



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

# Access to Work staff guide

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# 1 Introduction

## Principles of Access to Work

### **Above and beyond a reasonable adjustment**

Support that complements but does not replace or subsidise an employer's legal duty to make reasonable adjustments.

### **Additional costs**

Support that is over and above what a non-disabled person would need to do their job.

### **When determining whether there are additional costs or a business benefit**

Consider the support required by a disabled person doing the job. Do not take into account the cost incurred by a non-disabled person doing the job.

### **Meeting minimum needs**

Support that allows individuals to overcome workplace barriers that arise from their disability.

### **Value for money**

Support that meets an individual's needs in the most cost effective way for the taxpayer.

## Introduction

1. Access to Work (AtW) provides support for individual needs within the workplace above and beyond [the employers reasonable adjustments](#).

2. These instructions will help identify:

- the support customers need
- the support customers are eligible for

3. AtW is available for applicants who:

- have a paid job
- are about to start a paid job (customers can apply 12 weeks before start date)
- are returning to a paid job

4. AtW recognises that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference. Barriers can be physical, or they can be caused by people's attitudes to difference, like assuming disabled people can't do certain activities within the workplace.

5. This approach helps AtW recognise barriers that make life harder for disabled people. Removing these barriers creates equality and offers disabled people more independence, choice and control. In some cases, this may mean only slight adjustments to the working environment.

6. Eligible customers will be offered support based on their needs. This may include a grant to help cover the costs of practical support in the workplace.

7. Disability awareness training is available for employers and work colleagues to gain an understanding of changes they could make towards enabling customers to participate fully and flourish in the workplace.

8. AtW supports customers with a disability, illness or health condition (this includes mental health), who are:

- in paid employment or self-employed
- about to start employment
- in need of help at a job interview with an employer
- about to start a Work Trial
- about to start a Department for Education supported internship or traineeship
- about to start a self-arranged work experience or young person's work experience
- serving an apprenticeship.

9. AtW funding:

- encourages employers to recruit and retain someone with a disability, illness or health condition
- offers financial help towards the extra cost of employing someone with a disability, illness or health condition
- offers practical support to overcome work related barriers

10. In some cases, the employer will share the cost.

11. Extra employment costs over and above those considered as reasonable adjustments can be considered.

12. AtW advisers have access to independent holistic workplace assessors who can identify recommendations to suit the customer's needs.

13. Advisers work with the customer and their employer if appropriate to give the necessary support.

14. Repayment of some, or all the costs, are agreed in advance.

15. Repayments made under AtW are not liable for income tax.

16. All VAT queries must be signposted to HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC).

## 2 Process overview

### Steps involved in providing support

1. When an application is received, you must:

- check eligibility
- assess the effect of the customer's disability, illness or health condition
- contact the customer for additional information if necessary
- update the appropriate IT systems
- contact the employer if appropriate
- arrange for an assessor to visit the place of work to determine customer needs if necessary
- complete a business case, including support levels and agreed cost sharing
- record details on IT systems
- notify the customer of the decision
- notify the employer where appropriate
- respond to completed declarations
- manage the delivery of the support, including conducting regular reviews
- deal with any change of circumstance

2. When a customer sends in a claim form requesting payment, you must:

- review the claim form, application and evidence
- authorise payment or record overpayment
- consider a fraud referral

### Elements

3. There are different elements of AtW:

- Communication Support at Interview
- Travel to Work including Travel In Work
- Support Worker
- Adaptations to Premises and Equipment
- Special Aids and Equipment

## 3 Eligibility

1. To receive support through Access to Work (AtW) the customer must:

- be disabled, have an illness or a health condition that impacts on their ability to work
- be 16 or over (there's no upper age limit for support as long as employment is likely to continue)
- have the right to work in Great Britain
- be living in Great Britain

**Note:** Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands aren't included for AtW support

2. Certain restrictions apply if the customer is working abroad. Support can be considered provided the job is based in Great Britain.

3. Additionally, the customer must be:

- employed or self-employed or
- about to start employment or
- have a contract of employment or are about to start a Work Trial or
- about to start a Department for Education supported internship or
- about to start a traineeship or
- about to start a self-arranged work experience or
- about to start young person's work experience
- about to start or serving an apprenticeship

4. Customers in receipt of certain benefits are not normally able to get AtW.

5. 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
- Income Support paid as a result of illness.

6. Exceptions to the above are where the customer:

- is going for an interview, or
- is starting a Work Trial, or
- has a job to start, and will stop claiming when employment begins or
- has a permitted work decision where AtW will consider in work support

**Note:** There's no upper age limit for support as long as the employment is likely to continue.

7. If the customer is in or about to start paid employment, you must confirm that they will be paid at least the [National Minimum Wage](#).
8. AtW support is not available to employees of Ministerial government departments.

## Definition of disability

9. Someone is disabled under the Equality Act 2010, if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial, negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.

**See:** [Definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010](#) on the GOV.UK website.

10. Customers meeting this definition of a disability are eligible to apply for AtW support.
11. Customers whose disability, illness or health condition does not substantially affect their normal day to day activities, but has a considerable adverse effect on their ability to do their job can also apply.
12. The customer must be advised that when DWP makes a decision about disability, it is for support purposes only. 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.
13. Under the Equality Act 2010, employers have a responsibility to make reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

## Confirming disability

14. Customers are not usually requested to supply medical evidence or condition corroboration from a qualified health care professional unless the application is for new support under the Travel to Work element.
15. AtW cannot be used to fund treatment for a disability or be used for diagnostic assessments for any type of disability, illness or health condition.

## Initial contact stage

16. Ask for copies of any evidence or condition corroboration the customer has if:
  - there's a disagreement with the customer
  - there's difficulty in determining whether the effect of the customer's disability will introduce extra costs above those of a non-disabled person doing the job
17. Tell the customer that the AtW adviser may ask for a specialist assessment to identify the support needed. For example:
  - technical support

- ergonomic support
- third sector specialist support

18. The adviser may ask for extra evidence or condition corroboration they think necessary at any time during an application in order to validate a request for support.

## Drug and alcohol

19. People who are drug and alcohol dependent who do not have a primary disability or health condition fall outside the [Equality Act 2010](#). However, where a health problem and/or a disability has resulted from their addiction and they are on a treatment programme, they are eligible to apply to Access to Work.

20. Establish if the customer is on a current treatment programme.

**Note:** An addiction treatment programme helps people overcome compulsive alcohol and/or drug use. The programme may take place in numerous environments, varying from residential rehab to outpatient therapy. They also range in their forms of treatment. There's no predetermined length for addiction treatment.

21. Validation through self declaration is sufficient evidence of being on a treatment programme. However, if doubt about eligibility or concern about fraud exists, evidence of the programme should be requested.

22. A referral for a holistic work placed assessment must be made in line with the existing AtW process.

23. AtW advisers must make applicants aware that for all areas of support (excluding mental health), their employer will be contacted ahead of the work placed assessment. This is to validate the applicant's employment and to seek employer agreement to pay for any aids and equipment. Details of the customer's health condition must not be divulged.

## What is employment?

1. For AtW purposes, employment is:

- full or part-time paid work, whether permanent, casual or temporary
- a work trial arranged by DWP
- work in an unsupported or supported environment
- working as a councillor, elected official or appointee who has applied for a position on a public organisation's board
- work experience and self-arranged work experience

2. AtW is not available for those in:

- voluntary work

- training, except for training related to the customer's paid employment and is undertaken whilst the customer is in receipt of normal wages for the job
3. To get AtW support, customers who are in work or starting work can supply one of the following:
- a verbal offer of employment (check this as part of the initial employer engagement call)
  - a written offer of employment
  - a contract of employment
4. As well as one of the above, customers must be paid at least the National Minimum Wage (NMW)
- See:** [National Minimum Wage](#) check list on GOV.UK.
5. If during the initial contact with the customer there are doubts about the employment, ask the customer to provide supporting evidence.
6. The evidence will be considered when assessing the customer's need for support.
7. Customers who are registered with an agency must have a job to start before they can receive support.
8. Approval cannot be given for any type of AtW support, if there's evidence that a company is about to stop trading.

## Civil Service and government agency employees

9. Funding of changes is made by the employing department if the employer is a ministerial government department for example the DWP or one of its agencies.

**Note:** AtW can offer advice, arrange assessments and make recommendations about what support is needed, but each ministerial department will be expected to source and fund the support themselves. AtW cannot assist in arranging assessments for employees of DWP or its executive agencies.

## Members of the clergy

10. Applications from members of the clergy must be dealt with in exactly the same way as any other application. This is regardless of their religion.

11. The customer must be in paid employment. For example, a member of the Church of England clergy who receives a salary or stipend.

12. Some other religious denominations work on a voluntary basis. AtW is not available for voluntary workers.

13. If a customer's employment status is in doubt, contact the employer or the religious organisation they belong to. Most contact details can be found on the internet.

# What is self-employment?

1. For 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
- a business that satisfies the past or prospective viability tests
- possessing a Unique Tax Reference number (UTR)

2. A customer is considered employed (even if they own the company) if:

- they draw a salary
- they pay Class 1 National Insurance contributions

3. If they pay Class 4 contributions, they are self-employed.

4. Work can be done:

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

5. You must be satisfied that the applicant is self-employed. Do this by requesting:

- a Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR). This is a ten digit number issued by HM Revenue & Customs
- accounts for an established business
- a business plan of a standard acceptable to a bank or other financial institution

**Note:** A UTR and CV is appropriate in the case of self-employed applicants, who do not necessarily see themselves as being a business. For example, entertainers or actors etc.

6. AtW cannot pay for the costs of setting up a business such as:

- standard items of equipment
- support for fact-finding
- going on courses, seminars or similar events
- while the business is being formed

## Company directors

7. Customers are considered employed (not self-employed), if they pay Class 1 National Insurance contributions.

8. Company directors are not entitled to the minimum wage. They don't therefore, have to meet this eligibility condition to get AtW support.

9. Businesses must satisfy the the business viability test. This is still true even if the customer is a company director.

10. The customer must provide proof that the company is registered with Companies House.

## HM Revenue and Customs checks for self-employment

11. You can rely on HM Revenue and Customs treatment of the customer's employment circumstances. This ensures consistency when determining an applicant is self-employed.

- if the customer is employed, they will be taxed under PAYE rules and the employer will pay Class1 National Insurance contributions under the same PAYE rules
- if the customer is self- employed, customers will be taxed under the Self Assessment rules and have a UTR number for that purpose. Customers will be managing their Class 2/4 contributions through arrangements with the HMRC National Insurance Contributions Office

## Business viability

12. It's a requirement for a self-employed person or business owner/director seeking AtW support, to demonstrate that the business is a viable and legitimate concern.

13. To be considered viable, a business should achieve a minimum level of turnover each year in the course of normal operations.

14. This minimum level is set as the Lower Earnings Limit (LEL):

- the LEL for 2019 to 2020 – £6,136
- the LEL for 2018 to 2019 – £6,032
- the LEL for 2017 to 2018 – £5,876

See: [GOV.UK for the current LEL](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/lower-earnings-limit). This site includes previous years rates.

## Start-up period and down-turns

15. New businesses or periods of sole-trading may have an initial 12 month period "test trading" where they do not have to turnover the LEL threshold.

16. However, any new application must be accompanied by a business plan. Advisers may decline any self-employment award if, in their judgement, the plan is unlikely to have any prospect of becoming viable.

17. An award must be terminated if self-employed trading or, a business previously not satisfying the viability test, fails to achieve turnover of the LEL in between annual review periods.

**Note:** This does not apply to test trading periods.

18. If a previously viable business fails to achieve turnover of LEL in between annual review periods, then a further award may be made for the following year. If the business then fails to turnover the LEL in that following year, then the award is terminated.

19. Periods for which an award is suspended, for example through temporary cessation of trading is disregarded. For example, bereavement.

## Requalification

20. A person who receives an award for AtW on a self-employed basis which is subsequently terminated because the business does not satisfy the viability test, may not re-qualify for another self-employment AtW award for a period of 5 years from the last application.

**Note:** An AtW award can be considered if the customer claims self-employment as a different business and satisfies all other criteria.

## VAT

21. All VAT queries must be signposted to HMRC.

## Living in Great Britain

1. Support can be applied for by anyone who:

- is normally living in Great Britain (GB)
- is working in GB
- meets the eligibility criteria

2. Access to Work doesn't cover:

- Northern Ireland
- the Channel Islands
- the Isle of Man

## Workers posted from the European Community

3. Workers posted to GB by a company based in another European Community country are entitled to apply for support.

4. The EC Posted Workers Directive (96/71/EC) requires equality of treatment for EC posted workers and local workers.

5. In the case of European Community posted workers, AtW should not apply the rules covering living and employment in GB rules, all other eligibility criteria though still applies.

6. Workers from the European Community must register with HM Revenue and Customs when they start work. This is for National Insurance purposes.

7. You must check the customer has the right to work in GB. Do this by:

- making sure the customer has a current passport with immigration stamps indicating type of and period of leave to stay
- asking for details of time and length of employment contract

- asking for evidence of application for a National Insurance number and registration with HM Revenue and Customs for tax purposes

**See:** [Work in the UK](#) on the GOV.UK website for more information.

## Temporary residents

8. Temporary resident customers who are:

- learning a trade under “special government arrangement” schemes and
- who are employed but only receive lodging and pocket money
- are not eligible for AtW support

## Outside the European Economic Area

9. Customers from outside the European Economic Area need a visa to live in the United Kingdom (UK). This may give them the right to work in the UK but they won't get a National Insurance number until they start getting paid.

10. Confirmation that the visa allows the customer to work in GB is enough to meet the residency requirement.

11. You must ask the customer to provide their visa documents.

## Immigration Employment Document (IED)

12. Some customers will have an Immigration Employment Document (IED) that gives them the right to work in this country.

13. You must ask the customer to provide their IED document.

## Asylum seekers and refugees

14. Asylum seekers who have made an application for recognition as a refugee and are awaiting a decision are not allowed:

- to work in the UK
- access to the welfare benefit system

15. Customers who have a work permit or a leave to remain status do not need to hold a British passport. They are allowed to work in the UK and receive support.

**Note:** These cases must be closely monitored. Where the leave to remain is time limited, AtW support must also be time limited and subject to review.

16. 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.

17. Customers who have been given leave to work in the UK but have 'No recourse to public funds' are still allowed to apply for AtW support.

**See:** The [UK Visa and Immigration](#) website for the full list of all relevant public funds.

18. You must ask the customer to provide their notification of leave to enter or remain.

## **Working abroad**

19. If the customer's job is normally based in GB, but they need to travel abroad as part of their duties advisers must read the section on customers visiting overseas.

20. This will include, for example, the extra costs of a support worker.

21. After this period, support can only be extended in exceptional circumstances and after agreement with the policy team.

23. Customers can take equipment supplied through AtW abroad if it's needed to carry out their duties. This is provided the "owner" of the equipment has no objections.

## **Customers in receipt of benefit**

1. Customers in receipt of certain benefits are not normally able to get AtW.

2. 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 (SDA)
- Income Support (IS) paid as a result of illness

3. Exceptions to the above are where the customer:

- is going for an interview, or
- starting a Work Trial, or
- has a job to start, and will stop claiming when employment begins or
- is on Permitted Work Higher Level, Permitted Work PCA Exempt or Supported Permitted Work

4. Customers in receipt of contribution based or income based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), may be able to get AtW support if they're in a part-time job. They must declare this work to their Work Coach.

5. Customers in receipt of Pension Credit (PC) may be able to get AtW support if they're in a part-time job. They must declare this work to the appropriate DWP section.

6. Customers in receipt of any other benefits, for example Council Tax Benefit or Housing Benefit, are able to apply for AtW, provided they satisfy the eligibility conditions.

## **Universal Credit**

7. Universal Credit is a single benefit paid to those in or out of work.

8. Customers with a disability, illness or health condition will be able to apply for AtW support for any paid work they do.
9. Customers who can work, are expected to do all they can to establish an adequate level of earnings.
10. Customers who are working but don't have an adequate level of earnings, will be required to seek more work or better paid work. This must take into account their disability, illness or health condition.
11. Customers who are out of work are required to seek as much paid employment as they are capable of.
12. There's no lower limit on the number of hours of paid employment a claimant can expect AtW to support.
13. Support is only available for employment that pays at least the [National Minimum Wage](#).
14. There's no automatic time limiting of awards.

## New Enterprise Allowance

1. Customers who started New Enterprise Allowance (NEA) up to and including 31 December 2014 will continue to be eligible for AtW support during the mentoring phase of NEA.
2. Customers who started NEA on or after 5 January 2015 are not be eligible for AtW support during the NEA mentoring phase.
3. As NEA is now a contracted provision, extra support is the responsibility of the provider.

## Work experience

1. All work experience opportunities must be arranged in line with Jobcentre Plus instructions before support is authorised.
2. A Jobcentre Plus non Access to Work (AtW) adviser decides if the eligibility conditions for taking part in a work experience opportunity are met before an application is made.
3. Work experience opportunities are flexible, lasting between two and eight weeks so the adviser must establish its duration.
4. This is to make sure the correct amount of support is put in place, follow up agreed and is reviewed towards the end of the opportunity. This will allow the smooth transition into paid employment, if appropriate.
5. For the duration of the work experience, all costs will be paid by AtW including Travel to Work costs (TtW), if appropriate.

## Self-arranged work experience

1. Access to Work (AtW) support is available to customers who have a disability, illness or health condition who are:
  - in receipt of a benefit and request to start a self-arranged work experience placement with an employer
  - not in receipt of a benefit and request to start a self-arranged work experience placement with an employer
2. All self-arranged work experience placements must be arranged in line with Jobcentre Plus instructions before considering support.
3. Jobcentre Plus advisers will decide eligibility conditions for those customers in receipt of benefit who wish to participate in a self-arranged work experience placement. This must be done before an AtW application is made.
4. Jobcentre Plus customers must be made aware that not all self-arranged work experience placements will be able to get AtW support.
5. For AtW purposes, self-arranged work experience placements must:
  - help the customer move closer to the labour market, **or**
  - have a realistic prospect of securing paid work after the placement has ended.
6. The criteria for receiving AtW support will be decided by an AtW adviser.
7. The AtW adviser will need additional information to make a decision on the application. This must include one of the following:
  - written confirmation of the placement between the customer and the employer offering the work experience placement, **or**
  - evidence of paid work at the end of the work experience placement or soon after the end of the placement. For example within three months, **or**
  - an offer of an interview for paid work at the end of the work experience placement.
8. Work experience opportunities that don't get AtW support, may be able to get support via the Flexible Support Fund (FSF).
9. Self-arranged work experience can last between one to eight weeks.
10. The self-arranged work experience placements can be over multiple periods but must not exceed eight weeks in total in any one rolling year.
11. Self-arranged work experience cannot be used for a placement with an employer/organisation that a customer is currently, or has previously worked for on a voluntary basis.
12. AtW will fund work experience opportunities within DWP. This is because the customer undertaking the work experience is not a member of DWP and will not be able to access the internal DWP in-work support.

