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USERS' VIEWS OF ACCESS TO WORK

FINAL REPORT OF A STUDY FOR THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

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December 2000



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The views expressed in this report are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Employment Service or Department for Education and Employment

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

APE	Adapted Premises and Equipment
CSI	Communicator Support at Interview
DEA	Disability Employment Adviser
DST	Disability Service Team
ES	Employment Service
PACT	Placement, Assessment and Counselling Team
RADAR	Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation
RNIB	Royal National Institute for the Blind
RNID	Royal National Institute for Deaf People
SAE	Special Aids and Equipment
SW	Support Worker
TW	Travel to Work

Acknowledgements

The authors particularly wish to thank all the Access to Work users who contributed to the study

We would like to acknowledge the work of the Ipsos-RSL staff for their part in completing the study and give special thanks to the Ipsos-RSL area managers and interviewers who conducted the fieldwork. We are grateful to Leroy Groves and Len Dawes of the Research and Development Division and staff of Jobseekers Disability Services Division at the Employment Service for their guidance and assistance, and to Sally Pulleyn at the Social Policy Research Unit for preparing the typescript.

For a minority of users for whom adaptations had been made to premises or equipment, Access to Work provision had not kept step with changing needs and circumstances. Follow-up also might help clarify responsibility for repairs, servicing or replacement of Special Aids or Equipment; one in three such users do not know who is responsible. When such a need had occurred, reported by one in four of these users, three quarters reported adverse effects.

There are no significant differences in users' views of dedicated DST advisers and Disability Employment Advisers who handled their application.

Specialist advice

Four out of ten users of environmental support had specialist advice arranged through their DST adviser. Those who required alterations to premises are least likely to have seen a specialist. Ratings of advice on technological or computer-based equipment are consistently lower than advice on furniture or equipment. Users in the qualitative study valued visits by specialists to the workplace, especially when privacy was protected. There is some criticism of misleading or over-prescriptive advice. Specialist advice at assessment centres receives mixed reports.

Employers' Involvement

Three out of four employees reported that their employer was actively involved in facilitating their last Access to Work application; over half rate their involvement as 'very good' or 'excellent' and a further one in five describe it as

'good'. Over half of users of Travel to Work, Special Aids and Equipment and Support Worker provision rate their employer's involvement as 'very good' or 'excellent'. However, one in eight users of Adaptations to Premises and Equipment or Support Worker provision rate their employers' involvement as 'very poor' (compared with one in twenty overall).

Users in the public sector are twice as likely as those in the private/independent sector to rate their employer's involvement as no better than 'fair'. One in seven employees say that their employers' involvement (or non-involvement) caused them problems, mainly delay in getting the support required. Users recommend better communication between the employer, Access to Work and users themselves.

Administration of Access to Work
Opinions of the speed of provision range widely. Overall, almost half indicate that the time taken to provide what was requested was better than 'fair' but almost one in three as 'poor' or 'very poor'. Four in ten applicants for alterations to buildings, training to use new equipment, special equipment or furniture, and alterations to existing equipment feel that the time taken was 'poor' or 'very poor'.

Only one in three respondents recalled being told how long to expect support to be in place, and a further one in five could not remember if they had been told. One in three respondents said they felt 'completely' informed about progress but one in five said they felt

'not at all' informed. Being told how long it might take for support to be provided and being informed about progress help to shape users' appreciation of the time taken for that support to be provided. Users' opinions of the speed of provision reflect their views about DST staff. Being informed about progress also has a positive influence on views of DST staff.

Three months waiting for support to be provided seems to be a critical threshold for users. Within this timescale most users are satisfied with the time taken; beyond it users become increasingly dissatisfied. More than four out of five of respondents who rate as no better than 'fair' the time taken to provide fares to work, a support worker, reader or communicator/sign language interpreter at work reported delay having an adverse effect on their work.

Users offered many explanations for delays but attribute them primarily to 'red-tape' and poor liaison between employers, users, specialist advisors, suppliers and Access to Work staff in an overly complex administrative process. Many users see delay as cumulative, not attributable to a single factor.

Users comment on overly bureaucratic procedures and unnecessary paperwork and form filling. Regular, repetitive form completion to claim reimbursement of Travel to Work fares is a particular concern. Obtaining three quotations can be difficult and contribute towards delays. People with sensory impairments in particular call for alternative media, such as Braille

and e-mail, to make information accessible and form filling easier.

Variations in opinions of Access to Work

Travel to Work users are most likely to report that the support they receive 'completely' meets their needs, to rate the usefulness of Access to Work in enabling them to work most highly, and to have the highest overall opinion of Access to Work.

Only one in three users of human support, compared with half of users of environmental adaptations, say that Access to Work meets their needs 'completely'. Users of human support rate Access to Work overall less highly than users of environmental adaptations. One in five users of Communicator Support at Interview feel that Access to Work meets their needs only 'a little' or 'not at all', and one in four feel the support helped 'not much' or 'not at all' in enabling them to work. Over half of those who have ever received Communicator Support at Interview consider it 'very good' or 'excellent', while one in six find it no better than 'fair'. While three out of four Support Worker users say their support worker hours are about right, those with a communicator or sign language interpreter at work are least satisfied with the amount of time allocated.

Employees in the private and independent sectors are more likely than those in the public sector to say that Access to Work 'completely' meets their needs and that they cannot work without it. They are more likely than those in the public sector to rate their

Executive Summary

As part of a review of Access to Work, the ES commissioned the Disability Services Research Partnership to carry out a study of users' views and experiences of Access to Work. A national survey was carried out in summer 2000 with a representative sample of new users and people already using the service. Follow-up qualitative interviews with 20 survey respondents explored their opinions in depth, and assisted with the development of nationally consistent approaches to routine monitoring of user satisfaction with Access to Work.

Users of Access to Work

Over nine out of ten users were in paid work when they last applied to Access to Work. At interview, nine out of ten users were working as employees with one in eight of those in supported employment. More employees work in the public sector than in the private and independent sectors combined.

Users work predominantly in non-manual, white collar and professional jobs: four in ten in professional jobs and a further one in three in administrative, secretarial and related occupations.

