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# **EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF ACCESS TO WORK: A CASE STUDY APPROACH**

**Patricia Thornton and Anne Corden  
Social Policy Research Unit**

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# **Disclaimer**

The views expressed in this report are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect those of Jobcentre Plus or the Department for Work and Pensions.

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# Extended Executive Summary

The Access to Work programme aims to reduce inequalities between disabled people and non-disabled people in the workplace by removing practical barriers to work. There are four main elements of support: support workers in the workplace or to assist in getting to work; help with costs of travel to work; alterations to workplace premises; and aids and equipment in the workplace. Employers may be asked to make a financial contribution and users to contribute to costs of fares to work.

The Employment Service (now Jobcentre Plus) commissioned the Social Policy Research Unit to evaluate the impact of the Access to Work programme. The aims were to estimate the difference the programme makes in enabling its users to take up and stay in work and to estimate whether the same outcomes could have been achieved without the programme. Users and their employers were asked to explain the difference the support made to them and to hypothesise about what would have happened in the absence of the programme.

## Research Methods

A case study methodology was used as an alternative to estimating the difference attributable to the programme and deadweight through experimental and quasi-experimental research methods. Case study is a well-established methodology, and useful when the focus is on the relationship between a person and their setting. It is now accepted as an appropriate strategy for explanation, leading to findings which may be generalised at an analytical level on the basis of the cogency of the theoretical reasoning. The approach developed, within a realist theoretical paradigm, used qualitative techniques to obtain and explain quantifiable results, providing detailed insights into the way in which the programme led to outcomes.

Using agreement scales calibrated 1 – 100, users and employers were asked to rate the likelihood of possible outcomes in the absence of Access to Work, and then to discuss the reasons for so placing their response. They were also asked to rate the possibility and acceptability of alternatives to Access to Work support elements. They were asked about the differences Access to Work made to them without using the scale. Because users often receive more than one support element, question modules were developed for each, and in conclusion users were asked to rate the overall effects of Access to Work. The semi-structured interview schedule was designed to address, and circumvent, potential problems related to recall in retrospective interviews and socially acceptable answers.

The main user sample was drawn from respondents to a national survey, conducted in 2000 to investigate users' views of Access to Work, who said they were willing to take part in further research. The aim was to achieve a cohort who said they first

applied in 1999 or 2000, though some respondents were longer-term users. There was no attempt to achieve geographical representation, the prime consideration being to achieve adequate representation of the four main elements of Access to Work.

Eighty-seven full case studies were achieved, based on interviews with Access to Work users and their respective employers, and on extracts from client case records. There were interviews with a further 30 users who were self-employed or for whom no employer interview could be achieved.

## **Support Workers**

### **Respondents and their Access to Work Support**

Fewer Support Worker users took part in the study than projected. Twenty-one users were interviewed but full responses were obtained from only 19. Twelve employer representatives were interviewed.

Support Workers were used as readers, communicators at work, job aides, personal assistants, drivers to work and in work, and, exceptionally, as a job coach. Support Workers often performed more than one function. Levels of support varied from the entire working week throughout the year to six two-hour sessions per annum. People with physical or visual impairments had much higher levels of support than people with hearing impairments.

### **Likely Employment Outcomes in the Absence of Access to Work**

Although numbers are small, there is strong evidence from users that Support Worker provision was essential to take up a job. Without a Support Worker, getting any job would have been impossible for most, and some thought they might even have given up looking for work altogether. Some employers, keen to appoint the best person for the job, thought they might have found alternative solutions in the absence of Access to Work support, but it is not certain that such solutions would have materialised or been sustainable in the longer-term, or that they would have been fully acceptable to users. In only one case did both user and employer believe that an alternative might have been found by rearranging the work.

Support Worker provision was also important to sustain employment. Around one in four users established in work when they applied felt that they would have given up working altogether if Support Worker provision had not been available. Employers generally agreed with this view. Almost half of Support Worker users were completely or fairly certain that they would lose their job if the Access to Work Support Worker were not available at the time of the interview. Only three users agreed completely that they would carry on without the provision, in two instances where the only role of the Support Worker was to drive the user to work, and a majority totally disagreed. Deteriorating health and the consequent effect on work

performance was the main reason given for not carrying on. Those who said they would have carried on without the support stressed the importance to them of working, having an income, supporting a family or maintaining a business, although they believed they could not do the job effectively without the support. Employers' judgements generally concurred with those of users, though they tended to be more pessimistic about the possibility of carrying on without the support.

All except one had a package of Access to Work support and Support Worker provision appears to be a key ingredient in most cases.

### **Alternatives to Support Worker Provision**

Most users were pessimistic about the possibility of getting the support they needed from other people at work, and most would find accepting help from others unacceptable were it available. Where alternative sources of help were available, they were not likely to be of the same quality or intensity as that offered by Support Workers. Only one user was confident that the employer could have found an acceptable alternative solution.

### **The Possibilities of Employers Paying for a Support Worker**

Support Worker costs ranged from £300 to £24,000 per annum. Most users saw little or no possibility of the employing organisation paying for a Support Worker. Were it possible, it was generally unlikely to be acceptable to users. Some stressed the responsibility of government to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people, though it was also felt by some that employers have a duty to pay. Possible negative consequences of the employer paying were the effects on felt independence and good relations at work. Asking an employer to pay would emphasise impairment and difference, and prejudice employment chances. Some employees of small organisations and owners of businesses were concerned about the financial impact on an organisation to which they were strongly committed.

Employers were overall less negative than users about the possibility of paying, though none agreed wholeheartedly that the organisation would pay. There is some evidence that employers might be prepared to pay for a proportion of the costs. Where several staff members made use of Access to Work Support Worker provision organisations were concerned about the ongoing costs. The point was made that shifting costs to employers would make disabled people disproportionately expensive to employ.

### **The Possibilities of Users Paying for the Support Worker**

It was rare for a user to say that paying for Support Worker provision would be a real possibility. A few felt that they might have the resources to pay to support work that they could not contemplate giving up. Overall, the idea that users might pay was not acceptable, mainly because of the financial impact but also because of the perceived injustice of asking disabled people to contribute in order to work.



### **Differences Support Worker Provision Makes to Users**

Users were keen to emphasise the difference that Support Worker provision made to them. For some the fundamental difference was being able to work at all. Almost all emphasised the increased ability to do their job more effectively. Also stressed were participation at work and social inclusion. Independence, control and associated well-being were highlighted. Career chances were enhanced. For self-employed people a Support Worker could be the key to running a company in the way open to a non-disabled person. Using a Support Worker brought significant health gains that made the difference between staying in work and giving up. Having a Support Worker also demonstrated to non-disabled colleagues and customers that disabled people can work on an equal footing and helped to reduce prejudice. Only one respondent referred solely to financial advantage, where the Support Worker was a family member who served as a driver to work.

## **Travel to Work**

### **Respondents and their Travel to Work Support**

Travel to Work users were well represented in the study: 36 respondents had received help with taxi fares or the costs of being driven to work, of whom 23 were still receiving such help when interviewed. Twenty-seven employers were interviewed. As the employers' role is only to provide proof of attendance, employers were not always sufficiently aware of their employee's support to give full answers.

The approved annual costs of Travel to Work ranged up to £10,700. Support had sometimes been provided on a short-term basis.

### **Possible Alternatives to Travel to Work Support**

Walking to work was almost never an option. Using public transport was impossible, according to users, because it was inaccessible, journey lengths would have been unacceptable, or using it would be damaging to health or risk personal safety. Getting lifts to work from family or friends was definitely possible for a small minority of respondents, and where this was also acceptable, it might be concluded that Access to Work support was not essential. For most, however, there was no scope for such lifts, which would have seemed an unacceptable option, creating obligations and loss of independence.

### **Likely Employment Outcomes in the Absence of Access to Work**

There was strong evidence from users that Travel to Work was essential to taking up a job. With no other options for travelling to work for most people, the expense of taxi fares meant that people could not otherwise afford to go to work.

For those established in work when they applied, giving up work altogether or getting another job, should Travel to Work not have been available, was not usually seen as an option. Work itself, maintaining income and self-esteem, or having a suitable job

were all too important. Those who felt they could have carried on without Travel to Work thought some other options were open to them, such as using their own resources or asking family members for lifts. However, such arrangements were not thought to be sustainable for long.

A striking finding is users' views of the likelihood of taking more sick leave in the absence of Travel to Work, both at the time they first applied and, for those still receiving this help, in current circumstances. Those who saw no other way of getting to work felt they would be at home claiming sickness. Those who might have managed to make alternative arrangements expected the extra time and effort required would lead to exhaustion, and stress, and the likelihood of decline in health.

A strong possibility of losing their job without Travel to Work was felt among several current users, whose employers tended to agree.

People might have been expected to change their hours to reduce costs of travel, if Access to Work were not available. However, this was not an option for most, even where employers might have made arrangements. Reducing journeys by lengthening working days could have led to negative effects on health; major reductions in hours would have meant unacceptable loss of earnings. Home-working was sometimes seen as an option, but people generally wanted to come into a work-place.

### **The Possibilities of Employers Paying for Travel to Work**

Few users were optimistic about the possibility of using taxis paid for by their employer, although this would have been acceptable to many. When employers' views were sought, few thought this was more than a half-way possibility. The financial impact on the organisation was considered unacceptable, and they pointed to the precedent set in *'opening the floodgates'*. Even if willing in principle, which was unusual, taxi fares did not fit into existing budget allocations, or were beyond the control of local managers. It was unusual for this kind of accommodation for disabled people to be viewed as a legal responsibility. Where employers were rather more positive about the possibility of paying for taxi fares under current circumstances, they sometimes mentioned the value of retaining trained and competent staff. The possibility of employers actually providing transport themselves seemed remote, and unlikely to be a practical solution, to both employees and employers.

### **The Possibilities of Users Paying for their Travel Expenses**

Travel to Work users normally make a contribution to their travel expenses. For most, the full cost was unaffordable at the time of their application, although a minority thought this would have been a possibility. Acceptability was generally rated lower, again for financial reasons, and because it seemed unfair to have to pay extra to go to work. Even those who felt they might have afforded to pay were likely to rate lower the acceptability of doing so. Some users felt this should be a government responsibility, although some wished they were in a position to be financially independent.

### **Differences Travel to Work Provision Makes to Users**

For many users, the fundamental difference made by Travel to Work was being able to get to their job. For some, taking-up or continuing in lower-paid work would not otherwise have been possible, and people with higher earnings and expensive journeys would not have been able to do their job. Being able to assure prospective employers that getting to work was not a problem gave job applicants confidence and credibility.

People could be relied upon to arrive at work on time, and ready for work, which was valued by employers in terms of work performance. Users felt that health was not jeopardised by the stress, risk, and fatigue attached to otherwise exhausting journeys, and concentration and quality of work were enhanced by relief from worry and distraction. Not being financially out of pocket by going to work made substantial differences to the viability of employment.

### **Alterations to Premises**

#### **Respondents and their Access to Work Support**

Fifteen users for whom alterations to the building had been made and 11 employers were interviewed. The most common alteration was to toilet facilities. Other assistance included stair-lifts, automatic doors and ramps. Costs ranged up to £10,000 and six alterations cost over £5,000.

#### **Employment Outcomes in the Absence of Access to Work**

Alterations to Premises appeared to have the greatest impact on sustaining the employment of people who developed health problems which put their job at risk, although the support could also be indispensable to disabled people taking up work. For many of those, work would be totally impossible without the alterations. Disabled people who did not have health problems affecting their work mostly got help with Alterations to Premises when they had been carrying on without the support for some time. The benefits to them lay mainly in easier and more equal access in the workplace and some associated improvements in efficiency. Working without the alterations could have been tiring and sometimes demeaning but not intolerable for people determined to work.

Almost all users believed that the alteration had made some difference to them, though in two instances it was thought to be entirely dispensable. Some users felt they could have carried on without it with no serious negative effect on their work, health or well-being.

#### **The Possibilities of Employers Paying for Alterations to Premises**

Users' views of the possibility of their employer paying for the alterations ranged widely. Positive responses related mainly to employers' attitudes or the example they had already set. Users working in small local authority units were the most

pessimistic. Not all users were happy with the idea of their employer paying. Feeling obligated to the employer and the effect on relationships was a factor. Some felt that responsibility to enable employment of disabled people should lie with government; others felt that employers had a duty to their employees.

Employer representatives' ratings of the possibility of paying were only marginally higher than users'. Local authority respondents found it hard to answer if they themselves did not have control over budgets for adaptations. Most employers felt they would *'find some way'* of meeting their employees' needs, though how the funds would be found was not always clear. Only two respondents were certain or almost certain that the organisation would pay because it had a policy to make adaptations. Legal obligations were mentioned very rarely. Although the organisation might have been willing and able to pay, the expertise to make appropriate alterations could be lacking.

It was very exceptional for an employer to say that paying for the alteration was not at all acceptable, making it unlikely that the alteration would have been made. Employers generally seemed to accept the principle of employers paying for alterations. Benefits to other staff, students or customers were acknowledged. Where users had previously appeared to manage without the alterations some employers were less inclined to find paying acceptable.

### **The Possibilities of Users Paying for the Alterations**

Users rarely saw any real possibility of paying for the alterations. Many users rejected the idea on principle, believing it should not be their responsibility, that it was unfair to ask disabled people to pay or it denied equality of access. In some instances where users had previously managed without the alteration, saw it as a *'luxury'*, or found it unsuitable there would have been little point in paying themselves.

## **Aids and Equipment**

### **Respondents and their Aids and Equipment Support**

Special Aids and Equipment is the largest element of Access to Work provision. In all, 87 people were interviewed who had experience of using Aids and Equipment, of whom 11 were not current users at the time of their interview. The 76 current users are likely to be representative of the population of Aids and Equipment users in the survey of users' views who said they first applied for Access to Work in 1999 or 2000, although not regionally representative. Interviews relating to Aids and Equipment were conducted with 66 employers.

Aids and Equipment comprises different types of support, and respondents had experience of using: ergonomic chairs and workstation equipment; IT-related equipment and software; communication aids for people with hearing or speech impairments; wheelchairs; and special tools.

### **Employment Outcomes in the Absence of Access to Work**

A small minority of people were taking up a new job when they applied for Aids and Equipment, and it was rare for any of these to say they would not have taken their job without this support. In the one case where this would have been impossible, the employer agreed. Employers were generally positive about the likelihood of taking on these employees without Access to Work, wanting the best person for the job and sometimes believing that the organisation would have paid for the equipment. However, although numbers were small, findings suggested that Access to Work might be an important factor where the job was in doubt and organisations were uncertain about paying themselves.

Most people who had used Aids and Equipment had applied when established in work. Several emphasised that having an impairment did not mean they were ill, and totally disagreed that they would take more sick leave without their Aids and Equipment. However, other disabled people agreed that struggling to cope without their support (in particular, with pain and fatigue at their workstation) would have led to taking more sick leave. It seems that people were taking less sick leave since they got their support, and their morale had improved. Improved work performance was an important outcome, from the point of view of both users and employers.

Giving up work altogether at the time they applied, had Aids and Equipment not been available, was inconceivable to most, although one in ten would definitely or almost definitely have give up without the support. Employers were generally more pessimistic about the possibility of their employees staying in their jobs at that time, and sometimes had completely opposite views to their employee. There was strong evidence of the importance of their equipment for people staying in their jobs 'now'. A substantial number felt it was certain or more than likely that they would lose their job, under current circumstances, without their Aids or Equipment. Their employers, tended to be less pessimistic. Findings generally suggested that users were depending on their equipment to stay in their job, and that once employers saw the benefits they were more inclined to consider finding other solutions to keep that person in their employment.

There was a strong tendency for people to say they would have carried on at work without Aids and Equipment when they applied. However, when asked about the likely outcome at the time of the interview more said they would *not* have carried on than would have done so. Several users commented that having used the equipment they now realised its benefits. Among those who said they would have carried on were people who needed the equipment so much that they would have bought it themselves, and people who thought their employer would now provide it. Some users valued the extra comfort and convenience they had, but thought of this as an 'extra' and some people said their condition had now improved. Some items in the support packages were more dispensable than others.

### **Possibilities of Users Paying for Aids and Equipment**

Views on paying themselves for all their equipment when they first applied were wide ranging. It would have been completely impossible for nearly half, while one in three saw a distinct possibility. Among those receiving a package of equipment, one in three thought they could have paid for some items. Yet, paying was unacceptable to most, who saw provision of appropriate equipment as their employer's responsibility. However, the possibility of paying 'now' seemed higher to current users. Having felt the benefits, they were reluctant to lose them, and some felt better off financially.

### **Possibilities of Employers Paying for Aids and Equipment**

When users were asked about the possibility of employers paying for their aids and equipment at the time they applied, a number just did not know. Otherwise, views were polarised, but it was generally considered acceptable for employers to pay for such items. Indeed, some felt that this was the employer's responsibility.

When employers were asked a corresponding question, it was rare for them to say that their organisation would not have paid at all and four in ten agreed completely that the organisation would have paid for all the support at the time of application. Some were uncertain what would have been decided, and some scores reflected employers' willingness to try to fund items. There was no correspondence between the costs of the equipment and willingness to pay but few employers agreed completely that the organisation would have paid for packages that included accessible IT equipment or software which might have involved up-grading costs. Employers were overall more cautious about agreeing that the organisation would pay for all the equipment if Access to Work were not available at the time of the interview.

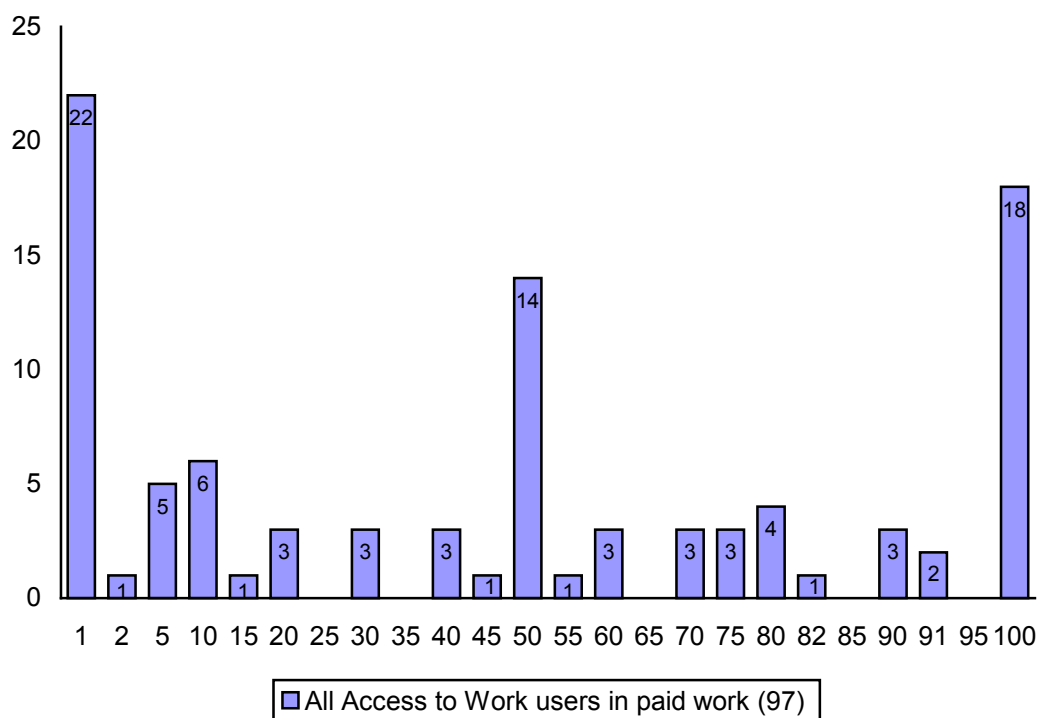
One issue was that while, in principle, employers might have been willing and able to pay, they lacked expertise in finding the right solution for an employee, and they valued this element of Access to Work. Employers sometimes felt that they might be forced to procure lower quality provision, or a slimmed down package of support, should they have to bear the full costs, and some commented that delays would be inevitable if they had to negotiate internal funding.

Looking across sectors, local authority employer respondents were overall most confident that the organisation would have paid the full costs in the absence of Access to Work. Respondents from central government departments were rather less certain, but this reflects some unfamiliarity with existing internal funding sources. Voluntary organisations were mostly keen to do their utmost to fund the provision, though considerable effort would have to be expended on seeking external funding. Private sector respondents overall were the most uncertain about the possibility of the organisation paying.

## Conclusions

Towards the end of the interview, all Access to Work users in paid work at the time were asked to rate on the scale from 1 to 100 the likelihood of being in their job if Access to Work were not available. By this point in the interview they were in a position to give a considered score of the overall impact of Access to Work, taking account of the contribution of the different types of support they received.

Users' scores for the overall impact of the programme are set out in the figure below. Fourteen of the 97 respondents opted for the middle score, indicating no strong opinion either way. The number saying it was less than half way likely that they would be in their job was rather higher than the number saying it was more than half way likely (45 compared with 38). Scores concentrate at the end points of the scale: 22 users estimated they would 'absolutely not' be in their job without Access to Work and 18 judged they 'definitely' would be in their job. If we include scores within ten points of each pole, we find that 35 per cent of respondents rated it highly unlikely (1-10) that they would be in their job without Access to Work while 28 per cent rated it as highly likely (90-100).



Looking across the four main support elements, the level of deadweight is lowest in the case of Travel to Work and highest for Aids and Equipment.

Employers were considerably more positive about the likelihood of the users being in their jobs in the hypothetical absence of Access to Work, with almost half of the 65 employer respondents agreeing completely that their employee would be in the job without Access to Work and only five totally disagreeing. Employers' judgements of

the likelihood of their employees remaining in work variously reflect a view that determined individuals would not give up, a commitment to equal opportunities, a will to retain valued employees, openness to looking for alternative ways of meeting needs and an optimism that funds could be found to substitute, in least in part, for Access to Work support.





# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background to the Study

In May 2001 the Employment Service (ES) – now Jobcentre Plus - commissioned the Social Policy Research Unit (SPRU), through the Disability Services Research Partnership Agreement, to evaluate the impact of the Access to Work programme. The main purpose of the evaluation was to inform decisions about the most effective and efficient use of limited resources in an on-going public programme.

The ES had been examining suitable methods to estimate the difference attributable to the Access to Work programme in terms of additional movement into work and job retention and to estimate whether the same outcomes could have been achieved without the programme (deadweight). Experimental and quasi-experimental methods were considered. An approach using a randomised control group was ruled out on ethical grounds and it was decided that the feasibility of using a comparison group needed to be explored before embarking on any study.<sup>1</sup> In this context, case study methodology was accepted as a valid alternative approach to estimating the impact of the programme.

SPRU adopted a case study methodology within a realist theoretical paradigm. The approach developed involved combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques within a research interview and, effectively, using qualitative techniques to obtain and explain quantifiable results. The advantage of this approach was the potential to provide detailed insights into the ways in which programme support led to outcomes. Previous research which attempted to estimate deadweight through programme participants' own assessments had been carried out within a survey context and did not explain why respondents answered as they did (Beinart *et al.*, 1996).

## 1.2 The Access to Work Programme

The aim of Access to Work is to reduce inequalities between disabled and non-disabled people in the workplace by removing the practical barriers to work. An established public programme operating throughout Great Britain since 1994, Access to Work is designed for people with long-term health problems or impairments who

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<sup>1</sup> Hirst, M. (2001) *Evaluating Access to Work and WORKSTEP: A feasibility study*, unpublished report for the Employment Service, York: Social Policy Research Unit.

need extra practical support to take up work or to do their job.<sup>2</sup> As most beneficiaries are established in a job when they apply, the programme mainly supports job retention although the policy intention is that unemployed people should be the priority group.

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<sup>2</sup> To be eligible for Access to Work people must meet the definition of a disabled person under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 or have a disability that affects them at work.

Disability Service Team (DST) staff assess what is needed for applicants, sometimes drawing on specialist advice. There are four main types of support: alterations to workplace premises; special equipment needed for work; human support on the job or in getting to work; and the costs of travel to work or in work (including adaptations to a disabled person's own vehicle)<sup>3</sup>. Employers, or users themselves in the case of some types of support, obtain whatever has been agreed and approved by the DST. The programme then reimburses the costs, in whole or in part. The programme now pays all of the costs of support workers, and most of the costs of fares to work (deducting the equivalent public transport cost). For existing employees, employers pay a proportion of the costs of environmental adaptations. Access to Work Advisers can ask the employer to make a voluntary contribution.

### **1.3 Case Study Methodology**

Case study is a well-established methodology within the realist paradigm used in a number of social science disciplines. Case studies are particularly useful when the focus of the research is on the relationship between the person and the setting. One feature of case study is triangulation of data from multiple sources, often involving a range of methods such as analysis of documents and archival records, observation, structured or unstructured interviews, and rating scales.

A common misconception of case studies once was that they are appropriate only for description, or for exploration to suggest theories for further investigation using different methods. Now it is widely accepted that case study is an appropriate strategy for explanation (Yin, 1989).

It is possible to generalise from the findings from multiple case studies as they rely on analytical, not statistical, generalisation (Yin, 1989). Procedures of statistical inference should not be confused with logical inference. In case studies statistical inference is not invoked at all; the validity of the extrapolation depends not on the typicality or representativeness of the case but upon the cogency of the theoretical reasoning (Mitchell, 1983).

### **1.4 Access to Work Case Study Methods**

The evidence for the impact of Access to Work came from interviews with Access to Work users, their respective employers and extracts from client case records obtained from Disability Services offices. Our target was 100 case studies - that is, 100 interviews with users and 100 with their respective employers. In the event we achieved 87 full case studies and interviews with a further 30 Access to Work users who were either self-employed or for whom employer interviews could not be

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<sup>3</sup> A small number of users were interviewed in relation to Travel in Work and Adaptations to Vehicles but their responses are not reported here.

achieved. To achieve full responses from employing organisations we sometimes needed to interview more than one representative and 124 employer representatives were interviewed in all, with some supplementary details obtained by telephone. Details of interviews achieved are given in Appendix A.

The case studies were built by first interviewing the user sample. The user's signed permission was sought to approach their employer to request an interview. The name of the person involved in the Access to Work application, as given in DST records, was checked with the user. The approach letter to the agreed employer representative (see Appendix C) explained that a current or past member of staff who used Access to Work had taken part in the study and had agreed that the employer be contacted. All respondents were assured confidentiality and information from the user interview was not shared with the employer.

### **1.4.1 Interview Techniques**

Our main data collection techniques were semi-structured interviews incorporating use of rating scales. The research instruments are shown in Appendix C.

Semi-structured interviews occupy the middle ground between structured interviews, where question wording and order are fixed and answers are limited to pre-determined alternatives, and unstructured interviews where the questions and follow-up probes are generated during the interview itself. Semi-structured interviews are best where there are clearly defined purposes to the interview. Sets of questions are worked out in advance, but can be asked in different ways and as most appropriate in the context of the discussion. The time and attention given to topics may vary.

### **1.4.2 Rating Scales**

The dual aims of the design were to arrive at some estimate of programme impact and to explain how the programme achieves those effects. We used an agreement scale asking users and employers to rate the likelihood of possible outcomes in the absence of Access to Work, such as whether they '*would have carried on without it*'. They were also asked to rate the possibility, and the acceptability, of alternatives to Access to Work, such as '*the employer would pay*'. These questions were each asked in a standardised way, followed by qualitative probing of respondents' answers.

Respondents were asked to place their response on a scale from 1 to 100. (The scale shown to respondents is at Appendix C.) The idea behind using such a wide scale was to get more precise responses than from the conventional five, six or seven point scale, and it helped that respondents intuitively related the scale points to percentage points. Interviewers were instructed to encourage respondents to place their answers between the obvious ten point marks.

In the semi-structured interview, the scale can also be a device for getting informants to explain *why* they have selected their response (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). Reasons for placing the answer on a certain point on the scale were explored in the interview and interviewers could remind respondents of information they had volunteered earlier in the interview. In follow-up discussion the informant might reflect on and possibly change their score. In this way we gained insights into why users had answered they way they did and could interpret the scores. For example, a high score on the scale for '*would have carried on without it*' can reflect extreme determination to work despite multiple disadvantages in terms of work performance, increased sick leave or low self-esteem.

The scales worked well with respondents and our experience is that integrating qualitative enquiry with quantitative ratings has led to more reliable ratings than could have been acquired through standard survey methods. Just as important is understanding why people gave the answers they did.

### **1.4.3 Approach to Retrospective Questioning**

These were one-off interviews in which participants were asked retrospective questions about what might have happened in the absence of Access to Work. This raises issues of recall. Our approach was to begin the user interviews by exploring the situation before the Access to Work support was provided. We asked users to reflect on problems they had faced in working for reasons related to ill-health or impairment and explored any changes they or their employer had made to make it easier for them to work. Similarly, we explored with employers any concerns about the individual's capacity and any changes they had made for them. So, when we moved on to questions about the time when Access to Work was applied for, one to two years previously, respondents found it easy to recall the situation. None of the users we interviewed said they found it difficult to answer the rating questions because they could not remember the circumstances.

### **1.4.4 The Problem of Socially Acceptable Answers**

An acknowledged problem in research with employers on employing disabled people is the possibility of getting socially acceptable answers rather than a realistic picture. We tried to circumvent this by asking first about policies relating to recruitment and retention of disabled people and their experiences of accommodating disabled employees in general. Then, applying the rating questions to the circumstances of the disabled person, whom the employer knew we had already interviewed, and asking what the employer would have done if Access to Work support were not available, encouraged a realistic assessment.

