of email as a reasonable adjustment). Any applications submitted previously will be returned, with the new forms being requested. These applications will be backdated to the original date of submission.

**Why does the young person have to provide their signature?**

To comply with Cabinet Office grant management procedures and align to departmental fraud processes, applications must include the signature of the applicant.

**Can the education/ training provider act on behalf of the young person?**

Yes, the new application form contains a section which the intern can sign to give permission for the education provider or training body to act as a representative for the intern.

With regards to completing the application form, the education provider or training body should only act in the capacity of support. This means that the provider can give assistance with understanding the content and filling out the form, but consent must be provided by the intern/trainee or their appointee and they must also provide their signature.

**What if the young person is unable to complete the application by themselves?**

Please see above. The education provider or training body can assist the young person when completing the application form. On the application form, the young person must provide consent for AtW to contact the third party representative listed on the form. AtW will then either telephone or write to the named contact to request the intern’s / trainee’s support plan.

**What if the young person has an appointee?**

The appointee must be the young person’s legal appointee and must be held by the Department for Work and Pensions. The appointee will be able to act in the capacity of the young person. For example, they will be able to provide consent for the Department to process the customer’s information and act as the young person’s signatory.

**Why must applications be submitted by post?**

* Departmental security procedures require all applications to be posted into the department where there is no secure channel for transferring information available. Submitting applications by post is standard practice within Access to Work. This is to ensure a reduction in the likelihood of personal information being leaked or intercepted.
* As with all other AtW customers, interns / trainees will be required to submit applications by post unless they have a disability that requires using email as a reasonable adjustment and have discussed this with an AtW adviser.

**Has AtW considered that these changes will lengthen the customer journey?**

* By requiring the intern / trainee to complete and sign the application form, this process will bring the AtW Supported Internship and Traineeship customer journey’s in line with other parts of AtW. Recognising that the intern / trainee may need more support to fill out the application than the standard AtW customer, we will continue to allow SI and Traineeship applications to be submitted up to 6 months in advance of the programme start date.

**Is there a limit on the amount that can be claimed?**

* There is no limit on the hourly rate that can be claimed for Support Worker / Job Coach support.
* The current AtW upper limit stands at twice the average salary. In April 2020, the total amount that can be awarded to all AtW customers increased to £60,700.

**There tends to be inconsistent decision-making. How will AtW address this during the Test and Learn?**

* To provide transparency for young disabled people and remove inconsistencies, AtW has developed a more robust staff guide for Supported Internships and Traineeships that will support advisers to make more consistent decision-making. The revised user guidance will provide a clearer overview of Supported Internship and Traineeship eligibility, how to apply and the support young, disabled people can receive.

**Do young people on a Department for Education Supported Internship/ Traineeship programme have to have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCPs) to be eligible for AtW funding?**

* Supported Internships and Traineeships are primarily funded by the Department of Education (DfE), whilst AtW can provide funding for the in-work support needs of the intern / trainee. As such, the requirement for EHCPs has been set by DfE.
* Interns on a DfE Supported Internship programme will need to have an EHCP, whereas not all young people on a DfE Traineeship will have an EHCP.
* To be eligible for AtW funding for the in-work portion of Supported Internships and Traineeships, young disabled people in England must have an EHCP.
* Scotland and Wales are devolved nations and young people on equivalent programmes in these nations will need to have a Statement of Special Educational Need (SSEN) in Wales or a Personalised Learning Support Plan (PLSP) in Scotland.