Over four in ten users had a musculo-skeletal impairment when they last applied for Access to Work support, three in ten had a visual impairment and 15 per cent a hearing impairment. Few users reported mental health problems, severe learning difficulties, dyslexia or specific learning difficulties.

Access to Work support

The most common forms of support are:

- new furniture or equipment (in two thirds of Access to Work supported jobs)
- help with fares for travel to work (in over four out of ten such jobs)
- human support on the job (in one in four jobs), comprising support workers (16%), personal readers for visually impaired people (11%) and communicators at work (7%).

The ES classifies support into five elements. Of those, Special Aids and Equipment, Adaptations to Premises

and Equipment and Support Workers are more likely to support public sector users, while Travel to Work and Communicator Support at Interview are more likely to support users in the private sector.

Over half of users receive more than one element of support; and 17 per cent three or more. Private and independent sector employees are somewhat more likely than those in the public sector to receive several elements. Users with sensory impairments are more likely than those with other conditions or impairments to receive more than one support element.

There are striking differences in support according to occupational status. One third of users of human support (Support Workers and Communicator Support at Interview) work in professional jobs compared with one

fifth of users of environmental adaptations (Adaptations to Premises and Equipment and Special Aids and Equipment) One third of users of the latter work in administrative or secretarial occupations compared with one in seven of those receiving human support. Travel to Work users are least likely to work in professional and senior managerial jobs.

Types of support differ according to impairment. Half of Support Worker users have a visual impairment and a further quarter have a hearing impairment. Around one half of users of environmental adaptations and around four in ten users of Travel to Work have a musculo-skeletal impairment. Over one third of Travel to Work users have a visual impairment.

Awareness of Access to Work

The great majority of users first heard about Access to Work through employers and people at work or through the ES and other public agencies. Promotional material was mentioned by only three per cent, and disabled people's organisations by six per cent. One in three feel they missed out by not using Access to Work earlier. Users called for the existence of the programme to be more widely known among the general public and not just among those who advise potential users.

Users are mostly unaware of what else Access to Work can offer. They advocate fuller information about the range of options being made available to potential users and employers before

an application is made and support agreed

Service provided by DST staff

Users value advisers who listen to users, understand their needs, explain options available, put effort into getting what is needed and keep them informed of progress. Nine out of ten users are satisfied with the privacy of their discussions with their adviser, and users praise advisers who are discreet about their impairment and its effects. Some feel DST staff could be more sensitive to, and understanding of, the needs of disabled people. Users are least satisfied with advisers' explanation of options to meet users' needs and their readiness to keep users informed of decisions and what happens next. Opinions of DST staff vary according to element of support, with users of human support rating their adviser's handling of their application less highly.

Only one in four survey respondents were followed up within one month of getting their support. Over half of those not contacted would have liked someone to get in touch. Follow-up is seen as important to ensure that the support agreed is in place. Recipients of Adaptations to Premises and Equipment and Support Worker support are more likely to want follow-up contact, and Special Aids and Equipment recipients also report high levels of unmet need for follow-up. Users want contact to check that they are using equipment to best advantage or to find new solutions.

experience of Access to Work as better than 'fair'

Opinions also vary according to disabling complaint reported. Users with a hearing impairment are most likely to say that Access to Work meets their needs 'a little' or 'not at all' and most likely to question the usefulness of Access to Work; and one in three rate Access to Work overall as no better than 'fair'

Half of the users reporting musculo-skeletal complaints say that their needs are met 'completely' while most users reporting visual impairments and mental health problems say that Access to Work meets their needs 'mostly'. Users with mental health problems and visually impaired users are more likely to say that they 'could not work without it' while those with musculo-skeletal complaints are more likely to say that Access to Work helps 'a great deal'.

Respondents with musculo-skeletal complaints and mental health problems rate Access to Work overall most highly, while almost one in four visually impaired users rate it as no better than 'fair'.

1 Introduction

The Access to Work programme is designed for people with long-term health conditions or impairments who need extra practical support to take up work or do their job. The programme offers advice on solutions to their needs and helps with the costs

Employment Service (ES) staff attached to Disability Service Teams (DSTs) provide advice and guidance to individuals applying to the programme. They assess what is required to meet individual needs, sometimes drawing on specialist advice.

Employers, or the users themselves in the case of some types of support, obtain whatever has been agreed and approved by the DST. Employers, or users in some cases, pay for the provision, and the costs, with some exceptions, are reimbursed by Access to Work in full or in part.

The Access to Work programme can pay towards three broad types of provision:

- physical and environmental aids and adaptations: such as ergonomic furniture and equipment; accessible computer equipment and software; and alterations to workplace premises
- human support: for assistance on the job or in getting to work, and for communication at a job interview
- fares for travel to work.

In 2000 the ES inaugurated a review of the Access to Work programme. As part of that review, ES commissioned the national study of users' views and experiences of Access to Work, reported here.

The main aim of the study was to identify users' views of what works well and where they perceive room for improvement. The ES was interested in particular in learning from users their views of the responsiveness of DST staff to users' needs, *communication about the progress of applications and the time taken for support to be provided*. A secondary aim of the study was to help the ES with the development of more consistent approaches to routine monitoring of user satisfaction at Regional level, allowing for aggregation of results across the country.

The study of users' views of Access to Work was designed and carried out by the Disability Services Research Partnership, a consortium of independent research organisations working in partnership with the ES under a three year Framework Agreement. Two of the four research organisations in the partnership carried out the study: the Social Policy Research Unit at the University of York (the lead organisation) and the Social Research Division of Ipsos-RSL.

1.1 Background

Access to Work is open to people who are disabled as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and also to those not covered by the Act because their disability affects them only at work. They must be in need of support to take up, or progress in, work on an equal basis with non-disabled colleagues.

The Access to Work programme was introduced in 1994. It replaced several separate Department of Employment schemes. Some of these schemes were set up at the end of World War II: to provide assistance with fares to work; and equipment and mobility aids initially reflecting the needs of war-injured people but expanding to encompass specialised technology (Roulstone, 1998). Further schemes giving grants towards the cost of adapting premises and workplace equipment and for personal readers for visually impaired people in paid work were introduced in 1977 and 1982 respectively (Employment Department, 1990).