## **1.5 Question Areas**

In the user and employer interviews we explored five main question areas in the following order.

- What would have happened if Access to Work were not available at the time of application?
- What alternatives to Access to Work were possible at the time of application to Access to Work?
- How acceptable would these alternatives have been?
- What difference has Access to Work made?
- What would happen if Access to Work were not available at the point of interview?

When users had received more than one type of support available in the Access to Work programme, as was often the case, (see Table B.7 in the appendices for support elements received at point of interview) they were asked about each type of support they had received. Employers were asked about likely outcomes in the absence of the programme in general (to keep the interview length within acceptable limits), but they were posed specific questions about the possibility and acceptability of the organisation paying for specific types of support. This was because of our interest in whether equality of opportunity for disabled people could have been obtained or sustained at less cost to the programme.

### **1.5.1 Outcomes in the Absence of Access to Work at Time of Application**

A basic aim of the research was to assess deadweight in the programme. Would users have taken up or stayed in their job without the specific types of help they got from Access to Work? Would employers have taken them on or retained them if Access to Work were not available at the time? We asked these questions using the rating scale and explored the reasons behind the responses.

The problem with these questions is that they are too 'black and white'. People desperate to work and make a living and committed to their jobs may well have carried on without support - but with detrimental effects to their health or productivity. So we also asked them, with reference to the types of Access to Work support they received, to rate the likelihood of taking more sick leave and changing their hours of work, and explored other impacts of them carrying on without the help from Access to Work that they volunteered, such as effects on morale or health. We asked the employer to rate answers to questions about the package of Access to Work support their employees received.

### **1.5.2 Alternatives to Access to Work**

We also wanted to find out whether alternatives to Access to Work were possible at the time of application and at time of interview. If the programme were not available, could needs have been met in some other way? For example, instead of using support workers provided through Access to Work, could other people at work provide the help needed? Could people get lifts to work, rather than receive a contribution towards the costs of taxis to work? Could the user or their employer have paid for the support? Respondents were asked to rate the possibility of alternatives on the scale, and then to explain their answers.

### **1.5.3 Acceptability of Alternatives**

What is *possible* is not necessarily *acceptable*. We asked users to rate the acceptability of alternatives to Access to Work and to explain their answers. For example, while help might be available from other people at work, users may be unwilling to accept it - because doing so draws attention to their health problem or impairment, or causes bad relationships with co-workers. It might be possible to get a lift to work but doing so may make the user feel a burden to others and pose a problem of reciprocating the help. While disabled people might be in a position to pay for the support, they may object to doing so on grounds of equity or because they believe it to be the employer's duty.

Asking people to explain their ratings of the possibility and acceptability of alternatives shed light on the probable impact of carrying on without help from Access to Work. For example, using public transport instead of help with Travel to Work through Access to Work might lead to stress and fatigue which in turn could increase the likelihood of reduced performance at work and more sick leave.

### **1.5.4 The Difference Access to Work Makes**

The next question area was about the difference the programme made to users and their employers. We wanted to give people the opportunity to volunteer positive effects, in contrast to the more negative line of questioning about the consequences of the absence of help from Access to Work. We did not apply the scale here.

### **1.5.5 Outcomes without Access to Work Now**

The subsequent line of questioning asked users and their employers to rate the likely outcomes if Access to Work did not exist at the point of interview, and to explain their answers. Rating questions were similar to those asked in relation to the point of application, with some additional questions; for example, would employers envisage



an impact on the performance of their employee and of other staff if the user did not get help from Access to Work?

### **1.5.6 Overall Effects of Access to Work**

Finally, users were asked to rate the overall effects of all the support they had obtained from Access to Work. They were asked to rate the likelihood of their being in their job in the absence of Access to Work. Employers were asked to rate the likelihood of the employee having to leave the job if Access to Work were not available.

## **1.6 The Sample**

The main user sample was drawn from respondents to the *Users' Views of Access to Work* survey (Thornton *et al.*, 2001) who said they were willing to take part in another ES study about Access to Work and agreed to have their details passed to a researcher. In order to achieve a cohort with similar experiences of Access to Work we selected those in paid work when interviewed who said they first applied in 1999 or 2000 and had made one or two applications at the time they were interviewed. People who had received only Communicator Support at Interview and those known to be working in Supported Employment were excluded.<sup>4</sup>

We did not attempt to ensure that case study respondents were geographically representative of that population, and the small numbers of clients in two Regions were excluded to reduce fieldwork costs. Once the sample was issued to interviewers the prime consideration was to achieve adequate representation of all Access to Work elements. Accordingly, the case study respondents are not representative of the population from which they were drawn.

Further details of sampling and recruitment are at Appendix A. Selected user characteristics and Access to Work use are shown in Appendix B.

## **1.7 Structure of the Report**

The report is structured around four types of Access to Work support in turn:

- Support Worker provision (chapter 2)
- Travel to Work (chapter 3)
- Alterations to Premises (chapter 4)

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<sup>4</sup> A small number of people interviewed in this study proved to have first applied to Access to Work before 1999, and a few were employed in open employment through the Supported Employment Programme.

- Special Aids and Equipment (chapter 5).

The final chapter draws the findings together.



## 2 Support Workers

### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter we report users' and employers' views on:

- what would have happened in the absence of Support Worker provision through Access to Work (section 2.5)
- possible alternatives to Support Worker provision and their acceptability (section 2.6)
- the possibility, and acceptability, of Support Worker provision being paid for by employers, users or in some other way (section 2.7)
- the difference Support Worker provision made to users (section 2.8).

Support Worker users are rather under-represented in the study, both as a consequence of the sampling method<sup>5</sup> and because of recruitment difficulties. Refusal and non-contact rates were higher amongst this group. The main problem lay in engaging British Sign Language (BSL) users in the study. Some BSL users who were contacted and declined to take part said they were not interested in contributing to the study, and some appeared unaware of how Access to Work funded the support they received on the job. Non-awareness might be explained in part by the practice of 'group' applications put forward by employers with several Deaf staff, with a view to sign language interpreter provision being distributed across the Deaf workforce as and when required, typically for training days and meetings. This practice, which applies also to Special Aids and Equipment such as fire alarm systems, seems to lead to Deaf users not being fully informed, or perhaps aware, of the source of their support.

Of the 117 Access to Work users interviewed, 21 had experience of using a Support Worker, and two of those had used a Support Worker in the previous year but not when interviewed for this study. Full interviews were achieved with 19.<sup>6</sup> Twelve employer representatives were interviewed.<sup>7</sup> We cannot make any statistical

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<sup>5</sup> The *Users' Views of Access to Work* survey (Thornton *et al.*, 2001) found that Support Workers were provided to 27 per cent of clients but that only 12 per cent had received this support from their most recent or only application. Because we had selected survey respondents who said they first applied in 1999 or 2000 Support Worker users were likely to be under-represented. This proved to be the case and we later boosted the sample of Support Worker users a little by drawing on the Census of Access to Work users which had been conducted to provide a sample for the *Users' Views* survey.

<sup>6</sup> Two recipients of occasional communicator support were unclear about the interpreting support they obtained from Access to Work. As they were not sufficiently informed to answer specific questions about the impact of Access to Work Support Worker provision they are excluded from the main analysis (in both cases it was not possible to interview their employer) although their circumstances and more general views are included wherever possible.

<sup>7</sup> One user had no superior in the organisation to interview. One user did not give permission for the employer to be interviewed. Two employers could not be contacted. It was not possible to interview one employer within the study period. Three users were wholly self-employed.

generalisations from such small numbers. Rather, the findings are indicative of users' and employers' views.

To put the findings in context, the chapter begins with a short overview of the type and intensity of Support Worker assistance and other Access to Work support respondents used. Respondents' employment situations are briefly outlined. Employer respondents are then described.

## **2.2 Support Used**

### **2.2.1 Support Worker Roles**

Support Worker roles were diverse, contributing to meeting the needs of people with differing impairments. According to users they acted as a:

- communicator for hearing impaired people
- reader
- combined reader and escort
- combined reader and driver
- job aide for people with physical impairments or dyslexia
- combined driver to work, job aide and assistant with personal care
- combined driver on the job, reader and interpreter, with some assistance with personal care
- job coach
- driver to work.<sup>8</sup>

### **2.2.2 Levels of Support**

According to Disability Service Team (DST) records the levels of support varied from the entire working week throughout the year to six two-hour sessions per annum. The annual costs of Support Worker provision ranged from £300 to £24,000.

People with physical and visual impairments tended to have much higher levels of support on the job than people with hearing impairments. Several users with physical or visual impairments were recorded as receiving assistance for 25 hours a week or more. It was unusual for a profoundly deaf user to receive regular support, most having access to communicator support on a sessional basis for occasional 'one-off'

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<sup>8</sup> It may be more appropriate to consider drivers to work as Travel to Work rather than as Support Worker provision but we have followed the ES categorisation. If the two cases were removed from this analysis a rather different overall picture of Support Worker provision would appear.

events such as staff meetings or training days. Some deaf users found the level of support inadequate, especially when the job routinely entailed face-to-face communication with hearing people.



Of those no longer using a Support Worker when interviewed, one was working independently of support and the other had found the Support Worker appointed not suitable for the tasks required (and it is of interest that a few other respondents, whose experiences are not reported in this section, had approval to recruit a Support Worker but could not find suitable workers to meet their needs).

### **2.2.3 Duration of Access to Work Support**

Support Worker users in the study were more likely than those using other types of support to be long-term Access to Work clients. Several had first obtained some form of Access to Work support before 1999, including help from one of the schemes that preceded Access to Work, although we had aimed to interview only those who had first applied in 1999 or 2000.<sup>9</sup>

### **2.2.4 Support Packages**

With the exception of the job coach user, Support Worker users received a package of Access to Work support (see Table B.7 in the Appendices). Most users of communicators in work also received Special Aids and Equipment to assist with communication, such as textphones, pagers and alarm systems. People using job aides and personal assistants tended to have ergonomic chairs and workstation equipment. Those with readers typically also had computer equipment and software, scanners or CCTV equipment. None had received support to adapt the premises.

Accordingly, the salience of Support Worker assistance in people's lives varied considerably and their views of the impact of Support Worker assistance reflect this in part.

## **2.3 Employment Situation**

Three respondents worked wholly as self-employed and a further two combined self-employment and waged employment. Of those working as employees, seven worked in the public sector, five in the private sector and five in the voluntary sector (Table 2.1). Rather fewer public sector employees took part in the study than would have been the case if a representative sample had been drawn. All five working in the

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<sup>9</sup> Some self reports of a 1999 or 2000 date of first application to Access to Work, recorded in the *Users' Views* survey, proved to be inaccurate when checked against the client case notes provided by the DSTs. This anomaly is due in part to the exclusion of Deaf users from full knowledge about their support. Further numbers of long-term users were introduced to the study when the Support Worker sample was boosted, as dates of first application were not recorded in the Census (see Appendix A for sampling details).



voluntary sector were employed by a small organisation specialising in disabled or deaf people's issues.

**Table 2.1 Occupational sector of Support Worker respondents**

<i>Sector</i>	<i>Number</i>
Self-employment only	3
Self employment and local authority	1
Private sector	5
Voluntary organisation	4
Voluntary organisation with self-employment	1
Central Government department	1
Prison service	1
Local authority	5
<i>Total</i>	<i>21</i>

Voluntary sector employees worked in organisations with less than 15 employees. Of the private sector employees, three worked in large organisations with multiple sites and one worked for a smaller local firm.

## 2.4 Employer Respondents

Out of a possible 18 employer interviews<sup>10</sup> (three people being wholly self-employed) 12 were achieved. Voluntary organisations are less well represented (Table 2.2).

**Table 2.2 Support Worker user and employer interviews achieved by sector**

<i>Sector</i>	<i>Number of users interviewed</i>	<i>Employer interviews</i>
Private sector	5	4
Voluntary organisation	5	2
Central Government department/service	2	2
Local authority	6*	4
<i>Total</i>	<i>18*</i>	<i>12</i>

\* includes two partial interviews

Employer respondents were mostly managers of the user interviewed.

<sup>10</sup> In some cases we interviewed more than one representative from the employing organisation. The term 'employer' is used as shorthand.

## 2.5 Likely Employment Outcomes in the Absence of Support Worker Provision

Users were asked to rate the possibility of a range of possible outcomes in the absence of Support Worker provision at two points in time - when the application was made and at the time of the research interview. Employers were asked to rate the possibility of outcomes in the absence of Access to Work support; that is, they were not asked in relation to specific elements of support. (This was necessary to keep the interview length to 45 minutes.) Accordingly, except in the case where the user received only Support Worker support, employers' scores cannot be set directly against those of their employees. Where possible, users' views on likely outcomes are compared with employers'.

We report separately on the six Support Worker users who received Access to Work on taking up a new job and the 13 who applied for Access to Work support after they had been employed for some time.<sup>11</sup>

### 2.5.1 Likely Outcomes at the Time of Application for Support Worker Users Taking up a New Job

Six Support Worker users interviewed received Support Worker provision on taking up a new job, a comparatively high proportion compared with users of other elements of Access to Work in the study. Two were long-term unemployed. The remainder were job changers, all of whom had received support from Access to Work in an earlier job.

#### *Users' Views*

Users were asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 100 how far they agreed or disagreed that they would not have taken up the job if Support Worker had not been available. Overall, there is strong evidence from users that Support Worker provision was needed to take up the job (Figure 2.1). Most believed that they could not have taken up the job if unable to communicate fully with colleagues and customers, perform tasks efficiently and with confidence, or physically manage daily activities. Exceptionally, determination to pursue a much sought-after career would have made it impossible to turn down the job, although the almost full-time support from Access to Work was essential to succeed in a highly competitive profession.

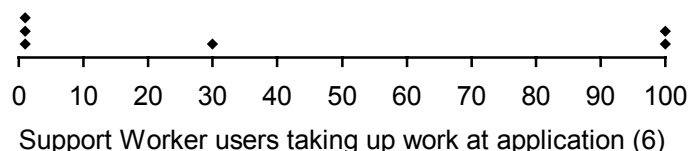
Getting another job would have been impossible, most felt, and for one or two a lack of a Support Worker from Access to Work might even have meant giving up looking for work altogether. Where exceptionally it might have been possible to find an

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<sup>11</sup> This divide was used throughout the study to reflect the ES distinction between 'unemployed' applicants whose support is wholly funded by ES and 'employed' applicants who were in the job for at least six weeks before they applied and whose employers may be subject to cost-sharing.

alternative line of work where a communicator was not essential, the rewards of working would have been poor and the social isolation unacceptable.

Figure 2.1  
Likelihood at application of taking up a  
new job without a Support Worker



According to most there would have been no alternative sources of support. Exceptionally, there might have been opportunities for rearranging the work.

### ***Employers' Views***

We interviewed five employers of people taking up a new job. Two gave similar answers to their employees', one believing that employment would have been unlikely without the Support Worker (a job coach) and the other accepting that an alternative solution might have been found by re-arranging the work.

Otherwise employers believed that, hypothetically, they would have offered the user the job in the absence of Access to Work support. They had appointed the best person for the job and were keen to arrange solutions to their needs. A disability organisation with a strong commitment to removing barriers to employment faced by disabled people might have been prepared to dip into a small budget or put a case to funders, for the sake of equality of opportunity; this would not have been sustainable in the longer term, would have set a precedent with major implications for the organisation's viability and would not have been acceptable in principle. Public sector employers pointed to their organisations' policies in relation to equality of opportunity for disabled people. In their view, possible solutions might have involved obtaining communication support from internal resources or rearranging work allocation as a partial solution. The question was of course hypothetical, particularly as in all cases employers had expected Access to Work help to be forthcoming. However, it seemed to the researchers that employers aspired out of goodwill for solutions that may not have been achievable, and users certainly doubted that satisfactory alternatives were possible.

## 2.5.2 Likely Outcomes for Support Worker Users in Paid Work at Application

Thirteen respondents were established in paid work when they applied for support from Access to Work. These included long-term users of Access to Work or the schemes that preceded it. In some cases, users came to need support because of an acquired impairment or deteriorating health, or when participation at work became harder.

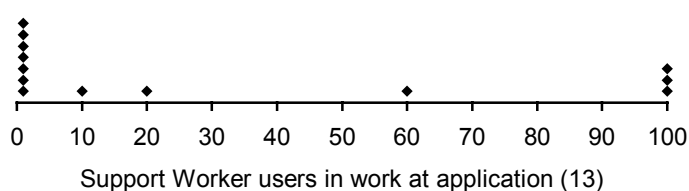
### **Views on Giving up Working Altogether**

According to users already established in paid work, giving up working altogether would have been a real possibility for some if Support Worker provision had not been available at the time of application (Figure 2.2). Pain and fatigue, later ameliorated by job aides, meant that they were not able to do their jobs and no other source of help was possible. Indeed, users had actually considered retiring on health grounds, returning to sick leave or giving up the attempt to work at all.

The larger number of ratings at the other end of the scale is explained by the importance of work to disabled users: the need to bring in an income and the likely negative impact on family members if they did not, the need to maintain a self-made business or to establish a career. Without the Support Worker, working life would be hard for many but giving up working altogether was just not feasible. One or two volunteered that employers would have intervened to keep them on, but quite how employers might have helped was not clear. If Access to Work support had not been available in the job they had at the time some hoped that they could have resorted to a type of job they had before or ‘survive’ in some capacity elsewhere, driven by the need to work for self-fulfilment or financial security. This would have meant an unplanned career change or abandoning a self-made business, however. A strong commitment to their right to work influenced some people in being certain that they would not give up working.

Employers interviewed generally reflected users’ views on the possibility of giving up. Those who were considerably more pessimistic about the outcome were not thinking of options which the employee was considering. Another was more optimistic than the user believing that ‘ways round’ the absence of Access to Work might have been created.

Figure 2.2  
Likelihood at application of giving up  
working altogether



### **Views on Carrying on Without the Support**

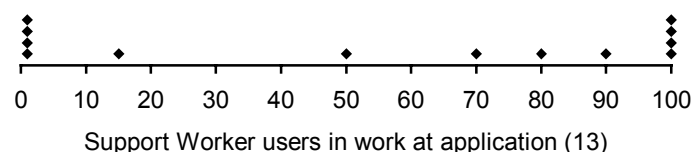
Users tended to either strongly agree or strongly disagree that they would have carried on in the job if Support Worker provision had not been available at the time they applied for it (Figure 2.3).

Deteriorating health and the consequent effect on work performance was the main reason given for possibly not carrying on without the support at the time. But also important was the essential contribution of the Support Worker to making the work viable.

Counted amongst those who agreed they would definitely have carried on without the support were users who could envisage an alternative to be driven to work by a Support Worker and one who had in fact since carried on without the support although performance at work was held back as a result. Otherwise, people would hypothetically have carried on without the Support Worker because of the importance to them of working, having an income, supporting a family or maintaining a business, and not because they felt they could do without the support. On the contrary, users relied on Support Workers to do the job effectively and participate fully at work. One person believed that persevering in the job was the way to effect change, and had faith in their employer's capacity to find a solution.

Where employers were interviewed their views generally concurred with users' judgements, though there was a tendency for employers of those who said they would have carried on to be more pessimistic.

Figure 2.3  
Likelihood at application of carrying on  
without a Support Worker



### **Other Outcomes**

A minority of people in paid work at the time they applied felt that they would definitely have taken more sick leave without their Support Worker, because working without it would affect their condition or lead them to take time off as they could not do their job adequately. Giving up work altogether rather than taking sick leave, was a real possibility, because they would not be able fulfil their work obligations. Others explained that taking more sick leave was not at all likely, as they were not ill and taking time off because of lack of support at work would imply shirking their

duties, and there was a worry that taking sick leave because support for communication at work was not available would jeopardise their jobs.

Employers tended to view sick leave as more likely than their employees did, expressing concerns about the viability of sustained employment.

### **2.5.3 Likely Outcomes Now**

Users were asked to speculate on a range of possible outcomes if the Support Worker provision were not available 'now'. Again they were asked to say how far they agreed or disagreed with a statement on a scale from 1 to 100. By this point in the interview respondents had thoroughly discussed possible alternatives to having Support Worker provision through Access to Work and can be assumed to have taken any into account when thinking about the viability of their current employment situation.

#### ***Views on Job Loss Now***

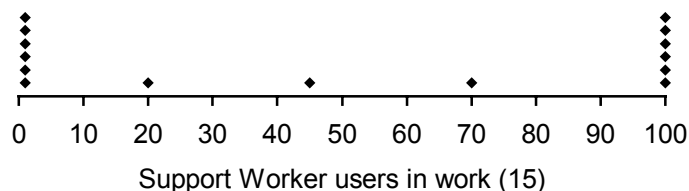
Users were asked to rate the possibility of losing their job if a Support Worker from Access to Work were not available 'now' and to explain their answer.

Fifteen users responded to this question (a smaller number as three respondents were not currently using a Support Worker). Views were highly polarised (Figure 2.4). Most people scoring '1' or '100' gave exactly the same scores as to earlier questions relating to the time of application (that is, on not taking up the job and carrying on without the support at the time of application). For those who thought they would lose their job, the job was felt to be untenable because pain or fatigue would prevent the work being done to the required standard, it was not possible to do everyday tasks without personal assistance, or communication and participation at work would not be possible. The importance of the support to business viability was stressed just as highly.

Similarly, most of those who answered previously that they would have taken up the job or carried on despite the absence of Support Worker were certain that they would not lose their job now. As before, pursuing a career in a competitive environment or establishing a new business had to come first, even though the Support Worker was thought essential for success. Again, there might be some alternative to Support Workers whose only role was to drive to work. Some mentioned their rights under employment legislation, and their determination to ask for support needed to do their job.

Exceptionally, changes in circumstances had some influence on views of the viability of the job without a Support Worker. For example, greater security in a new job made the job appear much more sustainable than at the time of application.

Figure 2.4  
Likelihood of losing the job now



Most employers interviewed tended to agree with the employee’s judgement on the possibility of leaving. In exceptional cases employers were considerably more positive about the outcome, believing that employment would be protected.

**Views on Carrying on Without a Support Worker Now**

Respondents were also asked their views on the possibility of carrying on now without the Support Worker (Figure 2.5). The majority saying they would not carry on without it reflects the view already reported that there would be no choice other than to leave the job, and users’ determination to get support required. It also reflects the view of some users that their employer might ‘do something’ to support their continuing employment.

Figure 2.5  
Likelihood of carrying on without a Support Worker now



**Views on Changing Hours**

We had speculated that users might change their hours of work as a partial solution to meeting their needs for a Support Worker. The option of reducing hours was rarely a possibility for users, there being little scope to do so in the type of work they did. Occasionally hours had already been reduced to accommodate ill-health and there was no scope for further change.

## 2.5.4 Importance of Support Worker Provision in the Access to Work Package

All except one current Support Worker user was receiving more than one element of Access to Work support when they were interviewed. In most instances the Support Worker provision appeared to be an essential part of a package, with many users giving it higher priority than other forms of support.

All respondents in the study in paid work were asked at the end of the interview, after discussing all elements of their Access to Work support, 'If help from Access to Work were not available how likely is it that you would be in your job?'. They rated their agreement on the 1 to 100 scale. Support Worker users' responses are shown in Figure 2.6.

Figure 2.6  
Likelihood of being in the job now without  
Access to Work



One way of examining the importance of Support Worker in the Access to Work package is to compare users' scores of the 'overall effects' of Access to Work (shown in Figure 2.6) with their scores for 'lose my job' and 'carry on without it'. There was a clear correspondence in five of the eight instances of scores of five or less, suggesting that Support Worker provision is a key ingredient in making the job possible for those individuals.

## 2.6 Alternatives to Support Worker Provision

Support Worker users were asked to rate first the possibility and then the acceptability of getting the support needed from other people at work in place of Access to Work provision. The same 1 to 100 scale was used.

Most were pessimistic about options for getting support they needed (Figure 2.7). Either there was simply nobody available to help - especially true for self-employed people - or others' work responsibilities would prohibit them from helping out. More rarely, it was felt that others would be unwilling in principle to help.

Of the few who said it was possible or fairly possible to get support from other people there was some previous experience of receiving help at work, including from

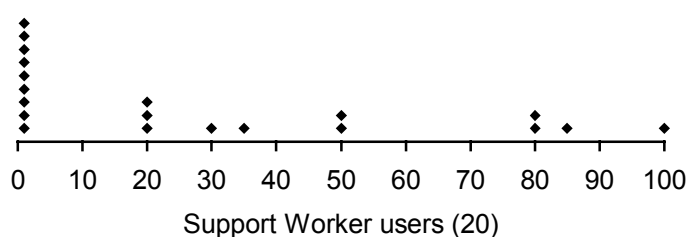


volunteers. Convincing staff to rearrange the work so that Support Worker help was not necessary might just have been possible, although it would take time to change attitudes and potentially damage relationships with others at work.

With one exception, users who thought getting help from others was less than likely would not have found alternative sources acceptable. The main objection was having to rely on others at work, because that would put other people out or make it difficult for colleagues to fulfil their own duties effectively, and so lead to feelings of obligation to others and 'guilt' or affect independence or pride. As a consequence, relationships at work and self-esteem might be negatively affected. Some strong feelings were expressed about the injustice of having ask for help at work and the denial of deaf and disabled people's rights to access. One person observed that nobody had ever approached her with an offer of support.

Where alternative sources were theoretically available, the help was considered to be unlikely to be of the quality or intensity offered by Support Workers and thus would affect performance at work and morale. For deaf users who worked with people with some interpreting skills, the standard of communication could be less than adequate, and being forced to use such an alternative could be viewed as a unjust. Absence of Access to Work support would also increase reliance on family members or friends to act as interpreters, sometimes already filling the gap in provision. Moreover, hearing people at work could not be relied upon to communicate necessary information or to write in a way that could easily be understood by a BSL user.

Figure 2.7  
Possibility at application of getting the  
support needed from other people at  
work



The alternative of substituting human support with technology was not explored systematically. Those who said the DST had proposed or instituted this change believed that communication and workstation equipment was not an adequate or acceptable solution to needs such as carrying or accessing paper files and taking notes, leading to unfair dependence on the goodwill, availability or reliability of others at work and inability to fulfil their duties adequately. Visually impaired users who also had computer equipment saw it as complementing their reader; for example, a scanner was no substitute in a profession where much written communication was 'hand-written scrawl'.

## 2.7 Funding the Support Worker Provision Some Other Way

Users were asked to rate the possibility and the acceptability of funding the provision in some other way - paying for the support themselves, having the employer or self-employment business pay, and getting the funds from other sources. Employers were asked to rate the possibility of the organisation paying for a Support Worker, and the appropriateness of the employing organisation paying.

### 2.7.1 Users Paying for a Support Worker

Support Worker users were asked about the possibility of paying for the Support Worker provision themselves at the time they applied (Figure 2.8). Given the ongoing costs of Support Worker provision it is perhaps not surprising that a majority thought that to be a complete, or almost complete, impossibility for financial reasons. In some cases, the Support Worker costs would be a substantial proportion of the users' own earnings, making working unviable.

Earlier experience of bearing the costs of being driven to work meant that paying for the support could have been a real possibility. Some recognised that they might have the resources and be willing to use them to support work which was essential to them. Even poorly paid users might contemplate paying, in order to advance their career. However, most felt that paying themselves was not so acceptable – sometimes completely unacceptable because of a strong belief that government should pay to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people.

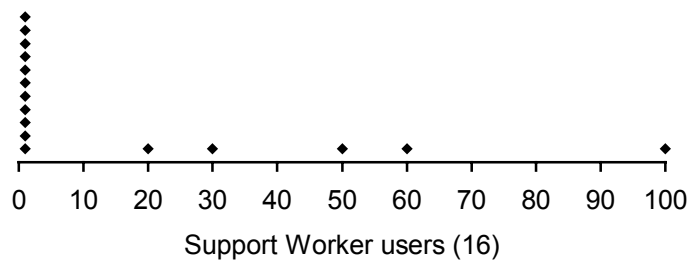
Figure 2.8  
Possibility at application of paying for the  
support



We had hypothesised that changes in circumstances between application and the point of interview might lead to different responses to the possibility of paying oneself. Asked about the possibility of paying 'now', four people rated the possibility considerably more highly than would have been the case when they applied. The prospect of paying was more of a possibility in part because earnings had improved for some but also because users had come to realise the full benefit of the Support Worker and experience had shown that they could not carry on without it.

Overall, the idea that users themselves might pay for the support was not acceptable (Figure 2.9). The main reason was the financial impact; another was that it should not be their responsibility to pay, having already contributed as taxpayers, and there were some strong feelings expressed that it would be *'immoral'* or totally unfair to ask users to pay. Some pointed to the oddity of the idea that they should pay in order to work.

Figure 2.9  
Acceptability at application of paying for the support



### 2.7.2 Employers Paying for a Support Worker

Current and past Support Worker users were asked to rate the possibility and the acceptability of the employer or business paying for a Support Worker in the absence of Access to Work at the time when they first applied for the support. Employers were asked to rate the possibility and appropriateness of the organisation paying at the time of application and at the time of the interview.

#### **Users' Responses**

Responses from users show that most saw little or no possibility of the employing organisation paying at the time they applied for a Support Worker from Access to Work (Figure 2.10).