## Sector based work academies

1. From 9th December 2013 customers starting a sector-based work academy (sbwa) opportunity will be eligible to apply for Access to Work (AtW) support.
2. Sector-based work academies are available in England and Scotland.
3. Placements last up to six weeks and consist of three elements:
  - pre-employment training;
  - a work-experience placement with an employer in that sector; and
  - a guaranteed interview for a job (including an apprenticeship) or other support to help participants through the employer's application process.
4. Only the work-experience element qualifies for AtW support
5. All sector-based work academy opportunities must be arranged in accordance with sbwa policy intent before AtW support is authorised.
6. Eligibility conditions for participation on a sector-based work academy opportunity will be decided by Jobcentre Plus non Access to Work adviser before an application is made.
7. It's important that advisers establish the duration of the work-experience element to make sure the correct amount of support is put in place.
8. Advisers must agree to follow up and review towards the end of the opportunity. This is to allow the smooth transition into paid employment, if appropriate.
9. For the duration of the work experience element, all costs will be paid by AtW including Travel to Work costs, if appropriate.

## Work Trials

1. Work trials are used to find out an individual's suitability for a particular job by giving them an opportunity to try out the job for a short period.
2. Work trials can last between one day and six weeks, but must only be used when there is a genuine job vacancy that the employer wants to fill.
3. Work trials are available for any customer meeting the work trial eligibility criteria.  
**Note:** Customers must also meet AtW eligibility.
4. Customers aged 16 and 17 are not eligible for work trials.
5. Customers in receipt of benefit who start a work trial can continue to receive benefits and travel expenses.  
**Note:** Payments of travel expenses are arranged by Jobcentre Plus.
6. Customers in receipt of benefit must continue to engage with their work coach. The work coach must agree the work trial before AtW support is agreed.

7. Customers not in receipt of benefit but meet AtW and work trial eligibility can receive Travel to Work (TtW) support from AtW.
8. All work trials must be arranged in line with Jobcentre Plus instructions.
9. For those customers not in receipt of benefit, AtW advisers will need to receive a completed DWP104 form from the work trial employer.

## **Adviser assesses customer needs and completes business case**

10. AtW advisers must:

- assess customer needs to the same standard as non-work trial application
- 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 decided or agreed with the customer
- tell the work trial employer that it's their responsibility to purchase, hire or loan any equipment required by the customer
- align support with the start date of the work trial

11. AtW advisers must:

- monitor the customer to make sure support matches the duration of the trial
- reassess the support if the customer secures employment resulting in a longer term AtW award.

## **Supported Internships and Traineeships**

**Note:** Education systems in devolved nations are not governed by DfE and instructions relating to this are under development and will be added when finalised.

For applications in Scotland and Wales, you must confirm the funding the education provider has received for the placement.

1. Young people aged from 16 to 24 years old who start a work placement with an employer as part of the Department for Education (DfE) Supported Internship (SI) or Traineeship programme may be eligible to apply for AtW support for the period of the work placement.
2. If the eligibility criteria for AtW support is met, the customer can still receive benefit payments for:
  - Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA)
  - Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
  - Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
  - Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
3. The maximum period of AtW support depends on the type of eligible programme:

- 39 weeks for a SI, or
- 26 weeks for a Traineeship

4. The period of support can be used within different academic years.

5. A customer who has already received the maximum support within one type of programme is not eligible to apply for support in another type. For example, a customer who has already received AtW support for the full 39-week SI programme is not eligible for AtW support on a Traineeship programme. Similarly, a customer who received support for the full 26-week Traineeship programme will not be able to receive AtW support for a SI programme.

6. In exceptional circumstances a customer may be able to transfer from one type of programme to another.

**See:** [Customer wishes to change programmes](#)

7. Applications can be made up to six months in advance of the SI or Traineeship work placement starting.

#### AtW Funding support

8. AtW support includes:

- funding for travel costs where a customer incurs additional costs travelling to and from work because of their disability
- a Job coach who analyses the placement tasks and breaks them down into easily understood parts for the customer. The coach will also identify skills and knowledge required to do the job. The job coach will also provide direct support for the customer to learn their job and to socially integrate within the workplace
- other types of support including:
  - costs of special aids and equipment, if appropriate, for days that a customer is at the employer's premises
  - mental health support via the Mental Health Support Service (MHSS)
  - help to smooth the transition into paid employment. For example, helping the customer apply for support and making sure it's in place before the programme ends

**Note:** Costs not associated with the in-work element of an SI or Traineeship study programme will not be met by AtW. For example, AtW will meet the costs associated with necessary travel for training in the workplace during the SI, but AtW will not fund travel for training undertaken before the start of an internship. AtW will not fund English and Maths courses.

#### Supported Internships eligibility

9. To be eligible to apply for AtW grant funding the customer must:

- be aged between 16 and 24, (or 25, if the internship is completed before the end of the academic year during which the customer turned 25)

- have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This is also known as a (or Statement of Special Educational Need (SSEN) in Wales and a Personalised Learning Support Plan (PLSP) in Scotland) be undertaking, or about to start, a DfE SI (England). Where the customer is in Scotland or Wales, you must get confirmation of the placement which the customer has received from the education provider.
- spend the majority of the SI programme in the workplace

10. To check eligibility for SI support, the Adviser must phone the named contact on the application form where the customer has given consent to:

- obtain confirmation the customer has been accepted onto a DfE SI programme (England) or a SI programme in Scotland and Wales
- obtain details of how the SI programme is funded in Scotland and Wales
- confirm that the customer has an EHCP, a SSEN or a PLSP

#### Traineeships eligibility

11. Traineeships are a type of study programme that includes a work placement and aims to move young people closer to employment.

12. A traineeship can last anywhere between 6 weeks to 26 weeks.

**Note:** AtW support is available for a maximum of 26 weeks.

13. The unpaid work experience element should last for a minimum of 100 hours and not exceed 240 hours. The provider, the customer and the employer agree how the hours are used based on their needs and activities.

14. The time spent on work experience is dependent on the needs of the trainee and employer and the point at which the opportunity for paid employment occurs.

#### Eligibility for a Traineeship

15. To be eligible for a Traineeship, the customer must:

- be aged 16 to 24, or
- be aged 25 with Learning Difficulty Assessments
- have an EHCP. This is also known as an SSEN in Wales and a PLSP in Scotland
- be currently unemployed with little work experience and qualified below level 3. See: [gov.uk Compare different qualification levels \(link is external\)](https://www.gov.uk/compare-different-qualification-levels)
- be deemed to have a reasonable chance of being job ready or gaining an apprenticeship within 6 months of engaging in a traineeship according to a learning provider
- be undertaking or about to start a traineeship programme and must spend the majority of the programme at the employers premises to be eligible for AtW

16. To check eligibility, the advisor must get confirmation from the named contact on the application form that the customer has been accepted onto a DfE Traineeship (England) or a Traineeship programme in Scotland or Wales

**Note:** obtain details of how the Traineeship is funded in Scotland or Wales.

### Application for support received

17. The application form introduced for the academic year 20/21 is completed and signed by the customer and posted to AtW.

**Note:** this can be submitted electronically if a customer requires email as a reasonable adjustment.

18. Customers who send an old style application form to AtW from the start of the new academic year (20/21) must be asked to complete a new style application form. We are unable to process the old style application form as it doesn't comply with current data protection and security guidance, but the date the original form was received must be used by AtW when backdating the application.

19. To process an application for support, the advisor must:

Step	Action
1	<p>Application received by post</p> <p>AtW advisers must check if the work is paid or unpaid to identify if the application is SI. If unpaid the application is forwarded to the SI team</p>
2	<p>check the application form submitted</p> <p>if this application has been made using the form introduced for the academic year 20/21, go to step 3</p> <p>if the old style application form has been submitted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• issue a new style application form</li> <li>• note the date the old style application was received in DiSC</li> <li>• await return of new style form before following step 3</li> </ul>
3	<p>check DiSC for any previous or duplicate applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• already processed</li> <li>• awaiting processing</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> if the customer has already received the maximum funding for a SI or Traineeship, they can't receive any further funding. An exception to this is if they've been unable to complete their work because of Covid-19 restrictions. <b>See:</b> <a href="#">Covid-19 measures</a></p>
4	<p>complete Searchlight check</p>

	validate and build DiSC record for application
5	check the application is for an eligible SI or Traineeship <b>See:</b> <a href="#">AtW funding details</a>
6	review the attached form, checking all information required has been included <b>Note:</b> if an old style application form was submitted previously, backdate the application to when this original form was received. A new style form must have been submitted before you can proceed with the application if any required information isn't included, make enquiries
7	if further enquiries are needed, contact the person identified by the customer on the application form make 3 attempts to contact at different times if unable to contact, close application
8	update the Employment Status field in DiSC to record the programme enrolled on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre Employment (Scotland) – Temporary – Part Time</li> <li>• Engage to Change (Wales) – Temporary – Part Time</li> <li>• Supported Internship (England) – Temporary – Part Time</li> <li>• Traineeship (England) – Temporary – Part Time</li> </ul>
9	issue ATW01CL letter to the customer with declaration issue ATW02 letter to the named contact on the application form at learning provider update DiSC

### Customer wishes to change programmes

20. If a customer wishes to transfer from one type of programme to another, refer the case to your Line Manager.

21. The LM must refer the case to the national AtW Policy team.

### Covid-19 Temporary Measures

22. Customers who were unable to attend their placements for the 2019/2020 academic year will be able to reapply for AtW support for the 2020/21 academic year.

23. Customers who are unable to attend their placements in the Autumn term of the 2020/21 academic year will be able to apply for AtW support for employability training. AtW will review the position on this in January 2021.

## Permitted Work and Access to Work support

1. Permitted Work (PW) rules allow customers to do some work while still receiving ESA, IB or SDA, including credits only cases.
2. PW enables customers to gain skills and build confidence while still receiving benefit.
3. Customers are considered for AtW support if they're undertaking:
  - Permitted Work (PW)
  - Supported Permitted Work (SPW)
  - Permitted Work PCA Exempt (PWPCAE)

## Access to Work and Jobcentre Plus programmes

1. There are limits on the use of Access to Work with some Jobcentre Plus programmes.

### Specialist Employability Support (SES)

2. AtW support is not available to customers on the Specialist Employability Support (SES) programme.

### Work Choice

3. A specialist advisory team handles queries raised by prime providers.
4. 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	
MHSS	No	
Driver	Yes	

<b>Access to Work Element</b>	<b>Available whilst on Work Choice programme</b>	<b>Cost share may be required</b>
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

## **Modules 1 to 3 of Work Choice and Access to Work**

5. There are limits on AtW support for customers who are on Work Choice.

6. In Module 1 of Work Choice (job entry support – six months with occasional extension to nine months), AtW is only available for those who are:

- AtW eligible
- taking part in either Permitted Work or a Jobcentre Plus Work Trial

7. In Module 2 of Work Choice (in work support – up to two 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
- are being supported by the Work Choice provider
- the support required is not short term support, for example special aids and equipment, travel to work

8. Short-term support is support that embeds the customer in their employment, for example travel buddy.

9. Short-term support is the responsibility of the Work Choice provider.

10. Short-term support will stop once the Work Choice customer is comfortable handling the journey to their supported employment.

11. All current AtW rules apply, including employer / provider purchase and cost sharing where the individual is in Work Choice supported employment for more than six weeks.

12. Either the employer or the Work Choice provider may contribute to AtW costs. It's for the employer and Work Choice provider to agree.

## **Exiting Work Choice**

13. Once the customer is ready to leave the Work Choice programme and enter unsupported employment, the provider will:

- explain the standard AtW process
- provide them with appropriate contact details

14. Providers must inform AtW that the customer is leaving Work Choice.

15. AtW will amend records to make sure the customer is picked up in the AtW standard review process if they have been getting AtW support already.

## **Supported factories/businesses**

16. Customers working in supported factories/businesses, are not eligible for adaptations to premises and equipment or for help from some types of support worker.

17. Sometimes, people working in supported factories/businesses are placed on a work placement with another employer with a view to them progressing from Work Choice.

18. In these cases, adaptations to premises and equipment can be considered, but the likely duration of the placement must be taken into account.

19. Cost sharing applies where the customer is in their Work Choice supported employment for more than six weeks.

## **Blind Homeworkers Scheme**

20. Applicants working under the Blind Homeworkers Scheme (BHS) are not eligible for adaptations to premises and equipment or some forms of Support Worker help.

21. There's a separate capital budget to cover adaptations available via BHS.

22. Help under all other elements of AtW may be available subject to the usual eligibility conditions.

23. Always check the evidence of employment before authorising support.

24. Some local authorities may withdraw assistance when the customer reaches 65.

## **Training and further education**

25. AtW cannot be used for:

- skills build / training for work / work based learning for adults programmes where the customer remains on benefit or receives a training allowance

- training for skill enhancement where the customer remains on benefit or receives a training allowance
- student access to education

26. 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 customer'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

27. 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**

28. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on both employers and service providers to make reasonable adjustments.

29. AtW can help with anything 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 the provider was aware the person needed handouts in large print.

30. It's 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 is seen as a reasonable adjustment.

31. If someone working for a small employer went on a course and needed very expensive BSL support, this may be unreasonable for both the employer and the provider due to financial reasons. This is the sort of case where AtW can help.

## **Induction training**

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

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

## **Redundancy training**

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

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

## European Social Fund Programmes

36. AtW support cannot normally be agreed for customers on the European Social Fund (ESF) programmes. ESF contracts of employment will usually cover costs.

## Voluntary work

1. Access to Work support cannot be offered to people in voluntary work.

## Payments in kind

1. AtW support cannot be given unless the customer is paid at least the [National Minimum Wage](#).

2. Payments in kind do not count as contributing towards the NMW. Accommodation is an exception to this. If accommodation is provided check the [GOV.UK website](#) for the amount allowable to count towards the NMW.

## Local councillors and elected officials

3. Councillors don't need to meet the National Minimum Wage requirements as they're not defined as workers in the National Minimum Wage Act 1998.

4. Councillors elected to office in Scotland since 2007 are paid a salary rather than an allowance and are able to claim AtW providing all other eligibility conditions are satisfied excluding the NMW requirement.

5. Councillors in England and Wales getting repaid for travel and meal allowances will continue to be treated as voluntary workers and are not eligible for AtW.

6. Councillors getting allowances over and above the travel and meal allowances, for AtW purposes, are treated as in employment and may be able to get AtW support providing they meet other eligibility conditions excluding the NMW requirement.

7. 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.

8. HM Revenue and Customs confirm that although subsistence and other similar payments are made and attract Tax/National Insurance, these are not treated as paid employment when paid for expenses incurred in carrying out duties.

9. 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, as long as the owner of the equipment (their employer) agrees.

## Insurance

10. The equipment owner must confirm that there is adequate insurance cover for equipment being used for voluntary work. If extra insurance cover is required it is the customer's responsibility to get the insurance.

11. The customer must seek financial support from the 'voluntary' employer to cover the insurance costs.

12. AtW advisers can help the customer to negotiate with the voluntary employer if necessary.

## Ministerial government departments

1. Departments of the Westminster government, have agreed to fund all adjustments for staff directly employed by them and based at any location.

2. Access to Work support is not available to employees of Ministerial departments unless covered in exceptions and variations.

**See:** [Departments, agencies and public bodies](#) (link is external) on gov.uk for a full list of the Ministerial departments.

## Exceptions and variations

### Non ministerial departments

3. Non ministerial departments do not fund adjustments for their staff, therefore, AtW is appropriate.

**See:** [Departments, agencies and public bodies](#) (link is external) on gov.uk for a full list of non ministerial departments.

### Agencies and other public bodies

4. Ministerial departments do not fund adjustments for staff employed by their agencies and other public bodies.

5. AtW will fund adjustments required by their staff.

6. The Home Office (this includes Border Force, UK Visas and Immigration and HM Passport Office) and the Department for Work and Pensions are exceptions as they do fund adjustments for staff employed by their agencies and other public bodies.

**See:** [Departments, agencies and public bodies](#) (link is external) on gov.uk for a full list of agencies and other public bodies.

### Mental Health Support Service

7. Mental Health Support Service (MHSS) referrals are available to employees of any ministerial department.

8. The cost of any recommendations made by MHSS for employees of ministerial departments cannot be met by AtW.

### Ministry of Defence

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

### **Child Maintenance Group**

10. The Child Maintenance Group is now part of DWP, therefore, AtW funding is not appropriate.

### **Assessments**

11. AtW can provide assessments for people employed in any ministerial department other than DWP.

All assessments for DWP staff must be dealt with by the DWP Workplace Adjustments Team (DWPWAT).

## **Apprenticeships**

1. People serving apprenticeships are eligible for AtW support as they receive a wage and have a contract of employment. National minimum wage rates don't apply to people on apprenticeships.

2. 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.

3. For more information on UK apprenticeships visit the following websites for more information:

- [Apprenticeships in England](#)
- [Apprenticeships in Scotland](#)
- [Apprenticeships in Wales](#)

# 4 Applications

## Overview of application process

1. When dealing with applications for Access to Work (AtW) you must:

- complete IT systems
- contact the customer for additional information if required
- update IT systems with additional information

## Retrospective new applications

2. AtW will only consider funding from the point where all:

- eligibility conditions have been met
- requested evidence and information has been supplied and considered
- support levels have been agreed

3. Any costs that have been paid for prior to a new application being made and agreed will not be met by AtW.

**Note:** You can only consider accepting a retrospective new application (i.e. from the date the application was made), if you've good reason to believe the customer has encountered exceptional circumstances. For example, being in hospital for an extended period or has been misdirected by the department.