Access to Work brought these schemes together under one roof, including assistance for communicator support at interview for people who are deaf or have a hearing impairment and for adaptations to cars for getting to work. The new integrated programme also expanded the range of assistance to include support workers on the job or in getting to work. Accordingly, Access to Work offers the flexibility to meet an individual's needs within a single service. For example, under Access to Work a visually impaired person may receive both a personal reader and computer equipment within a single scheme.

For administrative purposes, the ES records support provided in terms of five types of provision, reflecting the origins of the programme, and we use these categories for the purpose of analysis in this study:

- Special Aids or Equipment (SAE) in the workplace
- Alterations to Premises and Equipment (APE) in the workplace
- Travel to Work (TW): help with taxis fares or other transport costs if an individual cannot use public transport to get to work
- Support Worker (SW) for assistance at work or in getting to and from work
- Communicator Support at Interview (CSI) for people who are deaf or have a hearing impairment.

The programme has undergone a number of changes since its inception. Originally, there was no charge to the employer (except where the help provided brought wider benefits to an employer's business). In June 1996 cost-sharing was introduced in certain circumstances and for certain elements of support. In February 2000 the requirement for the employer to pay towards the costs of support worker for an existing employee was removed.

1.2 Studies of users' views of Access to Work

Prior to this study, two research evaluations of the programme had been carried out on behalf of the ES. Both surveyed Access to Work recipients, employers and ES managers and staff. The first was carried out in 1995, around a year after the inception of the programme (Beinart *et al.*, 1996; Beinart, 1997a) and the second in 1997 after cost-sharing was introduced (Hillage *et al.*, 1998). In both studies, the surveys of users focussed more on describing patterns of use of Access to Work than on users' experiences of the programme, though users were asked some questions about their satisfaction with the service. In addition, a survey of PACT clients (DSTs were previously called PACTs) provided some information about use of Access to Work (Beinart, 1997b).

In the voluntary sector, disability organisations have conducted investigations into users' experiences of Access to Work (for example, RNIB/RADAR, 1995; RADAR, 2000) but views reported were not representative of the population of Access to Work users, depending on monitoring by disability organisations or volunteered reports from users.

There are few qualitative studies of users' views of Access to Work (excepting that carried out for the ES by Legard *et al.*, 1995, as a preliminary to the 1995 study). However, we gained valuable qualitative information on the user perspective from the unpublished report of the focus group of Access to Work users, mainly from disability organisations, convened for the ES in May 2000 by Sue Maynard Campbell. Some accounts written by users themselves also shed light on their experiences of the programme (for example, Glickman, 1996) and information on users' experiences is reported in studies addressing wider topics (Barnes *et al.*, 1998, Thornton and Vernon, 1998; Simkiss *et al.*, 1998, Baker *et al.*, 2000).

All these studies and reports were valuable resources for the research team in designing the research instruments to carry out this study of users' views of Access to Work.

1.3 The study

There were two components to the study:

- a national survey comprising face-to-face interviews with 628 people who were using Access to Work in January and February 2000
- a follow-up qualitative study of 20 people interviewed in the national survey.

The research methods are outlined briefly here; a full account is at Appendix C.

1.3.1 The national survey

To ensure that the survey was representative of all Access to Work users, in terms of the types of support they received, we first needed to conduct a census. The census captured those using Access to Work in the first two months of 2000, and included both those recorded during that period as having applied for Access to Work (both first-time and longer-term users) and also those receiving on-going support as indicated by payments having been made for their support during that period. (Thus, comparisons should not be made with the findings from the two previous Access to Work surveys commissioned by the ES, as they surveyed applicants only and were not representative of all Access to Work users.) Some census data are given at Appendix B. Our further analysis of the census data is not reported here.

A letter from the ES (shown in Appendix D) was sent in advance to 865 users selected from the 5306 in the census. Recipients were invited to contact the survey manager should they not wish to take part, and 42 elected not to take part. In all, 628 face-to-face interviews were achieved, rather under our target of 640, a response rate of 76 per cent of the available sample. Fieldwork took place over a six week period from late July to the second week of September 2000.

The interview and questionnaire

The questionnaire scope and content were informed by findings from the earlier research with Access to Work users and users' accounts of their experiences of Access to Work described above, as well as review of the literature on assessing user satisfaction with services. So that the design might be informed directly by users' perspectives and priorities, a small 'panel' of Access to Work users was recruited. Panel members identified the questions that they felt had to be asked, and advised on question format, wording and order.

Face-to-face interviews, using the CAPI (computer-aided personal interview) method, were designed to take an average of 40 minutes. Most questions required interviewees to select from a prepared list of alternative answers; some follow-up questions asked them to explain their response. Other questions were 'open-ended', giving users the opportunity to use their own words. The questionnaire is at Appendix D.

1.3.2 The qualitative study

To obtain further insights into the experience of using Access to Work, and to inform the development of a nationally consistent method of monitoring users' views, we followed up a sub-sample of respondents to the national survey. Twenty users, in two Regions, were sampled to reflect variation in opinion of the service received and a breadth of experience of Access to Work support. An outline of the topics covered is found in Section C.10 in the appendices.

1.4 Structure of the report

- Chapter 2 reports information gathered from the national survey on users' personal characteristics, employment situation, occupation and health condition or impairment. This information is used throughout the report to explore patterns of use of, and opinions about, Access to Work
- Chapter 3 describes the types of support survey respondents had agreed for them through Access to Work, and variation in use. Drawing also on the qualitative study it reports users' views of the adequacy of certain types of support.
- Chapter 4 reports on how users heard about Access to Work and their awareness of the range of support the programme can offer.
- Chapter 5 focusses on users' opinions of the DST staff who handled their application and also reports users' experiences of, and need for, follow-up.
- Chapter 6 reports on receipt of specialist advice arranged by the DST: what types of advice users received, how they rated their specialist adviser and their experiences of receiving such advice.
- Chapter 7 reports on the employers' role and users' opinions of their employer's involvement in the process of getting Access to Work support.
- Chapter 8 turns to the administration of Access to Work. It looks at survey respondents' opinions of the time taken for their support to be provided. Drawing also on the qualitative study, it reflects users' understanding of the reasons for extended waiting periods and the impact of delay on them. The chapter concludes by looking at views expressed on the application and claims procedures.
- Chapter 9 assesses users' overall opinions of Access to Work:
 - how far Access to Work met their requirements at work (its appropriateness)
 - how far Access to Work had enabled them to work (its usefulness)
 - their overall experience of using Access to Work (its acceptability).
- Chapter 10 provides guidance on designing routine monitoring of users' views of Access to Work, based on findings from the qualitative study and the user Panel.