Figure 2.10  
Possibility at application of the employer (or business) paying



The acceptability to users of the employer or business paying was overall low (Figure 2.11). A number of those rating it completely unacceptable stressed the responsibility of government and the need to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people. The point was made that disabled people would be less employable if costs were imposed on employers. On the other hand, views were expressed that employers have a responsibility to pay, both as a duty to the employee and to meet the obligation to reduce disadvantages faced by disabled and deaf people.

Possible negative consequences of the employer paying for a Support Worker were the effects on felt independence, pride, good relations at work and not feeling like ‘a *burden*’ to the employer. Asking an employer to pay would have the effect of emphasising impairment and difference, and prejudice employment chances. Employer funding would mean disclosing an impairment a user wished to conceal from those who made the financial decisions in the organisation. Some employees of small organisations and businesses were concerned about the financial impact on an organisation to which they were strongly committed. Relying on the employer to pay might mean not getting the support needed.

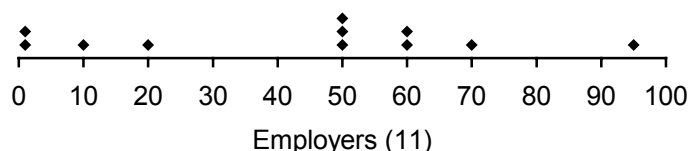
Figure 2.11  
Acceptability at application of the  
employer (or business) paying



### **Employers Responses**

Employers' scores of the possibility of their organisation paying were less polarised than users' and overall more positive (Figure 2.12). In some cases employers said that it might have been possible to pay part of the costs, accounting for some middle range scores. According to DST records a small number of employers already made a voluntary contribution towards the costs of the Support Worker.

Figure 2.12  
Possibility at application of the  
organisation paying



### **Comparison of Users' and Employers' Scores**

Comparing users' and employers' scores, five employers gave higher scores than users, three gave broadly similar scores, and three gave lower scores. Users' and employers' scores diverged considerably in three cases.

### **Sectoral Differences**

In the analysis we looked for differences across the voluntary, public, private and self-employed sectors. (Interviews by sector were shown in Table 2.2).

#### *Voluntary Sector*

Users working for small disability organisations in the voluntary sector were, with one exception, highly pessimistic about the possibility of the organisation paying, referring to their very limited budgets and difficulties in securing on-going funding (although an instance was reported of a previous voluntary sector employer having employed a Support Worker, being unaware of Access to Work).

From the very limited information we have available from small voluntary sector employers it seems that dedication to making work accessible for disabled people and enabling them to perform on an equal basis might over-ride such financial considerations. Employers said they would do their utmost to seek out funds or resort to *'creative accounting'* if Access to Work were not available. The principle of the employer paying was not at all acceptable, however; shifting the costs to employers would make disabled people disproportionately expensive to employ and further disadvantage them in the labour market.

#### *Public sector*

Support Worker users working for public bodies were comparatively rather more optimistic about the possibility of their employer paying, though their scores ranged from 15 to 100. Nevertheless, most believed that limited financial resources would restrict their employers' ability to pay (one believing it almost impossible). Exceptionally, paying was thought to be a total possibility when it was believed that the local authority employer already paid a substantial proportion of the costs.

Local Education Authority respondents could be concerned about the on-going central costs in the absence of Access to Work when the authority had a number of staff receiving Support Worker provision through Access to Work. Where Local Authority respondents managed their own budgets, there might have been scope to consider alternative ways of providing the support required, by reallocating tasks within the team or by using existing staff with some interpreting skills. Lack of guidelines or obvious source of funding led one central government respondent to rate the possibility of paying as low, and one thought it would be hard to make the business case. The most positive response came from a central government respondent who believed that existing interpreter resources intended for customers' use, combined with money '*found from somewhere*' would meet the user's needs.

#### *Private sector*

Five Support Worker users worked in the private sector. Two rated the possibility of their employer paying as completely or almost impossible. One service sector employer concurred as there was no money for the type of training provided by a job coach. The other saw some slight possibility in paying for taxis as an alternative to a Support Worker driver but only if the user could fully justify the need.

Exceptionally, one private sector user rated the possibility highly, pointing to the considerable help at work arranged by the employer, and the employer's response confirmed the user's opinion. In this instance the help had been provided by other staff members for many years, at considerable cost to the employer. The employer had few doubts about the appropriateness of bearing the costs, to maximise and capitalise upon the skills of a valued employee, though for a different employee a more commercial view would have to be taken.

#### *Self-employed respondents*

Two wholly self-employed people felt it would be completely impossible for the business to pay either at the time of application or 'now'. The third saw some possibility of finding a way for the business to pay in the absence of Access to Work at application, only so that the running of an all-important newly-founded business would not be jeopardised, but felt that paying would be a total impossibility at the point of interview.

### **2.7.3 Users' Views on Funding Support Worker Provision from other Sources**

No respondent saw real opportunities for funding Support Worker provision in any other way, probably a realistic assessment. Most were unaware of any other funding sources. When asked, nobody said that applying to charities, taking out loans or turning to family members would have been more than half way possible and a majority thought it would be a complete impossibility. Had these other sources been possible, almost all users would have found them unacceptable. Occasionally, friends and family might have stepped in with practical help, but only in the short-term, and users would have been reluctant to impose on them.

## 2.8 The Difference Support Worker Provision Makes to Users

In this section we draw on users' own words to demonstrate their strong feelings about the importance to them of the support.

For some, the fundamental difference was being able to work – *'the difference between working and not working'*. This could not be emphasised *'strongly enough'*. Not having a Support Worker might mean *'the end of my working career'*.

Almost all users emphasised the increased ability to do their job effectively. A driver meant getting to get to work reliably and doing a full week's work. Support from a job coach enabled quicker work, mixing with others at work, and so gaining confidence to progress to another job. When starting a new job learning about the job, making appointments and getting to know team members would have been *'very difficult'* without a communicator at work. Communicator support enabled more direct communication of important information needed to do the job (as opposed to written messages which can be hard for BSL users to understand). Having Access to Work demonstrated that employer and colleagues *'want me fully involved'*.

Also stressed were participation in at work and social inclusion. People talked in terms of Access to Work giving them confidence, making them more relaxed, and making it easier to communicate with colleagues. People were not sure that they could have *'coped without it'*. Being *'kept in touch with the outside world'*, not feeling excluded at meetings and not knowing what other people were talking about made a lot of difference.

Independence, control and associated well-being were also highlighted. Having an assistant *'on tap'* allowed greater command over the work without the indignity of having to always ask for help from colleagues. *'Having to interrupt and hassle'* busy colleagues would cause problems. People did not want to be *'a burden'*.

Career chances were enhanced, users believed. Having a personal reader enabled entry to a very competitive profession on a more equal footing, by demonstrating ability to do the work properly, and helped with advancement. Users of personal readers and job aides also pointed to improved career prospects - through being able to travel extensively and gain job experience or through progressing within the firm without appearing a burden to the employer and colleagues. Access to Work was *'a crucial service'* to broaden careers.

For self-employed people Support Worker support could be *'absolutely key'* to running company in the way a non-disabled person could. Guaranteed provision enabled planning of long-term business needs and more efficient business management.

Using a Support Worker could bring significant health gains that made the difference between staying in work and giving up. Without the *'agony'* of writing and carrying, it

was possible to step back from the brink of resignation. Early retirement was averted through reduction of physical activity and associated pain, and the Support Worker was *'a weight lifted off my shoulders knowing I could carry on'*. Having a Support Worker could also make ill-health less likely, by reducing stress in coping with business paperwork for example.

For some, Support Worker provision was believed to reduce the disadvantages facing other disabled and deaf people too. Having a Support Worker demonstrated to non-disabled colleagues and customers that disabled people can work on an equal footing and helped to reduce prejudice.

Only one respondent referred solely to financial advantage, where the Support Worker was a family member who served as a driver to work.

## 2.9 Summary

- Without a Support Worker, getting any job would have been impossible for most users, and some might even have given up looking for work altogether.
- Around one in four people established in work when they applied felt that they would have given up working altogether if a Support Worker had not been available, and their employers generally agreed.
- Almost half of Support Worker users were completely or fairly certain that they would lose their job without the support.
- Getting the support needed from other people at work was usually seen as impossible and unacceptable to most. In only one case did the user and employer see scope for an acceptable alternative to having a Support Worker.
- Employers are not required to pay towards the costs. No employer agreed wholeheartedly that the organisation would pay the full costs, but some might have paid a proportion. Employers were concerned about ongoing costs if several staff used Support Worker provision. The point was made that shifting costs to employers would make disabled people disproportionately expensive to employ.
- Some users stressed the responsibility of government to promote equality of opportunity. Users felt asking an employer to pay would emphasise impairment and difference, prejudice employment chances, affect relations at work or reduce felt independence.



- Support Worker users stressed the difference the support made to them. Participation at work, social inclusion, independence, control and enhanced career chances were emphasised. The support could be key to running a self-employed business in the way open to a non-disabled person. It could bring health gains that made the difference between staying in work and giving up. It also showed that disabled people can work on an equal footing and helped to reduce prejudice.

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## 3 Travel to Work

### 3.1 Introduction

The term 'Travel to Work' is used as short hand for help with the costs of transport to and from work where it is not possible for the client to use public transport or drive. Access to Work reimburses clients for the costs of taxis (deducting the costs of public transport) or, more rarely, pays the excess costs of using a car driven by a family member or someone else.

In this chapter we report Travel to Work users' views of possible alternatives to Travel to Work when they applied, and the acceptability of these options (section 3.5). In that section we also report employers' views on the possibility and acceptability of providing transport and paying for taxis. Users' views on alternatives provide the context to understand their responses to questions about what would have happened in the absence of help with Travel to Work through Access to Work at the time they applied (section 3.6). We then move forward in time to look at users' views on alternatives and possible outcomes should Travel to Work have not been available at the time of the interview (section 3.7). The final section (3.8) reports users' views on the differences Travel to Work made to them.

Travel to Work users are well represented in the study. Thirty-six were interviewed. Of those, 23 were getting help from Travel to Work at the time of the interview, and 13 were no longer receiving assistance but were able give views on the basis of past experience.

Compared with chapters on other elements of Access to Work, more emphasis is given here to users' views than employers'. Although employers were asked about the impact of Travel to Work on their employees they were not always sufficiently aware of the support to answer fully. Employers are not so likely to know that an employee receives fares for Travel to Work, as the client takes responsibility for arranging and paying for the support and the employer's role is only to provide some proof that the employee has attended work.

Twenty-seven employers were interviewed in relation to Travel to Work. In 18 cases the employee was still using Travel to Work. In the other nine cases it was more difficult to ask the employer hypothetical questions about the impact of support that had ceased and about which they sometimes knew little.

First we provide a brief overview of Travel to Work support provided and the employment situation.

## **3.2 Support Provided**

### **3.2.1 Levels of Support**

According to Disability Service records, the approved annual costs of Travel to Work ranged up to £10,700. In a few cases the employer paid part of the costs, for example where the business had moved to a more distant location. Occasionally a family member provided a lift to work for one leg of the journey, and the costs were reimbursed by Access to Work.

### **3.2.2 Past Use of Travel to Work**

As already noted, 13 people were no longer getting help with Travel to Work when they were interviewed for this study. Occasionally the support had been provided on a temporary basis, such as when cars were unavailable. Otherwise users had moved to a job closer to home and no longer needed taxis to work, had a Support Worker who drove them to work, had arranged a lift or had given up the job for reasons related to ill-health or impairment.

### **3.2.3 Support Packages**

It is interesting to note 15 of the 23 people currently in receipt of help with Travel to Work received no other form of Access to Work support (see Table B.7 in the Appendices) though in most cases they or their employer had made some changes to make it easier to work.

## **3.3 Employment Situation**

All respondents were working as employees. Six of the eight working in the voluntary sector were employed by disability organisations. Private sector organisations ranged from a small firm of three to large national organisations.

Table 3.1 shows the occupational sector of Travel to Work user respondents and the distribution of the 27 employer interviews achieved.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Four users did not give permission for their employer to be contacted, three employers refused or were impossible to contact, and in two cases there was no suitable employer to contact.

**Table 3.1 Travel to Work user and employer interviews achieved by sector**

<i>Sector</i>	<i>Number of users interviewed</i>	<i>Employers interviewed</i>
Private sector	15	11
Voluntary organisation	8	6
Local government department	4	4
Central government department/agency/service	3	2
Health authority or NHS Trust	2	1
Local authority controlled school or college	1	1
Police/fire service	1	1
Other public service	1	1
Not clear	1	0
Total	36	27

### 3.4 Alternatives to Travel to Work

All respondents who had received Travel to Work support were reminded about other ways in which some people get to work and were asked to rate first how possible and secondly how acceptable each would have been on a scale of 1 to 100. They were asked to explain their answers.

They were asked about the possibility and the acceptability of the following options:

- walking to work
- lifts from a family member, neighbour or friend
- lifts from colleagues at work
- using public transport
- using their own car
- using transport provided by the employer
- using taxis paid for by the employer
- paying for the taxis
- getting the funds in some other way.

Their responses show that it was rare for alternative ways of getting to work to have been available at the time of application. This result is perhaps not surprising as in principle Access to Work should not be offered if there are other acceptable solutions.

Employer representatives were asked about two possible alternatives: transport provided by the organisation and the organisation paying for taxis to and from work. It should be noted that employer respondents were not always in a position to give a definite answer as such decisions would be taken elsewhere in the organisation, and this is reflected in their responses.

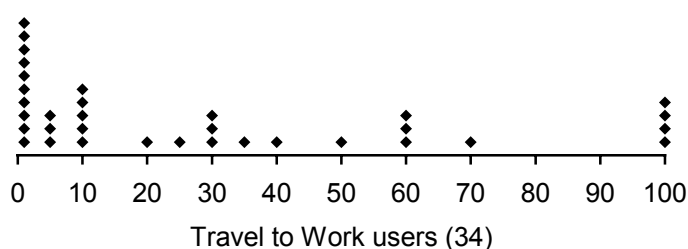
### 3.4.1 Possibility of Walking to Work

As one might expect, walking to work was almost never possible because distances were too great, walking would take too long, or because of the nature of the impairment. Very rarely, work was theoretically within walking distance but the journey was not safe for people with visual impairments having to cross busy roads, and particularly after dark or in wet or icy weather, or threatening for someone recovering from a mental illness and lacking confidence in undertaking the trip alone.

### 3.4.2 Possibility of Lifts from Family, Neighbours or Friends

Getting lifts from a family member, neighbour or friend was definitely possible, at the time of application, for a very small minority of respondents (Figure 3.1). Where this option was perfectly acceptable it might be concluded that Access to Work support was not totally essential; for example, where lifts had previously been provided and been thought acceptable. For the great majority, however, there was no scope for such lifts, and only a few felt that taking up such an option would be acceptable were it possible. Objections in the main were the negative impact on family members, such as interfering with their work routine or the expense to them. People did not want to be '*a burden*' or feel obliged to others. They needed to feel independent, and avoid restrictions on their flexibility in travelling at times convenient to them. It was sometimes felt that lifts might have been viable in the short-term only, accounting for some middle-range scores. People knew from past experience that such arrangements broke down, sometimes leading to bad feeling.

Figure 3.1  
Possibility at application of lifts from  
family, neighbour or friend



### 3.4.3 Possibility of Lifts from Colleagues at Work

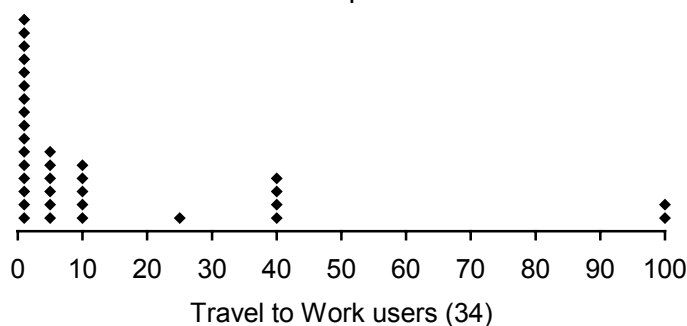
Most respondents felt there was little or no scope to get lifts from colleagues at work, and nobody saw it as more than 60 per cent possible. Colleagues did not live nearby or have similar travel-to-work times. Some users did not know where other people at work lived and some had not thought about the possibility. A few had past experience of such an arrangement working successfully but breakdown could damage

relationships. Objections to the idea centred mainly on reluctance to ask for help, not wanting to feel obliged to others and the lack of flexibility in being dependent on a lift from a colleague. Occasionally users were unable to access the kinds of vehicles owned by people who might have offered lifts.

### 3.4.4 Possibility of Using Public Transport

The vast majority of Travel to Work users could not entertain using public transport to get to work at the time of application (Figure 3.2). For them, buses and trains were impossible to reach or physically access, ran at unsuitable times or would have involved unreasonably long journey times. Some felt that using public transport would have damaged their health, and in many instances would have affected performance at work. Even if public transport had been accessible, its use was generally not acceptable because of inaccessibility, deleterious effects on health such as increased exposure to infection, or respiratory problems arising from waiting outside, and the safety risk. The very few who said that using public transport was a real possibility in theory would not have found it acceptable. They felt that attempting bus journeys after dark would risk safety and using buses was likely to cause injury.

Figure 3.2  
Possibility at application of using public transport



### 3.4.5 Possibility of Using Own Car

Not surprisingly, use of one's own car was almost never an option at the time of application. Mostly the respondent could not drive, had no access to a car, or the nature of their impairment ruled out the option completely. Exceptionally, use of a car was possible if partners could drive users *en route* to their place of work but would have involved time-consuming detours.

### **3.4.6 Possibility of Using Transport Provided by the Employer**

The possibility of using transport provided by their employer was almost universally dismissed by users as something their employer just did not do, though one respondent optimistically saw opportunities for rides in the employer's delivery vehicles. Should transport be made available by the employer, it would be quite acceptable to more than half, though there were provisos relating to the degree of convenience it would afford, and the costs to the organisation.

When employers were asked, actually providing transport was not something that most employers could contemplate. Occasionally, it was felt that the organisation's transport vehicles could be put to use but this was unlikely to be a practical solution. Where organisations provided coaches for the workforce they did not offer the door-to-door service required.

### **3.4.7 Possibility of Using Taxis Paid for by the Employer**

Users were only slightly more optimistic about the possibility of using taxis paid for by the employer to get to and from work than about the possibility of the employer providing transport. Again, it just was not an option and had not occurred to people unless, as reported to us, the employer paid fares home for all employees after late shifts. People on shift-work would have valued this option, or transport arranged by the organisation, because of the dangers of getting home by public transport. When asked about acceptability, people were generally positive about the idea, although some felt that their employer would not be willing or able to pay and some objected on the grounds that the cause of equality for disabled people would not be furthered if employers had to bear the costs. The possible pressure of feeling '*obliged*' to employers could be a worry.

#### ***Employers' Views***

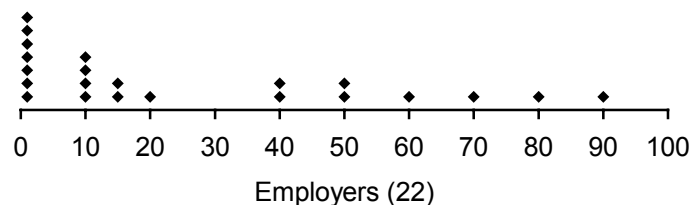
Employers were asked to rate the possibility of the organisation paying the costs of travel to work if Access to Work were not available when the employee applied for the support and were invited to comment on the appropriateness of paying.

The organisation paying was rarely more than half way possible (Figure 3.3). The likely financial impact stood out amongst the reasons employers gave. Even if willing in principle (though unusual) there would have been no budget to draw on and getting outside funding would have been very hard. Concerns were expressed not only about the on-going costs of supporting one employee but also about setting a precedent and '*opening the floodgates*'. This could be a sensitive area where there were stringent policies on use of cars and taxis for work. Organisations did not have policies on paying fares for disabled employees. Any decisions relating to the individual would have to have been taken at a high level. Some employers felt that responsibility for getting to work lay with employees and that exceptions should not

be made for disabled people. It was exceptional for this kind of adjustment to be viewed as a legal responsibility.

The more positive responses reflect attitudes and good intentions more than real possibilities. The ethos of the organisation, and the value attached to the individual, led some respondents to think that money would have been *'found from somewhere'*. Where companies had relocated and wanted to retain staff, employers would have been willing to consider making a contribution to fares. Occasionally employers were rather more positive about the possibility of paying for taxi fares at the time of interview, sometimes acknowledging the value to them of the employee.

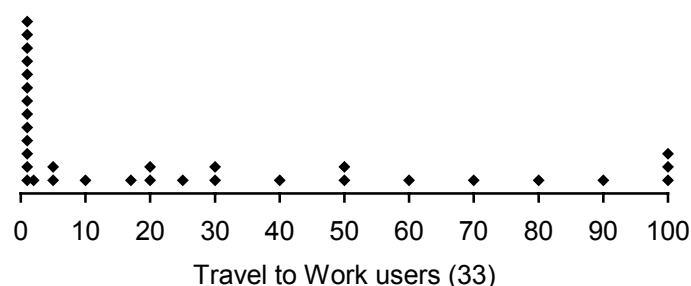
Figure 3.3  
Possibility at application of the  
organisation paying for taxis



### 3.4.8 Possibility of Paying the Taxi Fares

The majority of users gave low ratings for the possibility of paying the taxi fares themselves at the time of application (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4  
Possibility at application of users paying  
for taxis



The acceptability of paying was also low (Figure 3.5). Interestingly, almost all of those who rated paying themselves more than half way possible rated the acceptability less highly. Users' main reasons were financial but the fairness of paying was also raised, some users feeling that government rather than disabled people should take responsibility. On the other hand, some wished they were in a position to pay themselves and so become independent of government help. People



were conscious of the costs and some spoke of not wanting to be ‘a burden’ to Access to Work.

Figure 3.5  
Acceptability at application of paying  
for taxis



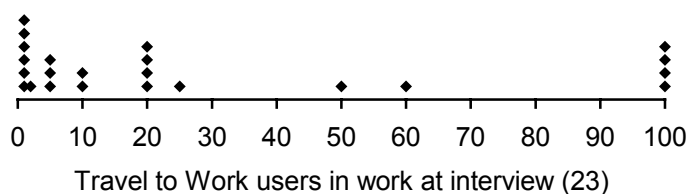
Respondents rarely had considered any other possible way of getting funds for fares to work. When prompted about the possibility of family members paying, borrowing or even applying for charitable funds their responses differed quite markedly. But getting funds some other way was rarely a real possibility.

### 3.4.9 Alternatives Now

After asking about the possibility and acceptability of alternatives when they applied for the support, and after asking about the difference Travel to Work made to them, we turned to questions about possible alternatives at the time they were interviewed. In most cases, eighteen months or more had elapsed since the support was put in place and we had hypothesised that circumstances might have changed.

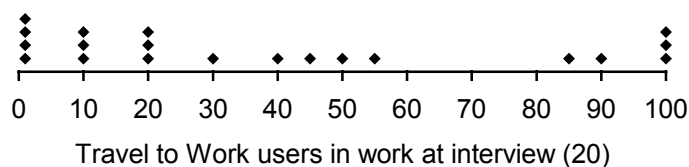
Finding another way of getting to work now was very rarely an option for current Travel to Work users (Figure 3.6). Where alternatives were thought to be possible, using public transport would have deleterious effects on health and work or paying for taxi fares would be a huge financial drain. Some positive scores reflect determination to find any solution to maintain work of extreme importance to self-esteem.

Figure 3.6  
Possibility of finding another way of  
getting to work now



Views on the possibility of paying the fares at the point of interview (Figure 3.7) reflect in part users' determination to work despite the costs, and occasionally greater financial security as a result of have been able to work with the help of Access to Work.

Figure 3.7  
Possibility of paying for fares now



### 3.5 Likely Employment Outcomes in the Absence of Travel to Work at Application

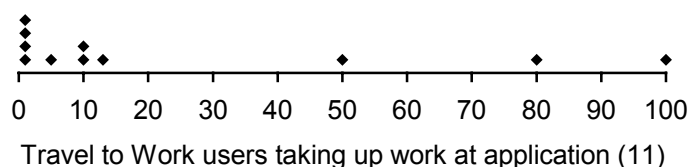
Travel to Work users were asked the same questions about employment outcomes as those using other types of Access to Work support. They were asked to rate the possibility of given outcomes in the absence of Travel to Work at two points – when the application for Travel to Work was made and at the time of the research interview.

Eleven of the 36 respondents were taking up a new job when they applied for Travel to Work. We report first on their views of possible employment outcomes were the support not available, before turning to those already established in work at the time of application.

### 3.5.1 Likely Outcomes at the Time of Application for Travel to Work Users Taking up a New Job

Travel to Work users were asked to rate on a scale from 1 to 100 how far they agreed or disagreed that they would not have taken up the job if Travel to Work had not been available. There is strong evidence from users that Travel to Work was essential to taking up a job (Figure 3.8). They saw no other options and without the support many simply could not have afforded the journey to work. Return to unemployment might well have been the consequence. When long distances were involved, taxi fares would eat up most or all of the salary, and people would be *'paying to work'*.

Figure 3.8  
Likelihood at application of taking up the  
job without Travel to Work



No obvious pattern emerged from employers' responses to the similar question to them; some scores agreed with users' while others diverged markedly.

### 3.5.2 Likely Outcomes for Travel to Work Users in Paid Work at Application

#### ***Views on Giving up Work Altogether***

Giving up work altogether was seldom an option (Figure 3.9). Work itself, income, self-esteem gained from working and responsibilities for family were too important. Giving up might well have been likely where people could not afford to pay fares themselves or burden family members who might drive them, or where health would suffer too much through struggling on without the help.

Figure 3.9  
Likelihood at application of giving up working altogether



### **Views on Getting Another Job**

Getting another job also was not an option according to the majority (Figure 3.10) because of the importance of the existing job or because there were no alternatives available. Location could rule out getting another job, as could perceived attitudes of prospective employers towards disabled people, the difficulties facing older workers in the labour market and lack of experience or qualifications for other kinds of work.

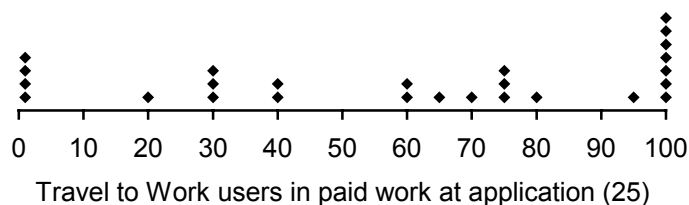
Figure 3.10  
Likelihood at application of getting another job



### **Views on Carrying on Without Travel to Work**

It would have been impossible or very hard for a minority to carry on in their job without the provision (Figure 3.11). Those who felt they would have carried on generally thought there were other options open to them, some having the resources to pay for the fares themselves. Some would have asked family members for lifts. Some would have gone back to trying to use public transport. It should be noted that respondents tended to say that they would *try* to carry on, although they did not have a particular solution to the problem, because of the importance of the job to them and the need to earn. Some observed that attempts to carry on in their job without help with fares to work were unlikely to have lasted for long; options might have been possible on a temporary basis, but not sustainable.

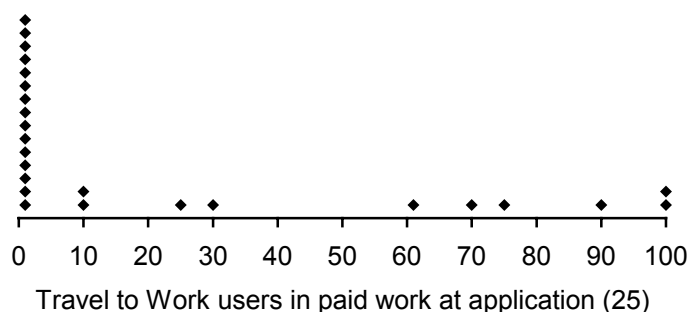
Figure 3.11  
Likelihood at application of carrying on  
without fares to work



**Views on Changing Hours**

Recipients of help with Travel to Work might have been expected to change their hours to reduce the costs of travel to work if help from Access to Work were not available. For most this was simply not an option (Figure 3.12). If it had been possible, reducing numbers of journeys by lengthening working days could have led to negative effects on health, and major reductions in hours could mean unacceptable loss of earnings. Some people preferred to work short hours every day for health reasons. Home working might have been a possibility where employers were flexible and willing to make accommodations for disabled people.

Figure 3.12  
Likelihood at application of changing  
hours



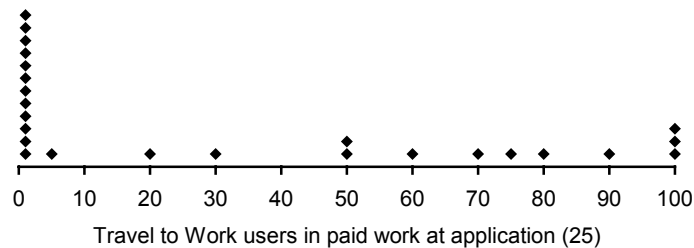
**Views on Taking More Sick Leave**

Around one in three respondents felt that at the time of application they were more than likely to have taken more sick leave if Travel to Work had not been available (Figure 3.13). Some of those respondents felt they would have had no choice but to take sick leave if there had been no means of getting to work, although they were not actually ill, and this might even have put their job at risk. But many users explained that it was not their habit to take sick leave or that finding the journey to work hard was not an indication of being 'sick'. For some, working was too important and employers' attitudes were also a consideration.

