Written evidence submitted by Claire Perdomo (ATW0130)

Executive Summary:

- Issues with the assessment time
- Issues with understanding my needs
- Issues with understanding my role

Introduction:

1. My name is Claire Perdomo and I work as a Support Service Secretary at the outreach team in Newcastle, however work for Leeds and York foundation NHS Trust, and the National Deaf CAMHS service.

The AtW application and assessment process, from the perspective of employees

2. At first, the application was applied for by someone else in my team as I was eager to get the support agreed before I started employment, and I was aware this is never a quick process. The job description etc was enclosed, to help them understand my job however this did not help. I then started employment 3 months later with no support agreed as yet, and we finally had a decision by 6 months into my employment. The problem was that the advisor did not understand my needs, as a deaf lady, nor did he understand how an interpreter would help me to my job. This process was very arduous and frustrating. I applied for full time support of an interpreter, however I was only allowed 13 hours a week.

The adequacy of ongoing support, both in terms of the aids, adaptations and support workers provided through AtW, and the help and advice offered by DWP:

3. As I stated, I asked for full time support and I was given 13 hours a week, this had a massive implication on how I was able to do my job. I am responsible for answering queries on the phone etc so when I have no support the queries have to be transferred to an answering machine, which means we are not providing an equitable service, which was not enabling to do my job. The advisor was encouraging me to rely on hearing staff, for them to do my job for me, and this is not the aim of the AtW scheme.

AtW’s effectiveness in terms of helping disabled people to: secure a job, stay in employment, and develop their careers:
4. AtW is a good scheme if the advisors understand how to support deaf people. I do feel without this scheme I would not be able to remain in employment.

The steps taken so far by DWP to extend AtW, including its marketing and funding of the scheme:

5. As far as I am aware I have not seen any marketing regarding AtW, and I have found out about AtW through a friend. It always seems the advisors aims are to give us less support than we need and they do not give us more information about other ways in which they can support us.

6. **My Recommendations:**

   I would recommend that advisors visit deaf people in their work place to understand our jobs.

   I would recommend advisors have more knowledge about deaf people and our needs.

   I would recommend the 30 hour rule is not enforced, as one size does not fit all.

   I would recommend the current market value for interpreters is reflected in the new changes.

*19 June 2014*