2 Access to Work Users

The purpose of the national survey was not to collect routine information on the characteristics of those receiving support from Access to Work. Rather, it focussed on users' views of the programme, drawing on their experiences of getting and using the different types of support. In order to explore patterns of opinion about the different aspects of the programme, we asked survey respondents several questions about their employment situation and, at the end of the interview, three brief questions about age, ethnic group and long-term health conditions or impairments. This information was also used to explore the patterns of use of the different types of Access to Work support described in Chapter 3.

2.1 Age, gender and ethnicity

Table 2.1 shows there were more female respondents than male in the survey - 356 women and 272 men - and that equal proportions of women and men were aged 25 to 44 (55%) and 45 to 64 (38%). As shown in Appendix C (Table C.5) the age profile of the 628 survey respondents is identical to that of the Census from which the sample was drawn and the match in terms of gender is within the normal ± 3 per cent confidence limit for samples of this size.

Table 2.1 Distribution of respondents by age and gender¹

<i>Age group</i>	<i>Women (%)</i>	<i>Men (%)</i>	<i>All (%)</i>
16 to 24 years	6	5	6
25 to 44 years	55	55	55
45 to 64 years	38	38	38
65 years or over	0	1	1
Base all respondents	356	272	628

Almost nine out of ten (89%) identified themselves as belonging to the 'White - British' ethnic group. The largest minority ethnic groups were Indian (3%) and

¹ In all tables the actual number of respondents in the sample is shown as the base for the calculation of percentages. The percentages have been adjusted to reflect the distributions that would have been obtained if all the individuals in the census, from which the sample was drawn, had been interviewed. Percentages may sum to 99 or 101 because of rounding. Values less than 0.5 are shown as 0. Cells with no cases are shown by —. Base numbers may vary because of missing data. Where the number of cases varies due to differing response rates to multiple questions, the smaller base number is shown.

Pakistani (2%), with Black Caribbean (1%), Black African (1%) and White - Irish (1%) also represented (Table A 2 1 in the appendices).

2.2 Employment situation

Most respondents were in paid work at the time of their only or most recent application for Access to Work (91%).² The vast majority were also in paid work, including those temporarily off sick, when interviewed for this survey (95%). (Table A.2.2 in the appendices shows the employment situation at time of interview.)

Of those in paid work at the time of interview around nine out of ten (91%) worked as employees. The remainder worked as self-employed: most (73%) worked on their own account or with a business partner only; 15 per cent employed one person; and the remaining 12 per cent had between two and six employees.

2.2.1 Hours of work

Most users in paid work were working full time. Striking differences are evident in the amounts of time spent working by employees and the self-employed. Just over half of employees (57%) worked between 30 and 39 hours a week, a traditional working week; a further 18 per cent worked longer hours. By comparison, almost half the self-employed (49%) worked 40 hours or more a week with fewer than one in ten (9%) working between 30 and 39 hours a week. However more self-employed than employed worked part-time: 34 per cent and 26 per cent respectively worked under 30 hours a week.

2.2.2 Supported employment

Employees were asked whether they were in supported or sheltered employment. One in eight employees (12%) worked in supported employment, mostly in ordinary workplaces rather than in a Remploy factory or sheltered workshop.³

2.2.3 Type of employer

More employees worked in the public sector (53%) than in the private and independent sectors combined (47%). Table 2.2 shows in more detail the distribution of employees across different public sector bodies. Employees in local authorities and establishments, including health and education, are more widely represented than those in central government and the Civil Service.

² Note that 42 per cent of survey respondents had applied for Access to Work support more than once (Table A.3 2 in the appendices)

³ The terms used to explain supported or sheltered employment to respondents are given in the endnote to the survey questionnaire at Appendix D.

Table 2.2 Organisations in which employees worked by gender

<i>Type of organisation</i>	<i>Women %</i>	<i>Men %</i>	<i>All %</i>
Private firm or business	25	42	32
Local government or council	26	20	24
Central government or Civil Service	18	10	15
Charity, voluntary organisation or trust	10	15	12
Health authority or NHS trust	7	2	5
Local authority controlled school or college	5	2	4
University or further education college	4	5	4
Police / fire service	1	1	1
Other public service	2	1	2
Other	4	3	3
<i>All public sector</i>	<i>62</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>53</i>
Base: all employees	323	227	550

Apart from further and higher education, women predominate in all public service organisations; overall, 62 per cent of women and 40 per cent of men employees worked in the public sector. By comparison, men are more likely to be employed not only in private firms or businesses but also in the charitable or independent sector.

Four out of ten employees (42%) belonged to a workforce on the same site of fewer than 50 workers and a further 13 per cent worked alongside between 50 and 99 workers; almost one in four (23%) worked in establishments with 500 or more employees.

2.2.4 Occupation

Access to Work users worked predominantly in non-manual, white collar or professional jobs which often require good educational qualifications, professional training, or both, and are associated with higher earnings, career progression and often greater job security. The broad occupational classifications are given in Table 2.3.

Overall, over four in ten (41%) worked in professional jobs. Rather under three in ten (28%) worked as senior managers or professionals; in the latter group 'teaching and research' and 'business and public service' professionals predominated (8% in each classification). A further 13 per cent were 'associate professionals', nearly half of whom were in health and social welfare jobs.