But there were also some strong feelings that health would have suffered in the absence of help with Travel to Work. Panic or anxiety states seemed more likely to

some people, and some felt they would have been more likely to succumb to increased infection, or that pain or fatigue levels would have been higher.

Figure 3.13  
Likelihood at application of taking  
more sick leave



### 3.5.3 Likely Outcomes for Travel to Work Users Now

#### **Views on Taking More Sick Leave Now**

A striking finding is people's views of the likelihood of taking more sick leave in the absence of Access to Work at the point of interview (Figure 3.14). For those who *could* find a way of getting to work without Travel to Work, having to drive or find an alternative would require a lot of effort that would drain reserves and impact on the ability to put in the hours required. They spoke of the likelihood of becoming exhausted and stressed and of fatigue affecting their condition. For some, without Access to Work there would be no choice other than to stay at home claiming sickness, taxing the tolerance of employers.

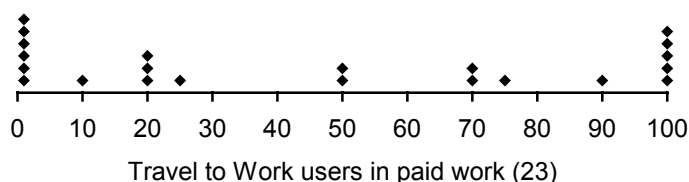
Figure 3.14  
Likelihood of taking more sick leave now



#### **Views on Losing The Job Now**

Users' ratings of the likelihood of losing their job (Figure 3.15) might be considered realistic, given that they had considered their situation and possible options by this point of the interview. Moreover, in cases where users felt they were completely or very likely to lose the job (scoring 75 and over) their employers' scores were similar.

Figure 3.15  
Likelihood of losing job now



At the end of the interview all respondents in paid work were asked to rate the likelihood of their being in paid work if Access to Work were not available. As already noted, 15 of the 23 people receiving Travel to Work at the point of interview had no other form of Access to Work support. Only one Travel to Work user completely agreed that they would be in their job in the absence of Access to Work and nine totally disagreed (Figure 3.16).

Figure 3.16  
Likelihood of being in the job now in the absence of Access to Work



### 3.6 Differences Travel to Work Made to Users

All respondents who were currently getting help with fares to work, or had done so in the past, were asked how having Travel to Work through Access to Work had made a difference to them. Without exception, they spoke of substantial differences.

For some the fundamental difference was being able to get to work. Without the support, as we have shown, in some cases employment would have been impossible. Taking up or continuing in low-paid work was unlikely to have been possible without help with fares. Where journeys to work were long, well-paid users could not have afforded the costs without damage to their standard of living and that of their families.

For people looking for work, knowing that Access to Work was available gave confidence at interviews and assured employers that getting to work was not a problem.

People emphasised the difference Travel to Work made to getting to work on time, contrasting the reliability of taxis with their past struggles using public transport. Employers also valued the reliability that Access to Work had brought, and the effect it had on work performance and even chances for advancement.

Users emphasised benefits to their health, independence, morale, performance at work and financial position, which combined to substantially increase quality of life.

Travelling by taxi could mean that health was not jeopardised by the stress of travelling by public transport, standing at bus stops without shelters, the risk of cross-infection on buses, the risk of accidents on icy roads or in the dark, worry about getting home safely, or the stress and energy used in driving. For people in poor health, taxis gave the flexibility to return home early if too fatigued to carry on. The reliability of taxis was valued by those who felt unwell. Not having to worry about transport and its cost reduced the kind of stress that made people ill.

Choice and control was valued. Being able to come and go without dependence on others could give a *'real buzz'*. Without that independence, people felt they would have been *'disappointed and downhearted'*.

Concentration and quality of work were enhanced by relief of worry and preoccupation with the costs of travel to work or difficult, time-consuming and stressful travel by public transport. Employers who commented on the difference Access to Work made to employees getting help with Travel to Work stressed these benefits too. Arriving at work in a good frame of mind, rather than exhausted, made work life easier and improved work relationships.

Enabling continued employment contributed to self-esteem and morale, increased self-confidence and improved participation at work. Some felt able to cope with increased responsibility because of reduction of fatigue, and prospects for advancement were felt to be improved.

Removing reliance on family increased self-esteem and felt independence. Family members themselves were thought to have increased well-being and freedom to live their own lives if they no longer had to drive users to work.

As already explained, not being out of pocket – or sometimes impoverished - through paying taxi fares made a substantial difference to the viability of employment. But people were by no means unaware of the costs to Access to Work. They spoke of not wanting to *'be a burden'* to Access to Work or *'abuse the privilege'*. Some managed their working hours to avoid heavy traffic and so keep fares to the minimum.



### 3.7 Summary

- There was strong evidence from users that Travel to Work was essential to taking up a job.
- Around one in four users saw a strong possibility of losing their job without Travel to Work, and their employers tended to agree.
- A striking finding is the perceived likelihood of taking more sick leave in the absence of Travel to Work.
- Employers are not required to pay towards the costs. Few users saw any possibility of their employer paying for taxis, although the idea was acceptable to many. Few employers thought paying was likely or acceptable, especially as a precedent would be set.
- Users normally pay the equivalent public transport costs. For most, the full cost was unaffordable when they applied, although a minority thought this would have been a possibility. Acceptability of paying was generally rated low, for financial reasons and because it seemed unfair to have to pay extra to go to work.
- For many users, the fundamental difference Travel to Work made was being able to get to their job, as alternatives were rarely feasible. Arriving reliably on time and ready for work was valued by both users and employers. Users felt that health was not jeopardised by the stress, risk and fatigue of exhausting journeys without Travel to Work, and concentration and quality of work were enhanced by relief from worry and distraction. Not being out of pocket by going to work also made substantial differences to the viability of employment.

## 4 Alterations to Premises

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter we report users' and employers' views on:

- what would have happened in the absence of Alterations to Premises supported by Access to Work
- the difference the alterations made to users
- the possibility, and acceptability, of the alterations being paid for by employers or by users.

Alterations to Premises covered in this chapter comprise changes to the fabric of buildings. Alterations to equipment, such as desk extensions, special lighting installations and fire alarms for people with hearing impairments are covered in chapter 5 on Aids and Equipment.<sup>13</sup>

We interviewed 15 users who had experience of Alterations to Premises supported by Access to Work. Of those, two no longer had access to the facility as they had left the job to take up or look for other work. Although users of Alterations to Premises are rather over-represented in this study,<sup>14</sup> the number interviewed is too small to indicate the impact of Access to Work reliably. Twelve employer representatives were interviewed and 11 of those answered questions about Alterations to Premises.

### 4.2 Alterations Provided

---

<sup>13</sup> Questionnaire modules were designed to reflect the Access to Work administrative categories. However, it proved hard to ask separately about 'alterations to premises and equipment' (APE) and 'special aids and equipment' (SAE) where the two categories of support were indistinguishable to the user. For example, it would have been difficult to pursue different lines of questioning about a change to an existing desk to accommodate a new computer, or to distinguish changes to overhead lighting from other components of a package of workstation aids for someone with visual impairment. Where deaf users received a package of communication support, it was not realistic to ask separately about items such as textphones or vibrating pager alarms (classed as SAE) and fire alarm installations (APE).

<sup>14</sup> The *Users' Views of Access to Work* survey found that eight per cent of users said they currently had 'alterations to the building'.

The most common type of alteration was an adaptation to existing toilet facilities or installation of a new toilet; some users had more than one alteration (Table 4.1).



**Table 4.1 Types of alterations to premises**

<i>Type of alteration</i>	<i>Number of users</i>
Toilet adaptation or installation	9
Stair lift	2
Door adaptation	2
Wheelchair ramp	2
Machinery ramp	1
Parking space and signage	1

Most alterations involved major works, the costs of which ranged from £1,800 to £10,000. Seven alterations cost over £5000. The least expensive items comprised installation of grab rails in toilets.

Most alterations were made to improve access for wheelchair users and people limited in walking, though in two cases toilet installations had been arranged for people who needed a toilet nearby because of medical conditions.

### 4.3 Support Packages

In four instances, the user received help with alterations to premises only. The majority (10) of those who had a package of support also received SAE, and five received help with Travel to Work, Travel in Work, an Adapted Vehicle or a Support Worker (Table 4.2). Some support packages were extensive and the alteration was not necessarily the most costly item.

**Table 4.2 Support packages of users of alterations to premises at interview**

<i>Support package</i>	<i>Number of users</i>
Alterations to premises only	4
Alterations to premises and SAE	6
Alterations to premises and TW	1
Alterations to premises and SAE and AV	1
Alterations to premises and SAE and TW	1
Alterations to premises and SAE and SW	1
Alterations to premises and SAE and TiW	1

A number also received practical help arranged by their employer.

## 4.4 Employment Situation

Seven current and past users worked in the public sector, six in the private sector and two worked for voluntary organisations. None were self-employed. Rather fewer were in the public sector than might have been expected; in the *Users' Views of Access to Work* survey 57 per cent worked in the public sector.

Eleven employer interviews were achieved in relation to Alterations to Premises.<sup>15</sup> Table 4.3 shows the number of user and employer interviews achieved by employment sector.

**Table 4.3 Alterations to premises user and employer interviews by sector**

<i>Sector</i>	<i>Number of users interviewed</i>	<i>Number of employers interviewed</i>
Private	6	3
Local authority	6	6
Voluntary organisation	2	1
Central government	1	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>11</i>

## 4.5 Likely Employment Outcomes in the Absence of Alterations to Premises

Users were asked to rate the possibility of a range of outcomes in the absence of alterations to premises at two points in time – when the application to Access to Work was first made and at the time of the research interview.

### 4.5.1 Likely Outcomes for Users of Alterations to Premises When they Applied

Respondents' employment situations at application varied. A small minority of disabled people were taking up a new job, one after a long period of unemployment. Of those who had worked for the organisation for some time before the application a few had been on long-term sick leave. Amongst those established in paid work some had developed health problems in the job or found that their condition deteriorated, while others had long-term, relatively stable, physical impairments. For one person, reorganisation in the workplace created new access requirements. Accordingly,

<sup>15</sup> One respondent had alterations in a previous job only and the current employer was interviewed in relation to another element, one respondent refused permission, and in one case the employer declined to be interviewed. In one interview, questions about Alterations to Premises were not asked in error.

respondents had rather different perspectives on what might have happened in the absence of the alterations to the premises.

Respondents taking up a new job required major structural changes to the building and took up the job assuming that the employer would make the alterations, being unaware of Access to Work. In one case it seems likely that the employer would have paid for the alteration without Access to Work support. In another it seems that the employer anticipated support from Access to Work; without that Access to Work support employment could not possibly have been sustained, the user would have been '*devastated*' and probably given up looking for work altogether.

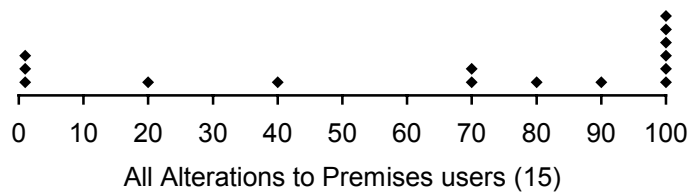
Turning to users already established in the job, Alterations to Premises had the most impact where people had medical conditions and said they would have definitely have given up working altogether if Access to Work had not been available when they applied. Pain, exhaustion or the embarrassment of dealing with bowel or urinary disorders would have made the job untenable. Deteriorating health would have prevented office access. For people with physical impairments, the effects of not having the alteration could have included increased tiredness with a knock-on effect on performance at work, for example through struggling with stairs.

Most respondents already in work said they were more than likely to have carried on without the alteration. The benefits for them lay mainly in easier and more equal access in the workplace and associated improvements in work efficiency. As they had been working already without the alterations, they tended to say that they would have carried on without them and that their job was not at risk – though employers were overall rather more pessimistic about the outcome. For example, installation of automatic doors or a toilet on the same office floor as a user clearly increased equality of access and made moving around the building less time-consuming and inconvenient but made no difference to staying in work. Life would have been difficult without a stair-lift but moving office might have been a solution, though inconvenient.

Overall, around two in three agreed they would definitely or probably would have carried on without the alteration at the time of application (that is, scores of 70 or more in Figure 4.1). Some respondents would have been willing to put up with a situation with no alteration although health might have put at risk (for example, by avoiding going to the toilet), and some would have tolerated the inconvenience and indignity of lack of support. As we have shown throughout this report, determination to work influenced people's responses when asked if they would have carried on without the support.

Almost all users believed that the alteration had made at least some difference to them. Unusually it was thought to be entirely dispensable. Sometimes users felt that they could have carried on in its absence with no serious negative effect on their work, health or well-being in instances where a toilet nearby was a '*bit of a luxury*' or its siting was felt to be unhelpful, or where they had already managed adequately without changes to access.

Figure 4.1  
Likelihood at application of carrying on  
without the alteration



#### 4.5.2 Likely Outcomes Now

Users' views on likely outcomes if they did not have the alteration at the time of interview did not differ much from views relating to the time of application, except in a case where surgery had meant that the alteration was no longer needed. Without suitable toilet facilities or office access two people were definite and one 70 per cent certain they would have to leave the job, and in one case definitely would have given up working altogether.

#### 4.6 Funding the Alterations Some Other Way

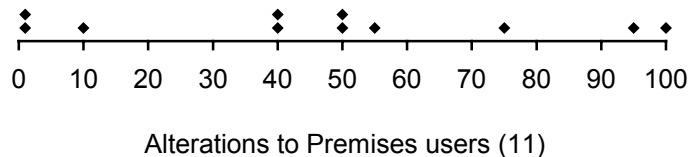
Users were asked about the possibility and the acceptability of the employing organisation paying, and about paying for some or all of the alterations themselves. Employers were asked whether and to what extent they would have paid for the alterations and the appropriateness of doing so.

##### 4.6.1 Possibility of Employers Paying for the Alterations

Users' ratings of the possibility of their employer paying for the alterations ranged across the scale (four did not answer) (Figure 4.2). Reasons for the most positive responses related mainly to employers' attitudes, responsibilities or the example they had already set. Users working in small local authority units were the most pessimistic.

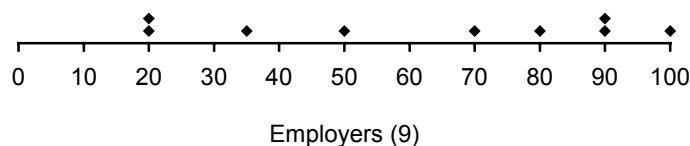


Figure 4.2  
Possibility at application of the employer paying



Employer representatives' ratings of the possibility of paying were only marginally higher than users' (Figure 4.3). Local authority respondents found it hard to answer if they themselves did not have control over budgets for adaptations. Many scores reflect respondents' willingness to *try* to fund the adaptation. Most employers were strongly committed to retaining the employee and felt they would '*find some way*' of meeting their needs, though they were sometimes unclear about how the funds would be found. Unusually respondents were certain or almost certain that the organisation would pay because of a policy to make adaptations, or because the alteration was helpful to other regular users of the premises. Legal obligations were mentioned very rarely.

Figure 4.3  
Possibility at application of the organisation paying for the Alterations to Premises



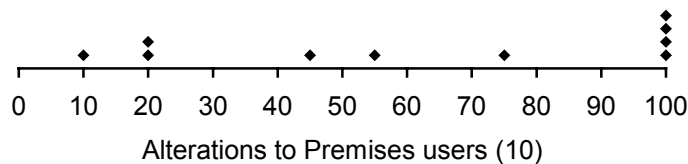
The point was made that although the organisation might have been willing and able to pay the expertise to make appropriate alterations was lacking. The importance to employers of advice and expertise available through Access to Work is highlighted in the following chapter.

#### 4.6.2 Acceptability of the Employer Paying

Not all users were happy with the idea of their employer paying (Figure 4.4). Feeling obligated to the employer and the effect on relationships was one factor. There was some feeling that responsibility to enable employment of disabled people should lie

with government. Some felt, on the other hand, that employers had a duty to their employees.

Figure 4.4  
Acceptability of the employer paying



It was very exceptional for an employer to say that paying for the alteration was not at all acceptable, making it unlikely that the alteration would have been made. Most employers who answered the question seemed to see paying acceptable in principle, if only the funds were available. Views on acceptability were generally more positive when other staff, students or customers would also benefit. Where users had previously appeared to manage without the alterations some employers were less inclined to think that paying would be acceptable. Where employees developed health conditions that threatened their employment without accommodations, employers tended to say they would try to find the funds.

#### 4.6.3 Users Paying for the Alterations

The user paying all the costs was seldom a real possibility. Paying for a minor alteration or some of the costs of a home alteration might have been possible.

The overall acceptability of users' paying was very low. The costs were clearly a consideration but it is striking that many users rejected the idea on principle, believing it should not be their responsibility, and that it was unfair to ask disabled people to pay and negated the principle of equality. In some instances where users had previously managed without the alteration, saw it as a *'luxury'*, or where it proved to be unsuitable there would have been little point in paying themselves.

## 4.7 Summary

- Alterations to Premises appeared to have the greatest impact on people who developed health problems which put their job at risk, but could also be indispensable to disabled people taking up work.

- Disabled people who did not have health problems affecting their work mostly had been working for some time before the alteration was made. The benefits to them lay mainly in easier and more equal access in the workplace; working without the alterations could have been tiring and sometimes demeaning but not intolerable for people determined to work.
- Some users felt they could have carried on without the alteration with no serious negative effect on their work, health or well-being.
- Employers are required to make a financial contribution where the user is taking up the job. Employers' ratings of the possibility of paying the full costs ranged widely. Most felt they would *'find some way'* to pay if Access to Work were not available. Only two were clear that the organisation would pay because of a policy to make adaptations. Employers generally seemed to accept the principle of paying, some acknowledging benefits to other staff, students or customers, though expertise to make appropriate alterations could be lacking. Where users had previously appeared to manage without the alterations some employers were less inclined to find paying acceptable.
- Not all users were happy with the idea of their employer paying. Feeling obligated to the employer and the effect on relationships were factors. Some felt that responsibility should lie with government, others that employers had a duty to their employees.

# 5 Aids and Equipment

## 5.1 Introduction

This final chapter on Access to Work support elements reports users' and employers' views relating to Aids and Equipment in the workplace. It covers:

- what would have happened in the absence of Aids and Equipment provided through Access to Work
- the possibility, and acceptability, of Aids and Equipment being paid for by users, employers or in some other way.

In all, 87 people with experience of using Aids and Equipment were interviewed. Eleven of those had left the job for which Aids and Equipment had been provided. Interviews relating to Aids and Equipment were carried out with 66 employers.

Special Aids and Equipment is the largest element of Access to Work provision. In the nationally representative *Users' Views of Access to Work* survey, 64 per cent of respondents were using Aids and Equipment. In this study, the same percentage had Aids and Equipment at the time of the interview. Although this study was not intended to be representative, because the sample was drawn from the *Users' Views* survey respondents it is likely that current users broadly represent the population of Aids and Equipment users who said they first applied for Access to Work in 1999 or 2000, with the caveat that this study concentrated on certain Employment Service Regions (see Appendix A for details of the sampling procedure).

Given the size of the study group, and the likelihood of it representing the Aids and Equipment user population, we consider it acceptable to quantify responses in this chapter.

## 5.2 Support Provided

Aids and Equipment comprises a wide range of support. Respondents had experience of using:

- ergonomic chairs and other ergonomic workstation equipment such as desks, keyboards, wrist rests, footrests, writing slopes, pen holders and document holders
- IT-related equipment and software such as large monitors, enlargers, voice-activation and voice-synthesising systems, scanners, printers, laptop computers, and Braille conversion systems
- communication aids and equipment for people with hearing or speech impairments, such as minicomms, textphones, fire alert systems, amplifiers and digital hearing aids

- electric or lightweight wheelchairs, or a scooter
- special tools.

### 5.2.1 Levels of Support

Sometimes users received only one item - 11 had only a desk chair and seven only a wheelchair - but much more often they received a package of Aids and Equipment as recommended at assessment. A very common package comprised a desk chair and a number of desk-top aids such a writing-slope, document holder and wrist rest. A desk chair was by far the most common item received, used by 31 current users. Table 5.1 shows the types of support provided to current users.

**Table 5.1 Types of Aids and Equipment provided to current users**

<i>Type</i>	<i>Number of users</i>
Ergonomic equipment only	30
IT-related equipment only	18
Communication aids and equipment only	11
Wheelchair only	7
Tools only	3
Ergonomic equipment + IT-related equipment	5
IT-related equipment + Communication equipment	2
Total	76

According to Disability Service Team (DST) records, the costs of Aids and Equipment provision ranged from £98 to £24,600 although over four in ten packages cost less than £1000 (including assessment costs).

### 5.2.2 Access to Work Support Packages

Forty-eight of the 76 current users received no other element of Access to Work support (combinations of support elements are shown in Table B.7 in the Appendices).

## 5.3 Employment Situation

The great majority of respondents with experience of using Aids and Equipment worked in managerial, professional and administrative/secretarial jobs in their current or last position (Table 5.2). The occupational classifications of people in this study group generally reflect those of the study group as a whole (Table B.5 in the Appendices).

**Table 5.2 Aids and Equipment users' occupations**

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Number of users</i>
Managers/senior	6
Professionals	20
Associate professionals	12
Admin/secretarial	38
Skilled trades	2
Personal service	4
Sales/customer service	1
Process/plant/machinery	1
Elementary	1
Total	85
<i>Missing</i> 2	

Table 5.3 shows the occupational sector of users interviewed and the number of employer interviews achieved.

**Table 5.3 Aids and Equipment user and employer interviews achieved by sector**

<i>Sector</i>	<i>Number of users interviewed</i>	<i>Employers interviewed</i>
Central government department/agency/service	22	19
Local government department	15	15
Voluntary organisation	14	9
Private sector	12	11
Health authority or NHS Trust	5	5
University or FE college	4	2
Local authority controlled school or college	3	2
Police/fire service	1	1
Other public service	2	2
Wholly self-employed	9	-
Total	87	66

## **5.4 Likely Employment Outcomes in the Absence of Aids and Equipment**

As with other elements of Access to Work, respondents were asked to rate the possibility of a number of employment outcomes if Access to Work had not been available at the time they applied for their Aids and Equipment. Towards the end of the interview they were asked to rate the possibility of these outcomes in the current

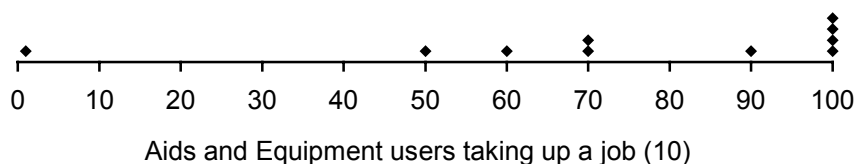
situation. We first look briefly at the small group of respondents who were taking up a new job when they applied before concentrating on those who were established in a job when they applied.

#### 5.4.1 Taking Up a Job

A small minority (ten) were taking up a new job when they applied for Aids and Equipment. It was very exceptional for someone in this group to say they definitely would not have taken up the job without Aids and Equipment, though some were uncertain (Figure 5.1). One or two said they had considered looking for another job where they could manage without the equipment, for example avoiding the kind of meetings a hearing impaired person found difficult. Occasionally an item of support was viewed as a *'bonus'* initially, but experience later showed how essential it was for full participation at work.

In the one case where the user agreed it would have been totally impossible to take up the job without the equipment the employer's view was consistent with that of the user. Otherwise, employers were generally very positive about the likely outcomes, in some instances a lot more positive than their employees, many saying that they wanted to take on the best person for the job. In the two cases where employers were unlikely to have offered the job they were only half way certain the organisation would have paid. This suggests that Access to Work might be an important factor where the job is in doubt and organisations are uncertain about paying.

Figure 5.1  
Likelihood at application of taking up the job without  
Aids and Equipment



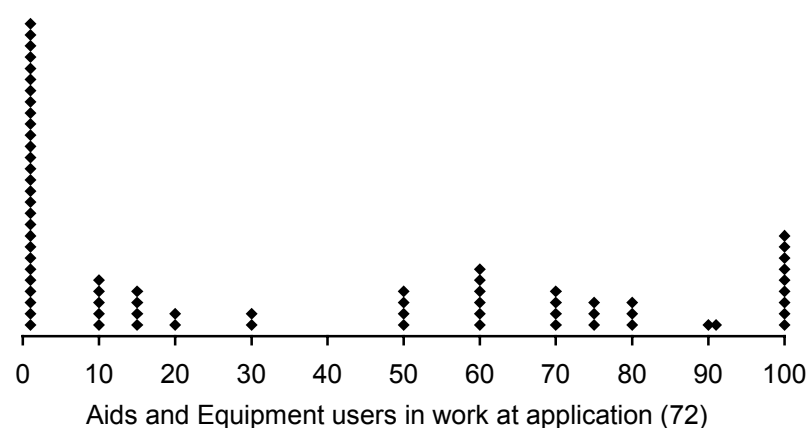
## 5.4.2 Staying in Work

Respondents already established in the job rated the possibility of a number of employment outcomes if their equipment had not been available through Access to Work at the time they applied. All respondents in work at the time of the interview were asked about the same outcomes in the current situation. In most instances eighteen months or more had elapsed since they applied.

### *Taking More Sick Leave*

A substantial minority (around four in ten) of people established in the job totally disagreed that they would have taken more sick leave had Aids and Equipment not been available when they applied (Figure 5.2). Several respondents wanted to point out that having an impairment did not mean they were ill. This group was mainly using communication aids and accessible computer equipment designed for people with visual impairments or dyslexia. But many disabled people believed that struggling to cope without the support could lead to stress and time off work. Amongst those agreeing that they were more than likely to have taken more sick leave at the time they applied were people who had experienced pain and fatigue at their workstation before they got their support from Access to Work. Ergonomic chairs, speech recognition systems and voice amplifiers in particular proved in retrospect to relieve the pain, and Aids and Equipment were also felt to prevent increased sick leave by some people who needed mobility aids.

Figure 5.2  
Likelihood at application of taking more sick  
leave

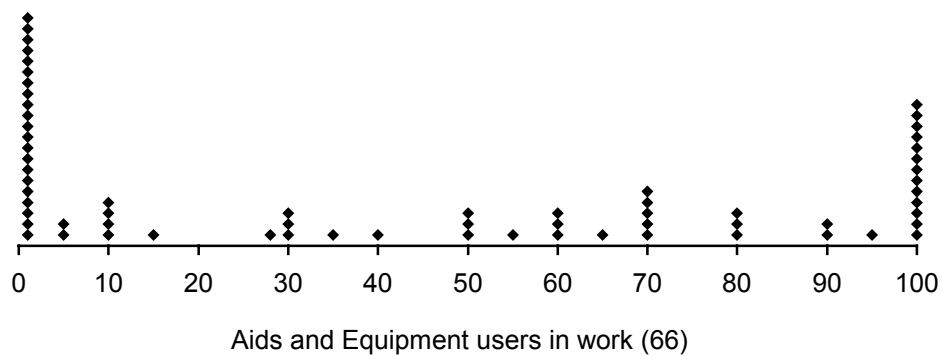


The pattern of scores relating to the current situation shows more agreement that more sick leave would be taken in the absence of Aids and Equipment (Figure 5.3). The results are not strictly comparable with those in Figure 5.2, relating to the time of application, as the people who took up a job are now included. If we look at the differences in individuals' scores a more useful picture emerges. Of the 57 instances



where both scores were given, the 'now' score was substantially higher in 16 cases, lower in eight and the same (within ten points) in 33 cases. People explained that they were taking less sick leave since they got the support because using it had decreased pain, stress and fatigue or prevented a condition from deteriorating. Morale also had improved.

Figure 5.3  
Likelihood of taking more sick leave now



Employers were not asked about specific elements of support. Rather, they were asked to comment on what would have happened in the absence of Access to Work overall. Not all employers of Aids and Equipment users were in a position to offer an opinion but the great majority of those who did comment agreed that more sick leave was a possibility if Access to Work were not now available (Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4  
Likelihood of taking more sick leave now

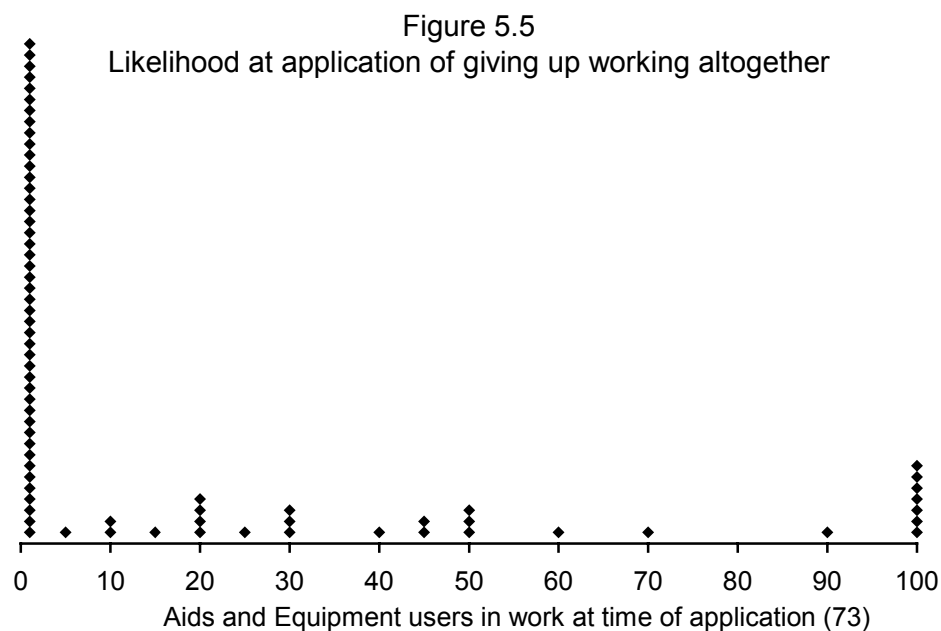


### ***Performance at Work***

An important outcome of Aids and Equipment, from the point of view of both users and employers, was improved work performance. When asked what difference Aids and Equipment made to them, two in three Aids and Equipment users volunteered that their performance and the quality of their work had improved. Asked to rate agreement that performance at work would be affected without the support, half of the employers of people receiving only Aids and Equipment scored 90 to 100 on the agreement scale and only one in ten scored ten or less. Most employers agreed that the performance of other staff would also be negatively affected if their employee did not have Aids and Equipment.

