

ACCESS TO WORK

ARE YOU ENTITLED TO ACCESS TO WORK ASSISTANCE?

WHAT IS ACCESS TO WORK?

The Access to Work (ATW) scheme is ostensibly designed to provide help and support to disabled workers to enable them to overcome barriers that they may experience getting work, travelling to work and in the workplace. If you qualify for ATW the government will pay for, or make a contribution in the form of a grant towards, the support you need because of a disability.

WHO QUALIFIES FOR ACCESS TO WORK?

If you are a disabled person as defined by the DDA and your health or disability affects the way you do your job and you are:

- unemployed and starting a new job
- self employed
- working for an employer.

WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE?

If you satisfy the qualifying criteria ATW will contribute all or a proportion of the costs of:

- adaptations to premises and equipment
- special aids to employment
- support workers
- travel to work costs
- communication support at Job interviews.

HOW DO YOU GET ATW ASSISTANCE?

In the first instance discuss the matter with your employer. Your CWU rep can help you with this. Then contact the Disablement Employment Adviser who are part of the governments Placement Assessment and Counselling teams based in the local job centre. You will then have to complete an application form stating details of your employment and what type of support you require.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

From all accounts the Access to Work process is a relatively short one. When your application has been approved the Disablement Employment Adviser will contact you and the employer and may visit your workplace to appraise your needs. When a solution has been identified, costed, and agreed the applicant and the employer will receive an action plan from the DEA. It is the employer's responsibility – or yours if you are self employed – to arrange the agreed support and/or purchase the required aids or adaptations. The approved costs can then be reclaimed from ATW.

WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

Here is an overview of what appears to be a positive government policy to encourage and support disabled workers. The CWU welcomes and supports this initiative. If you want to learn more specific details you can contact the agency responsible for the scheme's administration at:

Access to Work
Operational Support Unit
1st Floor Alexandra House
377 Cowbridge Road East
Canton
Cardiff
CF5 1WU
Tel: 02920 423291

You can also contact the CWU Equal Opportunities Department if you have any questions or queries on this or any other matter.

Linda Roy
National Equality Officer
Email: lroy@cwu.org
Tel: 020 8971 7238