Written evidence submitted by Hampshire Unison (ATW0272)

This submission contains feedback provided by two branch members. The first (CR) is also a caseworker for members of Hampshire Unison employed in the private sector and she mentions working with them as well as her own experience.

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CR:

It is really important to support this scheme, I used Access to Work when I was working for HCC, not so much for the funding as they could afford the adjustments but to ensure they actually happened. They came out to the work place and looked at what I was doing and what could be done to support my continuation to remain in the work place.

They then write a report which backs up Occupational Health reports and provides suppliers who can be contacted to provide the necessary equipment. It was really helpful and worked for me.

I am currently working with two members who I have advised to go down this route, one is a school who won't get funding but again its about backing up the OHU report and ensuring the Head takes note and will give them the information about the equipment required.

The other company is private sector and may get help but just starting this one.

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CC:

1. Secure a job

Early last year, I was off work for several months due to work related stress. A condition I had never suffered from before. The reason why I was suffering from stress was because my line manager kept picking up on my spelling and typing mistakes. Regardless of how often I proof read my documents. Hence I was put on a work review and told to improve or lose my job. However, I previously been in the post of 3 years whilst being managed by other line managers.

I’ve always had trouble taking notes, actions and minutes whilst managing meetings. However as a project manager this is part of my job. At the same time, I’m supposed to understand the technical aspects of what people were telling me during meetings.
2. Stay in employment

To cut a long storey short, I was asked to complete a Dyslexia test run by the British Dyslexia Association. The results showed that I have dyslexia. The Association has helped me put forward a case for reasonable adjustments to be made to help me cope and manage my illness. It has also proved to me and others that I’m not stupid and that with small but well planed adjustments I can do my job effectively.

New IT equipment and training is being ordered, such as speech recognition software. This will allow turn my voice into text. The software will also help me to plan my projects by producing Gantt charts. At the same time, the software will allow me to open and new documents, which have been saved as templates. I will also be given training so that I can create and modify my own document templates.

The biggest impact for me is that I can stay in full time employment, which means that I won’t have to claim State benefit since I’m no longer under threat of losing my job.

The only reason why I have such a positive out-come, is that my trade union, UNISON fought my case. They fought for me to have an assessment. The employer did nothing to investigate or look at other reasons why I couldn’t perform. Without UNISON, the out-come for me would have been very different. I’m sure that I would have lost my job.

3. Develop their careers

The other positive outcome of the Dyslexia assessment is that I know I’m not stupid. I just see and understand things differently from most of my colleagues. Hence I know I will be stronger and be in a position to develop my career at a later stage.

Finally

The AtW application process was very straight forward. I’ve found staff to be very helpful and knowledgeable.

I’m not able to comment on ongoing support, because the equipment has not been setup as yet. However, the assessor did show me various aids which would be of benefit to me.

My employer is also able to obtain a grant which will pay for most of the equipment. Hence, they have no justification for not supporting me with reasonable adjustments.

20 June 2014