## Deferred applications

4. If a customer wants to check their eligibility for AtW before they apply, inform them to contact us again when they have decided to go ahead with their application. We will then review their eligibility.

## Evidence

5. There's no need to obtain condition corroboration from a suitably qualified medical practitioner or other relevant independent professional expert to assess a customer's eligibility unless the customer is applying for new support with [Travel to Work](#).

6. Only request suitable relevant evidence and decide if the evidence is sufficient to decide eligibility.

## Missing evidence

7. Contact the customer and ask them to send in any outstanding evidence they've been asked to provide. This should be done straight away.

8. If the customer disputes the need for the evidence or doesn't have it, explain that an adviser will review their eligibility and may ask for an independent assessment to be made.

9. In all cases, record a summary of the action taken on the appropriate IT systems.

10. If you cannot contact the customer on three occasions, issue letter ATW03 NCL requesting them to contact us.

## Application not pursued

11. An application can be closed if:

- the customer contacts us to say that they do not wish to go ahead with their application
- an employer decides that an AtW contribution is not needed because they will fund the support, provided this is before any assessment costs have been incurred. The customer must be told of the employer's decision before the application is closed

## Overtime

12. Overtime cannot be funded for any element of AtW.

# 5 Assessment

## Action

1. You and the customer, must discuss and consider the effect their disability, illness or health condition has on their ability to do their job. If in doubt, ask for an assessment of the impact.
2. Suggest reasonable adjustments to the employer and/or consider an Independent Holistic Workplace Assessment
3. Identify the need for any:
  - communications support at a job interview
  - travel during working hours
  - travel to work support
  - need for a Support Worker
  - adaptations to premises or equipment
  - special aids or equipment
  - other miscellaneous support
4. When potential solution(s) have been identified, consider and agree with the customer and employer, the most cost effective support that fully meets the customer's needs.

## Assessing the impact of the disability

5. If it's not clear how a customer's condition affects the way they can or will do their job, arrange an independent holistic workplace assessment. This will be with a specialist for an objective analysis of how the customer's condition will affect their ability to do a job.
6. Don't ask for the assessment to identify or diagnose the condition or its causes.
7. Some customers will need to use an interpreter or another third party to help them with their application for AtW. That person might also help the customer to identify the types of support they need and offer to provide that support.
8. If you're concerned that the level of support requested is more than the customer needs, you can ask for an independent holistic workplace assessment through the contracted supplier.
9. You mustn't use AtW funds for a diagnosis of the disability, illness or health condition.

## Historical evidence and assessments

10. When assessing the level of support needed, you must take into account any previous assessments a customer has had due to:

- having a job
- being a disabled student
- having other private support for example, education or a health and care plan

11. A further assessment may not be necessary unless:

- the customer asks for one
- the type of work has significantly changed

## Workplace assessments

12. The most appropriate type of assessment, will depend on the particular needs of the customer.

### Independent holistic workplace assessment

13. Ask for an independent holistic workplace assessment if:

- the customer disagrees with a previous assessment or
- the in work need is unknown or
- it's difficult to decide whether there will be additional costs due to the disability, illness or health condition of the customer

14. The costs of AtW independent holistic workplace assessments are met from general AtW programme spend.

15. For approval and audit purposes, all action taken must be recorded as supporting evidence.

### Technical assessments

16. Other types of specialist assessments may include technical assessments for adaptations to premises and equipment.

17. All advice received should be clearly recorded in the customer's case, including supporting documentation and technical reports.

## Considering alternatives

18. Discuss each option with the customer and the employer to identify the solution that will fully overcome the customer's employment needs.

19. If the customer and the employer wants to use an option which isn't the most cost effective, you should discuss this and receive the appropriate contributions.

20. Explain to the customer and employer, the AtW contribution is based on the option which fully meets the customer's employment needs.

## Vehicle purchase

21. Normally, AtW will not fund the purchase of vehicles but there are exceptional circumstances when the purchase of a vehicle would be the most cost effective option.

22. Identify which element of AtW the cost of the support should be allocated to. Different considerations apply depending on whether the vehicle is work equipment or for travelling to work.

23. AtW doesn't fund the purchase of standard equipment, but could fund adaptations to a customer's vehicle. This would come under the Adaptation to Premises and Equipment element of AtW and the guidance for this must be followed.

24. Vehicles considered as standard, would be for occupations such as:

- taxis for taxi drivers
- lorries for hauliers
- milk floats for milkman
- tractors, quad bikes, all-terrain vehicles and any other equipment needed for agricultural work

25. In exceptional circumstances, AtW can make a contribution to the purchase of a non- standard vehicle where a standard vehicle cannot be used.

26. The contribution must be limited to the difference between the cost of the standard vehicle and the specialist vehicle with further deductions for business and social benefits.

27. Use the Special Aids and Equipment element of AtW to fund the contribution.

## Transferability/portability of equipment

28. You must always discuss with the current employer, the possibility of the customer taking the equipment with them if they go to another job with a new employer. Record this discussion within the business case on the ATW system.

29. If the equipment was funded by both AtW and the employer, and the employer is unwilling to release the equipment despite being requested to, AtW will consider funding the equipment in the new job.

# 6 Travel to Work and Travel in Work

## Introduction

1. Travel to Work (TtW) can provide short or long term financial assistance for disabled people who incur extra costs in travelling to and from work because of the effects of their disability, illness or health condition. It's used to reimburse an agreed portion of the costs of taxis or adaptations to vehicles.
2. Travel to Work costs cannot be paid for customers on a work trial as these will be met by the Jobcentre.
3. Customers are expected to contribute towards the cost of any adaptations to vehicles or the purchase of vehicles which they use for purposes outside work.
4. Car parking charges cannot be considered under any element.
5. The following travel costs are covered under other elements of AtW or other schemes/programmes:
  - payments to a relative or friend for travel costs other than a mileage rate are covered by the Support Worker element
  - purchase of specialised vehicles specifically for work must be dealt with under Special Aids and Equipment
  - special arrangements apply to adaptations to vehicles bought or leased through [Motability](#)
6. AtW does not contribute to fares to interviews.
7. The amount paid in support of the costs, will depend on the method of transport used.
8. Help paying for a taxi is available, if this is the only solution due to the effects of a customer's disability, illness or health condition.
9. AtW wouldn't normally consider making payments to a customer if they can use suitable public transport.

**Note:** You must consider customers with a disability, illness or health condition that may improve or get worse over time. This means there will be times when they can use public transport and times when they can't.
10. AtW will only fund the most cost effective solution that meets the customer's needs. If the customer decides to use a more expensive method of travel, the customer will then need to fund the difference between the cost effective solution and their preferred alternative.

## Condition corroboration

11. All new TtW applications must also be supported by condition corroboration from a suitably qualified medical practitioner or other relevant independent professional expert. They must confirm how the disability, illness or health condition affects the customer's ability to travel to work.

12. The Medical Request form must always be used.

13. For a change of circumstances or a renewal case, there's no need for condition corroboration unless there's a reasonable expectation that the disability, illness or health condition may have improved or needs have changed. Customers with a progressive, degenerative, terminal health condition, or a condition which is never going to improve from one which we have already received evidence for then we do not need additional confirmation of this.

## Normal cost of travel to work

14. Establish what the cost of the customer's journey would normally be if they didn't require support from AtW.

15. If the customer previously drove to work, the customer's contribution is 25 pence per mile.

16. If the customer used public transport, the customer's contribution is what the public transport cost would have been for the whole of that journey.

**Note:** If the customer has a pass entitling them to reduced fares or free travel on public transport, the cost to the customer is the reduced fare or nil as appropriate. If the pass is subject to time restrictions, then these should be taken into account.

## Independent travel

17. You must discuss the travel needs and choices available to support customers getting to and from work. Consider whether the customer may only require support for part of the journey.

18. After initial support from AtW, it's possible that a customer may eventually travel independently to work. In this case you must agree a travel plan and arrange for a short-term temporary solution to be in place.

## Flexible personalisation

19. Build in a tolerance to allow for small increases in support without the need for approval of a new business case and based on need only.

20. The percentage tolerance range must be between 1.5 and 5%, and must only be applied after all reasons have been included in the reaching of the yearly profile.

## Cost effectiveness

21. You can use TtW if the customer's work needs them to travel to a variety of sites and there's no default location provided by the employer, for example a piano tuner.

22. Consider if the proposed solution is practical and cost effective before agreeing the support. For example, if the customer is 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.

23. Consider if it's more suitable and cost effective to adapt the company's vehicle (using the APE element) or the customer's own vehicle (using the TtW element).

24. The costs of removing the adaptation must be included in the agreed spend if adapting a company vehicle.

25. Consider if training is appropriate and will be more cost effective than paying for taxis for customers expected to use public transport.

## Customers with more than one workplace

26. You must establish whether there is a set pattern of travel on which to base costs.

27. If there isn't a pattern, work out the extra costs for each destination. This is based on:

- the availability of suitable public transport/mileage and
- profile costs based on previous work patterns where known

## Suitable public transport

28. A public transport journey is only suitable when:

- it would take less than two hours each way from the customer's home to their place of work and
- public transport is available at times that would enable the customer to use it to travel to or from work.

**Note:** The journey isn't suitable if either of these conditions aren't met.

29. If public transport isn't available, AtW will only meet Travel to Work costs if the effect of the customer's disability, illness or health condition would have prevented them from using it had it been available.

30. AtW will consider an application from a customer who has been travelling to work without previous AtW assistance, but has now developed a disability, illness or health condition. For example, a customer who previously drove to work but has had to stop because of a disability, illness or health condition. This can be temporary or permanent. If no suitable public transport is available, AtW will consider TtW costs in these cases.

31. If suitable public transport is available, the customer would be expected to use it unless they could provide condition corroboration from a suitably qualified medical practitioner or other relevant independent professional expert. This would confirm how the disability, illness or health condition affects the customer's ability to use public transport.

32. Consider whether providing a Support Worker would be the most cost effective means of meeting the customer's travel needs if:

- suitable public transport is available and
- the customer would use it if appropriate help or training was available

## Motability

33. Help may also be available through the [Motability](#) scheme if the customer is in receipt of any of the following:

- Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance
- Enhanced Rate Mobility Component of Personal Independence Payment
- Armed Forces Independence Payment
- War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement

34. Advisers must ask customers who get one of the above benefits, if they wish to be supported through the Motability scheme.

35. The customer is free to choose whether they apply for Motability support.

36. If a customer wishes to apply for Motability support, you must:

- refer them to Motability
- consider putting in place a temporary period of support, with a suitable review period, until the customer receives a response from Motability

37. You must continue to assess any other elements of AtW support and put them in place as quickly as possible.

38. Customers who already have a suitable vehicle supplied through the Motability scheme shouldn't need extra help from AtW unless:

- all other options of travel have been explored
- extra support is required after considering corroboration of the effect of their disability, illness or health condition

39. A Motability vehicle that's not suitable for travelling to work, for example a motorised scooter, must not be taken into account when considering a customer's TtW costs.

40. Customers may be able to receive AtW support to adapt a vehicle if:

- this is the most cost effective solution
- they are not applying for Motability
- they don't have a suitable vehicle from Motability

41. You must inform customers that:

- AtW will make a contribution towards adaptation costs
- they're fully responsible for ownership, repairs, maintenance and all running costs
- they make arrangements for the adaptation to be carried out and reclaim the agreed costs on completion

42. Applications for adaptations to vehicles must be supported by:

- an assessment of driving needs, usually through a [Motability accredited centre](#)
- condition corroboration from a healthcare professional

43. Consider providing temporary alternative support while the adaptations are made.

## Adaptations to customer vehicles

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

45. Help may also be available through the Motability scheme.

46. AtW can only help with adapting a vehicle if this is the most cost effective solution.

47. Arrange for an assessment through an approved centre to determine what adaptations the customer needs and whether the vehicle is suitable for adaptation.

**See:** [drivingmobility.org.uk](http://drivingmobility.org.uk).

48. Driving assessments are not included in the contracted holistic assessment.

49. Consider alternative support such as taxis if this is needed in the interim.

50. AtW will fund the adaptations but customers will be required to make a personal contribution based on the number of days per week it's not used for work but is still used for personal use. AtW calls this a social and domestic benefit contribution.

51. You must calculate the maximum AtW contribution using the following formula:

- take the total cost of the adaptation
- divide it by the seven days of the week
- multiply that by the number of days not at work

### Example

A customer has their own vehicle but they can't use it as it needs adapting for their disability, illness or health condition.

This would come under the Travel to Work / Adapted Vehicle (AV) element of AtW.

The customer travels to work in the vehicle five days a week.

The total cost of an adaptation would be £2,800.

Use the formula to calculate the customer contribution:

Total cost of adaptation	£2,800
Divided by days of a full week	7
Equals	£400
Multiplied by number of days not at work	2
Equals	£800

The customer's contribution is £800.

The AtW contribution is £2,000.

These make up the total adaptation cost of £2,800.

## Vehicle unsuitable for adaptation

52. AtW can contribute towards the cost of a vehicle that meets the customer's minimum requirements. This is when the customer's existing vehicle is unsuitable for adaptation. This could be because:

- the vehicle is too old
- the vehicle is not large enough for the customer's needs
- it's more cost effective to replace a vehicle rather than adapt it, for example exchanging a manual transmission for an automatic

53. You must advise the customer, that they must contribute towards the cost by trading in their existing vehicle against the cost of the newer one.

54. The principle of cost effectiveness is taken in to account in every case regardless of the customer's social and domestic benefit contribution. For example, it's not cost effective to pay taxi fares over a long period of time when considered alongside the approval of a grant towards buying a vehicle.

55. 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 two / three years of age, regardless the age of the vehicle being traded in.

56. Customers must be advised that purchasing a newer car should be seen as a one-off and no further grants will be given for this.

57. Customers must provide their own quotes. These must be recorded on the business case.

58. The number and type of written quote depends on the expected level of expenditure as follows:

- £499.99 and under – one quote needed
- £500 and above – three quotes needed

59. Use the formula to work out the customer's contribution but take into account the trade in value.

## Customer owns a manual vehicle but now needs an automatic car

60. AtW can help meet the additional cost of an automatic vehicle. This should be based on a like for like swap i.e. the same manufacturer, model and age of car.

61. If it's 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.

62. 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.

63. When AtW have provided a grant towards a newer automatic vehicle, the customer must be told that we have now 'moved them into the automatic car market' and can't help any further with grants towards any subsequent automatic vehicle.

64. 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.

65. Advise the customer that we can help meet the additional costs of an automatic car of the same age / model as their existing vehicle.

66. Additional costs up to £499 can be authorised straight away, but three quotes are required for costs of £500 or more.

67. Although AtW will contribute towards the additional costs, the customer must be asked to pay a social and domestic benefit contribution. This is worked out using the formula:

- take the extra cost after trade in
- divide it by the seven days of the week
- multiply that by number of days customer not at work

### Example

A customer has a three year old manual Ford Focus which they can no longer use.

They've seen an automatic car of the same age and specification at a local dealer. This is a 'like-for-like' swap.

They can trade in their own car, but will need to pay an additional £450.

They use the car to travel to work four days per week.

Extra cost (after trade in)	£450
Divided by days of a full week	7

Equals	£64.28
Multiplied by number of days not at work	3
Equals	£192.86

The customer should be asked to make a social and domestic benefit contribution of £192.86.

AtW can contribute £257.14

These make up the total extra cost of £450.

## Adaptation of lease/hire vehicles

68. The customer must check the terms of the contract before approval can be given for:

- adaptations requested for a leased vehicle
- one purchased via a finance arrangement

69. Written permission will be needed before adaptations can be made in either case.

70. Take into account the cost of possible removal of the adaptation later when assessing the cost of adapting a leased or hired vehicle. These costs should be included in the customer's profile.

71. Consider providing other support on a temporary basis while the adaptations are being made.

## Buying a vehicle

72. In exceptional circumstances, buying a vehicle may be the most cost effective solution.

73. AtW support is only available as a contribution to the costs of a vehicle supplied through Motability. AtW funds aren't available to buy a vehicle from any other supplier.

74. AtW may contribute towards the deposit for a Motability vehicle.

75. All decisions to give AtW support for buying a vehicle must be approved in advance by an AtW Senior Operations Manager.

76. You must confirm the customer is in receipt of one of the following benefits if the buying of a vehicle is approved:

- Disability Living Allowance – Higher Rate Mobility Component
- Enhanced Rate Mobility Component of Personal Independence Payment
- Armed Forces Independence Payment
- War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement

77. You must refer the customer to Motability who will assess their circumstances and may be able to provide a suitable vehicle.

78. Consider putting in place a temporary period of support, with a suitable review period, until the customer receives delivery of the vehicle.

79. Funding will not be approved for TtW beyond the delivery of the vehicle.

80. You must continue to assess and put in place as quickly as possible if the customer needs any other elements of AtW support.

81. Consider whether providing a Support Worker is the most cost effective way in meeting the customer's needs if:

- a vehicle is available and
- the customer would use it given the correct help or training

## Funding for travel training

82. Travel training is a short period of time where support is given to the customer to see if they can use public transport on their own.

83. Consider whether funding travel training would be a cost effective way to assist the customer to use public transport.

84. The customer may be more willing to consider this choice once settled in their employment. If this is the case, fund taxi travel for the first few months then revisit and review the customer's needs.

85. Support should be considered on a case by case basis and reviewed regularly.

## Travel by taxi

86. In most cases, the actual means of travelling to work will be by taxi.

87. The customer must provide three quotes from three different taxi firms who are registered with the local authority. The adviser must confirm that the rate charged is reasonable and includes VAT.

**Note:** Taxi companies may submit different quotes but it's important that the customer's needs are met for example, the cheapest taxi may not be able to pick the customer up at the required time.

## Shared taxis

88. If taxis are shared, each AtW 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.

89. The combined contributions must be taken off the taxi fare and the outstanding balance met by AtW. This cost must be divided between customers sharing the taxi.

## Lift from a friend, colleague or relative

90. TtW can pay extra mileage costs if they exceed the normal cost of the customer's journey. This is when a friend, colleague or relative varies their journey to and from their own place of work to give the customer a lift to and from work.

