Written evidence submitted by Dyslexia Action (ATW0183)

1. This feedback is provided on behalf of Dyslexia Action, a national charity whose aims are to improve the lives of people living with literacy difficulties including the specific learning difficulty dyslexia and to promote dyslexia friendly practices in society. Dyslexia Action also undertakes workplace needs assessments to help employers support their staff who are affected by dyslexia/Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD).


Dyslexia Action believes the the Access to Work application and assessment process is ineffective as the general process of getting someone to go into an office to fill in forms is difficult in itself for someone that has dyslexia therefore we could be losing and/or deterring many potential beneficiaries at the first hurdle. It’s a free service which is helpful but it needs to be bespoke for the individual.

Many employers and support providers which exist to help get people back to work, such as occupational health providers, are still unaware of Access to Work so there needs to be a system in place to ensure this is corrected.

3. Dyslexia Action’s response in relation to the adequacy of on-going support, both in terms of the aids, adaptations and support workers provided through AtW, and the help and advice offered by DWP.

The help and advice offered by DWP support workers is likely to be general. Concerns exist as to the level of knowledge and awareness of Access to Work amongst DWP’s front-line staff and the level of retention by DWP for those that are effectively trained. To assist those that have dyslexia, support workers need to be specially trained.

4. Dyslexia Action’s response in relation to the effectiveness of AtW in supporting people with mental health conditions and learning disabilities.

In relation to the effectiveness of AtW it is believed by the dyslexia sector that no data has been collected from DWP on the number of adults still in employment following assistance from AtW. Collection of data would obviously help to assist with measurable outcomes.

There could be improvements to the marketing of the scheme so that employers hear about it more widely. Working with charities is a way to do this that does not increase the costs of such marketing. Dyslexia Action can assist with raising awareness of Access to Work amongst the charity’s supporters and its client base.
5. Dyslexia Action’s response in relation to AtW’s effectiveness in terms of helping disabled people to:

1. Secure a job;
2. Stay in employment; and
3. Develop their careers.

The Access to Work service needs to make resources more readily available and raise awareness amongst businesses, within job centres and with employers. I am not aware Access to Work actually helps people to get a job but it does help with reasonable adjustments to get settled in their job. Lots of people come to Dyslexia Action for advice which indicates to us that more awareness and support is generally needed.

The following would help people with dyslexia: coaching on dyslexia for employers on what reasonable adjustments need to be made for adults with dyslexia so they are also able to raise awareness; more people trained within the workplace to undertake workplace assessments in dyslexia; there needs to be a greater awareness among small businesses and graduates being supported by the DSA who have gone into the work place and can’t cope and that’s where Access to Work funding helps.

It is relatively cheap for an employer to support someone with dyslexia once they have received the appropriate training and all an employee usually needs is five to 10 sessions and then they are back in the office working properly and possibly directed to a literacy support course.

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