

Access To Work

Initial discussions from our monthly meeting in August:

Don't want to see reforms to A2W amount to combining it with other benefits like PIP to save money.

Employers won't install assistive tech due to workplace security concerns.

People are being pushed towards online resources rather direct access to physical or other tools.

It often takes over 1 year to process, so the need for a particular tool had already passed by the time it became available. Also people have trouble getting reimbursed for any personal outlays they made on equipment to overcome the delays in applications.

Many are puzzled why existing data from elsewhere is not used by the DWP to speed up assessments.

The assessors are outsourced to many who are not regulated or familiar with the nature of the work in terms of particular needs and

matching requirements.

Things like mindmap software to benefit neurodivergents who often need visual information to organise are dismissed as not assistive.

There should be far greater links with HR, who have a duty to help employees, they should be informed also as to why certain adjustments are valuable.

A statutory and mandatory timeline is required to address the infinite delays.

From the Pad:

https://rsn-pad.pikapod.net/p/RSN_Greater_London_Access_To_Work_Pad

We must try to emphasise that Access To Work is a standalone policy not linked to PiP in anyway. Jax

Must have statutory guidelines and timings for assessment of employee to be done within at least a 3 month period in order to access support/equipment/assistive technology at work

HR must be made aware of Access To Work as a Mandatory Employment right - in every corporate or SME business. Just as Autism Awareness such as Oliver McGowan Autism Training is now Mandatory in NHS and social care setting - inclusive of those employees who only do admin for such support/care companies.

Occupational Therapy must be more knowledgeable in regards Access to Work as disability can affect anyone at any time.

In my experience, large corporate businesses (multinational) do not know of Access to Work. My HR rep was based in Dubai, I worked in UK and I was never told about Access to Work and what it does. In my view, newly disabled employees may have no idea Access to Work exists.

Another point to make is about occupational health. They are often an external company contracted by an employer to do work assessment. They have their own agenda and they will never recommend Access to Work in their reports.

It's tricky as employees do not have to disclose their disability in the workplace. It's their right to not inform an employer of their disabilities or a disability. Once someone becomes disabled in the

course of their employment and decides to disclose it, the uphill struggle begins. HR refers to Occupational health. OH rushes to interview an employee. OH won't wait for a report from a GP practice as it may take 'too long' and they have a chat over the phone with an employee who - in good faith - has disclosed their disability. That over the phone assessment lasts about 20 minutes and covers very little. This whole end to end process must become regulated by law. We need transparency and support and genuine help to keep on working and / or return to work.

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