### ***Giving up Working Altogether***

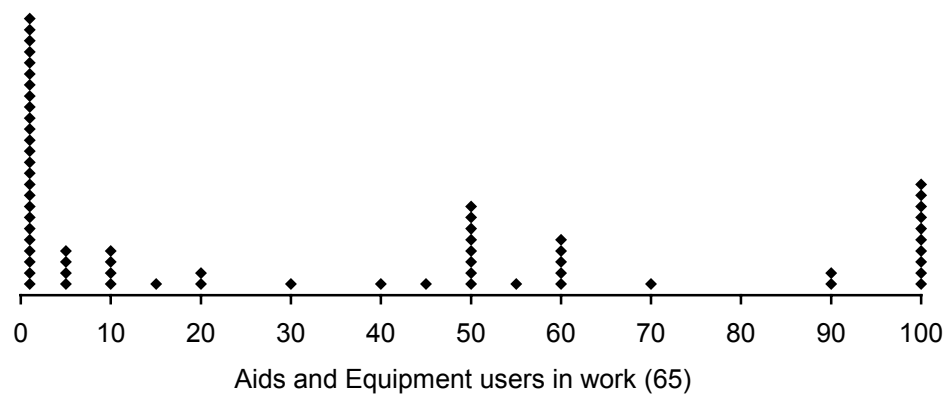
Giving up working altogether at the time they applied would not have been conceivable for the large majority of Aids and Equipment users (Figure 5.5). It is noteworthy, however, that around one in ten felt they would definitely or almost definitely have given up work without the support.



Employers of Aids and Equipment users were generally more pessimistic than their employees about the possibility of them staying in the job without the Access to Work package, and in some cases thought it considerably likely that the employee would have had to leave, although the user was completely or almost certain that they would not. The small number of employers who were more optimistic often referred to the organisation's equal opportunities policies and responsibilities (though rarely to the Disability Discrimination Act) or to a sense of responsibility towards the employee, and some volunteered that they would have paid for what was needed. Redeployment in the organisation would have been considered if possible.

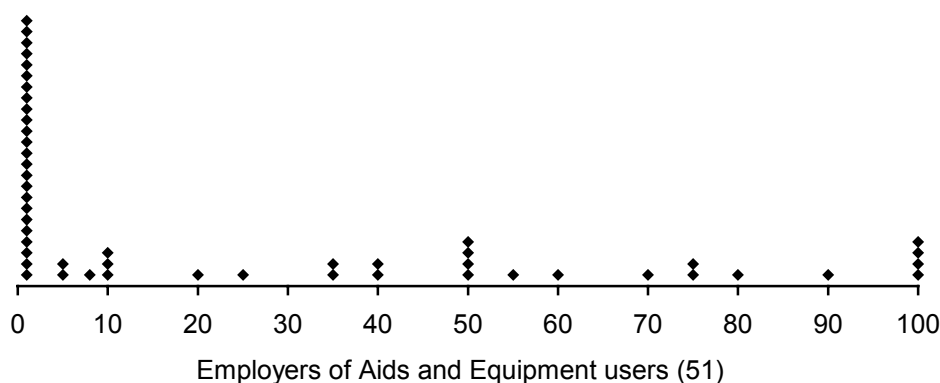
People’s dependence on their equipment to stay in the job is evident. Ten out of 65 agreed completely that they would lose their job without it and another eight thought it more than half way likely (Figure 5.6). Given what we found about people’s willingness to work against the odds, this is a striking finding. Of those disagreeing that they would have to leave if the equipment were not now available, many believed that their employer would find some solution such as a change of tasks if they were unable to supply the equipment needed.

Figure 5.6  
Likelihood of losing the job now



Where interviewed, employers, considering the Access to Work package as a whole, overall gave less pessimistic scores for the likelihood of the employee having to leave the job and nearly half disagreed completely (Figure 5.7). Usually the Access to Work user was considered to be a valued employee and employers would have taken steps to retain them, and equal opportunities policies were commonly referred to. Employers were not always certain that the organisation would supply everything that was needed and sometimes spoke of looking for solutions such as redeployment. It appears that once employers had seen the benefits of Access to Work support they were more inclined to consider finding solutions to keep the person in their employment, compared with at the time of application.

Figure 5.7  
Likelihood of having to leave the job now



### ***Carrying on Without the Support***

Well over half of Aids and Equipment users agreed that they were more than half way likely to have carried on without the equipment at the time they applied, and nearly three in ten agreed completely (Figure 5.8). In the current situation, however, the number saying they would definitely *not* carry on was larger than the number saying that they would certainly carry on in the absence of the support (Figure 5.9). Several respondents commented that having used the equipment they now realised the benefits it brought them in terms of reduced pain, more efficient working and more equal participation. Experience of these benefits meant it could be hard to contemplate working life without the support.

Amongst those saying they would have carried on without Aids and Equipment were some who definitely needed the equipment and would have bought it themselves or had it provided by the employer if Access to Work were not available now. We should also remember that strong attachment to work and the need to earn may have swayed some people towards saying they would have carried on without Aids and Equipment.

It was unusual for respondents to say that the equipment was completely unnecessary. A few users valued the extra comfort or convenience but believed the help a *'luxury'* rather than an essential item. Occasionally an item had been provided as a safeguard against recurrence of a condition that had improved through treatment. Smaller items provided in a package of desk station equipment were sometimes not used, because they took up space or did not help much. It seems that items in their support packages that they had not expected to get when they applied were more dispensable to users. Some surprise was expressed at the extent of the recommendations following assessment, when users had in mind a particular item or type of support. In a few instances users said that more expensive items were not

used because they had not been installed properly, because further training was needed or because they were not central to their current work.

Figure 5.8  
Likelihood at application of carrying on without the equipment

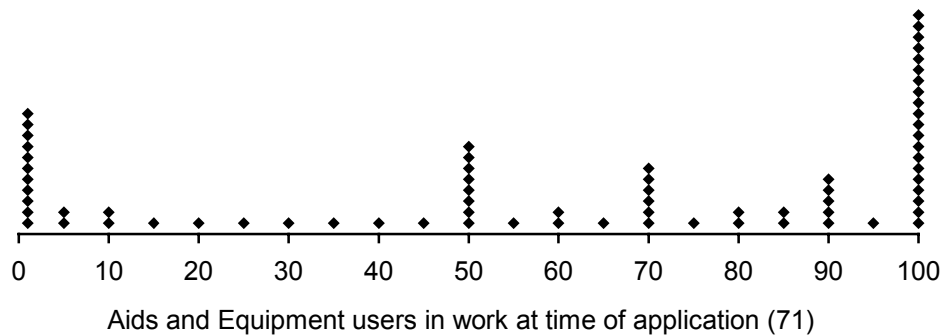
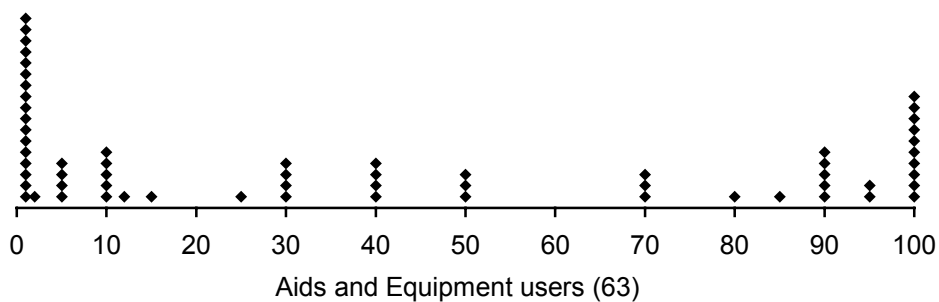


Figure 5.9  
Likelihood of carrying on without the equipment now



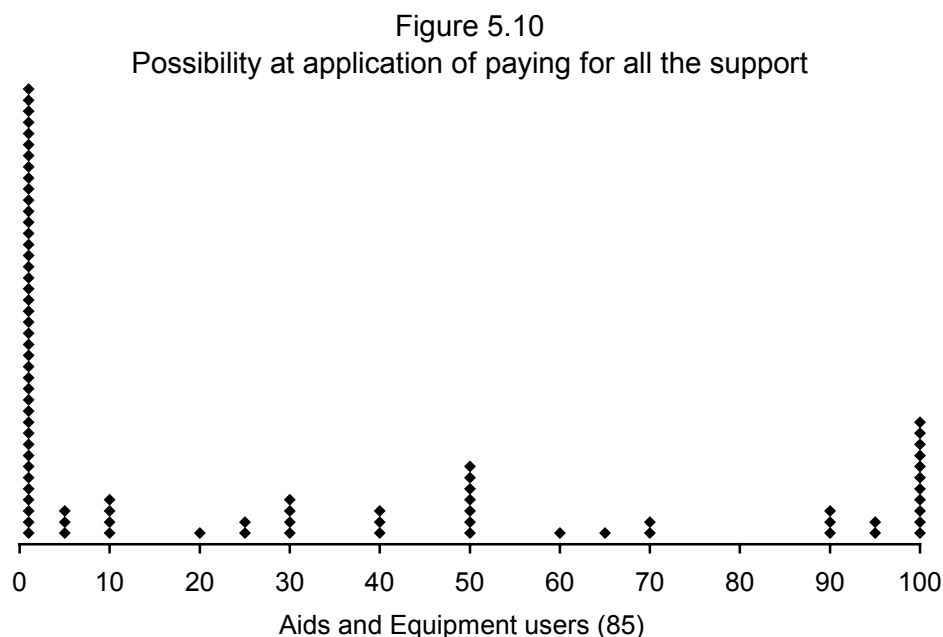
Employers of Aids and Equipment users were more optimistic than users about the likelihood of carrying on without Access to Work. Around one in three employers of people receiving only Aids and Equipment were 90 to 100 per cent certain that their employee would carry on now without that support, though a similar proportion rated their agreement at ten or less. Employers thought people might carry on without their Aids and Equipment because they were determined individuals committed to their job who didn't give up easily or because the employing organisation would provide the support.

## 5.5 Funding Aids and Equipment Some Other Way

As explained in the preceding chapters, users were asked to rate the possibility, and then the acceptability, of paying for the support themselves, having the employer pay and getting the funds from other sources. Employers were asked to rate the possibility of the organisation paying for all or some of the Aids and Equipment items, and were invited to comment on the appropriateness of the organisation paying.

### 5.5.1 Users Paying for Aids and Equipment

Paying for all the equipment at the time they applied would hypothetically have been a distinct possibility according to around one in five Aids and Equipment users but completely impossible for nearly half (Figure 5.10). Those with the lowest incomes (looking at both individual and joint incomes) tended to think paying was impossible but otherwise there was no relationship between earnings and the possibility of paying, with some high earners rating the possibility of paying very low. Nor was there any direct relationship between the costs of the provision and users' ratings of the possibility of paying. Users were not always aware of the costs, however, and these results should be treated with caution.

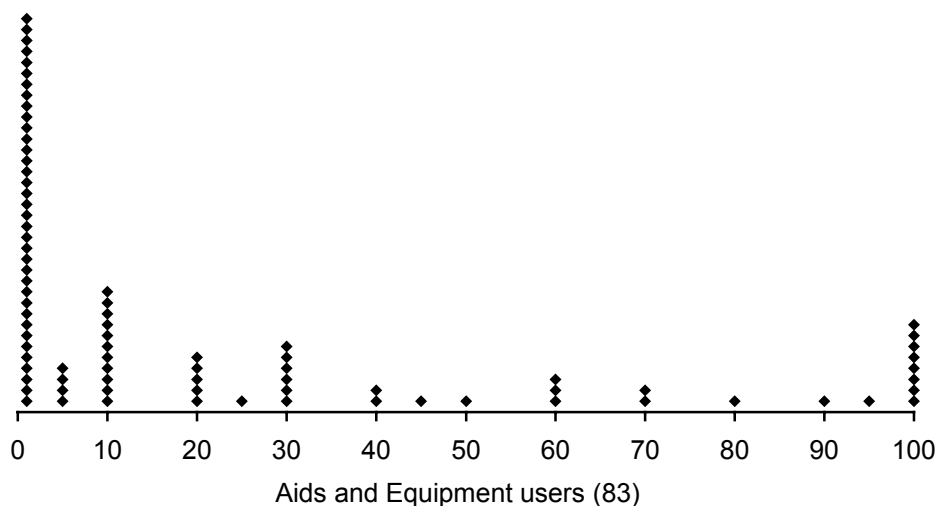


Those who got more than one item of equipment were asked how possible it would have been to pay for some items. Responses were wide-ranging with one in three saying it would have been a real possibility to pay for some when they applied.

Users were asked about the acceptability of paying themselves for all the Aids and Equipment at the time they applied. Over four in ten found the idea totally unacceptable and only eight said it would be completely acceptable (Figure 5.11).

When asked to explain their answer most respondents said it was their employer's responsibility to ensure they had appropriate equipment to do their job or that it would be unfair to ask employees to bear the cost, and rather few referred to the responsibility of government to pay. A few volunteered advantages in paying for the equipment themselves as they would then have ownership and be able to take it with them if they left the job.

Figure 5.11  
Acceptability at application of paying for all the support



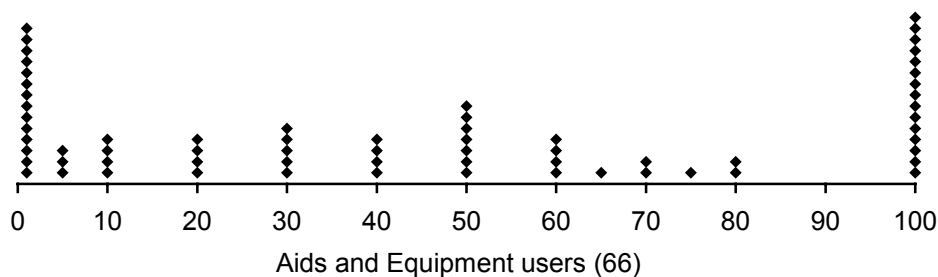
Towards the end of the interview people using Aids and Equipment at the time were asked to rate their agreement with the statement 'if I did not have the equipment now, I would pay for it myself'. Opinions were highly polarised (Figure 5.12). It is striking that ratings of the possibility of paying are much higher than in Figure 5.10 which refers to the possibility of paying at the time of application. Indeed, nearly four in ten individuals gave higher scores (by more than ten points). In some cases people said their financial situation had improved since the point of application.

The level of agreement with the statement is one measure of the importance of the support to respondents. People commented that having felt the benefits of the support they would not want to lose it. While some would have been reluctant to pay, either on principle or because they could ill-afford to do so, they felt they would have no option if they wanted to stay in work. Those who gave the highest scores tended to receive ergonomic equipment, reflecting the benefits of reduced pain.

Among those who disagreed that they would pay were some people who would find it completely impossible to pay the costs of the equipment, and some who expected that their employer would fill the gap. Some middle scores reflect a willingness to pay for some items but not for those considered to be an 'extra' or not much used. Where people received only Aids and Equipment and no other element of Access to Work

support low scores tend to correlate with low ratings of the overall employment effects of Access to Work.

Figure 5.12  
Likelihood of paying for the equipment now



### 5.5.2 Employers Paying for Aids and Equipment

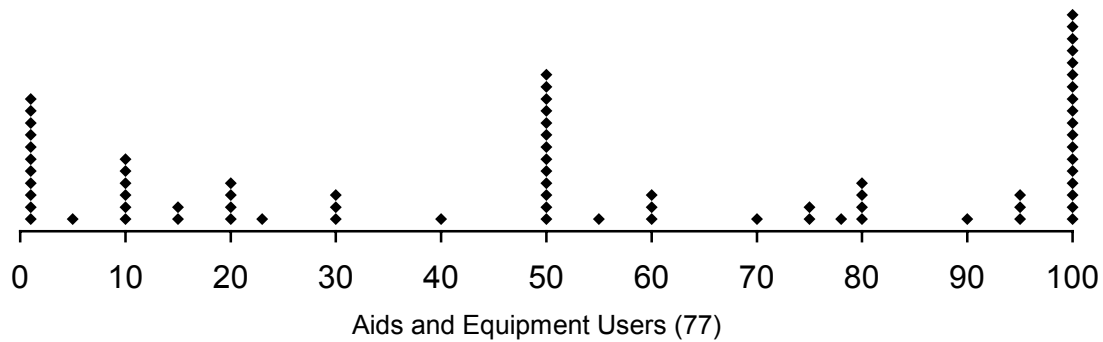
Access to Work requires employers to pay the first £300 and 20 per cent of the remaining costs of Aids and Equipment where applicants have been in the job for more than six weeks when they apply. There is no levy on applicants who are self-employed.

#### *Users' Responses*

We explored with users the possibility of their employer or self-employed business having paid for all the Aids and Equipment at the time they applied. A number said they did not really know, reflected in the middle range scores, and the other responses were polarised (Figure 5.13). Reasons for thinking their employer would have paid included the organisation's positive attitudes to employees' welfare and in some cases knowledge that the organisation had already paid for equipment outside the Access to Work programme.

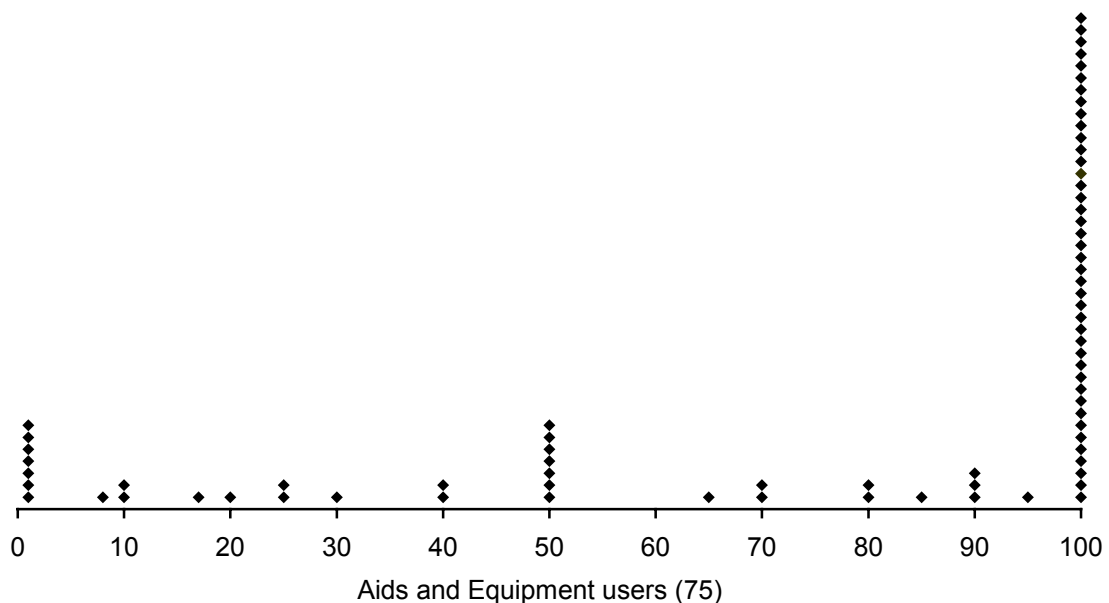


Figure 5.13  
Possibility at application of the employer  
(or business) paying everything



Over half of Aids and Equipment users found the idea of the employer or business paying completely acceptable (Figure 5.14). Many commented that employers have a duty to provide suitable equipment to do the job adequately or should do so to demonstrate that employees are valued. Some of the minority who found the idea totally or nearly unacceptable found it unfair or inequitable to have the organisation pay, particularly small private or voluntary organisations.

Figure 5.14  
Acceptability at application of the employer  
(or business) paying everything



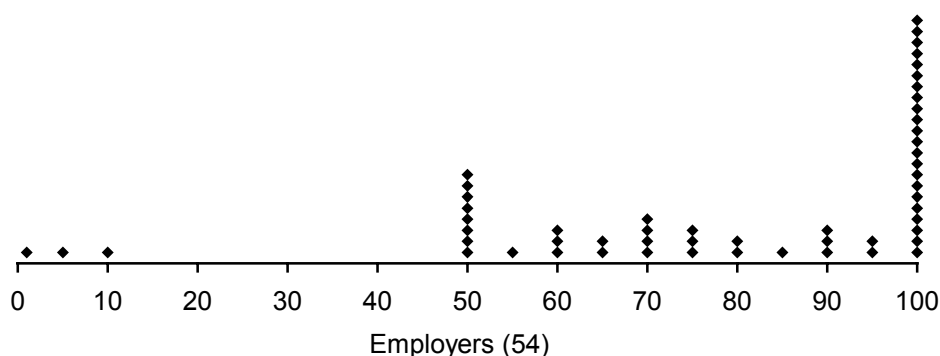
### **Employers' Responses**

Employers were asked whether the organisation would have paid at the time the employee applied and again at the time of interview. There was a high level of agreement that the organisation would have paid for all the support at the time of application with four in ten respondents agreeing completely (Figure 5.15).

Not all respondents were in a position to say whether the organisation would have paid, particularly line managers in large organisations who did not have budgetary responsibilities, and the middle range scores tend to indicate respondents' uncertainty. Some high scores reflect respondents' willingness to *try* to fund the items in order to retain a valued staff member but there could be some uncertainty about the availability of funds. It was very rare for an employer to disagree totally that the organisation would have paid the full costs at application. Many respondents explained that an equal opportunities organisation would have no option but to provide what was needed in the absence of Access to Work. One constraint on paying was if the user was undergoing a probationary period, and one or two users said that supply of their support had been delayed for this reason. In one instance where the user had been redeployed as a response to an acquired impairment it was felt that paying for the equipment in full would have been a less cost-effective action than recruiting to fill the post.

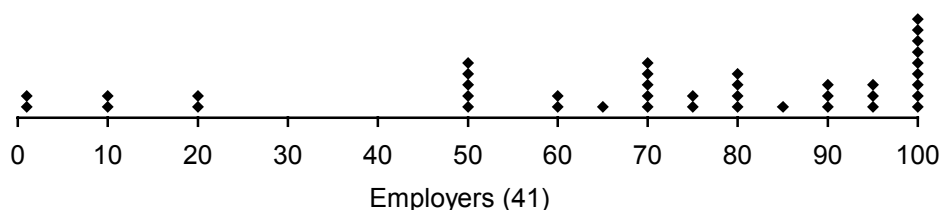
There was no correspondence between the costs of the Aids and Equipment packages and employers' willingness to pay at the time of application. Where employers were completely certain that the organisation would have paid, the items in question were primarily ergonomic chairs and desk accessories and communication aids. Few employers agreed completely that the organisation would have paid for packages that included accessible IT equipment or software. There was some feeling that it was more appropriate to pay for one-off items, such as chairs, than for equipment that would involve up-grading costs. The health and safety case was commonly invoked as a reason for investing in ergonomic furniture.

Figure 5.15  
Likelihood at application of the organisation paying for the equipment



When asked about the possibility of the organisation paying the full costs at the time of the interview, half of the employer respondents gave scores of 80 or more (Figure 5.16). Of those employers who agreed completely that the organisation would have paid the full costs at the time of application as many as half were less than 100 per cent certain when asked about the possibility at the time of interview. In many instances this reflects respondents' caution about giving a definite answer in current circumstances.

Figure 5.16  
Likelihood of the organisation paying the full costs of the equipment now



Many respondents pointed out that while the organisation might be willing and able to pay, they did not have the knowledge of what was available or the expertise to find the right solution for the client. This contribution from Access to Work had been important to them. The quality of the support recommended by Access to Work was also acknowledged, and employers sometimes felt they might be forced to procure lower quality and less expensive provision should they have to bear the full costs. Some commented that delays would be inevitable if they had to negotiate internal funding. Occasionally, employers felt they would not fund the full package of support, believing that some items were dispensable.

### **Sectoral Differences**

Looking across sectors, employer respondents in *local government departments* gave the highest scores, with nine out of the 13 who scored this question agreeing completely that the organisation would have paid the full costs at application. This finding may reflect a greater awareness of internal funding sources than shown by respondents in some other sectors. A number of local authorities had dedicated central budgets for adjustments for disabled employees. Several were dependent on Access to Work funding to supplement these budgets, and respondents pointed out that in the absence of Access to Work existing budgets would be inadequate to meet demand. In other authorities the policy was for individual departments to meet the

costs of special equipment from their own budgets; managers in small departments could feel that it would be hard to bear all the costs of Aids and Equipment without imposing cuts on other operations. Respondents from local authority controlled schools tended to see problems in drawing funding from hard-pressed school budgets, a centralised local authority budget being unusual.

All 17 respondents in *central government departments and agencies* who answered the question thought it at least half way likely that the organisation would pay the full costs and five agreed 100 per cent. This group tended to show a higher level of uncertainty about the possibility of the organisation paying. Several line managers interviewed were unsure about funding sources, even when it was apparent from our interviews with other departmental representatives that the department had a regional budget for adjustments for disabled employees. Respondents familiar with the funding arrangements were much more confident about the likelihood of the organisation paying the full costs in the absence of Access to Work.

There was little objection by central government respondents to the principle of their department paying all the costs, and several commented that it made little sense for one government department to subsidise another. However, a number of practical difficulties were foreseen should government departments manage adjustments without Access to Work support. Past experience of trying for departmental funding led some respondents to think that in a situation without Access to Work bureaucratic procedures would lead to delays. The standard of equipment procured might be lower, to save costs. It might not be of the right specification without Access to Work advice, and some concern was expressed about the quality of recommendations previously made by private companies contracted to some departments. Where a private company managed the department's estate, disputes over ownership of the equipment were predicted, and it might be hard to ensure that the company delivered timely support.

Four of the nine *voluntary sector* employers interviewed agreed that the organisation would have paid the full costs at the time the employee applied. Some would have had to make special efforts to get the money from outside sources. This could be hard to do and Access to Work was welcomed by voluntary organisations because it allowed them to concentrate resources on providing a service, and it made a large financial difference to organisations employing several disabled people. An ethos of ensuring that employees are properly equipped to do the job, a history of making adjustments for disabled staff, commitment to disabled people's rights, awareness of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and a reputation to uphold as a 'good employer' were the main reasons for saying the organisation was likely to have paid. Exceptionally, a voluntary organisation was doubtful about the possibility, and the appropriateness, of paying for the equipment in full, because of the implications of providing longer-term support for changing needs.

Overall *private sector* respondents gave the lowest scores, with a greater degree of uncertainty expressed. Three of the ten answering the question agreed completely that the organisation would have paid for the Aids and Equipment at the time of application, referring to the organisations' policies and legal responsibilities. One organisation (a very small firm) disagreed almost totally on grounds of affordability.

### **5.5.3 Users' Views on Funding Equipment from other Sources**

Asked about the possibilities of getting funding some other way, users seldom knew of other sources and, when prompted, generally found the idea of turning to charities or borrowing to be unacceptable.

## **5.6 Summary**

- The availability of Aids and Equipment rarely influenced people to take up a new job but could be an important factor in the few cases where employers were doubtful about making a job offer.
- Giving up work altogether at the time they applied, had Aids and Equipment not been available, was inconceivable to most users, although one in ten said they pretty definitely would have done so. Employers were generally more pessimistic.
- The equipment was important to stay in the job now, and 15 per cent of users felt certain they would lose their job without it. Their employers tended to be less pessimistic. It seems that having seen the benefits employers were more inclined to find other solutions to keep the person in the job.
- Less sick leave and improved work performance were important outcomes.
- One in three users said they were highly unlikely to carry on without Aids and Equipment, having benefited from less pain, more equal participation or more efficient working. Among those who said they would have carried on were people who needed the equipment so much they would have bought it themselves or thought their employer would now provide it. A few valued the extra comfort and convenience they had, but thought of this as an 'extra', or said their condition had now improved.
- Employers are required to pay a contribution unless the user is taking up the job. Four in ten employers agreed completely that the organisation would have paid for all the support at the time of application, if Access to Work had not been available.

- Employers were overall more cautious about agreeing that the organisation would pay now. They sometimes felt that they might be forced into lower quality provision, or a slimmed down package of support, should they have to bear the full costs, and some commented that delays would be inevitable if they had to negotiate internal funding.
- Some organisations lacked expertise in finding the right solution for an employee, and they valued this aspect of Access to Work.
- Over half of users found the idea of the employer paying completely acceptable. Many commented that employers have a duty to provide equipment appropriate for the job.
- Paying for all their equipment themselves when they applied would have been completely impossible for nearly half of users, while one in three saw a distinct possibility. Paying was unacceptable to most. However, the possibility of paying now seemed higher to current users. Having felt the benefits, they were reluctant to lose them, and some felt better off financially.