One in three (33%) worked in administrative, secretarial and related occupations. Skilled trades, caring and other personal service, and sales or customer service jobs were held by a further 15 per cent of respondents (5% in each classification), and one in ten respondents were machine operatives/drivers or in 'elementary' occupations

Table 2.3 Standard Occupational Classification by gender

<i>Standard Occupational Classification</i>	<i>Women (%)</i>	<i>Men (%)</i>	<i>All (%)</i>
Managers/Senior	6	11	8
Professional	18	22	20
Associate Professional	14	11	13
Administrative/Secretarial	42	22	33
Skilled Trades	1	10	5
Personal Service	6	4	5
Sales/Customer Service	5	5	5
Process/Plant/Machine	2	4	3
Elementary	5	9	7
Not known	1	3	2
Base: respondents in paid work* (employees or self-employed)	336	260	596

* This base reflects the fact that those respondents not in the labour force or not waiting to take up a job already obtained (n=35) were not asked about their most recent paid employment (if any)

Table 2.3 shows further that more women than men were employed in 'administrative/secretarial' and 'associate professional' jobs. By comparison, men are more likely to have senior managerial or 'professional' positions or to work in 'skilled trades', 'process/plant/machine' and 'elementary' jobs. Four out of five women (80%) worked in professional or administrative/secretarial jobs.

2.3 Reported 'long-term health problem, disability or impairment'

Respondents were asked to state their 'long-term health problem, disability or impairment' at the time of their only or most recent application for Access to Work support, and were prompted by the interviewer to report more than one condition.⁴

Table 2.4 shows that the most commonly reported impairments were those connected with the back or neck, legs or feet and arms or hands (74% of all

⁴ Answers were coded according to a standard code-frame, with some additional categories

impairments), which may affect mobility. Problems connected with the back or neck and arms or hands constituted nearly half of impairments reported (48%). Sensory impairments were reported by 45 per cent of respondents. Few users reported mental health problems, severe learning difficulties, dyslexia or specific learning difficulties.

Table 2.4 Disabling complaints by gender*

<i>Disabling complaint</i>	<i>Women (%)</i>	<i>Men (%)</i>	<i>All (%)</i>
Difficulty in seeing	22	42	30
Problems or disabilities (including arthritis or rheumatism) connected with the back or neck	35	19	28
Problems or disabilities (including arthritis or rheumatism) connected with the legs or feet	29	22	26
Problems or disabilities (including arthritis or rheumatism) connected with the arms or hands	23	16	20
Difficulty in hearing	15	15	15
Progressive illness not included elsewhere (eg cancer not included elsewhere, Multiple Sclerosis, symptomatic HIV, Parkinson's Disease, Muscular Dystrophy)	8	6	7
Anxiety, depression, phobia or other nervous illness	4	7	5
Heart, blood pressure or blood circulation problems	3	6	4
Specific learning difficulties (excluding dyslexia)	2	5	4
Chest or breathing problems, asthma, bronchitis	4	2	3
Epilepsy	2	5	3
Cerebral Palsy	3	2	3
Dyslexia	2	3	2
Severe learning difficulties (mental handicap)	1	3	2
Stomach, liver, kidney or digestive problems	2	1	2
Spina Bifida	2	-	1
Diabetes	1	1	1
Speech difficulties	1	1	1
Skin conditions, allergies	0	1	0
Severe disfigurement	1	-	0
Other	5	4	5
Base all respondents	356	272	628

* percentages sum to more than 100 because some respondents reported more than one complaint

We should not overlook the finding that nearly four in ten Access to Work users reported more than one disabling complaint, and that nearly three in ten reported both musculo-skeletal and other complaints (34% women and 24% men) (Table A 2.3 in the appendices.)

As Table 2.5 shows, overall more than four in ten users (43%) had a musculo-skeletal complaint. Visual impairment is the next most commonly reported impairment (30%), followed by hearing impairment (15%). Five per cent reported a mental health problem. Male users are more likely than women to report a visual impairment, and women are more likely than men to have a musculo-skeletal complaint

Table 2.5 Four types of disabling complaint by gender*

<i>Disabling complaint</i>	<i>Women (%)</i>	<i>Men (%)</i>	<i>All (%)</i>
Musculo-skeletal complaints	51	32	43
Eye complaints	22	42	30
Ear complaints	15	15	15
Mental health problems	4	7	5
Base: all respondents	356	272	628

* percentages do not sum to 100 because some respondents reported other complaints not shown here

As we will see in the following chapter, the Access to Work programme provides certain types of support specifically to meet the needs of visually impaired and hearing impaired people, as well as those with musculo-skeletal complaints. This explains, in part, the raised prevalence of visual and hearing impairments among Access to Work users compared with the overall economically active disabled population.

2.4 Key points

- Most users were in paid work at the time of their last application to Access to Work; and 95 per cent were in paid work at the time of the survey interview. Nine out of ten worked as employees.
- More employees worked in the public sector (53%) than in the private and independent sectors combined (47%), and women predominate in the public sector.
- One in eight employees (12%) worked in supported employment.

-
- Access to Work users worked predominantly in non-manual, white collar and professional jobs. Four in ten worked in professional jobs and a further one in three in administrative, secretarial and related occupations. Four out of five women were in professional or administrative/secretarial jobs.
 - More than four in ten users (43%) had a musculo-skeletal impairment. Visual impairment is the next most commonly reported impairment (30%) followed by hearing impairment (15%).
 - Few users reported mental health problems, severe learning difficulties, dyslexia or specific learning difficulties.

3 Access to Work Support

Access to Work offers people in paid work financial assistance for workplace equipment, adaptations to the workplace, travel to work, and for a support worker to assist on the job and in getting to work. It also pays for communicator support at a job interview. This chapter reports on the use of these different types of provision by respondents to the national survey. It then moves on to report their views of the adequacy of certain of these types of support.

3.1 Types of support

In the survey we asked respondents about support received through Access to Work that related to their current paid employment, or job they were waiting to take up. If they were not in work at the time of the interview we asked about their most recent job, or job interview in the case of users of communicator support at interview. It should be noted that, although we did not ask them specifically (excepting users of communicator support at interview), some respondents would have had experience of Access to Work support in earlier jobs or job applications, as suggested by the finding that over one third (35%) said they had first applied before 1997 and 17 per cent had made more than two applications. (Tables A.3.1 and A.3.2 in the appendices)

Respondents were asked which of the types of support listed in Table 3.1 had been agreed or arranged for them in relation to their Access to Work supported job. They were also asked which of those had been agreed or arranged in relation to their most recent - or only - application.