91. To work out the extra mileage costs, you must:

- work out the mileage for the driver's usual journey directly to work
- work out the actual mileage for the varied route
- take off the usual mileage from the actual mileage
- work out the cost of the extra mileage using the AtW mileage rate
- take off the normal cost of the customer's travel

92. If the driver is not varying their route, then no TtW cost applies.

93. Where a friend, colleague or relative makes a return journey to take the customer to and from work, the following applies:

- if public transport is available:
  - the actual cost is the mileage cost for a return journey
  - the normal cost is the usual public transport cost for a return journey
- if suitable public transport is not available:
  - the actual cost is the mileage cost for a return journey
  - the normal cost is the mileage cost for a return journey

## Learner drivers

94. Customers can be considered for TtW whilst they are learning to drive. Support can be approved for:

- up to a year or
- to the test date if sooner

95. You must confirm that the learner is making progress and has a realistic prospect of passing the driving test before extending support further.

96. AtW will not pay for driving lessons.

97. AtW cannot support the buying or adaptation of a vehicle for a learner driver.

## Travel costs within work

98. AtW can be used to pay the extra costs of travel within work if the customer is expected to use:

- a company car
- their own vehicle or

- local public transport and is unable to do so because of their disability, illness or health condition

99. If the customer needs to travel by air/train the employer must meet the additional cost.

100. Examples of the support within work are:

- costs of using a taxi for in-work travel, where public transport or a company car cannot be used
- the cost of hiring a vehicle on a temporary basis where the customer's own vehicle is being adapted or repaired

101. Take into account all in-work travel costs the employer would normally pay. For example, mileage allowances or a contribution to the cost of a vehicle or the cost of a vehicle they supply.

102. If the customer is expected to pay some costs, deduct these, using either:

- the actual fare
- the public transport rate or
- AtW mileage rate to determine the extra cost

# 7 Support Workers

## Introduction

1. Advisers must first explore all other options before considering a Support Worker (SW) as the most appropriate support. Examples of these options may include assistive technology or other adaptations. These options and details must be recorded on the business case.

**Note:** This must be done in a timely manner to enable a Support Worker to be employed promptly if that is the appropriate solution.

2. Advisers need to identify and understand the following before deciding on which single SW type or multiple SW types are appropriate. They must:

- understand the job role the customer is undertaking and its full requirements
- identify any training requirements for that role
- identify any barriers the customer is likely to face in the workplace. This should be done with the customer and the employer
- identify what support needs there are including any reasonable adjustments that may have been made

3. A holistic workplace assessment may be appropriate to identify:

- any barriers to work
- suitable recommendations on how to overcome these

4. Once the barriers and potential solutions have been identified, advisers must create a tailored package to enable the customer to be able to start, return to or retain their employment

**Note:** The package may need a combination of support, for example, a single SW type or multiple SW types.

5. Advisers must decide on the different SW type or types and confirm with the customer and employer who the employer of the SW will be. This could be either the customer or the employer. One SW may be able to provide more than one SW type.

6. AtW can pay for the following costs of employing a SW:

- holidays
- sick leave
- pension contributions
- redundancy costs

7. These costs must be confirmed with the employer of the SW. It must detail the SW's entitlement to holidays, sick leave and redundancy. You must ensure that all costs are inclusive of VAT.

**Note:** These should be in line with the statutory requirements available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

8. Advisers must confirm the hourly rate of the SW and ensure that the total award includes holidays, sick leave and pension contributions. These details must be recorded in the business case.

9. Advisers will need to ensure that details of the holiday, sick leave and pension contributions are detailed in the offer letter so the customer and employer are clear on exactly what AtW will fund.

10. Advisers must decide on the SW type or types they're looking to award and confirm this with the customer and employer.

11. The SW element of AtW offers:

- financial support to cover the full cost of providing SW assistance in the workplace
- assistance for the customer to get to and from work

12. In all cases, support is given in relation to the customer's job role.

13. There are different types of SW who can give different types of help. Some will be ad-hoc or short term, whilst others will be needed on a more regular basis.

14. Advisers must award all of the SW elements that are appropriate to the customer's needs. This will enable them to overcome the workplace barriers they face because of their disability, illness or health condition.

15. The award could be made up of more than one type of SW.

## Example 1

There may be a SW job coach to help a customer learn and retain the role. They may also have a SW job aide to help with some aspects of the job the customer can't do on their own because of their disability, illness or health condition.

## Example 2

An autistic customer may have a trigger at the weekend and doesn't feel they can go to work. With coping strategies not helping, the SW could assist by ensuring further coping strategies are developed to enable the AtW customer to attend work. This could involve establishing an action plan at the end of the week, where the SW and customer discuss how the week went and plan for the next week. The SW could then follow this up with the customer, to see if they're ready for work on Monday morning. If the plan doesn't work, they can work with the customer to determine what more is needed.

### Example 3

A deaf customer who uses English and BSL may use speech to text for training, and BSL interpreting for meetings with colleagues.

16. The SW mustn't do the work of the customer.

17. The only exception to this, is when a SW job aide is provided. A SW job aide may be used when the customer is unable to do their job because of their disability, illness or health condition. This can be up to 20% of customer's contracted hours.

18. Advisers can ignore the provision of personal care in the workplace, as this is not a replacement of duties. Advisers must consider where the personal care element is required when awarding a carer element.

19. Advisers must identify the tasks the SW will do for the customer and confirm they're all work-related. These may include mental health support.

20. A SW cannot give nursing care or help get the customer up and ready in the morning.

21. AtW support starts 'at the front door' i.e. when a person is ready to go to work.

22. Support can be provided outside of the normal working pattern as a one-off event. For example, doing preparation on a Sunday evening. However, this must fall within the normal hours of an AtW customer's contracted hours'. It must also be reported as a change of circumstances.

23. AtW funding is not available for overtime.

24. If advisers are considering support for a SW job aide, they'll need to decide whether:

- the customer is making decisions and directing the actions of the SW job aide
- the SW job aide is enabling the customer to do the job

25. If both of the above are true, advisers must identify tasks the SW job aide will do and decide how many hours can be supported. This is up to a maximum of 100% of the customer's contracted hours.

26. If only one of the above applies, then a maximum of 20% of the customer's contracted hours can be supported by a SW job aide.

## Assessing a customer's needs

27. Advisers must consider whether the support is the most suitable and cost effective solution to overcome the workplace barriers faced by the customer's disability, illness or health condition. This applies to every application.

28. Assistive technology, for example, a loop induction system or use of a Video Relay Service (VRS) may be more cost-effective than providing a SW. This all

depends on the customer's needs in the job they're doing and must form part of the considerations and options detailed within the business case.

**Note:** Advisers must consider whether the best solution for the customer is a blend of assisted technology, a Support Worker or Support Workers.

29. Advisers must discuss the possibility of job restructuring with the employer when the customer has difficulties with certain duties. This might avoid the need for a SW whilst ensuring the employer is fully aware of all the steps they could take to make reasonable adjustments to fulfil their duty under the Equality Act.

30. The adviser and customer must discuss:

- the different types of SW
- the most suitable SW that meets their individual needs

31. This must be done before making a final decision.

32. If advisers are unsure about the support needed, they can trial a level of support for a shorter period of time. This trial period will help determine the right level of support that meets the needs of the customer. Reviews will ensure the correct level of support is put into place.

## Support workers replacing the need for another employee

33. Support is given to meet the customer's needs, not the employer's.

34. AtW must not be used to help the employer avoid employing other staff where needed.

### Example

A Chief Executive role would be expected to have some type of personal assistant or secretary. AtW would not provide a SW to carry out tasks such as filing or photocopying. These tasks would not usually fall within the job description of someone working at Chief Executive level.

## Benefits for the employer

35. You must consider any benefits the employer may get where a SW needs to be available at all times but may not be working all the time and is able to take on other duties. If there's a benefit to the employer, you must negotiate a business benefit contribution.

### Example

A SW provides assistance by moving through the building and retrieving documents from the printer. There'll be times the SW isn't providing support to the customer. It's likely the employer would utilise the skills, where appropriate, of the SW if they are an

employee of the business to undertake other work during that down time such as other filing or retrieval of documents that are not related to the AtW customer. This would be a benefit to the employer's business and as a result a business benefit contribution would be required.

## Employer withdraws support

36. AtW will not provide support in situations where an employer has been giving support to an employee then withdraws help as a money saving strategy.

37. Employers have a legal obligation under the [Equality Act 2010](#) to make reasonable adjustments. If adjustments have already been made, employers cannot withdraw them just because AtW funding may be available.

38. If advisers have any doubts, they should ask for written evidence from the employer as to why support that was offered earlier has now been withdrawn.

39. This also applies to help offered earlier by a colleague if there has been no other change of circumstance, other than the withdrawal of help supplied earlier.

40. If an employer withdraws support, advisers must not offer AtW support.

41. If an employer stops support that was only put in place temporarily until AtW funding was agreed, this is not regarded as withdrawing support and the application can continue as normal.

### Example

A nurse who cannot drive would normally go out with a colleague to be able to visit patients in the community to provide the nursing assistance their employer requires as part of their job. A part of a restructuring exercise (for cost efficiencies), the employer decides they cannot afford to continue to support two nurses to go to a single patient's address. As a result, the ability to be driven by the colleague is withdrawn and means the customer would need to drive themselves which they are unable to do. This would be the employer removing the support that was previously in place for cost saving measures and AtW would not be able to support this.

## An employer wants to provide support through an existing employee

42. This can often be the most suitable and cost effective solution for all concerned. If the employee is being used to give full time support, AtW can repay:

- a full salary
- national insurance contributions
- pension, leave and sickness payments
- costs of a temporary SW to cover the sick employed SW

**Note:** The customer must contact AtW to report this for it to be considered.

43. AtW cannot make a contribution towards costs that the employer would have to meet anyway. For example, heating, lighting and other building costs.

44. If the SW is off sick for a period of time and the customer is remaining in work, it's possible to fund this via AtW and should be considered to ensure the retention of the customer's job.

45. Set a review date of four weeks (or the period agreed during the decision making process). This is to see if the SW is likely to return to work. Advisers can then in the short or longer term, identify the most appropriate support that can be put in place for the customer. This will ensure they are being supported in work and value for money is being achieved.

46. Advisers need to confirm that the total profiled costs over the year don't exceed the SW's full salary. If they do, advisers must limit AtW funding to the full salary costs only.

**Note:** This is if the adviser agrees to pay the employer at an hourly rate.

47. A booking fee must not be paid when employers use their own employees to support customers.

## Example

A customer needs 25 hours support per week and the employer has a suitably qualified employee who can give the necessary support. The employee's salary (including all costs) is £27,000 per year.

The 'going rate' for support of this type is £28 per hour in the local area.

In this case, you must work out the cost of support over the year i.e. 25 (hours per week) x £28 (rate per hour) x 52 (weeks per year).

As this total cost would be £36,400 which is significantly higher than their salary, you should restrict the AtW grant to £27,000

If the same customer however, needed only 15 hours support per week, then using the average rate, it would work out at a cost of £21,840 per year. This is less than their salary, and the most cost effective choice. This is this amount that AtW can pay.

## The customer or employer wants to recruit a new employee as a support worker

48. AtW can repay:

- a full salary
- national insurance contributions
- pension, leave and sickness payments
- recruitment costs including advertising
- costs of a temporary SW to cover the sick employed SW

49. Rates of pay should be looked at again at the yearly review or if the level of support changes.
50. It's usual to agree to pay for the SW if they or the customer are sick for up to four weeks in a rolling 12 month period from the first period of sickness.
51. AtW can pay recruitment costs up to 5% of the SW's gross salary. This covers the cost of adding the new employee to the payroll and any other HR activities. This must only be done if the employer asks for it. AtW will repay the full cost when an employer provides evidence to show that they have had to pay an amount greater than this percentage. They must provide a breakdown to demonstrate how this amount is made up.
52. Redundancy and notice payments costs can be paid. Don't profile redundancy or notice payments into the applicant's profile. These costs must be profiled when they occur.
53. Costs cannot be applied for retrospectively and would be unlikely to be paid if such an application was received.
54. Advisers need to agree a fixed period for which AtW will pay to cover unexpected absences such as sick leave. This must be included in the offer letter outlining the agreed support including the number of hours and rate of pay etc.
55. 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 AtW where the need is related to their disability, illness or health condition.
56. Advisers must agree an extra number of hours initially, but keep this under review. Don't meet this need through an increase in the hourly rate paid to the SW.
57. Customers and SWs who wish to find out their employment position must be told to contact their local HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) office.
58. HMRC has a Helpline for new employers.  
Telephone: 0300 200 3211  
Textphone: 0300 200 3212
59. If any financial liability is incurred as a result of a customer being considered an employer by the HMRC, advisers may arrange for the customer to be reimbursed from this element. In all such cases, tell the AtW policy team of the details at once.
60. Customers who use family or friends to provide SW help are equally subject to the considerations above.

## Support workers booked through an agency

61. If the customer or employer wishes to use an alternative supplier, advisers must confirm that the rate quoted is reasonable.

62. 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.

## Payment for a support worker

63. Payment for a SW will only be made for the days on which a customer would usually work or for other days for example, leave written in the SW's contract of employment.

64. Advisers must ask for a copy of the SW's contract and keep it in the customer's case file to help verify future claims.

65. Advisers must profile all costs, inclusive of VAT, 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

66. Under the regulations, a worker is entitled to 5.6 weeks' leave or at least 28 days if a person was to work a 5-day week. This isn't in addition to contractual rights.

**See:** [holiday entitlement](#) on the GOV.UK website.

67. AtW will pay for these weeks leave, as it's an extra cost that would not have been relevant had the employer or customer not needed to employ the SW.

**See:** [Health & Safety Executive](#) website for specific information.

**See:** [Pay and work rights](#) on the GOV.UK website.

**See:** [The Working Time Regulations](#) on the Health and Safety Executive website.

## Flexible personalisation

68. Build in a tolerance to allow for small increases in support without the need for approval of a new business case and based on need only.

69. The percentage tolerance range must be between 1.5 and 5%, and must only be applied after all reasons have been included in the reaching of the yearly profile.

**Note:** If the small changes become the norm, then this should be considered as a change of circumstance and the award revised.

## Additional payments

### Travel expenses

1. SW travel expenses must be included in the hourly rate quoted for support. This makes sure AtW agrees the most cost effective solution for the entire support.

2. If there are cases where AtW have agreed to pay travel expenses, you must repay costs at either the standard class public transport or the AtW mileage rate of 25p per mile (if they have driven to the assignment).

3. Car parking charges cannot be reimbursed.

## Customer visiting overseas

4. Advisers must first establish if the customer is classed as a UK resident for HMRC tax purposes. This must be done before they consider AtW support for a work visit overseas.

5. Advisers will do this by confirming the customer has been resident in the UK for more than 364 days in the last four full consecutive tax years recording this on the AtW system.

**Note:** Each tax year commences from 6 April.

6. AtW support is available for work-related trips outside of Great Britain. However, advisers must consider all aspects of the trip to identify the most appropriate support.

7. AtW advisers must determine the reasons why the customer is going to work abroad. These reasons must be recorded on the AtW system.

**Note:** The visit can only be funded if it's part of the customer's job. It cannot be funded, if it's a developmental or career development opportunity.

8. You must be satisfied that the support being provided is for the customer's job.

9. You must establish the exact details and reason of the trip. These must be recorded on the AtW system and must include:

- the work location
- the method and cost of transport to get there from their home
- the method and cost of journeys taken during their stay
- travel dates
- the number of hours they'll be working
- the support that will be required
- accommodation costs

10. You must review all travel and accommodation costs before agreeing AtW support. You must determine and assure yourself that value for money is being achieved. This doesn't mean the cheapest option. Various factors must be considered including any discounted rates an employer gets or any contractual agreements leading to greater discounts.

11. You must discuss costs with the customer's employer and undertake research using the internet. This includes any information from the customer about the trip.

## Support worker attending meetings, conferences or training as a delegate

12. AtW funding doesn't cover the SW attending meetings, conferences or training sessions as a participant.

13. The SW is only engaged to give full support to the customer and cannot do these other tasks at the same time.

## Overnight support

14. Where support is needed overnight, for example to be at a conference, the approved costs must be based on hotel rates on the DWP Business Travel and expenses website.

**Note:** Exceptional circumstances can be considered however. For example the SW needs to stay in an adjacent room.

15. Repayment of necessary travel costs must be considered and must be limited to standard class public transport rates or the AtW mileage rate of 25p per mile (if the SW is driving to the event).

16. If the SW drives the customer to the event, you must consider whether this is an extra cost, as the customer or their employer would have to meet these costs as usual business travel.

## Meal allowance

17. Extra SW meal costs owed for visits/trips outside their normal working pattern can be paid back on the production of a valid receipt.

18. Costs will be limited to the same restrictions and rates given on the DWP Business Travel and expenses website.

## Cancellation fees

19. There may be a claim from a SW for a cancellation fee. Claims can be considered if the cancellation is unavoidable and not caused by the SW or employer.

### Example

The customer has a SW for two hours each week for a team meeting. The customer phones in sick on the day of the meeting and notifies the SW that they will not be needed. As a result the SW claims a cancellation fee. AtW can consider funding this request.

If the employer cancelled the team meeting several days before however but forgot to tell the SW, then the employer should take responsibility for this and meet any resulting costs.

**Note:** Cancellation fees for British Sign Language Interpreters can be found on [National Union of British Sign Language Interpreters](#) website.

## Types of support worker

1. Advisers must consider the customer's needs and take an holistic approach to the support. It may be necessary to award more than one type of SW to meet the need. It may also be necessary to have a blended approach of a Support Worker and assistive technology. If in doubt, check with the customer.

### Example 1

A customer may be starting a new job and need a SW job coach to learn the job. In addition, they may also require counselling or mentoring. The SW job coach will carry out these tasks during the first 26 weeks of employment but there may be an on-going need for mentoring and counselling beyond 26 weeks. Additional support will be needed following the 26 week SW job coach period. This will enable the customer to sustain employment.

### Example 2

A deaf customer may use Speech to Text for their workplace induction so they have notes they can refer back to later. BSL Interpreting may be required for meetings with colleagues and customers and Remote BSL Interpreting (VRS / VRI) may be used for phone calls.