## **6 Conclusions: The Impact of Access to Work**

The Employment Service sought evidence on whether the Access to Work programme leads to employment outcomes which would not be attained in the absence of the programme. The study aimed to examine the difference the Access to Work programme makes in enabling its users to take up and stay in work and to estimate whether the same employment outcomes could have been achieved without the programme. Combining a qualitative interview approach with rating scales, the case study method relied on users' and employers' judgements of likely outcomes both at the time of interview and looking back to the time of application. The study thus was not designed to compare the employment outcomes for programme participants and non-participants.

While we have concentrated on reporting employment impacts – taking up a job or staying in work – we have tried to explain the ways in which the programme enables people to work. What might be termed 'intermediate outcomes' - such as improvements to work performance, improved health and reduced sick leave, improved morale, increased independence and control – have important consequences for the sustainability of employment. The study was not designed to assess how far the Access to Work programme meets its aim of enabling disabled people to take up or retain employment on an equal basis with non-disabled people. It has, however, provided evidence on the extent to which Access to Work has reduced the barriers to disabled people taking up and retaining employment.

So far we have reported separately on the impacts of the four main elements of Access to Work provision. In this concluding chapter we draw together the findings on the impacts of the different elements before moving on to report the overall impact of the programme and the combined effects of receiving more than one element of support.

### **6.1 The Impacts of Access to Work Elements**

Each of the four preceding chapters reported users' and employers' judgments of hypothetical outcomes in the absence of each of four elements of support, both looking back to the time of application and in the situation current at the research interview. The main thrust of the commentary was to explain how Access to Work works to meet its objectives, to understand the contexts and to explore emerging patterns.

We have shown that scores cannot always be taken at face value because of the differing influences on individual responses. The value of the research approach lay in interpreting these scores. We have explained that we cannot generalise, in a



statistical sense, from the small number of respondents in most elements. Had we interviewed more, or fewer, users of Support Workers or Alterations to Premises a rather different picture might have emerged. Numerical data were presented as a backdrop to the text, although we are more confident about reporting numbers in the case of Aids and Equipment because of the large size of the study group and because it is more likely to represent the population of Aids and Equipment users.

Although numbers are small, there is strong evidence from users that Support Worker provision can be essential to take up a job. Support Worker provision is also important to sustain employment. Around one in four users established in work when they applied felt they would have given up working altogether if Support Worker provision had not been available, and their employers generally agreed. Almost half of Support Worker users were completely or fairly certain that they would lose their job if the Support Worker provision were not available at the time of the interview, while a similar proportion was completely or fairly certain that they would still be in the job. Support Worker provision appears particularly effective in enabling disabled people to work on an equal footing with non-disabled colleagues and in supporting self-employed people.

There is particularly strong evidence that Travel to Work provision is essential to taking up a job and important in sustaining employment. A strong possibility of losing their job was felt by around one in four users, whose employers tended to agree. As well as making a direct difference between work and no work, Travel to Work affects employment outcomes by increasing users' standard of work and reliability.

Alterations to Premises made a direct difference to employment outcomes where medical conditions put the job at risk and also where environmental barriers made taking up a job completely impossible. The main contribution of Alterations to Premise was to increase equality of access for disabled people and this did not affect employment outcomes directly.

Aids and Equipment are used by almost two in three Access to Work users and our study group reflects this. Findings suggest that Access to Work can be an important factor for people taking up work where the job is in doubt and organisations are uncertain about paying themselves (though numbers in this situation were small). There is evidence to suggest that Aids and Equipment can work to keep people in their jobs by reducing sick leave. Having the equipment as such appears to sustain people in work, though there may be alternative ways of funding it, and 15 per cent of Aids and Equipment users agreed completely that they would lose their job without Aids and Equipment.

## 6.2 The Overall Impact of Access to Work

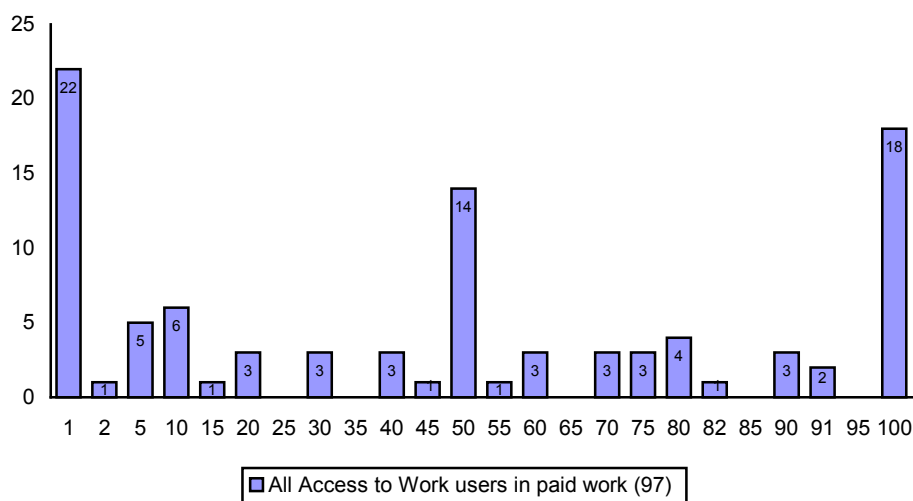
In this section we report users' and employers' summary judgements of the likelihood of being in the job in the absence of Access to Work. We look first at users' responses and then report employers' views and compare them with their employees'.

### 6.2.1 Users' Responses

Towards the end of the interview, all Access to Work users in paid work at the time were asked to rate on the scale from 1 to 100 the likelihood of being in their job if Access to Work were not available. By this point in the interview, they had recollected their circumstances before applying for Access to Work, discussed the possibility and acceptability of alternative sources of support, estimated the possibility of different outcomes were the support they received not available and had explained the difference the support had made to them. Respondents who had used more than one element of Access to Work had discussed each in turn. It is thus reasonable to suppose that respondents gave well-considered scores for the overall impact of the programme, taking account of the contribution of the different types of support they received.

Users' scores for the overall impact of the programme are set out in Figure 6.1. Fourteen of the 97 respondents opted for the middle score, indicating no strong opinion either way. The number saying it was less than half way likely that they would be in their job was rather higher than the number saying it was more than half way likely (45 compared with 38). Scores concentrate at the end points of the scale: 22 users estimated they would 'absolutely not' be in their job without Access to Work and 18 judged they 'definitely' would be in their job. If we include scores within ten points of each pole, we find that 35 per cent of respondents rated it highly unlikely (1-10) that they would be in their job without Access to Work while 28 per cent rated it as highly likely (90 -100).

Figure 6.1  
Ratings of the likelihood of being in the job without Access to Work:  
all users in paid work



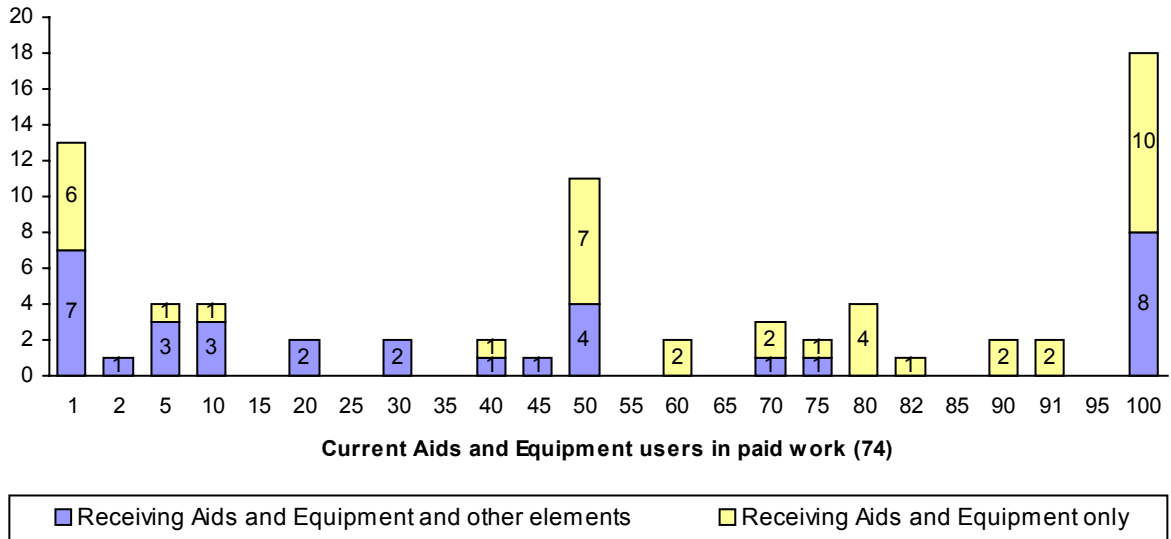
Figures 6.2 to 6.6 present breakdowns of users' scores by support element. Figures 6.2 and 6.3, relating to Aids and Equipment and to Travel to Work current users respectively, distinguish the scores of those who received only one element of Access to Work support from the scores of those who received a package of Access to Work support elements. Figures 6.4 and 6.5 distinguish current and past users of Support Worker provision and Adaptations to Premises respectively. There was no attempt to distinguish scores of those Support Worker and Adaptations to Premises users receiving only one support element, as numbers in those situations are very small.

Looking across the four elements, the impact of Aids and Equipment is the least marked. More people said it was more than half way likely that they would be in their job without Access to Work than said it was less than half way likely. This is the only element with more scores of 100 (definitely in the job without Access to Work) than scores of 1 (absolutely not in the job). If we examine scores within ten points of each pole, we find that scores given by users receiving Aids and Equipment are evenly balanced, with 30 per cent of users scoring 1-10 and 30 per cent scoring 90-100. Comparing the scores of people using only Aids and Equipment with scores of those receiving a package of support including Aids and Equipment there are no differences in the proportions scoring 1 and 100. However, the proportion of people saying they were less than half way likely to be in their job without their equipment was higher among the group who also received other Access to Work elements.

Aids and Equipment users who said they would definitely still be in their job without the Access to Work support offered a range of explanations for their response. Some would ask their employer for help, pay for the support from their own pocket or find the money from 'somewhere'. Others would tolerate the pain, discomfort and limitations on what they could do because they were highly motivated to work or

needed the income. None said that the Aids and Equipment support was unnecessary.

Figure 6.2  
Ratings of the likelihood of being in the job without Access to Work: users whose current Access to Work package included Aids and Equipment



The employment impact is clearly highest for Travel to Work users. Only four current users thought it more than half way likely that they would be in their job with Access to Work. Half of current Travel to Work users rated it highly unlikely (scoring 1-10) that they would be in their job (Figure 6.3) and this finding holds for past Travel to Work users too (Figure 6.4). The sole person judging they would definitely be in their job without their package of Access to Work support was an exceptional case in that Travel to Work had been provided for a few weeks only until normal travel arrangements could be resumed.

Figure 6.3  
Ratings of the likelihood of being in the job without Access to Work: users whose current Access to Work package included Travel to Work

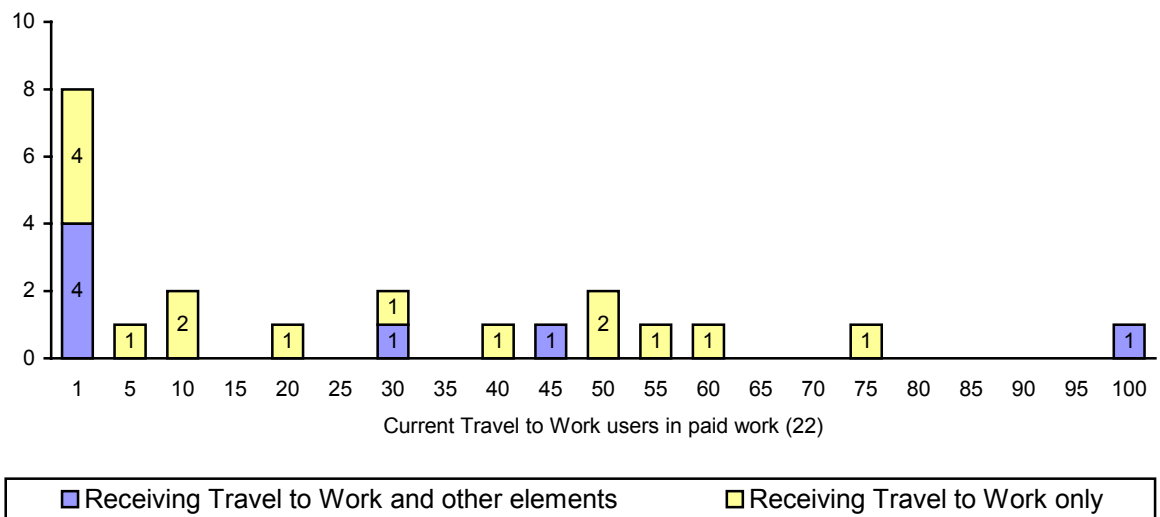
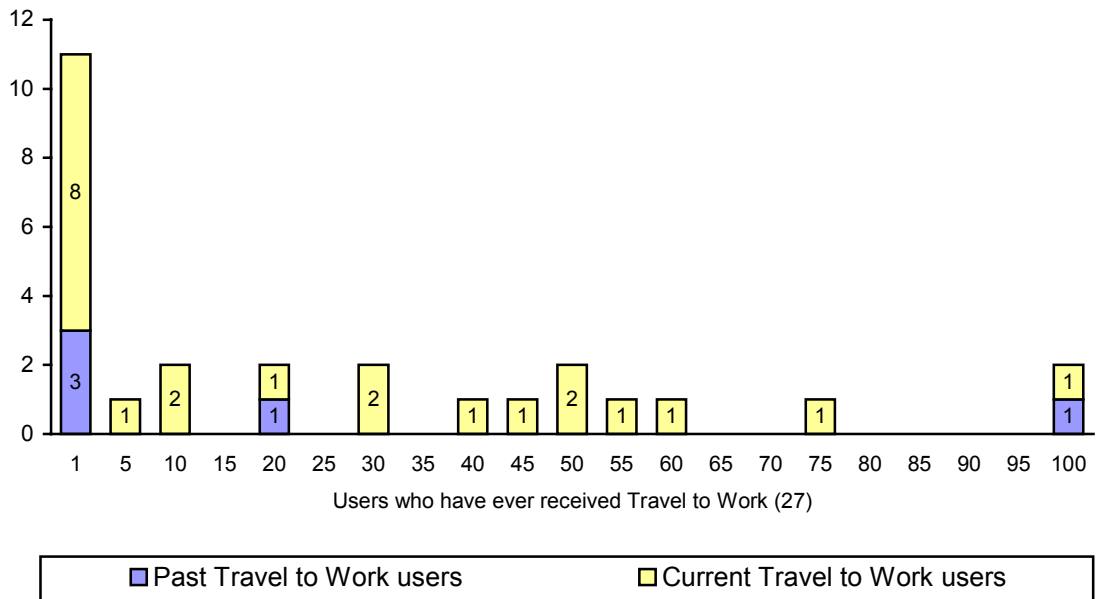
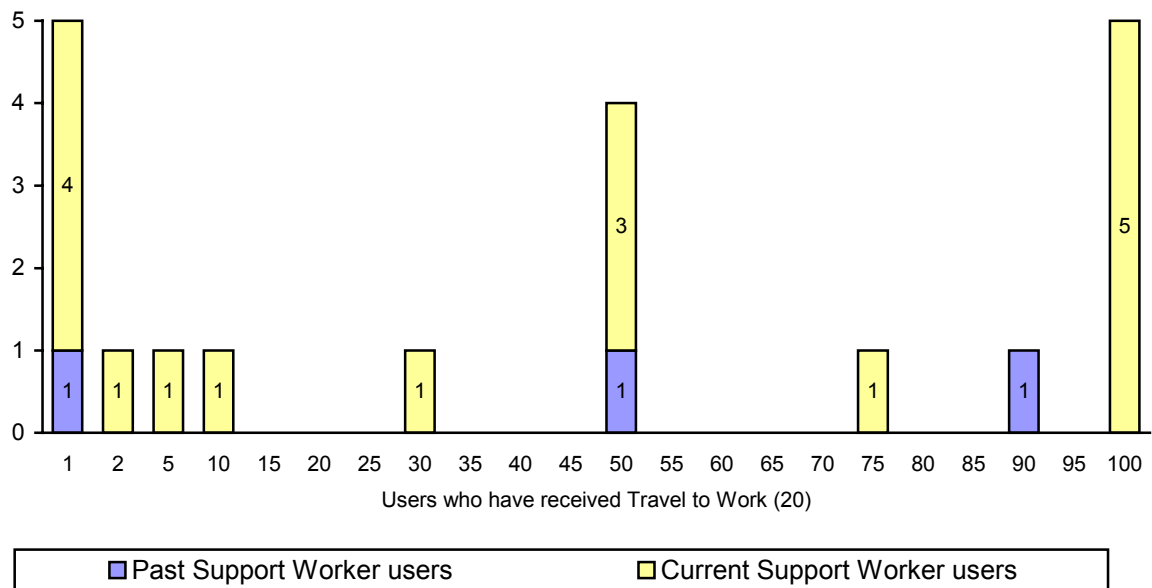


Figure 6.4  
Ratings of the likelihood of being in the job without Access to Work: users who have ever received Travel to Work



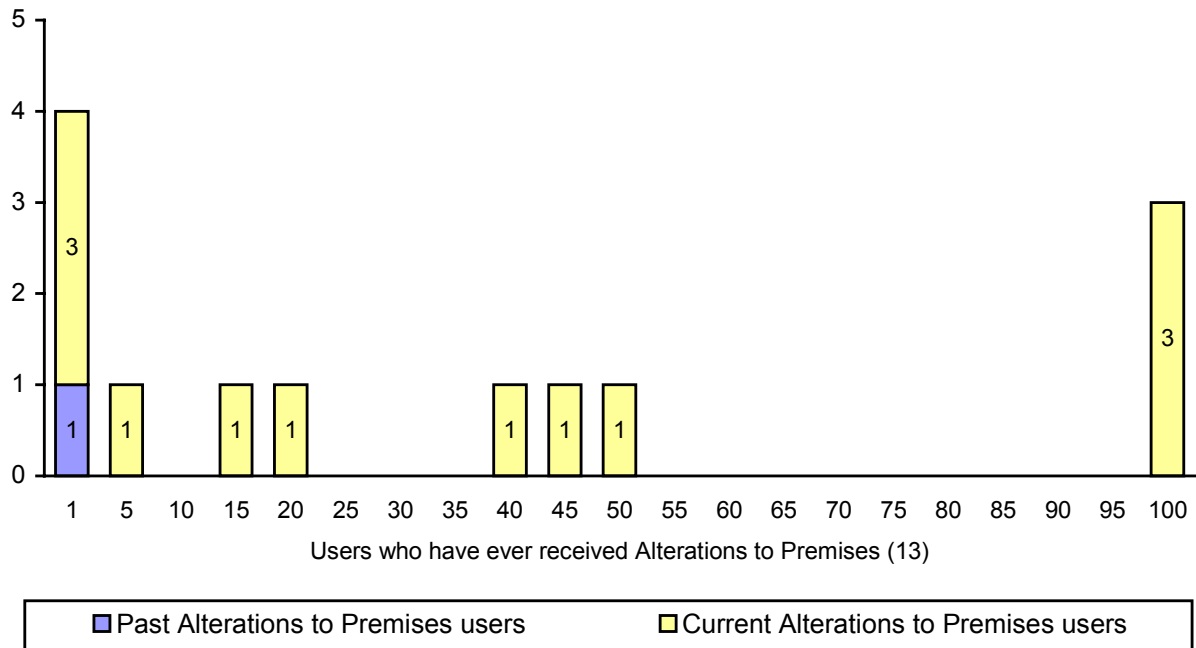
The impact of support packages containing Support Worker provision is less clear cut if the data in Figure 6.5 are taken only at face value. The figure shows that eight out of 20 users who had ever received a Support Worker scored 1-10 and six scored 90-100. However, included among those who said they would definitely be in their job in the absence of Access to Work were two users whose Support Worker only drove them to work and who said they would have reverted to having a family member drive them instead.

Figure 6.5  
Ratings of the likelihood of being in the job without Access to Work: users who have ever received a Support Worker



The number in the study with experience of Alterations to Premises is small and scores are available from 13, shown in Figure 6.6. The distribution of scores is different from that of other support elements, with a bias towards scores of under 50. Notwithstanding three people saying they would definitely be in their job without their Access to Work support package, more people scored 1-10 (5) than 90-100 (3).

Figure 6.6  
Ratings of the likelihood of being in the job without Access to Work:  
users of Alterations to Premises



## 6.2.2 Deadweight

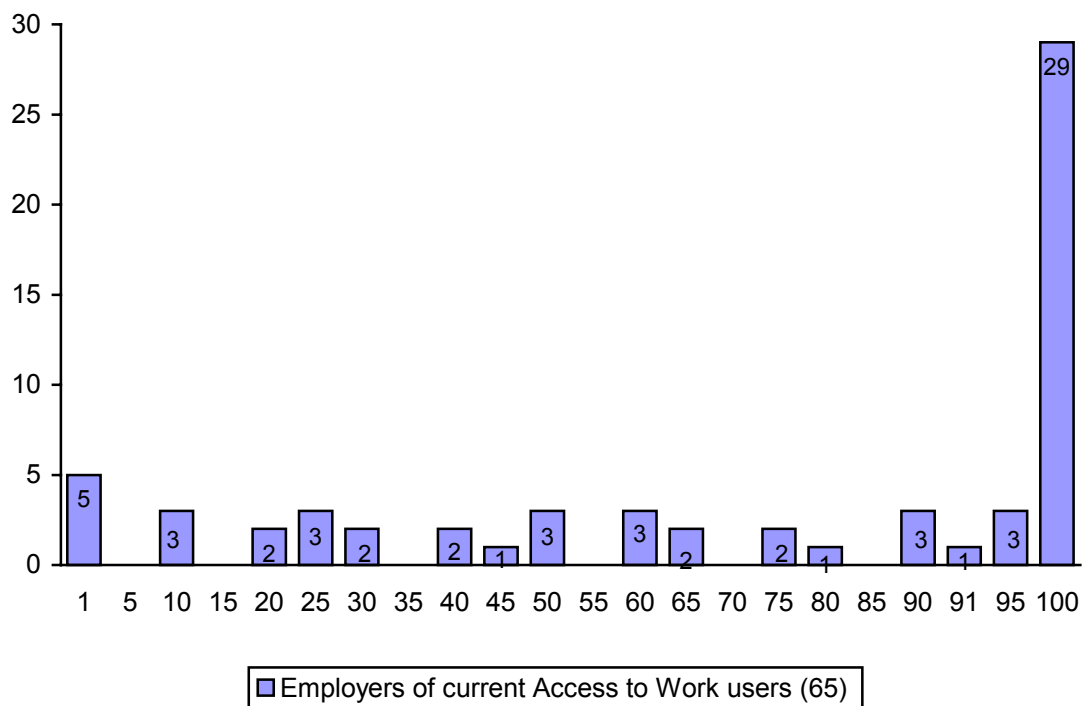
It is not straightforward to translate users' scores directly into an estimate of deadweight, as we are not dealing with simple positive and negative answers. One set of estimates can be based on the proportions scoring more than fifty on the 100 point scale. Other estimates can be formed from proportions scoring over a given threshold, to reflect the degree of certainty felt, but there is no definitive answer as to where that threshold might lie.

Whichever approach is taken, it is clear that deadweight in the Travel to Work element is very low while that in Aids and Equipment appears rather high. On the basis of the smaller numbers of current users of Support Workers and Alterations to Premises, deadweight might be characterised in these elements as low.

### 6.2.3 Employers' Responses

Employers were asked to rate the possibility of their employee having to leave the job if Access to Work were not available at the time of the interview. The distribution of employers' scores, shown in Figure 6.7, clearly contrasts with that of employees' shown in Figure 6.1. Employers were considerably more positive about the likelihood of users being in their jobs in the hypothetical absence of Access to Work. Almost half believed that the employee would still be in the job without Access to Work. In the five cases where the employer completely agreed that the employee would have to leave, the most significant elements of the support packages were Support Workers, Travel to Work and, in one case, Alterations to Premises, and in all cases the employer rated the possibility of paying as low.

Figure 6.7  
Employers' ratings of likelihood of being in the job without  
Access to Work



When employer and user scores are compared at the individual level an interesting picture emerges. In about one in three cases (21) employers' and users' scores on the likely outcome agreed completely or almost completely (within ten points), with employers' scores tending to correspond to those of their employees who thought it highly likely that they would be in their job in the absence of Access to Work. However, where users scored low on the scale, indicating that they thought it highly unlikely that they would be in the job without Access to Work, most employers were much more optimistic; indeed in seven cases there was complete or almost complete disagreement (with scores 90 or more points apart) and in a further eight cases employers' scores were 50 points or more above those of their employees. In only

eight instances were employers' scores considerably more negative than their employees'.

Employers' judgements of the likelihood of their employees remaining in work variously reflect a view that determined individuals would not give up, a commitment to equal opportunities, a will to retain valued employees, openness to looking for alternative ways of meeting needs and an optimism that funds could be found to substitute, in least in part, for Access to Work support.

Whether funds would have been forthcoming was often uncertain. Few organisations said they had a ring-fenced budget for adaptations for disabled employees. Usually equipment had to be funded as required out of general budgets, or sometimes equipment budgets, and demands had to compete with other calls on hard-pressed budgets with considerable discretion in the hands of managers. Voluntary organisations might have to fund-raise. Some universities, local authority departments and local education authorities held a central fund to subsidise small departments or schools, but should Access to Work not be available funds would be inadequate to meet demand. Many central government departments, however, had budgets held at divisional, regional or departmental level.

It was not always certain that alternatives of the same quality as Access to Work support could have been found. Without Access to Work, many employers, including heavy users of the programme such as local government departments, as well as private sector employers with little experience of making adaptations, felt the organisation lacked the expertise to assess needs and procure what was needed. Some respondents commented that they would look for less expensive equipment or a smaller package of support than recommended by Access to Work, and some felt that delays would be unavoidable if they had to negotiate internal funding.

The preceding chapters have shown that employers' willingness to pay for the support provided through Access to Work varied across Access to Work elements. It was unusual for an employer representative to say that the organisation would have paid for travel to work, a support worker or for the full costs of alterations to premises. On the other hand, there was less objection to the notion that the employer might pay for aids and equipment, although there was less enthusiasm for paying for specialised IT-related equipment and software that would require up-grading. Users were more accepting of the idea that employers might pay for aids and equipment than for other elements of support, generally feeling that it was the employer's responsibility to provide the equipment they needed to do their job adequately.

Some employers thought that rearranging workload or redeployment might be a solution where they were keen to retain the employee but it is far from certain that equality of opportunity could have been secured by such moves.





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# Appendix A Research Methods

## A.1 The Client Sample

The sample was drawn from the *Users' Views of Access to Work* nationally representative survey conducted for the Employment Service (ES) by the Disability Services Research Partnership in the summer of 2000.

From the 574 survey respondents who said they were willing to take part in another ES study about Access to Work, and agreed to have their details given to a researcher, we selected those who said they had first applied in 1999 or 2000 and had also made one or two applications only at the time they were interviewed.

We then excluded those who:

- had received Communicator Support at Interview (CSI) only;
- were working in Supported Employment when interviewed;
- were not in paid work (and not waiting to take up a job) when interviewed; or
- had been re-interviewed in the qualitative follow-up in the *Users' Views of Access to Work* study (7).

This gave us a sample of 199. The small number of clients in the South West Region (4) and Wales (4) were excluded to reduce fieldwork costs. One client took part in piloting. Consequently, letters of invitation were sent to 190 prospective interviewees. The letter, sent from the Social Policy Research Unit (SPRU), is at Appendix C.

At the end of the opt-out period seven people had replied to say they did not want to take part, a much smaller number than anticipated. No letters were returned undelivered. One client was found to be out of scope (receiving CSI only). In one case, the Disability Service Team (DST) had no record. One client who contacted SPRU to opt in to the study took part piloting. Thus, 180 cases were available for allocation to interviewers.

Not all of the 180 were approached for an interview. We had over-sampled to obtain sufficient numbers using the different elements of Access to Work support. Interviewers were instructed to approach people using Travel to Work (TW) or Support Worker (SW) first, then those receiving Alterations to Premises and Equipment (APE), and to give lower priority to Special Aids and Equipment (SAE) users. As a result some SAE users were not approached.

Of those approached and not interviewed five declined to take part. In four instances interviews could not be arranged because of hospitalisation, bereavement, holidays and difficulty in arranging an interview time. Nine people proved impossible to contact, not responding to letters and telephone messages.

In order to achieve more interviews with SW clients, the sample was boosted. To concentrate fieldwork and minimise pressure on DSTs (who provided information from case files - see section A.3) we selected clients from the North West Region, where case records are held centrally. Potential participants were identified from the Census carried out for the *Users' Views of Access to Work* survey. Some clients approached proved to be out of scope. Two declined to take part and one did not respond to letters and telephone messages. Five interviews were achieved.

Table A.1 shows the distribution across the seven Regions of the clients interviewed.

**Table A.1 Respondents by ES Region/Country**

<i>Region</i>	<b>No of clients interviewed</b>
London & South East	47
North West	31
Yorkshire & Humberside	15
West Midlands	12
Scotland	7
Northern	3
East Midlands	2
Total	117

User interviews were designed to take 75 minutes but duration varied from 45 minutes to two hours, depending on the number of Access to Work support elements received.