Table 3.1 shows that nearly two thirds (64%) cited specially provided equipment or furniture and 16 per cent alterations to existing equipment. We asked about training to use new equipment and found around one in five respondents (21%) reporting some. Only eight per cent reported alterations to the workplace. Three per cent reported support with adaptations to their own vehicle

Turning to human support, as opposed to environmental adaptations, we found over one in ten (11%) had a personal reader for someone who is blind, and seven per cent a communicator or sign language interpreter at work. A support worker was reported by 16 per cent (Support workers' roles are reported in Section 3.4.2 below.)

Help with fares for travel to work was reported by 44 per cent of respondents.

Table 3.1 Types of support agreed/arranged through Access to Work*

<i>Type of support received</i>	<i>Relating to AtW supported job</i> %	<i>From only or most recent application</i> %
Specially provided equipment or furniture (SAE)	64	53
Travel to work fares (TW)	44	38
Training to use new equipment	21	16
Alterations to existing equipment (APE)	16	10
Support worker (SW)	16	12
Personal reader (SW)	11	7
Alterations to building (APE)	8	5
Communicator or sign language interpreter at work (SW)	7	6
Communicator or sign language interpreter at interview (CSI)	5	4
Adaptations to own vehicle (APE)	3	2
Base: all respondents	628	628

* percentages sum to more than 100 because some respondents received more than one kind of support

We classified these results into ES administrative categories or 'elements' (in brackets in Table 3.1) as shown in Table 3.2.⁵

Table 3.2 Support elements agreed/arranged through Access to Work*

<i>ES categories of AtW support</i>	<i>Relating to AtW supported job</i> %	<i>From only or most recent application</i> %
Special Aids and Equipment (SAE)	64	53
Travel to Work (TW)	44	38
Support Worker (SW)	27	12
Adaptations to Premises and Equipment (APE)	23	16
Communicator Support at Interview (CSI)	5	4
Base: all respondents	628	628

* percentages sum to more than 100 because some respondents received support under more than one ES category

⁵ 'Training to use new equipment' is not an ES category. The small number of cases of 'Adaptations to own vehicle' is included in Adaptations to Premises and Equipment (APE), although classified by the Employment Service as Travel to Work (TW), because we have developed an analytical distinction between environmental adaptations and human support.

3.1.1 Number of types of support received

It is evident from the findings presented in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 that some users receive a package of support through Access to Work and not just one type or element of provision. Using the five ES categories, just over half of users (53%) receive more than one element of support, 30 per cent receive two and 17 per cent three or more. (Comparable figures from users' only or most recent application for Access to Work are 74 per cent, 20 per cent and six per cent respectively.) Table A.3.3 in the appendices shows how elements of support combine in a variety of ways, reflecting the diversity of individuals' employment-related needs.

As already noted, some respondents to the survey had made more than one application to Access to Work: nearly one in four (24%) had made two applications; and 17 per cent had applied more than twice (Table A.3.2 in the appendices). The number of supports that users in the survey received increases systematically with the number of applications they have made. The association is statistically significant whether support is defined according to the five ES Access to Work elements (as in Table 3.2) or the ten types of support distinguished in this survey and described in Table 3.1. This finding suggests that users already 'in the system' benefit from extensions to their support package, though it should be noted that, because of the sample design (see Appendix C), users of multiple elements of support are likely to be over-represented relative to those who may have had to give up paid work because their support needs were not adequately addressed or those who stayed in paid work without requiring further support.

3.1.2 Support alongside Access to Work

Respondents in paid work were asked if, at the time of the interview, they used any other special equipment, assistance or arrangement at work or for getting to or from work; that is, anything not provided under Access to Work. One in five (20%) said that they did. They were found to be more likely than those respondents who received only Access to Work support to be receiving APE, SAE and SW through Access to Work. Respondents were not asked to detail the other supports they used but some users in the qualitative study said employers had made building alterations or purchased computers, keyboards and monitors adapted to users' needs.

3.2 Variation in types of support

In Chapter 2 we described some characteristics of survey respondents. In this section we explore how types of support received under Access to Work relate to those characteristics.

3.2.1 Age

We found that receipt of Access to Work elements does not vary with age, except that CSI users are younger on average than those receiving other elements of support

3.2.2 Employment situation

We explored differences in weekly working hours according to type of support received. Differences were small but CSI recipients were somewhat more likely to be in full-time work (as shown in Table A.3.4 in the appendices).

Although, as shown in Chapter 2 (Table 2.2), more Access to Work recipients worked in the public than in the private and independent sectors combined, the difference is small and not statistically significant. Variations between employment sectors in the type of Access to Work provision are somewhat wider: SAE, APE and SW are more likely to support public sector workers; by comparison, TW is more likely to support employees in the private/independent sector, more so CSI (Table A.3.5 in the appendices.)

Private/independent sector employees are somewhat more likely than those in the public sector to receive several ES elements of support. Although there is little difference between the sectors in the proportions receiving at least two elements, 19 per cent of private/independent sector employees compared with 14 per cent of their public sector counterparts were receiving three or more different Access to Work elements

As noted in section 2.2.2, no more than one in eight Access to Work users were in supported employment. TW, and to a lesser extent APE, were somewhat more likely than other Access to Work elements to assist those in supported employment (Table A.3.6 in the appendices.)

3.2.3 Occupation

Different elements of Access to Work support are associated with variations in the distribution of occupations. SW users, for example, were predominantly in 'professional' occupations while APE users were most likely to have 'administrative/secretarial' jobs. The occupations of SAE users more or less follow the overall distribution but with a stronger representation of white collar or professional workers. CSI users were broadly distributed across the range of occupational categories described in the classification used here; white collar or professional jobs were represented, but more than one in five worked in manufacturing and unskilled jobs described as 'process/plant/machine' and 'elementary' occupations. By comparison, TW users were least likely to work in professional and senior managerial occupations. (Table A.3.7 in the appendices)

When a distinction is drawn between the human support provided (SW or CSI or both) and environmental adaptations (SAE or APE or both) a striking difference in the distribution of occupational groups is observed, as shown in Table 3.3. One third of users receiving environmental adaptations work in administrative/secretarial occupations while one third of those who receive human support work in jobs described as professional. More users of human support work in skilled trades and personal service whereas those who receive environmental adaptations are more likely to work in sales/customer service or elementary jobs.

