

Factsheet



Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living (LCiL) Grapevine Disability Information

Access to Work

What is Access to Work?

Access to Work (AtW) is a government scheme available in Scotland, England and Wales offering grants which can be used to pay for practical support for disabled people and adults with long term conditions who are starting in work, wish to continue in work or are thinking about becoming self-employed.

How much you get depends on your circumstances and whether you're in receipt of particular state benefits. AtW is grant based, so the money doesn't have to be paid back and will not affect any other benefits if you are eligible.

For a broad overview of AtW eligibility criteria, information on what you can use your grant for and how to apply please visit www.gov.uk/access-to-work or read on for our Frequently Asked Questions.

FAQ

We've pulled together a selection of frequently asked questions about AtW, many of which link to external content. While we can't be responsible for the accuracy of external content, we've found these resources useful in our own understanding of AtW and we hope you do to.

- **“What support is available with finding employment?”** All in Edinburgh is a consortium of four providers who can offer support in finding employment for people who have a disability or long term health condition.

www.enable.org.uk/services/employment-service/Pages/All-in-Edinburgh.aspx call 0300 0200 101 or email info@allinedinburgh.org.uk

If you live in East Lothian you can contact East Lothian Council's Vocational Opportunities Service (ELVOS) who can offer advice and support in their region. ELVOS 9-11 Lodge Street, Haddington, East Lothian EH41 3DX, 0131 653 5316 elworks@eastlothian.gov.uk

Factsheet



- **“What support is there available to me before I get a job?”** AtW can help with the costs of communication support if you are a disabled person and have been offered an interview for a job. For example, for deaf people requiring a British Sign Language Interpreter with them at interview. For full details of how to apply and what to expect, download our [Communications Support at Interviews factsheet](#).

- **“I’m about to start a new job/been offered a job. How do I go about accessing support?”** When you contact AtW, they will take you through a brief check list to check your eligibility. They will then contact you again within 10 working days to take forward your application. Following this there will be a telephone interview to complete the application process, after which you will receive a completed copy of the form to sign.

If you’re already receiving AtW and changing job or starting your own business, you’ll need to contact AfW to inform them of this change and any reassessment of needs there may be. You can also find out more via this short factsheet, [How to Apply for Access to Work](#).

- **“What kinds of things can Access to Work fund?”** The purpose of AtW is to enable you to work and therefore what can be funded is broad and specific to you but includes transport to work (for example, taxis to work if you can’t access public transport), support workers or personal assistants, specialist equipment and even modifications to existing premises or equipment.

- **“What does an Access to Work assessment involve?”** Assessments will focus on your specific impairment or long term condition and look at what the best use of a grant would be for you; this could mean anything from employing a personal assistant, specialised office furniture or installation or ramped access at your place of work. Assessments usually take place by phone and depending on your disability or condition, an external specialist organisation may be commissioned by AtW to assist with your assessment.

You’ll find a useful guide to assessment and other steps towards applying for a grant via the Your Access to Work website, www.yourdsa.com/atw/atw-assessment/

Factsheet



- **“I’m thinking about starting up my own business. What kind of support is there for me?”** AtW supports both those employed by others and those who are self-employed. The types of support are the same, however AtW cannot be used for any start-up costs associated with your business like buying or renting premises, market-researching, attending courses and seminars related to your business.

- **“What do employers/businesses need to know about Access to Work?”** Employers need to know about their duty towards making reasonable changes to the workplace required by a disabled employee. Depending on whether you apply for AtW before or after taking up employment their financial obligations to support reasonable changes, specialist equipment purchases etc. will vary. Your employer or potential employer plays an important role in successfully accessing AtW so you should always speak to them as soon as possible if you’re thinking about applying for a grant or moving to a new job.

Factsheets from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) for employers are available via www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-work-guide-for-employers

- **“What can I do if I want to challenge a decision about my Access to Work award?”** If you need to challenge a decision or make a complaint about AtW you should speak to your advisor first or to the regional manager for Access to Work. If you wish to appeal a decision you should be aware that as AtW is not a statutory service, there is no formal appeal procedure but you can ask for reassessment from your regional manager. You can’t appeal the amount awarded.

Full details of the DWP’s complaints procedure is available via www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions/about/complaints-procedure

- **“I’d like as much information as possible about AtW! Is there a guide that includes all the information I’ll need?”** There is! The DWP guide (available in accessible formats on request) has a wealth of information on the scheme and goes into a lot of detail on all aspects of the scheme including those not mentioned in this short introduction. You’ll find it here; www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-work-staff-guide

Factsheet



- **“I have a hearing impairment. Is there a BSL guide to AtW?”** The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has also produced a series of video ‘factsheets’ in British Sign Language (BSL) which can be accessed via their YouTube channel.

www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLC0aQWFFHARzJYt8cED-WX1g5jD0mApTv

The DWP’s AtW handbook is also available in a range of accessible formats (see the previous FAQ question for details)

- **“Where else can I go for information and advice about equalities and my rights at work as a disabled person?”** As well as LCiL’s Grapevine advice service (0131 475 2370 (Mondays-Thursday, 10am-4pm)/email enquiries to grapevine@lothiancil.org.uk) you can contact the following organisations for advice;

Citizens Advice Edinburgh (check their website for your nearest office and contact details, www.citizensadviceedinburgh.org.uk/locations/)

Musselburgh Citizens Advice Bureau, 141 High Street, Musselburgh, EH21 7DD, phone: 0131 653 2748 / 2544 or visit <http://musselburghcab.org.uk>

Disability Rights UK www.disabilityrightsuk.org

The Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH) www.samh.org.uk

Contact information

You can contact Access to Work via their central UK phone number for the scheme on 0345 268 8489 or 0845 268 8489.

Disabled people living in Edinburgh and East Lothian, other support organisations and employers can contact Grapevine, the disability information line, on 0131 475 2370 or email us via grapevine@lothiancil.org.uk if they have general enquiries relating to AtW

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Contact details

Tel: 0131 475 2350 (Monday-Thursday
10am-4pm)

Email: lcil@lothiancil.org.uk

Website: www.lothiancil.org.uk

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