## **A.2 Employer Interviews**

At the end of the interview signed permission was sought to approach a representative of the employing organisation to request an interview. If the user gave permission for their employer to be contacted, an Employment Service letter (see Appendix C) was sent explaining the study and interviewers followed-up by telephone or in person. In a few instances users did not wish their circumstances to be discussed with the employer but were willing for employers to be interviewed about Access to Work in general.

Table A.2 summarises the employer interview outcomes from the 117 user interviews.

**Table A.2 Employer interviews achieved**

<i>Self-employed</i>	<i>No employer to contact</i>	<i>User refused permission</i>	<i>Employer refused</i>	<i>Employer not contactable</i>	<i>Employer interviews achieved</i>
8	5	8	2	6	88

Most employer interviews were carried out face-to-face but in a few cases telephone interviews were conducted because of the distances involved.

In order to achieve full completion of the employer interview schedule it was sometimes necessary to interview more than one representative of an employing organisation. Some supplementary interviews were carried out by telephone. Table A.3 shows the number of employer representatives interviewed per employing organisation.

**Table A.3 Number of employer representatives interviewed per employing organisation**

<i>Number of employing organisations</i>	<i>Number of employer representatives interviewed per organisation</i>	<i>Total interviews</i>
58	1	58
25	2	50
4	3	12
1	4	4
		<b>124</b>

The main employer interviews lasted 45 minutes on average.

In all 87 case studies were completed, comprising an interview with both user and employer supplemented by case information (see A.3). Although 88 employer organisations were interviewed, in one instance the user had not received the Access to Work support recommended at assessment and a case study could not be completed.

### **A.3 Case Information Obtained from Disability Services Offices**

Information from Disability Services Offices was needed for client and employer contact details, to prepare for interviews and to add to the analysis. The following information was sought for each case.

Client and employer contact details:

- client's address, home and/or work telephone number
- name and address of employer
- current named contact in company, and address if different from that of the employer
- telephone number of current contact in company.

Details of the support provided and the costs of all provisions from the first approved application onwards:

- copies of the ATW3 Summary of Support and Authority for all approved applications and the Business Case for Approval.
- copies of technical consultants' reports if no Business Case for Approval
- copies of DiSC-generated single sheet 'Summary of Support and Authority' for all approved applications, including also costs of ergonomic assessment, courier costs, training costs and any other delivery-related costs.

#### **A.4 Case Information from the Users' Views Survey**

Interviewers were given extracted responses to the 2001 *Users' Views* survey to assist them in preparing for the interviews. An important aim of providing background information to each case was to avoid spending interview time obtaining details of the users' circumstances and Access to Work support.

#### **A.5 Instrument Development and Piloting**

The instrument development and piloting were carried out by two SPRU researchers working closely. The client interview schedule was developed through a modified version of cognitive interviewing or testing. This involved asking the interviewee to comment on the specific questions – how easy was it to understand the question, were the concepts clear, did the question work in provoking the anticipated response, could it be worded differently – and also on the ordering, sensitivity of topic areas and so on. Once we were satisfied with the question order and coherence and acceptability of the questions, and had identified fewer problematic questions, we stopped to explore respondents' understanding only if issues appeared to arise.

The interviews were taped with permission. In the first round of piloting we listened to the tapes and made revisions for piloting in the second round. Revisions were made in a similar way after the second round, and the instrument was tested once again.

The pilots were especially important in the development of the scaling questions and in the design of the scale itself. Three visual versions of the scale were tested before settling on one marked from 1 to 100 in gradations of five (see Appendix C).

The pilot interviews were held with five individuals recruited through North & East Yorkshire DST and two people from the initial sample (i.e., who had been interviewed in the *Users' Views of Access to Work* survey). Where possible, case information was obtained from the DST.

Minor revisions were made to the interview schedule in the light of research interviewers' comments and questions at the Briefing. The ten research interviewers recruited to the project fed back comments on their first use of the instrument, through a telephone debriefing with the lead researcher, and the instrument was slightly modified.

The employer interview schedule was piloted with employers of some clients who took part in the pilot. As this instrument of necessity paralleled the users', it was not piloted as extensively.

## **A.6 Fieldwork Period**

Users interviews were carried out mainly from September to November 2001. Employer interviews began in late September 2001 and were carried out mainly in November and December, though some did not take place until January and February 2002 because of difficulties in contacting employers.

## **A.7 Analysis**

Interviews were tape-recorded with the respondent's permission (in one case permission was refused and the interviewer took notes). Interviewers used the tapes to summarise user and employer interviews on standard proformas. The research team then reviewed the tapes selectively to illuminate points of particular interest to the analysis.

Qualitative responses were coded manually and entered into a relational database (Microsoft Access 2000) along with respondent characteristics, scores given in response to the scaling questions and free text entries (for example, details of employers' budgetary arrangements). The database permitted comparison of user and employer responses and sub-group analysis.





## Appendix B Respondents

**Table B.1** Users' age and gender

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>All</i>
16 to 24 years	4	2	6
25 to 44 years	42	21	63
45 to 64 years	33	15	48
Total	79	38	117

**Table B.2** Employment status at interview

<i>Current employment status</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>
Employee	89
Self-employed	9
Off-sick	6
Retired	2
Not working	10
Student	1
Total	117

**Table B.3** Earnings at interview, or in last job if not working

<i>Earnings band</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>
less than £10,000	28
£10,000 to £14,999	30
£15,000 to £19,999	15
£20,000 to £34,999	31
£35,000 and over	2
Missing	11

**Table B.4 Users claiming Disability Living Allowance**

<i>Claiming DLA</i>	<i>Not claiming DLA</i>	<i>No information</i>	<i>Total users</i>
55	59	3	117



**Table B.5 Users' occupations**

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Number of users</i>
Managers/senior	9
Professionals	25
Associate professionals	15
Admin/secretarial	50
Skilled trades	3
Personal service	6
Sales/customer service	2
Process/plant/machinery	1
Elementary	3
Total	114
<i>Missing 3</i>	

**Table B.6 Access to Work elements ever received**

<i>Type</i>	<i>Received at interview</i>	<i>Received in past but not when interviewed</i>	<i>Total</i>
TW	23	14	37
SW	19	2	21
SAE	74	11	85
APE	14	5	19
AV	3	0	3
TiW	1	1	2

**Table B.7 Access to Work elements received at interview**

<i>Element</i>	<i>Number of Users</i>
TW only	15
SW only	3
SAE only	44
APE only	3
AV only	1
TW + SW	1

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TW + SAE	2
TW + APE	2
SW + SAE	12
SAE + APE	8
SAE + AV	2
TW + SW + SAE	2
TW + SAE + APE	1
SAE + TiW + SW	1

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**Table B.8** Employment sector of user respondents

Sector	<i>Number of users interviewed</i>
Private firm or business	24
Charity or voluntary organisation	18
Public sector	66
<i>Central government department/agency/service</i>	24
<i>Local authority department</i>	18
<i>Local authority controlled school/college</i>	9
<i>Health Authority or NHS Trust</i>	7
<i>University or FE College</i>	4
<i>Police/Fire service</i>	2
<i>Other public service</i>	2
Wholly self-employed	8
Unknown	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>117</b>







# Appendix C Instruments



E-mail: [pat3@york.ac.uk](mailto:pat3@york.ac.uk)

15 August 2001

Dear

Last summer you took part in research about users' views of Access to Work, carried out for the Employment Service by the Social Policy Research Unit and Ipos-RSL. Your contribution was much appreciated. Details of how to obtain a free copy of the research report and summary are enclosed.

The Employment Service found the research findings helpful and is using them to introduce improvements to Access to Work. These include making it easier to apply, speeding up decisions and service delivery, keeping users fully informed about progress with their application, and improving follow up to check that users are happy with the help they have received.

The Employment Service has now asked the Social Policy Research Unit to do some more research on Access to Work. This time the focus is on how the programme enables users to stay in or take up work. We will be talking in detail to users and employers across the country. I am writing now to invite you to contribute to this new study, as when you were interviewed last year you said that you were willing to take part in future research on Access to Work for the Employment Service, and gave your permission for your contact details to be given to a researcher.

In this new study we wish to discuss with you how Access to Work provision has affected your work and what might have happened if Access to Work had not been available. This will help us to assess the difference Access to Work

makes to its users. The interview will take about 60 to 75 minutes. As a small token of thanks for your help we can offer a gift of £20.

Continued/...

.../2

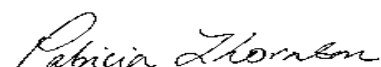
A researcher from the Social Policy Research Unit will contact you during September or October to explain more about the study and answer any questions you have about it. You can then agree a convenient time and place to talk to the researcher. If required, arrangements to assist with communication during the interview can be discussed when the researcher gets in touch. If you do *not* want to help with this research, please leave a message for me any time at the Social Policy Research Unit on 01904 432626 (Voice or Text) or e-mail Sally Pulleyn at [sap6@york.ac.uk](mailto:sap6@york.ac.uk) *before September 2<sup>nd</sup>*.

Taking part will not affect your Access to Work provision in any way. The information you give the researcher will be treated in strictest confidence, and our report for the Employment Service will be written so that no individual can be identified.

If you wish to ask the Employment Service about the research you may contact Claire Hinchcliffe, Research and Development, tel 0114 259 5335 or e-mail [claire.hinchcliffe@employment.gov.uk](mailto:claire.hinchcliffe@employment.gov.uk)

I do hope that you will be able to take part in this important study.

Yours sincerely



Patricia Thornton  
Senior Research Fellow

## EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF ACCESS TO WORK USER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

### INTRODUCTION

#### ***Recap on approach letter***

Last summer you took part in research for the Employment Service into users' experiences and opinions of Access to Work. The Employment Service has now asked the Social Policy Research Unit to carry out a different study.

This time the aim is to assess how far Access to Work enables people to stay in or take up employment. We want to find out what difference the programme has made and what might have happened if Access to Work was not available.

The Social Policy Research Unit is an independent research organisation. What you tell me will be treated in total confidence. We will write our report for the Employment Service so that nobody who takes part can be identified. Taking part will not affect your Access to Work support in any way, now or in the future.

#### ***The interview***

The interview will take between 60 and 75 minutes. Is that OK? We can take a break if you would like to.

I would like to cover the following topics:

- your current employment situation
- your situation before you got support from Access to Work
- the effect the Access to Work support has had on you and your work
- any other support you have
- what might have happened if Access to Work were not available.

I would like your permission to tape-record our conversation. This is for the purposes of this research only and the tape will be wiped clean after it has been transcribed. Nobody outside the research team will hear the tape-recording. Is that alright with you? *Ensure that permission is granted.*

We are offering everyone a gift of £20 for taking part. Please can you sign the receipt.

## I. EMPLOYMENT CIRCUMSTANCES AND HISTORY

**Before we talk about your work, could you tell me a little about your home situation?**

*Ask:*

- household members
- children's ages
- whether other members in work

**When you were interviewed in the summer of last year you said you were in paid work as an employee / self-employed / in work but off sick. Can you please bring me up-to-date on your employment situation and tell me about any changes since we last spoke to you?**

*Obtain current situation and history since last summer for:*

- employment status
- job
- sector
- work site
- hours of work
- periods of unemployment
- periods of extended sick leave

*If changes, explore reasons. Probe for positive or negative reasons related to health or disability.*

### **IF STOPPED PAID WORK:**

**When did you stop work?**

**Can you tell me a bit more about the work you did? *Ask:***

- job title
- what organisation did
- form of self-employment
- what the job involved

**How did the job (working as self-employed) suit you? *Explore:***

- earnings
- hours
- location
- tasks
- level of responsibility
- opportunities for advancement

*Probe for restrictions related to ill-health or disability*

**Why did you stop working?**

*Prompt: any reasons related to ill-health or disability?*

**Are you receiving any benefits or tax credits?**

- Jobseekers' Allowance
- Incapacity Benefit
- Income Support (with Disability Premium)
- Disability Living Allowance
- Disabled Person's Tax Credit
- Working Families Tax Credit

**Are you considering doing any paid work in the future?** *Ask:*

- type of work
- hours of work
- likelihood of reduced earnings

**IF IN PAID WORK (OR OFF SICK)**

**Can you tell me a bit more about your work at the moment?** *Ask:*

- job title
- what organisation does
- form of self-employment
- what the job involves

**How do you find the job (find working as self-employed)?** *Explore:*

- earnings
- hours
- location
- tasks
- level of responsibility
- opportunities for advancement

*Probe for current restrictions related to ill-health or disability*

## **II SITUATION BEFORE FIRST ACCESS TO WORK APPLICATION**

**Our records say that you first applied for Access to Work in 1999 / 2000.** *Check.*

**Can we talk now about your employment situation when you first applied for Access to Work.**

**I think you were working as an employee / self-employed / were not previously in paid work when you first applied?** *Check*

*If in paid work at first application:*

**What were you doing then?** *Ask:*

- current or different job
- length of time in job when applied

*If not previously in paid work at first application:*

**What was your situation then?**

- previously unemployed and looking for work
- previously looking after family/carer
- in education
- not working for health reasons
- any previous employment

**Were you receiving any benefits before you took up your job?**

- Jobseekers' Allowance
- Incapacity Benefit
- Income Support (with Disability Premium)
- Disability Living Allowance

## ASK ALL

**We are interested in knowing about problems you faced in working before you applied for Access to Work?** *Explore:*

- deteriorating health
- disability
- pain
- fatigue
- communication
- not doing the job well enough
- having to take time off work
- reduced opportunities for advancement
- discrimination in getting a job
- discrimination on the job
- attitudes of people at work
- effect on home or social life
- morale
- *Prompt: Anything else?*

*Ask if appropriate: Did you first begin to face these problems in the job you were in when you first applied for Access to Work, or before then?*

## III OTHER SUPPORT

**Before you applied for Access to Work did you make any changes yourself to make it easier for you to work?** *Obtain details.*

- equipment bought for work
- paid for taxi to work / in work
- lifts to work / in work
- adaptations to own vehicle
- extra help from people at work
- adjusted hours
- arranged own support worker / reader / interpreter
- anything else?

*If bought equipment, taxi to or in work, adaptations to own vehicle, arranged own support worker / reader / interpreter, adjusted hours:*

**How did that affect you financially?** *Explore:*

- costs
- affordability
- debt?

*If extra help from people at work, lifts to or in work:*

**What did you feel about receiving this help?** *Explore:*

- feelings of indebtedness
- relations with co-workers
- other positive or negative feelings?



## ASK EMPLOYEES

**Before you applied for Access to Work did your employer do anything to make it easier for you to work?** *Obtain details.*

- new or adapted equipment at work
- training adapted to your disability
- adaptations to the premises
- extra help from people at work
- employed a support worker or reader
- employed a sign language interpreter
- lifts/fares to work
- lifts/fares in work
- adjusted tasks
- adjusted hours
- home working
- anything else

**How happy were you with what your employer did?** *Explore:*

- adequacy
- appropriateness
- timeliness?

**What did you feel about getting this help from your employer?** *Probe for:*

- costs to employer
  - employer's duty / my right
- relations with employer
- relations with co-workers

## IV ACCESS TO WORK SUPPORT

**Can we talk now about the support you get (got *if not in paid work*) from Access to Work.**

**Can I just check what types of support you have from Access to Work at the moment (had in your last job) against the information we have.** *Obtain factual information only.*

- equipment or furniture
- training to use equipment
- alterations to existing equipment
- alterations to the workplace
- adaptations to own vehicle
- fares for travel to work
- travel in work
- support worker
- personal reader
- communicator or sign language interpreter at work.

**Can I check any changes in the amount or type of support since you first applied.**

*Check against information provided. Obtain factual information only.*

- new provision
- provision discontinued
- different fares to work
- different SW hours
  - use of communicator at interview.

*If changes:*

**Could you explain why the changes were needed?**

- changes in the work
- working at a different site
- need to renew equipment
- changes in where you live
- adaptations required to (new) vehicle
- changes in health
- job interviews (*if communicator at interview*)
- other reasons?

**V EFFECTS OF TYPES OF ACCESS TO WORK SUPPORT**

The next section(s) ask(s) about the support you get (got *if not in paid work*) from Access to Work.

**Ask if three or more types of Access to Work support: Which types of support are the most important to talk about?**

*EXPLAIN USE OF SCALES*

Some of our questions involve using this scale. You can see it goes from 1 to 100. I will read you a question and ask you to put your answer somewhere on the scale. Then I will ask you to tell me why you have put your answer there. We have found this way of asking people about their views works well. Different people put their answers in quite different places on the scale.

## A. FARES FOR TRAVEL TO WORK

Confirm *factual* information about *first* provision and any *subsequent* provision: taxi fares; costs; distance of travel.

Confirm dates.

If receives 'other fares', adapt questions accordingly.

### ASK VERBATIM

We are interested in what would have happened if help with fares to work had not been available at the time you applied. I am going to read you a series of statements and ask you to say how far you agree or disagree on a scale from 1 to 100. 1 means you totally disagree and 100 means you agree completely.

If help with fares to work had not been available when I first applied .....

<i>Ask if previously not in paid work</i>	
<b>I would not have taken up the job</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<i>Unless totally disagree</i>	
<b>I would have got another job</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have given up looking for work</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<i>Ask if on sick leave at application</i>	
<b>I would have stayed off sick longer</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have given up working altogether</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have got another job</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have gone back to work without it</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have changed my hours</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<i>Ask others</i>	
<b>I would have taken more sick leave</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have given up working altogether</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have got another job</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have carried on without it</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have changed my hours</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>

*Explore any other outcomes volunteered.*

ASK VERBATIM

I am going to ask you about other ways some people get to work. I would like you to say first of all how possible each would have been on a scale of 1 to 100 where 1 is totally impossible and 100 is a real possibility, and then to say how acceptable it would be to you.

*Probe for differences in rating of acceptability at application and now.*

How possible would it have been to ....

**walk to work?**

**Why do you say that?**

*Unless impossible*

**How acceptable would it be?**

**Why do you say that?**

**get lifts from a family member, neighbour or friend?**

**Why do you say that?**

**How acceptable would it be?**

**Why do you say that?**

**get lifts from colleagues at work?**

**Why do you say that?**

**How acceptable would it be?**

**Why do you say that?**

**use public transport?**

**Why do you say that?**

*Unless impossible*

**How acceptable would it be?**

**Why do you say that?**

**use your own car?**

**Why do you say that?**

*Unless impossible*

**How acceptable would it be?**

**Why do you say that?**

**use transport provided by employer  
(or business *if self employed*)?**

**Why do you say that?**

**How acceptable would it be?**

**Why do you say that?**

**use taxis paid for by the employer  
(or business *if self employed*)?**

**Why do you say that?**

**How acceptable would it be?**

**Why do you say that?**

**pay for the taxis yourself?**

**Why do you say that?**

**How acceptable would it be?**

**Why do you say that?**

**get the funds some other way?**

**Why do you say that?**

*distinguish family, other public bodies, charity, borrow*

**How acceptable would it be?**

**Why do you say that?**

*Probe:*

- effect on health
- effect on performance at work
- feeling obliged to others
- putting other people out
- expense to others
- quality of alternative support
- relations with employer
- damage to self-esteem
- a right to Access to Work support
- financial problems
- anything else?

**We are interested to know about the difference Access to Work makes to the lives of people who use it. How, would you say, has having fares to work through Access to Work made a difference to you? Prompt:**

- the work itself
- health
- getting on at work
- participation
- well-being
- financial.
- any other differences?

*Explore earlier effects expressed.*

*IF IN PAID WORK*

*ASK VERBATIM*

**We are interested in what would happen if you did not have help with fares to work now. REASSURE RESPONDENT. I am going to read you a series of statements and ask you to say how far you agree or disagree on a scale from 1 to 100. As before, 1 means you totally disagree and 100 means you agree completely.**

**If help with fares to work was not available now ....**

<b>I would lose my job</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<i>Unless totally disagree</i>	
<b>I would get another job</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would give up working altogether</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would take more sick leave</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would change my hours</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would pay the fares myself</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>Someone else would pay</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would find another way of getting to work</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>

*Explore other outcomes if volunteered, eg:*

- work would suffer
- health would suffer
- effects on morale, self-esteem

**Overall, how would you feel if you did not have help with fares to work?**

## B. SUPPORT WORKER

Confirm factual information about first provision and any subsequent provision: hours; tasks.

Confirm dates.

### ASK VERBATIM

We are interested in what would have happened if a support worker had not been available through Access to Work at the time you applied. I am going to read you a series of statements and ask you to say how far you agree or disagree on a scale from 1 to 100. 1 means you totally disagree and 100 means you agree completely.

If a support worker had not been available at the time I applied ...

<i>Ask if previously not in paid work</i>	
<b>I would not have taken up the job</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<i>Unless totally disagree</i>	
<b>I would have got another job</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have given up looking for work</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<i>Ask if on sick leave at application</i>	
<b>I would have stayed off sick longer</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have given up working altogether</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have got another job</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have gone back to work without it</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have changed my hours</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<i>Ask others</i>	
<b>I would taken more sick leave</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have given up working altogether</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have got another job</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have carried on without it</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have changed my hours</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>

*Explore any other outcomes volunteered.*

*ASK VERBATIM*

I am going to ask you about other ways in which some people can get support on the job. I would like you to say first of all how possible each would have been on a scale of 1 to 100 where 1 is totally impossible and 100 is a real possibility, and then to say how acceptable it would be to you.

*Probe for differences in rating of acceptability at application and now.*

**How possible would it have been to ....**

**Get the support needed from people at work  
How acceptable would it be?**

**Why do you say that?  
Why do you say that?**

**Pay for the support yourself  
How acceptable would it be?**

**Why do you say that?  
Why do you say that?**

**Have the employer pay  
How acceptable would it be?**

**Why do you say that?  
Why do you say that?**

**Get the funds some other way?  
*distinguish family, other public bodies, charity, borrow*  
How acceptable would it be?**

**Why do you say that?  
Why do you say that?**

*Probe:*

- effect on health
- effect on performance at work
- quality of help
- feeling obliged to others
- putting other people out
  - expense to others
- damage to self-esteem
- relations with employer
- financial problems
  - duty on the employer
- a right to Access to Work support
- anything else?

**We are interested to know about the difference Access to Work makes to the lives of people who use it. How, would you say, has having the support worker through Access to Work made a difference to you? *Prompt:***

- the work itself
- health
- getting on at work
- participation
- well-being
- financial.

*Explore earlier effects expressed*

*IF IN PAID WORK*

*ASK VERBATIM*

**We are interested in what would happen if you did not have help with a support worker now. *REASSURE RESPONDENT.* I am going to read you a series of statements and ask you to say how far you agree or disagree on a scale from 1 to 100. As before, 1 means you totally disagree and 100 means you agree completely.**

**If help from your support worker was not available now ....**

<b>I would lose my job</b> <i>Unless totally disagree</i>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would look for another job</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would give up working altogether</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would take more sick leave</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would change my hours</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would pay for the support myself</b> <b>Someone else would pay</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b> <b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would get the support I need some other way</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would carry on without it</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>

*Explore other effects if volunteered, eg:*

- work would suffer
- health would suffer
- effects on morale, self-esteem

**Overall, how would you feel if you did not have your support worker?**



**C. SPECIAL AIDS AND EQUIPMENT**

Confirm factual information about first provision and any subsequent provision.  
Confirm dates.

*ASK VERBATIM*

**We are interested in what would have happened if the item had not been available through Access to Work at the time you applied. I am going to read you a series of statements and ask you to say how far you agree or disagree on a scale from 1 to 100. 1 means you totally disagree and 100 means you agree completely. Ask of each package provided. Ask again for training.**

**If the ----- had not been available at the time I applied ...**

<i>Ask if previously not in paid work</i>	
<b>I would not have taken up the job</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<i>Unless totally disagree</i>	
<b>I would have got another job</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have given up looking for work</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<i>Ask if on sick leave at application</i>	
<b>I would have stayed off sick longer</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have given up working altogether</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have got another job</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have gone back to work without it</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have changed my hours</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<i>Ask others</i>	
<b>I would have taken more sick leave</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have given up working altogether</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have got another job</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have carried on without it</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would have changed my hours</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<i>Explore any other outcomes volunteered.</i>	

*ASK VERBATIM*

I am going to ask you about other ways in which some people can get the equipment / training they need to do the job. I would like you to say first of all how possible each would have been on a scale of 1 to 100 where 1 is totally impossible and 100 is a real possibility, and then to say how acceptable it would be to you.

*Probe for differences in rating of acceptability at application and now.*

**How possible would it have been to....**

**pay for all of the support yourself?**

**How acceptable would it be?**

**Why do you say that?**

**Why do you say that?**

*If more than one item*

**pay for some items of support yourself**

**How acceptable would it be?**

**Why do you say that?**

**Why do you say that?**

**have the employer / business pay everything**

**How acceptable would it be?**

**Why do you say that?**

**Why do you say that?**

**get the funds in some other way?**

*distinguish family, other public bodies, charity, borrow*

**How acceptable would it be?**

**Why do you say that?**

**Why do you say that?**

*Probe for*

- effect on health
- effect on performance at work
- feeling obliged to others
- expense to others
- quality of alternative support
- relations with employer
- damage to self-esteem
- duty on employer
- right to Access to Work support
- financial problems

**We are interested to know about the difference Access to Work makes to the lives of people who use it. How, would you say, has having the equipment through Access to Work made a difference to you? Prompt:**

- the work itself
- health
- getting on at work
- participation
- well-being
- financial.

*Explore earlier effects expressed.*

**Can I check, how much are you using the items now?**

**Do you have (had you *if not in paid work*) any other special equipment at work not provided through Access to Work?**

- what equipment
- paid for by the employer / through the business
- paid for by self
- paid for by others
- costs
- acquired before or after first Access to Work application.

**What difference does (did) it make to you having this equipment?**

*IF IN PAID WORK*

*ASK VERBATIM*

**We are interested in what would happen if you did not have your ----- now. REASSURE RESPONDENT**

**I am going to read you a series of statements and ask you to say how far you agree or disagree on a scale from 1 to 100. As before, 1 means you totally disagree and 100 means you agree completely.**

**If the equipment was not available now ...**

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| <b>I would take more sick leave</b>                  | <b>Why do you say that?</b> |
| <b>I would lose my job</b>                           | <b>Why do you say that?</b> |
| <i>Unless totally disagree</i>                       |                             |
| <b>I would get another job</b>                       | <b>Why do you say that?</b> |
| <b>I would give up work altogether</b>               | <b>Why do you say that?</b> |
| <b>I would change my hours</b>                       | <b>Why do you say that?</b> |
| <b>I would pay for it myself</b>                     | <b>Why do you say that?</b> |
| <b>Someone else would pay</b>                        | <b>Why do you say that?</b> |
| <b>I would get the support I need some other way</b> | <b>Why do you say that?</b> |
| <b>I would carry on without it</b>                   | <b>Why do you say that?</b> |

*Explore other outcomes if volunteered, eg:*

- work would suffer
- health would suffer
- effects on morale, self-esteem

**Overall, how would you feel if you did not have your equipment?**

## D. ALTERATIONS TO PREMISES OR EQUIPMENT AT WORK

Confirm factual information about first provision and any subsequent provision.

Confirm dates.

### ASK VERBATIM

We are interested in what would have happened if financial support for alterations at work had not been available through Access to Work at the time you applied. I am going to read you a series of statements and ask you to say how far you agree or disagree on a scale from 1 to 100. 1 means you totally disagree and 100 means you agree completely.

If financial support for the ----- had not been available at the time I applied ...

*Ask if previously not in paid work*

**I would not have taken up the job**

**Why do you say that?**

*Unless totally disagree*

**I would have got another job**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have given up looking for work**

**Why do you say that?**

*Ask if on sick leave at application*

**I would have stayed off sick longer**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have given up working altogether**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have got another job**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have gone back to work without it**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have changed my hours**

**Why do you say that?**

*Ask others*

**I would have taken more sick leave**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have given up working altogether**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have got another job**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have carried on without it**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have changed my hours**

**Why do you say that?**

*Explore any other outcomes volunteered*

*ASK VERBATIM*

I am going to ask you about other ways in which some people can get the alterations they need to do the job. I would like you to say first of all how possible each would have been on a scale of 1 to 100 where 1 is totally impossible and 100 is a real possibility and then ask how acceptable it would be to you.

*Probe for differences in rating of acceptability at application and now.*

**How possible would it have been to ...**

**Pay for all of the alterations yourself  
How acceptable would it be?**

**Why do you say that?  
Why do you say that?**

**Pay for certain alterations yourself  
How acceptable would it be?**

**Why do you say that?  
Why do you say that?**

**Have the employer / business pay everything  
How acceptable would it be?**

**Why do you say that?  
Why do you say that?**

**Get the funds some other way?**

*distinguish family, other public bodies, charity, borrow*

**How acceptable would it be?**

**Why do you say that?**

**Why do you say that?**

*Probe:*

- quality of support
- adequacy of support
- feeling obliged to others
- damage to self-esteem
- a duty on the employer
- a right to Access to Work support
- financial problems
- anything else?

**We are interested to know what difference Access to Work makes to the lives of people who use it. How, would you say, has having the alterations through Access to Work made a difference to you?** *Prompt:*

- the work itself
- health
- getting on at work
- participation
- well-being
- financial

*Explore earlier effects expressed.*

**Can I check, how much use do you make of the alterations now?**

**Do you (did you *if not in paid work*) make use of any other adaptations at work not arranged through Access to Work?**

- what alterations
- paid for by the employer
  - paid for through the business
- paid for by self
- paid for by others
- costs
- arranged before or after first Access to Work application.