## British Sign Language (BSL)

### Registered Sign Language Interpreters (RSLI) and Trainee Sign Language Interpreters (TSLI)

2. Deaf people may describe themselves as Deaf, deaf, deafened, hard of hearing, having a hearing loss. In these instructions we use 'deaf' to include all of them.
3. Deaf people's needs are diverse. Deaf people may have some or no hearing, and may use British Sign Language, English, or both.
4. Deaf people who use English may have varying levels of fluency and ability with written English, speaking English and understanding spoken English.
5. British Sign Language (BSL) is a language in its own right. It is not a signed form of English.
6. Just having the ability to use two languages is not enough to be able to interpret. Interpreting is a skill that requires training and experience to be able to transfer meaning between British Sign Language (BSL) and English effectively. This provides the customer with the most accurate translation service.

BSL 1 and 2      Equivalent to GCSE

BSL 3            Equivalent to A-level

BSL4            Equivalent to first year of undergraduate level

BSL 6                    Equivalent to graduate level

7. A RSLI and TSLI must have completed or started the:

- Level 6 NVQ diploma in Sign Language Interpreting approved
- undergraduate course
- postgraduate course

8. Some interpreters, especially if they live and work in Scotland, may be SASLI Registered Interpreter Members with the Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters SASLI.

**See:** [SASLI website](#) for more information.

9. A Trainee Sign Language Interpreter (TSLI) is someone who:

- has started their Level 6 interpreting qualification and intends to become a Registered Sign Language Interpreter (RSLI)
- is potentially active on the NRPCD

**Note:** You can check their name is on the register by visiting the NRCPD website. Enter their name, making sure you select 'include trainees' at the bottom of the page.

10. TSLIs with NRCPD must:

- be on an NRCPD approved interpreting course which leads to registered status
- have been assessed by a qualified assessor or verifier as meeting the NRCPD standards for trainee Interpreters
- have a minimum standard of level 4 in BSL
- have a named supervisor/mentor who is a RSLI
- have sufficient interpreter training or experience to be aware of developing professional competence boundaries

**See:** [National Registers of Communication Professionals \(NRCPD\)](#)

**Note:** Communication Support Worker (CSW) don't have training in interpreting.

11. A Trainee Sign Language Interpreter (TSLI) is on the path to becoming an interpreter. A CSW is not.

12. Sign language interpreters transfer meaning from one spoken or signed language into another signed or spoken language.

13. Customers requiring sign language interpretation will usually require a BSL/English interpreter. British Sign Language (BSL) is a language in its own right. It is not a signed form of English.

14. NRCPD Registered Sign Language Interpreters (RSLIs) have level 6 qualifications in both their second language, such as BSL, and interpreting.

15. An NRCPD regulated TSLI may be suitable for some assignments. Advisers must check with the customer to make sure their needs can be met by a TSLI. Advisers should remind customers that:

- TSLIs must not work in the criminal justice system or mental health settings
- TSLIs should exercise caution when accepting work in a social care setting
- the customer should ask the TSLI if NRCPD has placed further restrictions on the assignments they can take on

16. Some trainee interpreters, especially if they live and work in Scotland, may be SASLI Trainee Interpreter Members with the Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters SASLI.

**See:** [SASLI website](#) for more information.

17. If the customer is not able to find or does not want to engage an interpreter registered with [NRCPD](#) (link is external), advisers can ask customers to ensure they check and provide us with the following information. Does the Support Worker hold:

- the qualification(s) required for [NRCPD](#) registration
- appropriate Professional Indemnity insurance
- a standard check from the Disclosure and Barring Service

**Note:** Documentation should be stored in the customer's case file.

## Remote BSL interpreting (VRS/VRI)

18. Video Relay Services (VRS) and Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) are both services where the interpreter is in a different location to the customer.

19. Deaf customers will watch the interpreter on a screen, smart phone, tablet, laptop or, computer.

**Note:** In this guidance VRS and VRI are referred to as “Remote BSL interpreting (VRS / VRI)”.

## Video Relay Services (VRS)

20. VRS is when the customer, the person they are communicating with and the sign language interpreter are all at different locations.

## Video Remote Interpreting (VRI)

21. VRI, is when the customer and the person they are communicating with are at the same location but the sign language interpreter is at a different location.

## Interpreter with deafblind people

23. The term ‘interpreter with deafblind people’ refers to someone with specific training and skills, and who is registered with the NRCPD in this category.

24. As there are very few registered interpreters with deafblind people, many deafblind people will work with BSL interpreters who have additional skills, for example, in Close Frame interpreting.

## **Communication Support Workers**

25. The term Communication Support Worker (CSW) refers to people who use a variety of methods to support deaf and deafblind people access communication. CSWs are not interpreters.

26. CSWs are not interpreters and aren't trained or assessed to interpret. Their role is to support customers to access communication in English, using a wide range of techniques. For example, note taking or rewriting emails.

27. Most CSWs have some ability in BSL, up to level 3 (Level 3 is similar to an 'A' level, so is not fluent enough for interpreting.) However, this is not a requirement in order to receive AtW funding.

## **Deciding whether BSL interpreters and/or CSWs are required**

28. A sign language interpreter should be used in a situation which calls solely or mainly for interpretation.

29. Ask the customer whether they need to use an RSLI, a TSLI or a CSW for their work access needs.

30. Check that the customer understands the difference between Registered Interpreters (RSLI), Trainee Interpreters (TSLI), and/or Communication Support Workers (CSW), and is making an informed choice.

31. The customer may want to use RSLIs, TSLIs and/or CSWs in different settings. If this is agreed, their award should reflect this.

32. A BSL interpreter should be used for situations in which clear and accurate communication is essential, such as:

- team meetings
- appraisals
- disciplinary meetings
- legal meetings, such as a tribunal or court hearing
- most training sessions
- conferences on an unknown or technical subject

33. A CSW may be appropriate for:

- team meetings
- basic training
- conferences on a known subject
- one to one support

## General considerations for all interpreters

34. Due to the physical and mental demands of interpreting, there are a number of areas to consider before agreeing what interpreter support is needed.

35. Two or more interpreters may be required depending on the duration, nature and intensity of the work involved. These and the considerations set out below must be explored with the customer.

36. Consider whether:

- it's a straightforward one-to-one meeting
- it's a long meeting and whether there are no or insufficient breaks
- there's a large audience
- there are several people going who require a BSL interpreter
- the topic is straightforward
- there's a rapid change over of speakers that might make interpreting more difficult
- there are implications for the customer or others if there is a misinterpretation
- it's linked to the customer's actual job
- the setting is informal or formal
- there are structured breaks in place
- there will be 'break out' or syndicate exercises

37. You must discuss with the event organiser / employer what reasonable adjustments they have made to support communication such as interpreters.

38. If you're satisfied the event organiser / employer has taken all reasonable steps you must consider providing AtW funding for more than one interpreter.

## Lip speaker

39. Lip speakers are trained so that their speech is easy to lip read.

40. They are used in conferences or meetings where speakers are hard to lipread because of:

- distance
- accents
- speed
- use of jargon
- facial hair
- lighting
- there are lots of people speaking in turn in a group

41. They repeat silently what is being said by the speaker using clear lip patterns and will usually sit or stand close to the deaf person so they can be easily seen. They may also use some gesture or signs to support understanding.

42. Support can be put in place for deaf people who don't use BSL.

43. If the event is likely to last more than a couple of hours you may need to consider the provision of two lip speakers.

44. To register as a Lipspeaker with [NRCPD](#) someone must hold an NRCPD approved qualification in Lipspeaking.

## Note taker

45. It will mainly be used by customers who are:

- deaf
- dyslexic.

## Example

A deaf customer may need a note taker at meetings and conferences. This may be because a BSL user is unable to follow an interpreter and take notes at the same time.

46. Before authorising a note taker, discuss with the employer whether there is someone else who could take the relevant notes. There's usually someone at the meeting taking notes or minutes. If so, there's no need for a SW note taker.

47. To register as a notetaker with NRCPD, someone must hold an NRCPD approved qualification in notetaking.

## Speech to Text

48. A Speech to Text Support Worker, for example a palantypist, provide deaf users with access to spoken English.

49. Speech to Text is normally done by palantypists or stenographers using special keyboards. The information is converted into full written English that is seen on a screen for example, a tablet, a laptop, a conference videos screen. After the event a transcript can be made available.

50. It can be provided by the speech to text Support Worker being in the same room as the customer.

51. If there is a strong and stable Wi-Fi connection, availability of a tablet or laptop with a high quality microphone, it may be possible to provide speech to text remotely, with the operator at a different location. This must be discussed with the customer.

52. To register as a Speech to Text Reporter with NRCPD, someone must have passed an NRCPD eligibility assessment in Speech to Text Reporting.

## Re-Speaker

53. Re-speaking is a speech to text service. This is where, instead of typing, a remote operator repeats what they can hear, a computer using speech recognition turns it into English words, which are sent to be read on a screen.

## Carer

54. A carer is someone who helps a customer overcome physical barriers. For example, help with mobility or toilet use at work.

55. Check with the customer whether they're getting help from elsewhere as there could be some overlap with other benefits such as Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Carers Allowance (CA).

## Counsellor

56. A qualified counsellor may be useful in offering support and talking about work place coping strategies. This would be for customers with anxiety, panic attacks or mental health related problems.

57. A counsellor might be useful in negotiating with an employer when a customer is experiencing problems coping with the job.

58. AtW support could be made available either at the customer's home or place of work.

59. A counsellor will work with the customer to create goals for example to further help with work place coping strategies.

**Note:** Applications for this type of support can also be considered for Mental Health Support Service (MHSS).

## Driver

60. A SW driver enables someone who would normally drive but can't due to their disability, illness or health condition to be mobile as part of their job role.

61. A SW driver may be authorised to:

- drive the customer to and from work
- travel during their working day.

62. It shouldn't be used when:

- someone varies their journey to drive a disabled person to work
- friends and relatives who are paid a mileage fee for the duty.

**Note:** These applicants must be considered under Travel to Work (TtW).

63. If a SW driver is needed on an on going basis, inform the employer or customer to go through a recruitment agency.

64. If the SW is needed to make a return journey, but it's unlikely they could return home and get back to collect the customer within two hours, then we can pay an amount for 'downtime'. This payment must be limited to the national minimum wage rate.

**See:** [National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage rates](#) on the GOV.UK website.

## Job aide

65. A job aide may be used where the customer is unable, due to disability to do part of their job.

66. AtW can consider paying up to 100% of this type of support if the job aide is providing enabling support for the customer.

67. If the job aide is providing support which the customer cannot do themselves and requires the assistance to complete that whole task then AtW can only consider paying up to 20% of the customer's contracted hours in total for the role.

## Job coach

68. A job coach is a person who gives specialised on-site support to someone disabled who has a job to start and will assist the employee:

- learn the job
- keep the job

69. AtW customers will have found a job by the time their application is taken or have a Work Trial to start. Therefore coaching for job search will not be funded by AtW.

70. A job coach analyses tasks and breaks them down into parts. The coach identifies skills and knowledge required to do the job.

71. They show the employee how to do each task:

- efficiently
- safely and
- in a logical way.

72. A job coach can provide soft skills coaching for customers with Asperger's syndrome or other learning difficulties. This helps them learn appropriate communication styles in the workplace.

73. Soft skills can include social graces, communication, language, personal habits, interpersonal skills, managing people and leadership. This list is not exhaustive. Advisers can specify other duties in consultation with the customer, employer and job coach.

74. The job coach stays with the employee until their learning needs are fully met and levels of support can be safely reduced.

75. The job coach checks progress, initially at pre-agreed intervals and then on an ad hoc basis. This can be requested by the employee or employer. This may be when:

- a change of job or personal circumstances occurs or
- when an employee's performance or behaviour gives cause for concern

76. The job coach aims to support and encourage an employee to become as independent as possible, taking into account individual circumstances, until the level of support needed is reduced to a minimum.

77. Job coaches work primarily, though not only, with the learning disabled and those with mental health conditions.

78. They can also be used to help and support other groups of people such as the physically disabled.

79. 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
- travel
- making prompt cards for learning and routine tasks
- some advocacy work with the employer for example, negotiating reasonable adjustments

80. As the role of the job coach is flexible, their duties may include some or all of those outlined above. This list is not exhaustive and you can specify other duties in consultation with the customer, employer and job coach.

81. To reflect the flexibility of job coaching, advisers must make sure the support put in place is tailored to the needs of the individual.

82. It's essential that an action plan is drawn up between customer and job coach. This is done during the first weeks of support. It identifies how support will taper off to a point where it's no longer needed on a regular basis.

83. Once the action plan has been drawn up you will need to look at it regularly to make sure that support is tapering off as planned.

84. Job coaching is always more intensive during the first weeks or months of work. Intensive means working actively with the customer for all or part of each working day. This intensive period is varied to individual needs but should not normally last longer than 26 weeks.

85. An individual may require intensive support for longer than 26 weeks. There is discretion to allow up to a further 13 weeks provided 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.

86. At the end of the intensive period of support, job coaching must begin to taper off as recorded in the action plan. The tapering off period is not fixed and needs to take the individual needs into account. The aim must be that the individual will be working unaided within a suitable period of time.

87. If support is not beginning to taper off by the end of the 26 weeks (plus the 13 week extension if appropriate) review the application and determine if any of the barriers the customer is continuing to face could be available via another SW element or if there is a piece of Assistive Technology that could assist.

88. Even after an individual is working unaided there may be times when further job coaching is needed. For example, if the work changes or there is a change of line manager or location.

89. Support is flexible. Tell the customer they can ask for further support at any time by making a change of circumstances application.

90. In these situations, the adviser simply confirms with the customer and Job Coach the reason for the request and how many hours of coaching needed and fund accordingly.

91. A new application is needed if the individual moves to new employment or if the last contact from them was more than three years ago.

92. Job coaches are employed by a variety of organisations, including charities and local authorities. Some work on a self-employed basis. It's essential that advisers make suitable checks to avoid double funding. Employer withdrawing support must be taken into consideration.

93. The employer may provide a job coach with suitable knowledge and experience of the role from within the workforce. Individuals may already have a job coach who has helped them secure the job and it's usually sensible to allow this coach to continue in the role.

94. 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 the employer withdrawing support 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 as early as possible into the role and no later than 3 weeks into employment 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 two 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, consider what alternative support might be able to be funded from Access to Work to include SW or specialist aids and equipment

95. Any cut or withdrawal of support must be agreed with the customer and job coach.

96. A customer can ask for further help at anytime if their circumstances change.

## Personal reader

97. Support is available for those needing help with reading. This may be due to dyslexia, blindness or sight loss.

98. They need access to text that cannot be provided by scanners or other specialist aids or equipment.

99. It's likely to be used in conjunction with specialist aids or equipment but the two forms of help must not overlap.

100. Support may be used as an interim measure when a customer is waiting delivery of equipment or other support.

## Travel buddy

101. This is someone who accompanies the customer when travelling to and from work. For example where a customer has:

- epilepsy
- a visual impairment
- fear of travelling such as agoraphobia and who cannot manage travelling alone

102. You may wish to consider this type of support for a short and decreasing period to allow someone newly disabled to become confident using public transport, rather than offer long term TtW support.

103. AtW would consider funding the transport costs involved with the Travel Buddy using the public transport.

## **Other**

104. SWs can also deliver:

- strategy training to help individuals with specific learning difficulties or mental health issues cope better in work
- out of work support for customers experiencing mental health issues
- disability awareness training for colleagues and supervisors.

# 8 Adaptation to premises or equipment

## Introduction

1. AtW is available to pay the additional costs to modify an employer's or self-employed person's premises or equipment to allow a disabled customer to work and stay in work.
2. This is only where it's not the duty of the employer to make reasonable adjustments under the [Equality Act 2010](#).  
**See:** [What are reasonable adjustments?](#) on the Equality and Human Rights Commission website
3. What is reasonable will depend on:
  - the customer's disability, illness or health condition and the effects of that disability, illness or health condition
  - how practicable the changes are
  - whether the change will overcome the disadvantage for the customer
  - how much money and resources are available
  - the cost of making the changes
4. The kind of adjustments which could be made include removing, changing or providing a way of avoiding a physical feature where it is reasonable to do so.
5. 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.
6. This applies even if there are disabled employees who also need the facilities.
7. Examples of different types of adaptations for which help may be available are:
  - ramps for wheelchairs
  - lifts
  - the widening of doors
  - disabled toilets and washrooms
  - upgrades of computers and other equipment

## Employer's legal responsibilities

8. Employers must make adequate provision for disabled people present on their premises. This applies to both employees and visitors and takes into account all forms of disability.

9. You must be satisfied that the employer has taken action to carry out their legal responsibilities before ATW funding is allowed.

10. 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](#)

11. 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

12. For advice on current regulations, employers can contact:

- local authority planning departments
- the Health and Safety Executive
- the Equality and Human Rights Commission
- fire and rescue authorities

13. The AtW assessment process must not be delayed where an employer has to finish or fully act upon health and safety, workstation assessment or Equality Act 2010 responsibilities.

14. Under fire safety requirements, employers have to:

- carry out fire safety risk assessments and
- implement proper fire precautions and protections measures and
- maintain a fire management plan

15. Funding cannot be used where there is a duty on the employer to supply facilities for disabled members of the public on their premises. For example, disabled access to public areas in a building.

16. This applies even if there are disabled employees who also need the facilities.

## Employer's Equality Act 2010 obligations

17. You must not give legal advice on Equality Act 2010 obligations.

18. If employers are unsure about their own legal responsibilities, refer them to the [Equality and Human Rights Commission website](#).

19. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on an employer to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees.

20. AtW funding cannot be used to support these changes. Before agreeing AtW support, confirm the employer is taking their own steps to support these changes. The fact that AtW agrees to provide support, does not mean that an employer has satisfied their duty under the Equality Act 2010.

21. Detailed advice for employers can be found at the [Equalities and Human Rights Commission website](#).

22. A fact sheet covering landlord and property managers responsibilities, can be found on the [Office for Disability Issues website](#).

## Government buildings

23. Support cannot be given for adaptations to crown buildings.

**Note:** A crown building is one owned by a government department, including those leased to another government department or agency.

