1. Executive Summary and Introduction

The John Townsend Trust is a registered charity that offers a range of services to children, young people and adults who are d/Deaf or have communication difficulties and additional needs. This submission is from a group of six Deaf staff that use BSL as their first language. The staff met twice to discuss ATW issues and have created this submission with the support of the interpreting coordinator and two qualified and registered interpreters. There are other Deaf staff employed by JTT that were unable to attend the meetings and therefore their views are not represented in this submission. This submission is not a direct translation of the two meetings but a summary of what was discussed. The first draft was created after the first meeting and the final draft was translated back into BSL on the 4th of July 2014 for approval. The interpreters have met and translated this document pro bono and ATW funding has not been used for the creation of this document. All staff would like their identity to be disclosed from publication.

2. Application and assessment process

The staff do not feel the application and assessment process is accessible or consistent. The staff do not understand how funding is allocated or why some staff have more support than others. Below is a summary of the support each member has, to their knowledge.

Client AL receives a letter every 3 years and does not know how many hours interpreting support she has.

Client JP receives a call or email every year and has 10 hours a week support but has not been contacted as yet this year.

Client EL receives a phone call every 2 or 3 years and has 72 hours a year support.

Client DM originally received a letter but now a phone call every three years for reassessment.

Client CC and ZB — both clients are unsure of the application process and if they have ever been assessed but acknowledge that they have interpreters on training days.

The staff all said the letters that they receive from ATW are full of jargon language and they cannot access the information without support. All the staff give their letters to the interpreting coordinator to read and deal with. The staff contacted by phone by ATW advisors cannot answer calls or access answer phone messages without support and do not understand why ATW would contact them by phone as they are all Deaf. Client JP now has his re assessment by email but as English is his second language feels this could be made more accessible. All other staff applications and re assessments are done by BH by telephone when they give her the renewal letter.
3. **The adequacy of ongoing support, both in terms of the aids, adaptations and support workers provided by ATW, and the help and advice offered by DWP.**

All of the staff need interpreters to access the workplace and training. The roles of the staff vary but all staff have team meetings and attend mandatory training and appraisals. All staff also need written documents for example reports, policies, coursework and letters to be translated into BSL to be accessed and to be modified from BSL when produced. The staff agree that although they work in a Deaf school where it is presumed that all staff are fluent in BSL but they are not. The staff do not want to rely on unskilled colleagues to sign for them but want to use registered trainee or qualified interpreters that are professional and impartial.

Client EL is not satisfied with 72 hours a year and would like further support to be able to complete paper work and communicate with colleagues that have limited BSL.

CC and ZB do not have regular interpreter support for meetings and rely on gesture and written notes to communicate with their line manager. They sometimes feel isolated from their hearing colleagues. They would like to be able to access deaf relay interpreters for training.

The staff are happy to use freelance interpreters but the staff do not understand why interpreters charge what they do. They understand some interpreters have to travel further, so their travel costs are higher, but see an inconsistency in fees.

4. **The effectiveness of ATW in supporting people with mental health conditions and learning disabilities.**

All staff were unaware that ATW supports people with Learning difficulties and Mental Health conditions in the work place.

5. **Recommendations**

All of the staff would like a ATW representative to visit them to explain ATW face to face with a registered Interpreter. They would all like an individual face to face assessment as they do not understand the process, and how the funding is allocated. The staff would also like to know why there is no consistency, for example, some people are given three years funding whilst some have their funding reassessed yearly.

The staff would like letters from ATW to be written and structured in a more accessible way. All of the staff agreed that they were not able to read and understand any letters from ATW without support. It was also suggested that rather than have a yearly budget, it would be clearer to say how many hours a week were allocated and to have a maximum hourly rate. As the application and re-assessment process is not accessible for Deaf people the staff have concerns that if BH left JTT then they would struggle to arrange hours and book interpreters without her. The staff suggested that ATW advisors use webcams and book interpreters to communicate directly with clients. All of the clients do not feel that calling them is an appropriate way of contacting them, unless a time was pre-arranged, enabling an interpreter to booked to interpret the call.
The ATW website is not accessible, as it is in English with too much jargon and is not Deaf friendly. The staff would like the ATW website to be interpreted into BSL.

These are the views of some of the deaf staff employed at The John Townsend Trust.

7 July 2014