**Written Ministerial Statement

Tuesday 10 June 2014

THE DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS

Access to Work**The Minister for Disabled People (Mike Penning MP): Access to Work helps over 30,000 disabled people to take up and remain in employment each year, providing support such as specialist aids and equipment, travel to work and support workers.

​This Government has expanded and strengthened this important programme by increasing the budget and implementing a wide range of improvements. As a result, volumes and expenditure on Access to Work have increased over recent years, meaning more disabled people are now being supported to fulfil their potential in the workplace. This progress has been shaped by important reviews undertaken by Liz Sayce and an Expert Panel chaired by Mike Adams.

I want to continue to build on this success so that Access to Work can support more claimants per year. That is why I have asked that over a three month period, we now look into Access to Work, focusing on how we can support more disabled people and further improve customer service. I will set out further details on next steps shortly.

Whilst we undertake this work I am also suspending Access to Work’s 30-hour guidance for new claimants. This operational guidance stated that if a Support Worker is required full-time, for example 30 hours or more a week, Access to Work will normally provide funding on the basis of an annual salary rather than a freelance rate.

Having listened to concerns about its practical effect, notably on the ability of some deaf customers to source appropriate British Sign Language support, this guidance will not be applied to new cases pending the completion of this work.