## Actions

24. You must:

- confirm that Adaptation to Premises or Equipment (APE) applies
- talk about job restructuring with the employer
- arrange the correct technical expert to assess changes needed
- confirm the employer has met all necessary legal obligations
- confirm the employer/customer have relevant permissions
- confirm the proposed solution is fit for purpose and value for money
- consider the [business benefit](#) and daily living needs
- consider providing temporary support

## Confirm that adaptations to premises or equipment are suitable

25. An APE application is for alterations to premises or equipment that changes them from how they were originally built/supplied.

**Note:** Don't confuse this with a Special Aids and Equipment (SAE) case which supplies equipment.

26. Adaptations to new premises (post 2010), cannot normally be funded through Access to Work (AtW). However, they can be allowed in exceptional cases.

**Note:** If you believe there's exceptional hardship, then full details of the case should be sent to the policy team for them to consider and provide advice.

27. Adaptations to customers' own vehicles, must not be put under either APE nor SAE. They'll sit within the Travel to Work element.

28. Adaptations, for example, steering, indicators, pedals and seating to a specialist vehicle supplied by the employer such as a mechanical digger are put under the APE element.

29. It can be difficult, particularly with equipment, to decide whether an item should be under APE or SAE. To make this easier, think about the equipment being used by the customer and if it can be bought, or each piece of it, in its eventual state. If it can, then it's more likely that the item will be an SAE.

### Example

Providing a split keyboard may seem like an APE, as the customer's PC needs adapting. However, a split keyboard can be bought from a retailer and used without further changes. It is therefore a SAE.

30. Providing specialist software should come under SAE. However, if the software needs re-scripting to work fully with other software used by the customer, it should come under APE.

31. A relevant piece of equipment may be adapted to meet the customer's needs for employment or self-employment for the AtW award. Providing it's expected to stay serviceable for the life of the award, AtW will contribute to the cost for adaptations. Other conditions for the APE award must also be met.

32. The application must be dealt with under Special Aids and Equipment (SAE), if the equipment is not in place at the place of employment / self-employment or is unlikely to stay serviceable throughout the full AtW award period.

## Technical experts

33. Various external experts are available to help you decide on the right support needed. You should consider:

- the customer's disability
- your own areas of expertise and
- the probable type of adaptation, for example building or employer's equipment

## Visit the place of employment

34. Where an adaptation to premises is needed, a visit to the place of employment must be made by the holistic workplace assessor.

35. For self-employed customers, the holistic workplace assessor will visit their home or at the registered premises.

## Planning permission

36. Some employers will need to apply for planning permission or need landlord's permission before carrying out an adaptation.

37. Where possible, the customer should have quotations for building work and relevant permissions. Estimates of costs must include installation and training in use where suitable.

38. Extra costs, for example architect's fees, can be agreed in advance in order for the permissions to be sought.

39. The local authority may own a building for which they are being asked to approve a planning application.

40. You must request a statement of assurance from the local authority that it has complied with its legal obligations before any AtW funded alterations are made.

41. If AtW can't fund APE because relevant permissions are being sought, consider providing alternative temporary support.

## Value for money

42. You must consider if it's more cost effective to replace equipment rather than making an adaptation before agreeing AtW support.

43. Consider whether:

- the adapted equipment is likely to need replacing within the period of agreed support
- it's more cost effective to get new equipment (although above present needs), if it's a cheaper long-term solution

- the employer has any plans to upgrade equipment soon
- three separate quotes have been received before any planned work takes place

44. If you decide it's more cost effective to buy new equipment rather than adapting existing equipment, the award must be made under Special Aids and Equipment.

45. Decisions must be clearly documented in the business case.

## Leasing and renting

46. Leasing or renting equipment is usually expensive. Problems may occur if further adaptation is needed later on. For example, a penalty clause for early termination or the need to negotiate a new lease or rental agreement.

47. Before entering into lease or rental agreements, all other possibilities must be looked into first.

48. In some circumstances, leasing or rental is the best choice. For example, where an employee is on a short-fixed term contract. Value for money must be the over-riding reason in deciding which course of action to take.

## Preferred contractors

49. Employers may wish to use contractors of their own choice rather than the contractor who has supplied the cheapest quote. They may choose to have other work done at the same time to minimise disruption to the workplace.

50. 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

51. You must consider whether other customers of the business or non-disabled colleagues during their work will use the adaptation.

52. Consider if this will be of general benefit to the company. If there is a general business benefit a contribution must be sought, as well as a compulsory cost share.

## Adapting home premises

53. You must make sure the adaptation is primarily for employment needs and not daily living needs when an adaptation request is made for the customer's own home or premises.

54. An adaptation may be useful for daily living needs or increase the value of the property. Where this occurs take into account when talking about cost sharing.

55. AtW only meets the minimum need cost where a requested adaptation exceeds the minimum need.

## Temporary support

56. Adaptations to premises may be delayed by the need to get quotes or for a contractor to schedule the work into their plans. In these cases, a short-term, interim solution, should be considered so that customers are inconvenienced as little as possible. For example, a support worker.

57. Temporary support must be taken into account when preparing the business case for approval.

58. If planning permission is refused, temporary support may be extended while work is on-going with the employer to consider other choices. For example, resubmission of amended proposals or re-location of employee.

59. Costs of temporary support must be allocated to the appropriate AtW element for the support, not against APE.

# 9 Special aids and equipment

## Introduction

1. Support is available for customers who have a disability, illness or health condition to buy specialised aids and equipment, but only for employment purposes.
2. A special aid is any item needed to do a job which a person without a disability, illness or health condition would not need to do the same job.
3. Equipment is any tool needed to do a job and which most people would not need.
4. If the equipment needs to be attached or linked to an existing piece of equipment, then it should be classed as an adaptation. The customer would need to apply for help under the Adaptation to Premises and Equipment element of AtW.
5. The purchase of specialised vehicles used solely for work, should be categorised under special aids and equipment.

## Actions

6. On receipt of a customer's request for items, you must consider whether:
  - the customer has already had their own assessment
  - it has been referred for an independent holistic workplace assessment, if needed
  - it's standard equipment for the job
  - it's an essential in work disability need
  - it's provided by the NHS
  - these are the only choices available
  - you've got the appropriate quotes
  - it's cost effective and value for money
  - this is temporary support
  - employers can make a voluntary/reasonable contribution towards agreed solutions.

## Agreeing on the Item(s) needed

7. Take into account the applicant's knowledge and awareness of possible solutions. This can be helpful and accurate in identifying need.
8. You must manage a customer's expectations when a customer expresses a preference for, or awareness of, a specific item. This is vital to the Access to Work (AtW) process. You must consider:

- compatibility
- usability
- technological development
- value for money

9. AtW aims to supply a fit for purpose and cost effective solution. This means looking at a range of choices and, if appropriate, rejecting a preferred choice in favour of another.

10. This doesn't stop the customer getting their preferred choice but AtW would only contribute towards the most cost effective solution which meets the customer's employment needs.

## In work disability needs

11. AtW meets extra costs arising from a disability, illness or health condition. When considering applications:

- be sure the equipment is essential and the job cannot be done another way without the special aid
- consider the type of aid requested
- AtW doesn't provide aids of a medical nature. The term 'medical aids' includes anything used or worn about a person that effectively treats or improves their disability, illness or health condition and are outside of their working environment. This includes items such as:
  - glasses/frames
  - contact lenses
  - insulin pumps
  - cochlear implants
  - prosthetics of any kind
  - functional electronic stimulus devices, etc.
  - electric scooters
  - specialist walking sticks
  - prescriptions and frames for Irlens Syndrome

**Note:** AtW can fund the lens, colour test, tinted glasses for Irlens Syndrome

12. Applications for aids can be considered if there's a clear work related need, not just a social need, such as:

- aids requiring invasive surgery cannot be supported under any circumstances
- be satisfied that the item is not standard equipment used by anyone doing the job
- be satisfied that there is no Health and Safety requirement for the employer to provide the equipment other than for the disabled employee

- make sure, if appropriate, a workstation assessment is planned or finished and that the report recommendations will be addressed wherever possible. AtW will only help in meeting extra costs that arise from disability
- check the employer is acting on their responsibilities and making all reasonable adjustments
- take into account any aids the customer has that may be useful. AtW does not replace help voluntarily given in the past unless there has been a change of circumstance.

13. The AtW assessment process mustn't be delayed where an employer has to finish or fully act upon health and safety, workstation assessment or Equality Act 2010 responsibilities.

## Assessments

14. Before deciding on AtW support, it may be necessary to get:

- medical, specialist or technical advice
- advice from suppliers or manufacturers

15. Advice is needed when it's difficult to identify whether a disability, illness or health condition results in more problems over and above those of a non-disabled colleague doing the same job.

16. Technical assessment costs are met by the AtW programme spend.

17. External assessment or consultancy costs, are met by AtW programme spend and are not subject to cost share.

## Considering choices

18. Some customers have a clear idea of what they feel is the best solution for their needs. Before recommending the application, make sure all choices have been fully explored with both the customer and employer, including arranging any specialist or technical assessments where appropriate.

19. You must consider if:

- the job can be restructured to remove the need for a special aid or equipment
- the planned choice meets the minimum suitable requirement and offers the best value for money
- the employer can be expected to provide the equipment for other non-disabled employees
- the employer can provide the equipment as a reasonable adjustment
- supplying the special aid will benefit other employees
- the installation of the equipment affects other employees, for example if a training need is created or will raise environment issues
- the employer is prepared to fund the equipment without AtW help

## Demonstrations and trial periods

20. In addition to an introductory demonstration, a trial period may be necessary for example, to see if the equipment is compatible with an organisation's systems.

21. Trial periods must be negotiated at no charge with the suppliers. If a fee is charged a maximum of two weeks trial should be agreed.

22. The cost of training and the availability of support services (in case of breakdown), must be included.

## Cost effectiveness

23. AtW policy is to repay an agreed part of the cost towards suitable equipment that meets the customer's minimum requirement to do the job.

24. You must consider voluntary/reasonable employer contributions.

25. Quotes are required for each item. These can be obtained from the Independent Holistic Workplace Assessment Report, customer or employer.

26. The number and type of written quotes depend on the expected level of expenditure as follows:

- £499.99 and under – one quote needed
- £500 and above – three quotes needed

27. All quotes must be recorded in the business case, and be fully inclusive of VAT.

28. You can accept less than three quotes under exceptional circumstances. For example, if the special aids and equipment come from a very specialised provider or sole supplier. This must be recorded in the business case.

29. Where a wide range of models exist, or where a recommendation is made, you must identify the best value for money and the most cost effective solution to fully meet the customer's minimum agreed needs.

30. If the customer or employer decides to use a more expensive alternative solution, the customer or employer will need to fund the difference between the appropriate cost effective solution and their preferred alternative.

31. Value for money is achieved by giving the right support for the customer's need. This does not necessarily mean the cheapest solution if it doesn't fully meet the customer need or if there are hidden costs for training, delivery or installation.

## Temporary support

32. You must consider how AtW can give best value for money, especially if temporary support is needed whilst equipment is being arranged.

33. AtW aims to give help as quickly as possible. Where there are unavoidable delays for example, with the set up of equipment, training, or familiarisation, interim solutions such as using a support worker may be considered.

34. Customers and employers should be informed of likely delays and advised of the reasons.

35. AtW will not fund expensive on-going temporary support where an employer or customer fails to give information or buy equipment previously agreed.

36. The cost of a temporary solution is recorded under the appropriate AtW element. For example support worker.

## Application for a replacement item

37. If a customer applies for a replacement item due to loss of the original, treat it in the same way as a new application.

38. You must consider the following points before deciding whether or not to replace:

- what were the circumstances surrounding the circumstances of the loss
- was it due to carelessness on behalf of the customer
- was the loss avoidable

39. Only replace the item(s) if it was uninsured.

## Transferability / portability of equipment

40. Negotiate the transfer of equipment with the old and new employer when a customer changes job.

41. Customers should take their equipment with them if they move on to a new employer if the equipment is appropriate for the new job.

42. AtW will pay reasonable removal and transportation costs for the transfer of equipment between employers if it's cost effective to do so.

43. AtW advisers must consider purchasing new equipment if necessary to prevent delays in providing support.

## Standard equipment

44. AtW will not fund items that are:

- standard equipment
- standard business costs
- health and safety requirements.

45. These are needed whether the person doing the job is disabled or not.

46. If a solution is identified that includes both standard and extra items, AtW will only cover the cost of the extra items.

47. This applies to both self-employed and employed customers.

**See:** Please consider 'business benefit'.

## Types of equipment

### Hearing aids

48. All applications for hearing aids must be supported by an audiology report or appropriate letter.

49. The audiology report or appropriate letter must be provided by:

- the NHS audiology department or
- an accredited private dispenser of hearing aids working on behalf of the NHS

**Note:** Letters from private dispensers must state they are working on behalf of the NHS. Letters from other private dispensers of hearing aids are not acceptable for AtW purposes.

50. Cost share is applied where appropriate.

**See:** Order of deductions.

### Medical equipment

51. AtW can help with a grant towards the cost of medical equipment provided:

- the item needed is vital to help the customer to carry out their job
- it is identified as a solution after an assessment and does not pose a 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 does not involve surgery/treatment.

### Wheelchairs

52. All applications must have an NHS assessment.

53. A customer with a voucher towards the cost of buying a wheelchair must use it towards the overall cost.

54. A social and domestic contribution must be taken into account. This is based on the number of days the customer works regardless as to whether the wheelchair is used on a non- working day. Cost share is applied where appropriate.

**See:** Social and domestic contributions

**See:** Order of deductions.

55. Wheelchairs bought with AtW support are the property of the purchaser, who may be the employer or the customer.

56. The purchaser is responsible for all:

- insurance
- maintenance
- running costs including the costs of repair or replacement of part.

# 10 Miscellaneous support classifications

1. The miscellaneous support classification is only to be used for short-term or one off support which does not come under any other element.

2. Only a few applications will fall in to this category. Examples of this are:

consultancy fees for establishing what are standard costs for a business, or where the element of support is not known at consultancy stage

used alongside cost share for the payment of the Transitional Employer Support Grant (TESG) or Extra Employer Support Grant (EESG) (proof of concept)

3. These types of applications will be managed by a specialist team and should not be used for any other element or award for AtW.

4. You must consider whether the costs come under other elements of AtW such as consultancy costs for adaptations to premises which would come under the Adaptations to Premises and Equipment element.

# 11 Cost share

## Overview

1. Mandatory cost share applies to all applications for Adaptations to Premises and Equipment (APE), Special Aids and Equipment (SAE) and Miscellaneous support where:

- the customer has been in paid employment for more than six weeks at the time of their application
- the customer has been in paid employment for less than six weeks when they make their first application but then makes a subsequent application beyond the first six weeks of employment
- the customer makes a renewal application
- the customer makes an application for a non-cost share element of Access to Work (AtW) and then makes a subsequent application for either APE, SAE or Miscellaneous support.

2. Mandatory cost share doesn't apply to applications for APE, SAE or Miscellaneous support where the customer has been in paid employment for less than six weeks. In these cases, any costs would be met by AtW in full.

3. Where mandatory cost share would otherwise apply, it will be waived when the adviser has identified that funding for SAE falls under the Tech Fund provision.

**Note:** The Tech Fund provision only applies to SAE.

## Cost share applies

4. Where cost share applies, there is a threshold below which AtW pays none of the cost.

5. There's 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 three year AtW period. For example:

Total figure that attracts cost share	£10,000
Minus the threshold a large employer pays	– £1,000
Total	= £9,000
Total multiplied by 20% for employers' contribution (AtW will pay the 80%)	£9,000 x 20%
This equals	= £1,800
Add the threshold back in	+ £1000

Final total for large employer contribution  
over a three year award = £2,800

6. There are four categories of employers:

Category of employer	Number of employees	Employer contribution threshold
Micro	1 to 9	Nil cost share
Small	10 to 49	Nil cost share
Medium	50 to 249	£500
Large	250+	£1,000

7. Don't include voluntary workers or take into account the number of hours an employee works when calculating the number of employees.

**Note:** If the customer works for an international company, you must only consider the total number of employees based in sites in Great Britain when identifying the category of the employer.

## Recording application details

8. You must identify the size of the employer by recording micro, small, medium or large in the notes space within the system. Change the cost share status if necessary.

9. In all cases, you must enter the cost share marker status and AtW start date on the appropriate IT system.

10. Details of the AtW application history must always be recorded in the customer's case. This ensures there's a record of cumulative costs paid by the employer in repeat applications within the three year AtW period.

11. Once the three year AtW period ends, the cost sharing period starts again.

## Franchises

12. A franchise is a right given to an individual or group, to market or sell a company's goods or services within a certain area or location.

13. An individual or group who purchases a franchise is called a franchisee.

14. It's the franchisee who is the employer and not the company whose goods or services are being marketed or sold.

15. You must establish the total number of people employed by the franchisee when considering cost share. (They may run more than one site).

16. If there's still doubt after contacting the franchisee, you must use your discretion. Generally the benefit of doubt should be given to the franchisee.

## Calculating the threshold and ceiling

17. The thresholds include VAT even if the employer may be able to claim it back at a later date.

18. Any contribution made by an employer, including voluntary contributions, must be deducted from the total cost before any mandatory cost share is calculated.

19. You mustn't take into account any costs the employer met before the application was made.

20. Only apply one threshold where AtW support benefits a number of individuals. For example improved building access for several disabled employees.

21. A threshold per person must be applied in cases of bulk applications for equipment.

**Note:** For all calculations, you must round down.

## Order of deductions

22. Follow the order bulleted below for any deductions:

STEP	ACTION
1	deduct the NHS voucher from the full cost
2	deduct any voluntary employer contribution
3	deduct any Tech Fund contribution (if applicable) <b>Note:</b> this applies to steps 4 and 5 only <b>Not</b> step 6 see scenario 4 and scenario 5
3	deduct the appropriate employer threshold
4	deduct 20% employer mandatory cost share
5	deduct the social and domestic contribution based on the number of non-working days that the applicant benefits from the item, for example 2/7
6	the remaining balance is the AtW contribution

**Note:** Following the step-by-step worked examples below will ensure that your calculations are accurate and satisfy policy intent. All calculations must be rounded down.