Table 3.3 Standard Occupational Classification by environmental adaptations (SAE/APE) and human support (SW/CSI)*

<i>Standard Occupational Classification</i>	<i>Environmental adaptations (%)</i>	<i>Human Support (%)</i>	<i>All (%)</i>
Managers/Senior	8	11	8
Professional	19	34	20
Associate Professional	13	14	13
Administrative/Secretarial	35	14	33
Skilled Trades	4	9	5
Personal Service	5	9	5
Sales/Customer Service	5	1	5
Process/Plant/Machine	2	3	3
Elementary	6	2	7
Not known	2	2	2
Base: respondents employed or self-employed	517	189	593

* Note both categories omit TW

The number of elements received differs according to occupation. The evidence suggests that higher ranked occupations have more Access to Work elements than those of a lower rank:

- more than half of those in occupations described as 'manager/senior' (52%) or 'professional' (59%) have two or more elements
- those in personal service are also more likely to have multiple elements (64%)
- most of those in 'sales/customer service' (71%), 'process/plant/machine' (73%) or 'elementary' occupations (97%) currently receive only one Access to Work element

3.2.4 Disabling complaint

We explored the association between the different Access to Work support elements and the long-term health condition, disability or impairment identified by users.

SW and CSI are predominantly associated with sensory impairments. Half of those with a support worker have a visual impairment and a further quarter (26%) have a hearing impairment. Almost all CSI support goes to those with a hearing impairment. SAE, TW and APE chiefly support those with musculo-skeletal or visual impairments, with around seven out of ten users of these elements having those impairments. Table 3.4 shows the distribution of support by four types of disabling complaint.

Table 3.4 Four types of disabling complaint by element of support*

<i>Disabling complaint</i>	<i>AtW element received</i>					<i>All %</i>
	<i>SAE %</i>	<i>TW %</i>	<i>SW %</i>	<i>APE %</i>	<i>CSI %</i>	
Musculo-skeletal complaints	48	42	20	47	1	43
Eye complaints	33	32	50	28	6	30
Ear complaints	15	4	26	12	94	15
Mental health problems	4	7	2	6	-	5
Base: all respondents	410	234	193	172	45	628

* percentages do not sum to 100 because some respondents reported other complaints not shown here

Table 3.5 shows that having other complaints, whether singly or in combination, is associated with use of TW and to a lesser extent with APE.

Table 3.5 Disabling complaint by element of support

<i>Disabling complaint</i>	<i>AtW element received</i>					<i>All %</i>
	<i>SAE %</i>	<i>TW %</i>	<i>SW %</i>	<i>APE %</i>	<i>CSI %</i>	
Eye complaints only	25	21	36	21	-	22
Musculo-skeletal complaints only	16	8	4	10	-	13
Ear complaints only	11	0	21	9	87	11
Other complaints only	10	21	12	15	3	14
Musculo-skeletal and other complaints	32	34	16	37	1	29
Two or more complaints (other combinations)	7	15	11	8	9	10
Base: all respondents	410	234	193	172	45	628

Users with sensory impairments are more likely than those with other disabling complaints to receive more than one ES element of support

- 63 per cent of those with a visual impairment and 52 per cent of those with a hearing impairment receive at least two different Access to Work elements. This compares with 41 per cent of those with musculo-skeletal complaints and 39 per cent of those reporting mental health problems
- Users with hearing impairments are most likely to have the more complex packages of provision: 26 per cent receive three or more Access to Work elements compared with 21 per cent of those with visual impairments and 12 to 15 per cent of those with musculo-skeletal complaints or mental health problems.

Users with a visual impairment are also more likely than other respondents to use other supports in work or for getting to work in addition to those provided under Access to Work (43% compared with 27%).

3.3 Adequacy of support

In this section we examine use of some types of support and users' views of how well the support continues to meet their needs. We look first at human support; that is, communicator or sign language interpreter and support worker provision. We then look at adaptations to premises and equipment. Finally, we report on special aids and equipment.

3.3.1 Communicator or sign language interpreter for a job interview

In practice, communication support at interview (CSI) is provided for a discrete number of occasions until the individual obtains a job. As a consequence, very few Access to Work users are receiving this kind of assistance at any one time. In the survey, 37 respondents received CSI with their only or most recent application. Of these, 31 (87%) were in paid work at the time of interview compared with 27 (83%) at the time of their application, suggesting that most CSI provision is used to move between jobs or for career progression rather than to move from unemployment to paid work. Altogether 54 respondents (5%) had received CSI at one time or another.

As Figure 3.1 shows, more than half of those who had ever received CSI described such provision as 'very good' or 'excellent'. One in six described the arrangements for CSI as no better than 'fair'; over half the reasons given related to suitability of the sign language interpreter, with low grade qualifications and incompatible methods of signing singled out, and a further three survey respondents reported failure to provide a sign language interpreter.

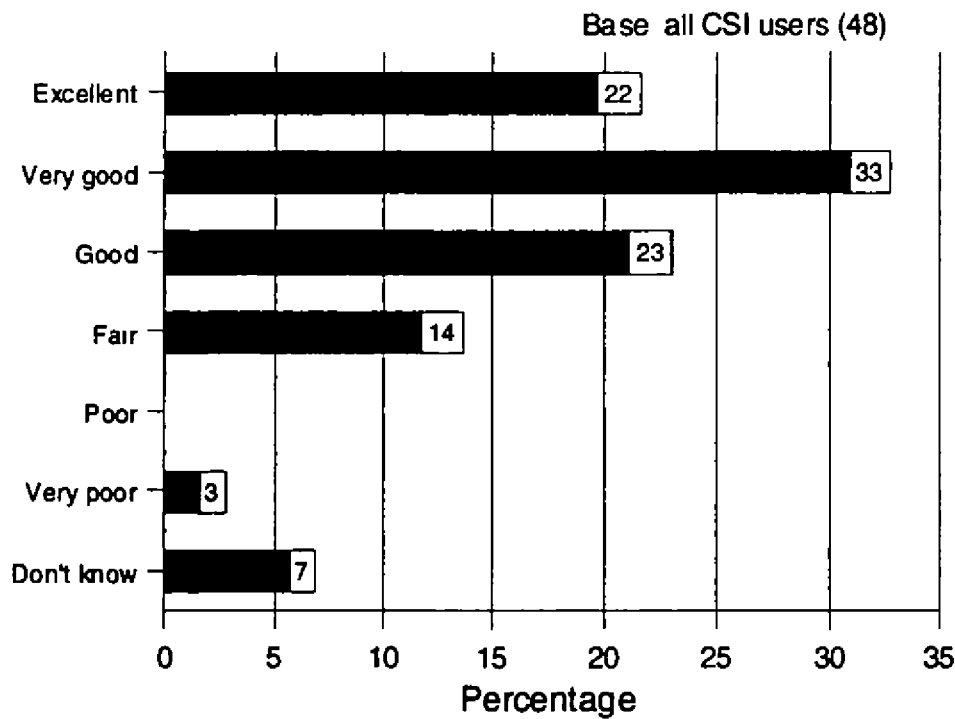


Figure 3.1 Users' rating of CSI provision

3.3.2 Support workers

Three types of support worker are available through Access to Work:

