1. I used Access to Work (ATW) for my previous role working with Scope. I managed to obtain hours to provide me with communication support so I could employ a British Sign Language (BSL) Interpreter – I am profoundly Deaf and BSL is my first language. When I began using my budget there was some confusion about whose responsibility it was to pay the interpreter. I was not made aware of the process and the information I was given was not clear. I used my employed interpreter to contact ATW regarding payment issues; the interpreter made the phone call with me so I could clarify what was going on. By the end of the call I was made to believe everything was sorted, until I received a letter telling me I would be taken to court; ATW had been paying into my account; therefore it was my responsibility to then pay the interpreter. I was not at any point made aware of this, and used my interpreter again to contact ATW to resolve the problem. Finally ATW accepted that they would pay the interpreter direct and that the issues we had encountered were resolved, however I wish that the ATW had more respect and awareness for Deaf people; we do not easily understand written English as BSL is our first language. We do not fully comprehend ATW procedures because there is no information available in BSL.

2. If I was to apply for ATW again I would automatically feel very nervous about doing so; I do not want the same complications again, and the system has not improved for Deaf people.

3. I wish ATW had interpreters or Deaf staff within the office who could explain ATW procedures and assessments to Deaf people using the service; it would clarify any problems and make access easier for Deaf people. Then if anything was to happen, Deaf people could contact ATW without having to first find an interpreter.

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