## Social and Domestic Contribution

23. Where a Social and Domestic Contribution is appropriate, it applies to all applications whether this is for a single item, (see scenario 1) or multiple items (see

scenario 2). Where not all items are subject to S&D contribution the Total Employer Contribution **must** be deducted from the cost of the S&D eligible items **first**.

24. Depending on the costs of the items involved it is possible that even though some or all of the items would ordinarily attract a S&D contribution, the mandatory cost share calculation may cover the full costs (see scenario 3).

25. Where an application covers multiple items that attract a S&D contribution, you must clearly detail in the business case and offer letter, which items are subject to a S&D contribution and the amount applicable to each item (**see Note after scenario 2**).

## Example calculations

### Scenario 1. Single item calculation

Terry works at Freshco, a large employer, full time, 5 days a week and has been awarded support with the costs of a specialised wheelchair to enable him to carry out his employment. The wheelchair will also be of benefit to Terry on his non-working days, the cost of the wheelchair is £10,000 and he has been provided with a NHS voucher to the value of £1000

Step	Action	Calculation	Result
1	deduct the NHS voucher from the full cost	£10,000- £1000	£9000
2	deduct any voluntary employer contribution	No voluntary contribution	£9000
3	deduct large employer threshold	£9000 - £1000	£8000
4	deduct mandatory 20% cost share	£8000 x 20%=£1600	£6400
5	calculate S&D contribution	2/7 x £6400	£1828.57
6	calculate AtW contribution	£6400 - £1828.57	£4571.43

### Scenario 2. Multiple item calculation not all subject to S&D contribution

Kevin has worked at X-Horst garages for 6 months with 64 colleagues. Following a workplace assessment, he has been awarded multiple items. The support includes

- an adapted wheelchair costing £10,000,
- a desktop PC with assistive technology costing £8000
- a hearing aid costing £3000

He works 4 days a week and will be benefiting from the wheelchair and hearing aid both at work and on his non-working days; the PC will remain in his workplace. He does not have an NHS voucher.

Step	Action	Calculation	Result
1	calculate the total package cost	£10,000 + £8000 + £3000	£21,000
2	deduct the NHS voucher from the full cost	N/A	£21,000
3	deduct any voluntary employer contribution	No voluntary contribution	£21,000
4	deduct medium employer threshold	£21,000 - £500	£20,500
5	deduct mandatory 20% cost share (£10,000 ceiling - £500 = £9,500)	£9,500 X 20% = £1900	£18,600
6	calculate total employer threshold & 20% mandatory cost share	£500 + £1900	£2,400
7	calculate amount for S&D eligible items	£10,000 (wheelchair) + £3000 (hearing aid)	£13,000
8	calculate amount on which S&D contribution is to be applied	£13,000 - £2,400 (total applicable deductions before S&D applied)	£10,600
9	calculate S&D contribution	$3/7 \times £10,600$	£4,542.85
10	calculate AtW contribution	£18,600 - £4,542.85	£14,057.15

**Note:** Where more than one item is subject to a S&D contribution an additional calculation is required to proportion the share of S&D required for each item. This needs to be shown in the business case and communication to both customer & employer

Using the example in scenario 2 the additional calculation to proportion the share of S&D required for wheelchair and hearing aids is as follows:

Step	Action	Calculation	Result
1	Calculate proportion of total S&D contribution for wheelchair	$\text{£}10,000 \div \text{£}13,000 \times \text{£}4542.85$	£3494.50
2	Calculate proportion of total S&D contribution for hearing aid	$\text{£}3,000 \div \text{£}13,000 \times \text{£}4542.85$	£1048.35

### Scenario 3. No S&D payable on eligible items

Yasmin works 3 days a week for a large employer she has been awarded a package of items totalling £1200, which includes

- PC at £700,
- Hearing aid at £250
- hand held magnifier at £250,

the last 2 items she will use and benefit from at home. No NHS voucher or voluntary contributions.

Step	Action	Calculation	Result
1	calculate the total package cost	$\text{£}700 + \text{£}250 + \text{£}250$	£1,200
2	deduct the NHS voucher from the full cost	N/A	£1,200
3	deduct any voluntary employer contribution	N/A	£1,200
4	deduct large employer threshold	$\text{£}1,200 - \text{£}1,000$	£200
5	deduct mandatory 20% cost share)	$\text{£}200 \times 20\% = \text{£}40$	£160.00
6	calculate total employer threshold & 20% mandatory cost share	$\text{£}1,000 + \text{£}40$	£1,040
7	calculate amount for S&D eligible items	$\text{£}250 + \text{£}250$	£500
8	calculate amount on which S&D contribution is to be applied	$\text{£}500 - \text{£}1,040$ (total applicable deductions)	Negative amount so no

		before S&D applied)	S&D contribution payable
9	calculate AtW cost	£1,200 - £1,040	£160

#### Scenario 4. Tech Fund Single item calculation

Terry works at Freshco, a large employer, full time, 5 days a week and has been awarded support with the costs of Orcam assistive technology to enable him to carry out his employment. The Orcam assistive technology will also be of benefit to Terry on his non-working days, the cost of the Orcam assistive technology is £10,000 and he has no other contributions.

Step	Action	Calculation	Result
1	deduct the NHS voucher from the full cost	£N/A	£10,000
2	deduct any voluntary employer contribution	No voluntary contribution	£10,000
3	Tech Fund applies to Orcam	£10,000	£10,000
4	deduct large employer threshold	N/A as TechFund applies	£10,000
5	deduct mandatory 20% cost share	N/A as TechFund applies	£10,000
6	calculate S&D contribution	£10,000 divided by 7 multiplied by 2	£2,857.12
7	calculate AtW contribution	£10,000 - £2,857.12	£7142.88

#### Scenario 5 Tech Fund calculation Multiple items

Kevin has worked at X-Horst garages for 6 months with 64 colleagues. Following a workplace assessment, he has been awarded multiple items. The support includes

- an adapted wheelchair costing £10,000,
- a desktop PC with assistive technology costing £8000,
- a hearing aid costing £3000.

He works 4 days a week and will be benefiting from the wheelchair and hearing aid both at work and on his non-working days; the PC will remain in his workplace. He does not have an NHS voucher.

Step	Action	Calculation	Result
1	calculate the total package cost	$\pounds 10,000 + \pounds 8000 + \pounds 3000$	$\pounds 21,000$
2	deduct the NHS voucher from the full cost	N/A	$\pounds 21,000$
3	deduct any voluntary employer contribution	No voluntary contribution	$\pounds 21,000$
4	Tech Fund applies to Desktop PC & Hearing Aid	$\pounds 8,000 + \pounds 3,000$	$\pounds 11,000$
5	deduct TechFund items to determine what support threshold applies to	$\pounds 21,000 - \pounds 11,000$	$\pounds 10,000$
6	deduct medium employer threshold	$\pounds 10,000 - \pounds 500$	$\pounds 9,500$
7	deduct mandatory 20% cost share	20% of $\pounds 9,500$	$\pounds 1,900$
8	calculate total employer threshold & 20% mandatory cost share	$\pounds 500 + \pounds 1,900$	$\pounds 2,400$
9	calculate amount for S&D eligible items	$\pounds 3,000$ (hearing aid) + $\pounds 10,000$ (Wheelchair)	$\pounds 13,000$
10	calculate amount on which S&D contribution is to be applied	$\pounds 13,000 - \pounds 2,400$ (total applicable deductions before S&D applied)	$\pounds 10,600$
11	calculate S&D contribution	$\pounds 10,600$ divided by $7 \times 3$	$\pounds 4,542.86$
12	calculate AtW contribution	$\pounds 18,600 - \pounds 4,542.86$	$\pounds 14,057.14$ (includes Tech Fund contribution)

## Employer involvement

27. It's the customer's employer who will be the cost sharer, but sometimes a third party such as a provider will, contribute some or all of the cost.

28. It's for the employer and the provider to decide who will contribute.

29. Involve employers as soon as possible in the application process and get their agreement to cost sharing before an application is approved.

## Contacting the employer

30. You must first obtain the customer's permission to disclose information, and record the outcome on the appropriate IT system, before an employer is approached.

**Note:** Permission can be given by different means for example, verbal, written or via an interpreter.

31. You can agree not to contact a customer's employer, but only if there's no requirement for the support to be used:

- on the employer's premises or
- the employer isn't required to confirm details of support received on the claim form

32. Cost sharing criteria still applies and you must be satisfied that the employer will meet the costs before you approve the application. In all cases consider appropriate review periods.

33. In all appropriate cases, an employer should be asked for a voluntary contribution whether or not cost sharing applies.

34. Any voluntary contribution made by an employer must be deducted from the total cost before you calculate any mandatory cost share contribution.

35. Always discuss with the employer the possibility of the customer taking the equipment with them if they go to another job with a new employer. Record the outcome on the AtW IT system.

## Multiple employers

36. Some customers will have more than one employer at the same time, but need the same level of support for each job.

37. You must calculate the total support costs (regardless of the number of employers) and negotiate a fair cost share for all employers if the customer's cost share status is the same for all jobs.

38. You must ensure AtW pays no more than the share expected of it as part of the total cost.

39. Ownership of equipment will depend on the type of equipment needed. For example, computer software loaded onto an employer's system would be jointly owned as all employers would require a licence to run it.

## Freelance workers

40. 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 term contracts with one employer.

41. You don't need to approve short term contracts with each employer if you are satisfied that the customer can be classed as a freelance worker.

42. If you're in doubt about whether the customer is a genuine freelance worker, you can ask to see supporting documents such as:

- membership of a relevant professional body or union
- an appointment letter from the employer
- the customer's self employed tax reference

43. Store copies of any document seen in the case file.

44. Treat freelance workers in the same way as self-employed customers and record them as self-employed on the appropriate system.

## Job movers

45. You mustn't consider cost share in cases where the customer moves from one employer to another. This applies even if there isn't a break between jobs, provided they apply within the first six weeks of starting the new job.

46. A customer who moves from one job to another within the same company such as on promotion is subject to cost share.

47. The customer must complete a new application and the application must be treated as a renewal and given a new AtW start date.

48. Cost share applies in the following situations:

- a change to the customer's health condition or disability creating a new need for support, means a new application must be completed
- a change in a customer's job description creates a new need but there is no fundamental change in their duties so should be treated as a repeat application within the existing AtW period
- a new employer who takes over the business but the customer's job remains the same should be treated as a repeat application
- a new employer who takes over the business who changes the customer's fundamental duties creating a new need for the customer, means a new application must be completed with a new AtW start date

## Self-employment

49. If a customer becomes self-employed during the AtW three year period, they'll no longer be subject to mandatory cost share. however, a voluntary contribution can still be requested.

50. Don't take into account the fact that they are earning the equivalent of the national minimum wage when deciding if a self-employed customer is eligible for AtW.

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

## Tech Fund

52. Tech Fund is the name given to an exemption from mandatory cost share for SAE support for medium and large employers. This is so assistive technology can be tried out while human support is also in place.

53. This allows Access to Work (AtW) to pick up the full cost of some assistive technology solutions for the customer if it can be demonstrated that in the long term, this will reduce support worker or travel cost awards.

54. The adviser must waive the requirement for mandatory cost share for the SAE, where SAE support is identified as potentially providing lower, long-term costs to AtW than already existing or proposed human support.

55. If the SAE is ultimately found not to suit the customer's needs, mandatory cost share won't be applied at any time once it has been waived.

56. Already existing human support is defined as human support that is currently in place for the customer.

57. Proposed human support is defined as human support that has been proposed by either the customer or the employer and is supported in principle by the employer in either case.

58. Following a work place assessment, the adviser must use their judgement to decide whether both the following apply:

- the item is an assistive technology solution that qualifies for Tech Fund provision
- there's a potential cost saving over the course of the three year period compared with AtW funding the human support

59. The mandatory cost share will only be waived under the Tech Fund provision if both the conditions above apply

60. Assistive technology only qualifies for Tech Fund provision if it supplements or replaces human support. For example, a motorised rise and fall desk to address a musculoskeletal condition does not qualify as there's no alternative human support solution.

61. Other items not qualifying for Tech Fund include:

- non-standard chair
- non-standard mouse
- non-standard keyboard

**Note:** The above list is not exhaustive. The adviser must use their judgement on a case by case basis.

62. If funding is approved for some SAE that qualifies for the Tech Fund provision and for some SAE that does not, cost share will only be waived for the SAE that qualifies for Tech Fund provision.

63. Tech Fund is not exempt from social and domestic contributions.

64. If the adviser decides that the Tech Fund provision applies, they must decide on funding for both the SAE and the human support.

**Note:** The level of human support should be the same as it would be without assistive technology.

65. Explain to the customer, that AtW expects the need for the human support to reduce over a period of time. This wouldn't be longer than their three year award period.

66. Agree a review date with the customer to reflect this expectation.

67. Further reviews may be agreed as necessary during the award period until the customer is gaining the full benefit from the SAE according to their disability and job role.

68. Where possible, the customer's reviews should be conducted by the adviser who originally dealt with the customer's Tech Fund case.

69. Approve funding for both types of support that are to be in place at the same time. The customer can then try out the SAE to see whether it suits their requirements. They can also use their human support if necessary.

70. Don't apply mandatory cost share to the SAE.

71. Once all agreed reviews have been completed, consider any further support needs on a case by case basis.

# 12 Monitor delivery of support

## Actions

1. There are a number of actions that need to be followed to ensure the correct AtW process is followed. You must:

- confirm the required support has been ordered / procured
- identify the expected delivery date(s) for support
- check that the support is delivered / provided on the expected date
- confirm the support meets the customer's needs
- confirm that any appropriate training has been undertaken
- decide when to review the case

## Procurement

2. Once the business case has been approved, the required support can be purchased.

3. AtW must take action to ensure the required support is in place as soon as possible. AtW must also chase progress, take into account any unexpected delays and put temporary support in place where appropriate.

4. In some 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.

5. Self-employed customers will procure support themselves.

6. Adaptations to premises or equipment can have long lead times. Additional unexpected delays can occur whilst work is being carried out. AtW must monitor progress and provide or extend temporary support if required.

7. 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.

8. 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.

## Special aids and equipment

9. 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 funding is approved. For other cases, ask the employer when delivery of the aid or equipment is expected. Follow this up to confirm delivery.

## Training

10. Make sure equipment meets the customer's needs, and that they've received all relevant training. If other people need to be trained in relation to the equipment, make sure that they've successfully completed the training and that cover has been considered for holidays or sickness.

## Ownership, insurance and disposals

11. Aids or equipment purchased with AtW support, are the property of the purchaser. This can be the employer or the customer. The purchaser is responsible for all maintenance, insurance and disposal costs when appropriate.

12. It's very important you don't give advice as to how unwanted items should be disposed other than allowing the customer to take equipment with them to a new job.

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

## Transferability / portability of equipment

14. Negotiate the transfer of equipment with the old and new employer when a customer changes job.

15. Customers should take their equipment with them if they move on to a new employer if the equipment is appropriate for the new job.

16. AtW will pay reasonable removal and transportation costs for the transfer of equipment between employers if it's cost effective to do so.

17. AtW advisers must consider purchasing new equipment if necessary to prevent delays in providing support.

## Delivery date

18. You must identify the date that each element of support is expected to be delivered. AtW must confirm that the support has been provided on the expected date. The date must be recorded on the system when each element is delivered.

19. As each element is delivered or implemented, you must check with the customer that it meets their assessed needs.

20. If the customer's needs are not adequately met, record this as part of the case history. An updated business case will then be required to secure any additional funding required for alternative solutions.

## Delays

21. Continue to monitor delivery until all approved elements are in place. If delivery delays occur, consider putting temporary support in place.

## Reviews

22. Once all the required support is in place and has been confirmed as meeting the customer's needs, regular reviews must be conducted.

## Annual reviews

23. All cases must be reviewed annually as a minimum.

24. If an adviser has worked on the case in the last six months for example the customer has a change in circumstances or has requested additional support, the adviser must review the application at the same time.

## One-off support

25. Where the customer was provided with one-off support, the review can be completed to:

- confirm the customer's work related needs have been met
- ask if there have been any change in the customer's circumstances
- offer the customer the option to discuss any additional requirements

## Ongoing support

26. For customers who are receiving ongoing support, complete the review to:

- confirm the support is being provided
- ensure the support continues to meet the customer's needs
- ensure claims for reimbursement are being made promptly
- ensure the amounts claimed are in line with the spend profiled for the customer
- ensure any changes in the customer's circumstances have been reported
- ensure any additional requirements for support are identified
- ensure the customer has been made aware of their renewal date

## Shorter review periods

27. Shorter review periods are appropriate when:

- the customer has a temporary job
- the adviser has concerns about the long term viability of a business
- it hasn't been possible at the initial assessment to define the exact level of support required
- 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
- temporary travel support has been awarded pending consideration of alternative travel arrangements. For example, the customer:
  - is having their driving licence reinstated
  - has a support worker as their driver
  - is buying a vehicle
  - is having adaptations made to a vehicle

28. Where shorter review periods are required, they should normally be quarterly, unless it's clear that the customer's employment or the alternative arrangement will end earlier.

29. Where short reviews apply, the adviser must discuss the situation with the customer, review any evidence available and decide if AtW support can be continued.

30. Awards can be extended for a further short period where:

- the customer receives another temporary job contract
- there are reasons that the business cannot show viability
- there are delays in the customer becoming familiar with their job or using public transport
- alternative travel arrangements will be finalised at a later date

31. The adviser will arrange another review in three, six or nine months if the award is extended for a short period.

32. You must ensure the customer is made aware of their duty to notify AtW immediately if there's any change in their circumstances.

# 13 Change of circumstances

## Identifying changes of circumstances

1. Customers must report changes in their circumstances to Access to Work (AtW).
2. Remind customers of the need to report changes whenever a case is reviewed. Customers can report changes by various means of communication.
3. Customers in receipt of Other Government Benefits (OGB) or credits, can report changes to another government office. AtW accepts changes in customer's circumstances details from Other Government Departments (OGDs).
4. You must seek confirmation from the customer that the change has happened where the change may have an impact on the amount of AtW support payable.
5. The support must be reviewed on the whole to ensure it is still appropriate and meeting the customer's needs and adjusted where appropriate.
6. Update systems with all relevant changes.