**What difference does (did) it make to you having these alterations?**

*IF IN PAID WORK*

*ASK VERBATIM*

**We are interested in what would happen if you did not now have the alterations made with help from Access to Work. I am going to read you a series of statements and ask you to say how far you agree or disagree on a scale from 1 to 100. As before, 1 means you totally disagree and 100 means you agree completely.**

<b>I would take more sick leave</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would lose my job</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<i>Unless totally disagree</i>	
<b>I would get another job</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would give up work altogether</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would change my hours</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would pay for the adaptations myself</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would get the support I need some other way</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>Someone else would pay</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would carry on without them</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>

*Explore other outcomes if volunteered, eg:*

- work would suffer
- health would suffer
- effects on morale, self-esteem

**Overall, how would you feel if you did not have the alterations?**

## E. ADAPTATIONS TO OWN VEHICLE

Confirm factual information about first provision and any subsequent provision.

Confirm dates.

### ASK VERBATIM

We are interested in what would have happened if help with adapting your vehicle had not been available from Access to Work at the time you applied. I am going to read you a series of statements and ask you to say how far you agree or disagree on a scale from 1 to 100. 1 means you totally disagree and 100 means you agree completely.

*Ask if previously not in paid work*

**I would not have taken up the job**

**Why do you say that?**

*Unless totally disagree*

**I would have got another job**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have given up looking for work**

**Why do you say that?**

*Ask if on sick leave at application*

**I would have stayed off sick longer**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have given up working altogether**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have got another job**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have gone back to work without it**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have changed my hours**

**Why do you say that?**

*Ask others*

**I would have taken more sick leave**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have given up working altogether**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have got another job**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have carried on without it**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have changed my hours**

**Why do you say that?**

*Explore any other outcomes volunteered.*

*ASK VERBATIM*

I am going to ask you about other ways in which some people get to work. I would like you to say first of all how possible each would have been on a scale of 1 to 100 where 1 is totally impossible and 100 is a real possibility and then ask how acceptable it would be to you.

*Probe for differences in rating of acceptability at application and now.*

**How possible would it have been to ...**

<b>Walk to work</b> How acceptable would it be?	<b>Why do you say that?</b> <b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>Get lifts from a family member, neighbour or friend</b> How acceptable would it be?	<b>Why do you say that?</b> <b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>Get lifts from colleagues at work</b> How acceptable would it be?	<b>Why do you say that?</b> <b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>Use public transport</b> How acceptable would it be?	<b>Why do you say that?</b> <b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>Use transport provided by employer or business (if self employed)</b> How acceptable would it be?	<b>Why do you say that?</b> <b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>Use taxis paid for by the employer or business (if self employed)</b> How acceptable would it be?	<b>Why do you say that?</b> <b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>Get the funds in some other way</b> <i>distinguish family, other public bodies, charity, borrow</i> How acceptable would it be?	<b>Why do you say that?</b> <b>Why do you say that?</b>

*Probe:*

- effect on health
- effect on performance at work
- feeling obliged to others
- putting other people out / expense to others
- relations with employer
- damage to self-esteem
- a right to Access to Work support
- duty on employer
- financial problems
- anything else?



**We are interested to know what difference Access to Work makes to the lives of people who use it. How, would you say, has having the adaptations through Access to Work made a difference to you?** *Prompt:*

- the work itself
- health
- getting on at work
- participation
- well-being
- financial

Explore earlier effects expressed.

**Can I check, how much use do you make of your adapted vehicle for work?**

*IF IN PAID WORK*

*ASK VERBATIM*

**We are interested in what would happen if you did not now have a vehicle adapted with help from Access to Work. I am going to read you a series of statements and ask you to say how far you agree or disagree on a scale from 1 to 100. As before, 1 means you totally disagree and 100 means you agree completely.**

<b>I would take more sick leave</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would lose my job</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<i>Unless totally disagree</i>	
<b>I would get another job</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would give up work altogether</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would change my hours</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would pay for the adaptations myself</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>Someone else would pay</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would find another way of getting to work</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>

*Explore other outcomes if volunteered, eg:*

- work would suffer
- health would suffer
- effects on morale, self-esteem

**Overall, how would you feel if you did not have the help with adaptations to your vehicle?**

## F. TRAVEL ON THE JOB

Confirm factual information about first provision and any subsequent provision.

Confirm dates.

### ASK VERBATIM

We are interested in what would have happened if help with the costs of travel on the job had not been available from Access to Work at the time you applied. I am going to read you a series of statements and ask you to say how far you agree or disagree on a scale from 1 to 100. 1 means you totally disagree and 100 means you agree completely.

*Ask if previously not in paid work*

**I would not have taken up the job**

**Why do you say that?**

*Unless totally disagree*

**I would have got another job**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have given up looking for work**

**Why do you say that?**

*Ask if on sick leave at application*

**I would have stayed off sick longer**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have given up working altogether**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have got another job**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have gone back to work without it**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have changed my hours**

**Why do you say that?**

*Ask others*

**I would have taken more sick leave**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have given up working altogether**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have got another job**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have carried on without it**

**Why do you say that?**

**I would have changed my hours**

**Why do you say that?**

*Explore any other outcomes volunteered.*

*ASK VERBATIM*

I am now going to ask you about other ways in which some people can get about in their job. I would like you to say first of all how possible each would have been on a scale of 1 to 100 where 1 is totally impossible and 100 is a real possibility and then ask how acceptable it would be to you. *Probe for differences in rating of acceptability at application and now.*

**How possible would it have been to ....**

<b>Walk</b> How acceptable would it be?	Why do you say that? Why do you say that?
<b>Get lifts from a family member, neighbour or friend</b> How acceptable would it be?	Why do you say that? Why do you say that?
<b>Get lifts from colleagues at work</b> How acceptable would it be?	Why do you say that? Why do you say that?
<b>Use public transport</b> How acceptable would it be?	Why do you say that? Why do you say that?
<b>Use transport provided by employer or business (if self employed)</b> How acceptable would it be?	Why do you say that? Why do you say that?
<b>Use taxis paid for by the employer or business (if self employed)</b> How acceptable would it be	Why do you say that? Why do you say that?

*Probe:*

- effect on health
- effect on performance at work
- feeling obliged to others
- putting other people out / expense to others
- relations with employer
- damage to self-esteem
- a right to Access to Work support
- financial problems
- anything else?

**We are interested to know what difference Access to Work makes to the lives of people who use it. How, would you say, has having the help with travel in work made a difference to you?**

*Prompt:*

- the work itself
- health
- getting on at work
- participation
- well-being
- financial

*Explore earlier effects expressed.*

*IF IN PAID WORK*

*ASK VERBATIM*

**We are interested in what would happen if you did not now have with help with travel in your job from Access to Work. REASSURE RESPONDENT. I am going to read you a series of statements and ask you to say how far you agree or disagree on a scale from 1 to 100. As before, 1 means you totally disagree and 100 means you agree completely.**

<b>I would take more sick leave</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would lose my job</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<i>Unless totally disagree</i>	
<b>I would get another job</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would give up work altogether</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would change my hours</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would find another way of getting about in work</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would pay the costs myself</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>Someone else would pay</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would get the support I need some other way</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>I would carry on without the support</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>

*Explore other outcomes if volunteered, eg:*

- work would suffer
- health would suffer
- effects on morale, self-esteem

**Overall, how would you feel if you did not have the help with the costs of travel on the job?**

## VI. OVERALL EFFECTS

*ASK ALL*

**All things considered, if help from Access to Work were not available how likely is it that you would be in your job (have stayed in your job *if no longer in paid work*)? On a scale from 1 to 100 where 1 means absolutely not and 100 means definitely.**

*ASK IF RECEIVES MORE THAN ONE ELEMENT OF SUPPORT*

We have talked about a number of different types of support you get from Access to Work. Which of these makes the greatest difference to you? Which, would you say, makes the least difference?

How likely it is it that you would be in your job now if you did not have [ item that makes the least difference]?

How likely it is it that you would be in your job now if you did not have either [item that makes the least difference] or [item that the next least difference]?

Continue ...

## VII. EARNINGS

*ASK EMPLOYEES*

**Could you please tell me how much you earn /earned (*if no longer in paid work*)? And your partner?**

*ASK SELF-EMPLOYED*

**Could you please give me a figure for your earnings?**

- net profit *if self-employed*

**How much does your partner earn?**

*IF CURRENTLY IN PAID WORK*

**Are you receiving any benefits or tax credits?**

- Disabled Person's Tax Credit
- Working Families Tax Credit
- Disability Living Allowance

## VIII. PERMISSION TO INTERVIEW EMPLOYER

*ASK EMPLOYEES*

**We are hoping to write to some employers of people who use Access to Work to invite them to take part in this research.**

**We want to talk to them about what they use Access to Work for and any other practical arrangements they make for their employees. We also want to discuss with them what they would do if Access to Work were not available.**

**Would you be happy for us to contact someone from the organisation you work for to arrange an interview?**

*If yes:*

**Who is the best person to contact?**

**What is their role in the organisation?**

**Have they been involved in your Access to Work provision at all?**

**Would it be acceptable for us to discuss your circumstances with this person?**

**Is there anyone else who deals with Access to Work that it might be useful for us to speak to?**

***Obtain name and contact details***

***Obtain signature on permission slip***

**Thank respondent**

The Social Policy Research Unit will be writing a report for the Employment Service and it should be available in the spring or summer of next year. The Employment Service produces a four page summary. Would you like us to send you a copy of the summary along with details of how to get the full report? *Note, on receipt if summary requested.*

Ref: AC/1

Date

Dear

### **Evaluation of Access to Work**

I am writing to ask you for your help with a research project. The research is investigating support at work and in getting to work for people who are disabled or have long-term health problems. In particular, the Employment Service is interested in use of Access to Work - a government programme providing help with the costs of equipment at work, alterations to workplace premises, support workers and travel to or in work. The aim of the research is to assess the difference Access to Work makes to employers and their employees.

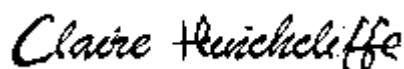
We have asked the Social Policy Research Unit at the University of York, an independent research organisation, to carry out interviews with a sample of employers who have, or have had, an employee receiving Access to Work help. The interview will last about 45 minutes. Taking part in the research is voluntary and will not affect the help your organisation and its employees receive from Access to Work in any way.

A researcher from the Social Policy Research Unit will contact you shortly to invite you to contribute to this study. They will then outline the interview questions and arrange a time for the interview if you agree to take part. Please note that the Social Policy Research Unit has already interviewed a current or past employee of your organisation who has received support through Access to Work. This person has given permission for a researcher to contact you and has agreed to their employment circumstances being discussed with you.

I can assure you that the researchers will treat all information you give in strictest confidence. Their research report will be written so that nobody taking part can be identified. Everyone taking part in the research will be offered a summary of the research findings. If you have any queries about the interviews please contact Patricia Thornton at the Social Policy Research Unit (voice and text 01904 432626, email pat3@york.ac.uk) or me at the Employment Service (tel 0114 259 5335, email claire.hinchcliffe@employment.gov.uk).

I do hope that you will be able to take part in this important research. Your contribution would be greatly valued. Many thanks in anticipation of your help.

Yours sincerely



Claire Hinchcliffe

## EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF ACCESS TO WORK EMPLOYER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

### INTRODUCTION

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the research. As your letter from the Employment Service explained, the Employment Service has asked the Social Policy Research Unit to carry out this study on its behalf.

The aim of the research is to assess how far the Access to Work programme enables disabled people and people with long-term health problems to take up or stay in employment. The Employment Service wants to find out what difference the programme makes to them and to their employers, and what might happen if Access to Work were not available.

As you already know, we have already interviewed someone who works/has worked for your organisation *Name person*. [Name] has given signed permission to interview you, and has agreed to their employment circumstances being discussed with you

The Social Policy Research Unit is an independent organisation. What you tell me will be treated in total confidence. We will write our report for the Employment Service so that nobody who takes part can be identified. Taking part will not affect the support Access to Work provides, now or in the future.

### The interview

The interview will take up to 45 minutes. As I explained on the phone, I would like to cover the following broad topics:

- some background information about the organisation
- experience of employment of disabled people and people with long-term health problems
- any financial provision for special equipment or facilities for disabled people
- use of Access to Work.

I would also like to talk specifically about [name]:

- the impact of their disability or health problem on their working life and on the organisation
- any financial and practical support provided to help them at work, apart from Access to Work
- their Access to Work support and the effect it has had on their work and on the organisation
- what might have happened if Access to Work had not been available when they applied for it
- what might happen now if Access to Work were not available.

I would like your permission to tape-record our discussion. This is for the purposes of this research only and the tape will be wiped clean after it has been transcribed. Nobody outside the research team will hear the tape-recording. *Ensure that permission to tape-record is granted.*



## I THE ORGANISATION

To start, I would like to ask some general questions about this organisation and your own job here.

1. **This is a.....** *Check against information provided:*
- private firm or business
  - central government department
  - health authority or NHS trust
  - university or further education college
  - other public service
  - charity, voluntary organisation or trust
  - local government department
  - local authority controlled school or college
  - police / fire service
  - something else?

*If private firm, charity etc (or unclear):*

**What does the organisation do?**

2. **Can you tell me what your job is?**

*Ask:*

- job title
- what the job involves
- period in job.

3. **Do you have any particular role or responsibilities in relation to staff who are disabled or have health problems?**

*Ask: what is involved*

**Is there anyone (else) in the organisation with such a role?**

*Ask: what do they do*

4. **As far as you know, does the organisation have a policy on the employment of disabled people?** *Prompt:*

- policy specifically on disabled people
- disability symbol ('two ticks') holder
- equal opportunities policy including disabled people.

- 5 **We are interested in knowing how many people work at the establishment where [name] works/worked?** (By establishment we mean the premises. This does not include other, separate premises of your organisation at a different address.) *If not known, obtain best estimate.*

*IF A PRIVATE FIRM OR CHARITY ETC*

**Can I check, does your organisation have other establishments?**

*If yes:*

**How many people does the organisation employ overall in the UK?** *If not known, obtain estimate*

6. **Do you know how many employees at the establishment where [name] works/worked have a long-term health problem or disability?** *If not known, obtain estimate.*

7. **As far as you know, how many current employees of that establishment receive help from Access to Work?** *Probe for estimate*

## II EXPERIENCES OF EMPLOYING DISABLED PEOPLE

The next section is about your experiences of employing disabled people and people with long-term health problems. May we talk first about any experiences of taking on disabled people (A). Then we will talk about keeping on employees with problems at work related to ill-health or disability (B).

ASK BOTH A AND B OF ALL RESPONDENTS

### A. TAKING ON DISABLED PEOPLE

A1. Have you been involved in the last three years (ie since January 1999) in taking on someone with a disability or health problem that you knew at the time might affect their work?

IF YES:

**a. Did you have any concerns about taking them on?**

Explore:

- concerns about effects on their health or well-being
- ability to do the job well enough
- having to take time off work
- effects on the organisation's performance
- effects on other employees
- attitudes of other employees
- communication issues
- anything else?

**b. How many people are we talking about here (ie since January 1999)?**

**c. Did the organisation made any changes for these people when you took them on, other than through Access to Work?**

Explore:

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| - new or adapted equipment at work | - training adapted to their disability |
| - alterations to the premises      | - extra help from other people at work |
| - employed a support worker        | - lifts/fares to work                  |
| - lifts/fares in work              | - adjusted tasks                       |
| - adjusted hours                   | - home working                         |

IF CHANGES MADE FOR ANY NEW EMPLOYEE:

**Some employers don't make changes. Why did you?**

Explore:

- needed the employees' skills
- legal obligation
- social obligation
- organisation policy
- union agreement
- any other reasons

**d. Looking back, were there any (other) changes the organisation might have made to make it easier for these people to work when you took them on?**

*Explore:*

- new or adapted equipment at work
- alterations to the premises
- employed a support worker
- lifts/fares to work
- adjusted hours
- training adapted to their disability
- extra help from other people at work
- lifts/fares in work
- adjusted tasks
- home working

**e. What are the main difficulties for the organisation in making changes to make it easier for new disabled employees to work?**

*Prompt:*

- costs
- expertise for making changes ( knowledge of appropriate equipment etc, sourcing appropriate equipment, knowledge of the effects of disability on work)
- lack of staff to arrange changes
- attitudes of managers
- attitudes of other employees
- any other difficulties?

**IF NAMED PERSON TAKEN ON NEW EMPLOYEE:**

**A2 Turning now to named person ....**

**a. Did you have any particular concerns about taking on named person?**

*Explore:*

- concerns about effects on their health or well-being
- ability to do the job well enough
- having to take time off work
- effects on the organisation's performance
- effects on other employees
- attitudes of other employees
- communication issues
- anything else?

**b. Did the organisation make any changes specifically for named person, other than through Access to Work ?**

*IF YES:*

**i. Can you tell me what these changes were?**

*Explore:*

- new or adapted equipment at work
- alterations to the premises
- employed a support worker
- lifts/fares in work
- adjusted hours
- anything else.
- training adapted to their disability
- extra help from other people at work
- lifts/fares to work
- adjusted tasks
- home working

**ii. Why did the organisation make these changes for named person?**

*Explore:*

- needed the employees' skills
- legal obligation
- social obligation
- organisation policy
- union agreement
- any other reasons

**iii. Can you give me an idea of the costs of these changes?**

**A3 I would like now to ask you about named person and their Access to Work support.**

**a. First, can I check if you were involved in any way in taking him/her on?**

*Remind respondent when named person was taken on*

**b. Did you or anyone else in the organisation know that he/she would get Access to Work support when he/she was taken on?**

**c. Do you know what support he/she got from Access to Work around the time that he/she took up the job?**

*Remind or inform respondent.*

*Tell them of support they are not aware of, such as TW.*

*EXPLAIN USE OF SCALES*

Some of our questions involve using this scale (*show scale unless visually impaired*). You can see it goes from 1 to 100. I will read you a question and ask you to put your answer somewhere on the scale. Then I will ask you why you put your answer there. We have found this way of asking people about their views works well.

*ASK VERBATIM*

Thinking of named person, we are interested in what would have happened if help from Access to Work had not have been available at the time he/she joined the organisation. I am going to read you a series of statements and ask you to say how far you agree or disagree on a scale from 1 to 100. 1 means you totally disagree and 100 means you agree completely.

If Access to Work had not been available at the time he/she joined the organisation .....

He/she would not have been offered the job                      Why do you say that?

He/she could not have stayed in the job                      Why do you say that?

He/she would have carried on without it                      Why do you say that?

*ASK ACCORDING TO ACCESS TO WORK SUPPORT WHEN TAKING UP THE JOB*

The organisation would have paid for the special equipment needed                      Why do you say that?

How appropriate would it have been to pay?                      Why do you say that?

The organisation would have paid for the alterations to the premises needed                      Why do you say that?

How appropriate would it have been to pay?                      Why do you say that?

The organisation would have paid the costs of taxis to work                      Why do you say that?

How appropriate would it have been to pay?                      Why do you say that?

The organisation would have provided transport to work                      Why do you say that?

How appropriate would it have been to pay?                      Why do you say that?

The organisation would have paid the costs of travel in work                      Why do you say that?

How appropriate would it have been to pay?                      Why do you say that?

The organisation would have paid for a support worker                      Why do you say that?

How appropriate would it have been to pay?                      Why do you say that?

*IF NEITHER TOTALLY DISAGREE NOR TOTALLY AGREE THAT WOULD HAVE PAID*

You said that it was not totally impossible that the organisation would have paid towards -----  
What proportion of the costs do you think the organisation might have paid?

*IF MORE THAN ONE ITEM OF SPECIAL EQUIPMENT OR ALTERATION TO THE WORKPLACE*

Which items / alterations might the organisation have paid for in full?

**B. EXISTING EMPLOYEES WITH PROBLEMS RELATED TO ILL-HEALTH OR DISABILITY**

**B1. The next part is about existing employees. Have you had experience in the last three years of (other) employees with problems related to ill-health or disability that affected their ability to do their job fully?**

*IF YES:*

**a. Did you have any concerns about them staying in the job?**

*Explore:*

- concerns about effects on their health or well-being
- ability to do the job well enough
- having to take time off work
- effects on the organisation's performance
- effects on other employees
- attitudes of other employees
- anything else?

**b. How many people are we talking about here?**

**c. Has the organisation made any changes for these people with problems related to ill-health or disability, other than through Access to Work?**

*Explore:*

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| - new or adapted equipment at work | - training adapted to their disability |
| - alterations to the premises      | - extra help from other people at work |
| - employed a support worker        | - lifts/fares to work                  |
| - lifts/fares in work              | - adjusted tasks                       |
| - adjusted hours                   | - home working                         |
| - anything else?                   |  |

*IF CHANGES MADE FOR AN EXISTING EMPLOYEE:*

**Some employers don't make changes. Why did you?**

*Prompt:*

- needed the employees' skills
- legal obligation
- social obligation
- organisation policy
- union agreement
- any other reasons?

**d. Looking back, were there any (other) changes the organisation might have made to make it easier for these people to carry on in their job?**

*Explore:*

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| - new or adapted equipment at work | - training adapted to their disability |
| - alterations to the premises      | - extra help from other people at work |
| - employed a support worker        | - lifts/fares to work                  |
| - lifts/fares in work              | - adjusted tasks                       |
| - adjusted hours                   | - home working                         |
| - anything else?                   |  |

**e. What are the main difficulties for the organisation in making changes to make it easier for existing employees with a health problem or disability to work?**

*Prompt:*

- costs
- expertise for making changes ( knowledge of appropriate equipment etc, sourcing appropriate equipment, knowledge of the effects of disability on work)
  - lack of staff to arrange changes
  - attitudes of managers
- attitudes of other employees
  - any other difficulties?

**IF NAMED PERSON AN EXISTING EMPLOYEE**

**B2 Turning now to named person ....**

**a. Did you have any particular concerns about named person staying in the job?**

*Explore:*

- concerns about effects on their health or well-being
- ability to do the job well enough
- having to take time off work
- effects on the organisation's performance
- effects on other employees
- attitudes of other employees
- communication issues
- anything else?

**b. Has the organisation make any changes specifically for named person, other than through Access to Work ?**

*IF YES:*

**i. Can you tell me what these changes were?**

*Explore:*

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| - new or adapted equipment at work | - training adapted to their disability |
| - alterations to the premises      | - extra help from other people at work |
| - employed a support worker        | - lifts/fares to work                  |
| - lifts/fares in work              | - adjusted tasks                       |
| - adjusted hours                   | - home working                         |
| - anything else?                   |  |

**ii. Why did the organisation make these changes for named person?**

*Explore:*

- needed the employees' skills
- legal obligation
- social obligation
- organisation policy
- union agreement
- any other reasons

**iii. Can you give me an idea of the costs of these changes?**

**B3. I would like now to ask you about named person and his/her Access to Work support.**

**a. First, can I check whether you were involved in any way when he/she first got help with Access to Work?**

*Tell respondent date of first application when with this employer.*

**b. Do you know what support he/she got from Access to Work when he/she first applied (in a job with this employer)?**

*Remind or inform respondent.*

*Tell them of support they are not aware of, such as TW.*



*ASK VERBATIM*

We are interested in what would have happened if help from Access to Work had not have been available when he/she first applied. I am going to read you a series of statements and ask you to say how far you agree or disagree on a scale from 1 to 100. As before, 1 means you totally disagree and 100 means you agree completely.

If Access to Work had not been available when he/she applied .....

He/she would have had to leave the job <i>Unless totally disagree</i>	Why do you say that?
he/she would have given up working altogether	Why do you say that?
he/she would have got another job	Why do you say that?
He/she would have taken more sick leave	Why do you say that?
He/she would have carried on without it	Why do you say that?
He/she would have had to change his/her hours	Why do you say that?

*ASK ACCORDING TO ACCESS TO WORK SUPPORT AT FIRST APPLICATION WITH THIS EMPLOYER*

The organisation would have paid for the special equipment needed	Why do you say that?
How appropriate would it have been to pay?	Why do you say that?
The organisation would have paid for the alterations to the premises needed	Why do you say that?
How appropriate would it have been to pay?	Why do you say that?
The organisation would have paid the costs of taxis to work	Why do you say that?
How appropriate would it have been to pay?	Why do you say that?
The organisation would have provided transport to work	Why do you say that?
How appropriate would it have been to pay?	Why do you say that?
The organisation would have paid the costs of travel in work	Why do you say that?
How appropriate would it have been to pay?	Why do you say that?
The organisation would have paid for a support worker	Why do you say that?
How appropriate would it have been to pay?	Why do you say that?

*IF NEITHER TOTALLY DISAGREE NOR TOTALLY AGREE THAT WOULD HAVE PAID*

You said that it was not totally impossible that the organisation would have paid towards

-----

What proportion of the costs do you think the organisation might have paid?

*IF MORE THAN ONE ITEM OF SPECIAL EQUIPMENT OR ALTERATION TO THE WORKPLACE*

Which items / alterations might the organisation have paid for in full?

**C. SITUATION NOW**

**C1. We are interested to have your views on any differences Access to Work has made.**

**a. What difference overall has having assistance from Access to Work made to the organisation. ?**

*Explore:*

- increased efficiency of Access to Work employees
- increased efficiency of employees generally
- increased morale of Access to Work employees
- increased morale of employees generally
- enabled organisation to retain a valued employee
- benefited customers or clients
- cost savings
- other differences

**b. What difference would you say has Access to Work made in the case of named person?**

*IF USER STILL EMPLOYED BY ORGANISATION AND STILL RECEIVING ACCESS TO WORK*

**C2. Can we turn now to the current situation of named person.**

*Inform respondent of Access to Work support used now*

**We are interested in what would happen if named person did not have help from Access to Work now. I am going to read you a series of statements and ask you to say how far you agree or disagree on a scale from 1 to 100. As before, 1 means you totally disagree and 100 means you agree completely.**

**If Access to Work were not available for named person now ....**

<b>He/she would have to leave the job</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>He/she would carry on without it</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>He/she would take more sick leave</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>His/her performance at work would be affected</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>
<b>The performance of other staff would be affected</b>	<b>Why do you say that?</b>

*Respond to and explore other outcomes volunteered. Respond if interviewee suggests using scale.*

**ASK ACCORDING TO ACCESS TO WORK SUPPORT NOW**

*Probe for any differences in the possibility and acceptability of the organisation paying now compared with when the person was taken on or first applied as a current employee.*

**If Access to Work was not available for named person now .....**

<b>The organisation would pay the full costs of the special equipment</b>	<b>Why do you say that? How acceptable would it be now?</b>
<b>The organisation would pay the full costs of alterations to the premises</b>	<b>Why do you say that? How acceptable would it be now?</b>
<b>The organisation would pay the costs of taxis to work</b>	<b>How acceptable would it be now?</b>
<b>The organisation would provide transport to work</b>	<b>Why do you say that? How acceptable would it be now?</b>
<b>The organisation would pay the costs of travel in work</b>	<b>Why do you say that? How acceptable would it be now?</b>
<b>The organisation would pay for a support worker</b>	<b>Why do you say that? How acceptable would it be now?</b>

*IF NEITHER TOTALLY DISAGREE NOR TOTALLY AGREE THAT WOULD PAY*

**You said that it was not totally impossible that the organisation would pay paid towards  
-----**

**What proportion of the costs do you think the organisation might pay?**

*IF MORE THAN ONE ITEM OF SPECIAL EQUIPMENT OR ALTERATION TO THE WORKPLACE*

**Which items / alterations might the organisation pay for in full?**

### III FINANCIAL RESOURCES

**We are interested in how adjustments for disabled employees are financed.**

- a. **Does your establishment (or organisation) have a dedicated budget for making adjustments for disabled employees?**

*If yes, ask:*

- what does this cover
- is there a single central budget or a number of budgets for different parts of the organisation
- what is the annual budget
- how adequate is the budget?

- b. **How much has the establishment spent in the last year in providing modifications to premises and specialist equipment for disabled employees (including costs of staff time as well as direct costs)?**

*Probe for estimate*

- c. **What is the establishment's (or organisations's) total annual budget for equipment and maintenance of premises?**

*Probe for estimate of expenditure on modifications for disabled people as a proportion of the total budget.*

### IV ARRANGEMENTS TO INTERVIEW A SECOND EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVE

**Finally, is there anyone else in the organisation whom we might interview to get more information about ....**

- a. the organisation's financial resources
- b. the contribution of Access to Work to named person's employment here?

***Obtain contact details***

### ***THANK RESPONDENT***

**The Social Policy Research Unit will be writing a report for the Employment Service and it should be available in the spring or summer of next year. The Employment Service will produce a four page summary. Would you like us to send you a copy of the summary along with details of how to get the full report?**

*Note if summary is requested.*



The Employment Service sought evidence on whether the Access to Work programme leads to employment outcomes which would not be attained in the absence of the programme. The study aimed to examine the difference the Access to Work programme makes in enabling its users to take up and stay in work and to estimate whether the same employment outcomes could have been achieved without the programme. Using a case study approach which combined qualitative interview techniques with agreement scales, the researchers asked users and their employers to judge likely outcomes if Access to Work were not available. In-depth questioning provided detailed insights into how the programme works to achieve employment outcomes for its users.

The study was carried out by the Social Policy Research Unit at the University of York under the Disability Services Research Partnership Agreement with the Employment Service.