Executive Summary:

- Application documentation can be tricky for a Deaf person to understand.
- Budgets awarded are often insufficient for the area we work in.
- Lack of awareness in local government.

Introduction:

I work for a charity called United Response, we support many different disabilities but in my day to day work I run a team supporting people who are Deaf, indeed a large part of my team are Deaf too which I am very proud about as it provides good role models for the people we support.

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

I often have to support staff with clarifying what parts of the application mean, being the communicator on phone calls with AtW and for email correspondence. The language used is frequently confusing for a person whose first language is BSL. Often having to wrangle the hours needed to effectively supervise and train staff, and the level at which the funding is provided may force the charity to foot any difference in interpreter fees in the future.

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:

The experience that we often find is that appointments at our local Jobcentre Plus or similar made for the people we support are made without knowledge of their support needs. I do not recall a time when on making a call enquiring about interpretation provision we have not been asked about being ‘interpreters’ ourselves. I often have to stress that we are not qualified or insured to perform this role as the meeting may involve serious decisions.

The effectiveness of AtW in supporting people with mental health conditions and learning disabilities:

Please see previous response.

AtW’s effectiveness in terms of helping disabled people to: secure a job, stay in employment, and develop their careers:

We have recently supported a client who is Deaf into her first part time job. However have found that the hours she works are not sufficient to qualify her to receive funding so that she can employ qualified interpreters for training and
regular supervisions. At the moment she has to rely on support workers that can provide basic communication assistance.

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

It often occurs to me that people that have a disability are caught between government policy trying to get people to work if they are able, yet not provide adequate support to help them get and maintain a career.

My Recommendations:

- A review of the funding provided to support people who need qualified interpretation and the real life experience of how employers and users find how far this money goes.