## Authorising changes to approved support

8. A change in the customer's circumstances or a change in the rates charged for AtW support may mean an increase in the authorised amount of AtW support.
9. Flexibility exists to allow small increases in support without the need for approval of a new business case.
10. The decision to apply flexibility must be confirmed by an adviser not previously involved in assessing the customer's needs. Confirmation that flexibility has applied must be recorded.
11. Flexibility cannot be allowed if the total amount of increases, including the increase currently being considered, since the last signed authorisation is £500 or more.
12. Flexibility cannot be allowed if it takes the total amount approved into a higher approval bracket.

### Example

If an operations manager has authorised expenditure of £59,900, increases of, or totalling £100 or more cannot be given. This would take the total amount approved to the level where senior operations manager authorisation is needed.

## Changes to a customer's health

13. Some health conditions can switch unpredictably between periods when symptoms are stable to periods of deterioration. When a customer's health deteriorates, there's likely to be an impact on their ability to do their job. It may not be possible to fully re-assess the customer's requirements until their health stabilises.
14. Record details of the change and consider booking a review at a suitable date in the future.
15. 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. Respond sensitively and flexibly to customers in these circumstances.
16. If increased support is needed, it must be supported by a revised business case and approved before more AtW payments are made.
17. The cost share decision applied to the existing award will apply to the extra needs for elements where cost share applies.
18. A change in the customer's condition may lead to a reduction in the support required. Record the change and advise the customer that their requirements will be fully re-assessed at the end of the current AtW period.
19. The customer/employer will continue to claim repayment 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 needed.
20. Where the customer or their employer, employ the support worker, AtW can continue to fund the normal level of support for a maximum of four 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.
21. All claims must be checked to make sure overpayments are not made.

## Change in personal details

22. Most changes in personal details will have no impact on AtW support. A change of address is likely to have an effect on Travel to Work (TtW) costs or on a support worker's activities.
23. Customers or OGD can report changes in the customer's personal details.
24. Update the customer record with all relevant changes and details of any support that's been reassessed.
25. Notify any other relevant OGD or agency that needs the information. Record actions taken.

## Change of name

26. If the customer's name changes, update the customer's record. Verify the bank account details and update them if necessary.

## Change of address

27. If the customer changes address this is likely to have an effect on TtW costs or on support worker's activities. You must:

- review all support to ensure it's still appropriate and meeting the customer's needs
- adjust the support where appropriate
- update the system with all relevant changes

## Changes to employment

### **Same employer, different job**

28. A new job with the same employer may result in a change in support.

29. Ensure the job is new by confirming new duties or change in earnings.

30. If it's a new job, the case is treated as a new application. You must:

- consider if reasonable adjustments are appropriate
- create a new job entry and record the AtW start date
- reassess the support needed
- identify changes
- apply [cost share](#) if appropriate
- create an updated business case for extra costs and submit for approval.

31. If new elements of support are to be supplied, monitor delivery and consider the need for temporary solutions until the required solutions are in place.

### **New employer (new owner of business), same job**

32. 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 AtW.

33. If a customer makes contact because a new employer has taken over the business you must:

- update the employment details
- contact the new employer to confirm they will carry forward the existing support arrangements

- make sure the new employer is aware of their ownership and maintenance obligations for any equipment provided
34. If the employer wishes to renegotiate support arrangements, for example providing a support worker from internal staff rather than on going cost share, you must review the business case.
35. The change can be approved if it means a reduction or no change in the AtW support.
36. Consider if the employer has withdrawn support.
37. AtW will not pay for support that appears to have been withdrawn to secure funding from AtW.

### **New employer, different business, same job**

38. If the customer starts work for a new employer doing the same job for which they previously received AtW support you must identify the elements transferable to the new employer and negotiate with both employers for them to be transferred.
39. Some elements will not be transferable and others no longer needed.
40. Identify all extra needs for support and their costs.
41. Reconsider and agree cost share for extra needs if appropriate. Create a new business case to include the revised needs.
42. If SAE or APE is being transferred from the previous employment, you must:
- create nil cost elements for these
  - add any costs associated with the transfer
  - submit the business case for approval
  - monitor the delivery of support

### **Freelance workers**

43. Customers doing the same job on short contracts with various employers are treated as self-employed.
44. This allows the customer to take responsibility for their support needs and saves the adviser having to repeatedly negotiate with employers for the transfer of support.

### **New location, same employer, same job**

45. An employer may ask an employee to work temporarily at a new location. They will take responsibility for normal extra costs resulting from the move.
46. If AtW provides 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.

47. You must negotiate with the employer making sure they make all reasonable adjustments.

48. Any requirement for more support must be shown on an updated business case and approved before extra costs are repaid.

49. If the new location is outside Great Britain (GB) AtW support can continue for a maximum of three months.

50. Where it's known that a customer will be working abroad, set a review date on the appropriate system for 10 weeks time or the expected date of return, whichever is the shorter.

51. At the review date, confirm that the customer has or will return to working in GB within the three month limit.

52. If they're not expected to return before the end of the three month limit, you must advise the customer:

- that support will end when the limit is reached
- they will need to make a new application if they return to GB

53. If the customer has exceptional reason for continuing to work outside GB refer to the national policy team for approval before extending the support beyond three months.

54. When the three month limit has been reached, end the AtW award so payments stop.

## Change in employment status

55. Support can continue where a customer is suspended from their employment but still employed.

56. This includes paying for support workers to allow the customer to take a full part in meetings that may impact on their employment.

57. Systems must be updated to make sure payments:

- are not made for support no longer needed
- the case is reviewed regularly to determine if the customer has resumed normal work or is no longer employed

## Changes to policy

58. Changes to the AtW policy may impact on individual customer payments.

59. Payments to customers or their employers must not be changed until their current agreement period, normally when three years, is finished (unless new policy announcement specifically states otherwise).

## Changes to available support

60. Technological improvements may lead to a better way of overcoming a customer's barriers to work.
61. If a customer requests more support due to the availability of a new form of support and their other circumstances remain the same, consider whether the new technology provides a more cost effective solution to the customer's support needs.
62. If the new technology will reduce costs, complete a revised business case and submit for approval.
63. Tell customers their requirements will be fully reviewed at the end of their current AtW period.
64. AtW staff should keep up to date with the introduction of new products and services that may help customers.
65. AtW staff should alert other AtW staff at communications meetings if they learn of new products via the intranet, advertising, attendance at events or talking with the customer.

# 14 Review of claims in payment

## Customer claims

1. Payments are made on a repayment basis on the receipt of:

- correctly completed claim forms
- original copies of costs

2. Payments can be made direct to:

- a customer
- their employer
- a supplier

## Pro forma invoices

3. A customer or employer may not be able to pay an invoice due to cash flow problems. In this case, and with the approval of the Access to Work (AtW) payment team manager, AtW will accept a pro forma invoice with a claim to trigger payment direct to the supplier. For example, if the customer is employed by a micro-employer (less than 50 staff), a charity organisation or is self-employed. AtW will accept a proforma if there are extenuating circumstances. This must be authorised by the AtW payments manager.

## Frequency of claims for on-going support

4. Encourage customers to:

- make new claims on a regular basis, ideally on a four week cycle although variations are acceptable
- only send in new claims after the last day for which payment has been claimed for
- send us their claims within six months of the date the original spending was incurred

**Note:** Don't issue pre-paid envelopes for the return of claim forms.

## Forms in alternative formats

5. Information on types of alternative formats and reasonable adjustments can be found on the customer communications and accessibility intranet site.

## Retention of documents

6. Retain all documents for 14 months after case closure.

7. Documents must be kept as an exception, if there has been an overpayment or fraud interest.

8. You must keep paperwork for 14 months once the exception is cleared.

## **Incorrectly completed claim forms**

9. Payment teams mustn't accept claim forms, where amounts have been amended or overwritten.

10. These should be returned to the customer with an explanation why it's not possible to process the claim.

11. Ask the customer to send the claim back to us with mistakes corrected and signed against, not initialed, by the customer.

12. Claim forms signed prior to the last day for which support is claimed must be returned for re-signing at the appropriate time.

## **To claim travel to work costs**

13. Travel to Work (TtW) is paid to support the customer with their journey to work.

14. Customers need to complete form DP226JP 'Claim for travel to work costs'.

15. Parts 3 and 4 must be signed and dated by the customer and their employer

**Note:** If the customer is self-employed, Part 3 'Employer's declaration' doesn't need a signature.

16. The form must show the total cost of the journey and the customer's contribution towards it.

17. The full name, address and contact details of any taxi company used, must be supplied on an attached invoice/receipt.

18. Journey details should include pick up and drop off points.

19. If the invoice includes VAT, a registration number must be provided.

## **To claim travel in work costs**

20. Customers wanting to claim travel costs during working hours, must complete form DP227JP.

21. Customers need to fully complete Part 2 of the form including:

- pick up and drop off point details
- total mileage
- total cost
- their contributions
- their employer's contributions

22. Invoices / receipts from a taxi company must include their full name, address and contact details. If the invoice includes VAT a registration number must be provided

**Note:** If the customer is self-employed, there's no need to complete Part 3 'Employer's declaration'.

## To claim special aids and equipment costs

23. Before AtW can make a decision on a claim for one-off costs, AtW need a fully completed DP224JP form that is signed and dated by the purchaser. This could be the customer or the employer.

24. AtW also need original or certified copies of any invoices or receipts that support the claim.

## To claim support worker costs

### Payments to support workers

25. All claims for payments to support workers must be made on form DP222JP.

26. Support workers employed by the customer or their employer should supply:

- a copy of the contract of employment
- a fully completed claim form signed by the customer and their line manager (not a third party)
- a copy of the support worker's payslip.

27. If the support worker works for an agency, they must supply:

- a fully completed timesheet
- details of the admin fee

28. British Sign Language (BSL) support workers must supply a registration number and their level of qualification.

### Payments to self-employed support workers

29. A fully completed DP222JP claim form must be signed by the customer and their employer.

30. If the customer is self-employed, then the support worker must complete Part 3 of the form.

31. The self-employed support worker must provide original invoices which must include:

- a UTR (unique tax reference) number
- a unique identification number (invoice number)
- the company name, address and contact information
- the company name and address of the customer you're invoicing
- a clear description of what you're charging for
- the date the goods or service were provided
- the date of the invoice
- the amount(s) being charged

- the VAT amount if applicable
- the total amount owed

**Note:** The support worker's unique tax reference number must be provided prior to any payments being made.

32. BSL support workers must supply a registration number and their level of qualification.

## **Travelling with your support worker**

33. Before we can make a decision on a claim for travel to work costs, we need a fully completed form DP226JP.

34. If the customer is self-employed, the support worker must complete Part 3 of the form.

35. Travel receipts and invoices must be supplied for both the customer and support worker

36. We need itemised bills from the hotel / B&B for any overnight stays. These must give details for both the customer and support worker.

**Note:** We won't accept sustenance receipts or credit notes.

## **Banking hours of support workers**

37. Support worker claim forms should only show hours of support provided for the period stated.

38. Hours not used for this period should not be claimed or carried forward (banked).

39. Payments can only be paid for the support provided. The claim form should be signed by the customer / employer (support worker if the customer is self-employed).

# 15 Overpayments

## Overview

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

## Overpayment identified

3. When an overpayment is identified, details must be sent to the AtW payment team manager to make a formal overpayment decision.
4. This must be undertaken before any overpayment recovery action by the AtW payment team.

## Recovery action

5. All overpayments are calculated by the AtW payment team.
6. If the customer voluntarily agrees to repay the overpayment, the AtW payment team will take local recovery action.
7. In all other instances, the overpayment must be referred to the accounts receivable team who will initiate formal recovery action.

## Vulnerable customers

8. A customer's personal circumstances could make them vulnerable.
9. You must take into account an individual's circumstances, before any recovery action is taken, voluntary or otherwise.
10. Vulnerable customers include those with:
  - mental health conditions
  - physical disabilities
  - learning difficulties
11. All cases must be dealt with sensitively and in accordance with DWP Vulnerability instructions (additional support for individuals)

# 16 Ceiling cap

1. All new applications are subject to a maximum annual award limit of twice the [national average salary](#). The figures are:

- 01 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 - £60,700
- 01 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 - £59,200
- 01 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 - £57,200
- 01 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 - £42,100

**Note:** This figure will be updated annually each April.

2. Customers who are subject to the maximum annual award limit are subject to annual reviews where:

- progress can be monitored
- their needs are looked at again
- extra advice and support are offered
- the new updated limit is applied to their award

3. Awards must be calculated in the usual way and a ceiling cap applied.

4. You must explore how the resources provided by AtW can combine with reasonable adjustment to support the customer into work. If possible, discuss with customer and employer together.

5. This discussion must involve the customer and employer if appropriate. If the customer is self-employed, you must include their own business resources in the discussion.

**Note:** Before contacting the employer, you must:

- get consent from the customer that we can contact their employer
- make sure the customer understands why we are contacting them.

6. If needs reduce below the level of the cap then rise above that level, advisers are permitted to use their discretion in applying the cap level to those whose requirements fall below the cap temporarily, for example a brief change of role or illness.

## Examples of how the Cap may apply

### Example 1

Customer has one job.

Customer is capped and has a change of circumstances where their need for AtW support is assessed as still being over the cap limit. This means the customer is still subject to the cap.

Capped to capped

Under these circumstances:

- there will be no change in entitlement and the original award will continue
- there will be no change of circumstances letter issued to the customer the award will continue using existing dates i.e. no new award period.

**Note:** if the change of circumstances was the customer getting a new job (not an additional job), you must retain the capped amount for the new job. Treat this as a new application apply a new three year period and issue a new declaration letter to customer

## Example 2

Customer is uncapped and has a change of circumstances that increases their need for more AtW support above the cap limit.

Uncapped to Capped

Under these circumstances:

- there will be no change in entitlement but a cap will be applied to the limit per annum
- you must close the existing element and start a new element for 12 months from the date of change
- issue a revised entitlement letter to customer
- support is put in place for 12 months from the date of the change of circumstance application (or date of future change).

## Example 3

Customer has one (or more) jobs and takes on an additional job

Capped To Capped

Under these circumstances:

- there will be no change in entitlement and the original award continues
- an amended declaration letter will be issued to the customer
- the award will continue with same dates i.e. no new award period
- you must convert the element to a single event cost at relevant amount, based on the current award
- you must record a new job on the IT system with a full business case but no element
- you must note that funding for their original jobs remains on the business case.

## Example 4

Customer takes on an additional job that increases their need past the cap limit.

Uncapped to Capped

Under these circumstances:

- issue a revised entitlement letter to the customer
- close the existing element for Job 1 and start a new element for 12 months from date of change
- enter all expenditure in Job 1 to ensure the cap is adhered to
- record a new job on the IT system with full business case but no element
- note that funding remains in job 1 on the business case.
- Multiple elements

Under these circumstances:

- combine all the elements into one single event cost (using 'Support Worker' element)
- ensure notes are clear for the payments team
- close the existing element and start a new element for 12 months if uncapped to capped
- convert element to single event cost based on current award if capped to capped.

# 17 Communication support at interview

## Overview

1. Communication Support at Interview (CSI) is a fast track process that helps with the cost of employing an interpreter or communicator to accompany the customer to a job interview. This is when the customer would find it difficult to understand or to make themselves understood.
2. CSI is generally used by the deaf, hard of hearing or individuals with hearing loss. It is available to anyone who has a disability, illness or health condition that affects their ability to communicate.
3. CSI is available for all job interviews, including internal promotion.
4. Access to Work (AtW) pays 100% of all costs under CSI. There's no cost sharing.
5. CSI cannot be used for:
  - communication within a job such as job induction and job reviews. Under these circumstances, consideration should be given to a Support Worker
  - customers attending interviews with Jobcentre Plus or other departmental staff
  - attending other departmental programmes
6. Interpreters or communicators must be employed to cover a format understood by the customer. For example, British Sign Language (BSL) or lip speaking.
7. More information about organisations that can help with the recruitment of suitably qualified interpreters can be found in the [National Registers of Communication Professionals \(NRCP\)](#) working with Deaf and Deafblind people and the [National Union of British Sign Language Interpreters \(NUBSLI\)](#).
8. Other types of communication support such as advocacy can be provided for customers with learning difficulties or mental health problems.
9. CSI can be approved for up to three hours. In some circumstances, support can be provided for longer. For example, at a trade or aptitude test.
10. There's no limit to the number of interviews a customer can receive support for. However, where they have repeated interviews which do not result in employment, you must consider a referral to Jobcentre Plus staff if appropriate.

## Eligibility

11. To get communication support at a job interview the customer must:
  - be 16 or over

- live in England, Scotland or Wales
- have a health condition or disability which means the customer needs communication support at job interviews
- have an interview date for a paid job or apprenticeship in England, Scotland or Wales, or a Department for Education supported internship

## Application procedure

12. All applications for CSI must be made before the job interview takes place.

13. Applications are made on the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website.

14. All applications must include quotes. These must be an all inclusive rate that includes:

- support worker costs
- support worker travel costs
- administration costs
- VAT

15. The customer needs to tell AtW:

- the name of the company the job interview is with
- the date of the job interview
- how long the job interview is expected to last
- the name and contact details for someone at the company

**Note:** AtW must contact this person after the job interview to confirm the interview took place.

16. There's no requirement for an AtW adviser to contact the potential employer before the job interview.

## Actions after the application

17. You must share your decision with the customer using their preferred method of contact. This must be done within two working days.

18. A decision confirmation letter and a claim form if appropriate must be posted to the customer.

19. The customer can book their support worker for the job interview once a decision has been made to pay for CSI support.

20. Payment can only be claimed once the job interview has taken place.

21. The customer must provide an invoice and a signed claim form before payment can be made.

**Note:** AtW can only make payment if the cost on the invoice / claim matches the cost on the application.

22. Development of the Access to Work Integrated Service (AtWIS) system means from 10th September 2020 the whole of the CSI journey, from application to payment, will be managed entirely within the AtWIS digital service and will remove the dependency of DiSC.

23. As customers have up to 9 months to submit claim forms from when the costs were incurred, CSI applications from 10th September onwards, could be held in either AtWIS or DiSC.

24. All AtW colleagues who are responding to progress chasing enquiries or payment queries must, in the first instance, access AtWIS to locate the correct CSI application. If the application cannot be located colleagues must access DiSC to locate the application. This will ensure a swift resolution to the query and will prevent duplicate applications being made.