

**Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
Central Freedom of Information Team**

freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Our reference: VTR3261

Date: 5 August 2014

Dear Mr Townsend-Handscomb,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (Fol) request received on 21st July 2014. You asked:

I would like to request the written information and any summary of training that is made available to AtW Advisers in order to allow them to assess whether a CSW is the appropriate support for a Deaf AtW customer, including but not limited to the following areas:

Access to Work has specialist teams that focus on applications from those with Hearing Impairments. These advisers are trained via in house e-learning, workshops and case studies that highlight specific learning areas. Our Deaf focus teams hold regular meetings/knowledge days with deaf organisations such as Action on Hearing Loss, Microlink and Bee Communications. During these meetings barriers faced by Deaf customers are discussed and these sessions are used to help advisers better understand these issues.

1. What a CSW is.

A Communication Support Worker (CSW) works with deaf people and those with others disabilities who require support with communicating spoken and written English.

2. What their skills and competencies are.

- BSL Stage 2 or equivalent functioning

- GCSE English and Maths at Grade C or above

or

- the BTEC/EDEXCEL qualification in Communication Support.

3. The criteria, issues or circumstances that mean a CSW is the appropriate level of communication support to award.

In determining a reasonable and proportionate grant award, advisers discuss in detail the customer's job role and daily working practices, with input from employers and any other relevant parties. During that process, the exact

nature and type of support required is identified and agreed. Advisers make funding recommendations on the basis of information received.

4. The criteria, issues or circumstances that determine the proportion of time for which a trainee or qualified interpreter will be awarded versus a CSW.

Access to Work is designed to assist disabled workers and their employers to overcome workplace barriers resulting from a disability or condition by considering a grant award to address minimum essential needs, within the wider context of potential solutions and adjustments. Customer circumstances and support needs are extremely varied and funding decisions are made on an individual basis.

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central FoI Team

Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act

If you are not happy with this response you may request an internal review by e-mailing freedom-of-information-request@dpw.gsi.gov.uk or by writing to: DWP, Central FoI Team, Caxton House, Tothill Street, SW1H 9NA. Any review request should be submitted within two months of the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. Generally the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF www.ico.org.uk/Global/contact_us or telephone 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745