- Communicator or sign language interpreter at work
- Personal reader at work for someone who is visually impaired
- Support worker to assist someone on the job or to get to and from work.

Those who had a support worker in the third category were asked to describe what assistance they provided. Table 3.6 summarises their responses. Most support workers acted as a job aide, doing some parts of the job with or for the user. Enabling users' communication and mobility are also key aspects of a support worker's role.

Table 3.6 The support workers' role

<i>What the support worker does</i>	<i>Per cent*</i>
Job aide does parts of the job with/for user	55
Reads for the user	39
Note-taker helps user communicate at meetings	30
Drives user during the working day	23
Drives user to and from work	22
Escorts user to and from work (other than driving)	13
Job coach: shows user how to do the job	7
Base all users with a support worker	76

* percentages sum to more than 100 because some support workers have multiple roles.

Survey respondents were asked how many hours of human support a week they usually received. The results in Table 3.7 indicate that for a small minority, especially CSI users, human support is not provided regularly every week. Thirty-eight per cent of users of communicator or sign language interpreters at work said they had support for less than six hours a week, compared with 27 per cent of those with a personal reader and 16 per cent of those with a support worker.

Table 3.7 Hours of human support per week

<i>Number of hours</i>	<i>Communicator/sign language interpreter at work %</i>	<i>Support worker %</i>	<i>Personal reader %</i>
Less than 6	38	16	27
6 to 9	7	20	19
10 to 15	8	17	29
16 to 20	10	10	13
21 to 25		4	2
26 to 30		6	2
31 to 35	11	2	-
36 to 40		5	-
41 or more		3	2
Varies	11	1	2
When required	3	2	-
Other	9	11	5
Can't recall	3	3	0
Base number of users	49	90	60

When asked whether those hours were sufficient to meet their current needs, the great majority said that their support was available for enough or around the right number of hours but this left a sizeable minority who felt that 'not enough' hours were provided. As shown in Figure 3.2, those with a communicator or sign language interpreter at work were least satisfied with the amount of time allocated.

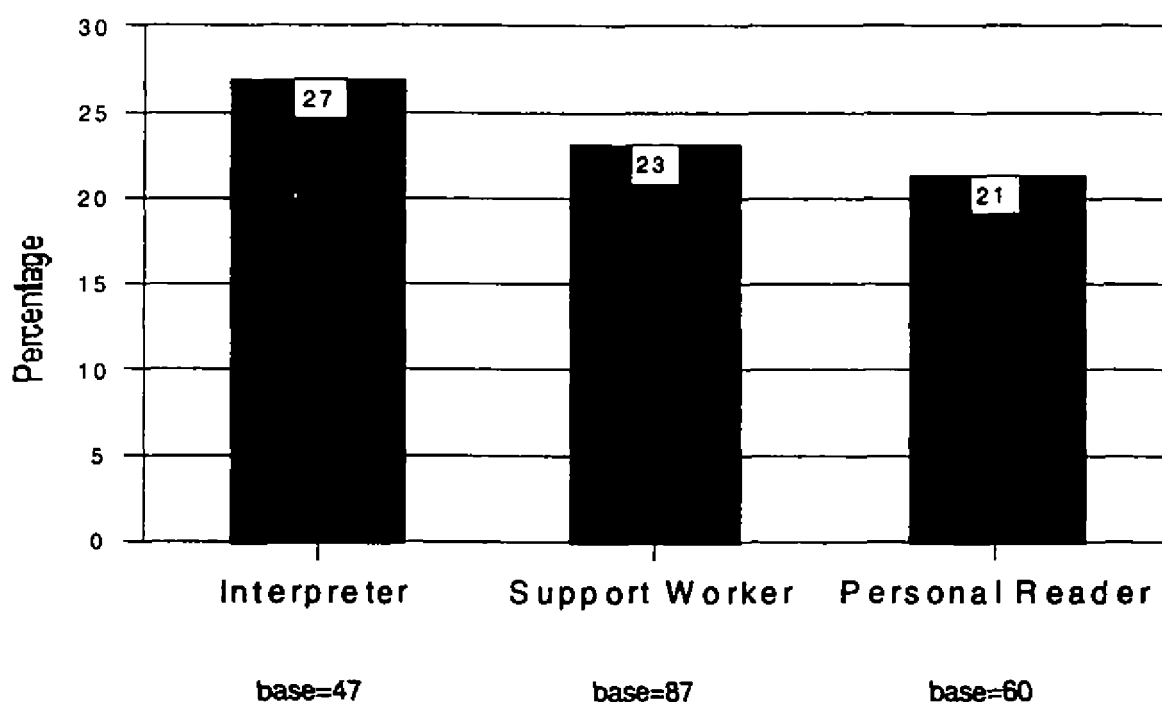


Figure 3.2 Users reporting 'not enough' hours a week of human support

3.3.3 Adaptations to premises and equipment

Altogether 133 respondents currently in paid work had applied through Access to Work for alterations to the equipment or furniture they used or to the building where they worked and in all cases these had been completed in full by the time of the survey. This group also includes those respondents who used a company vehicle that had been adapted through Access to Work plus 16 individuals who had received money to complete adaptations to their own car or van

We do not know precisely when these adaptations were completed but more than three out of four rated the extent to which they meet their continuing needs at work as 'good', 'very good' or 'excellent'. Most of the remainder were unable to express an opinion or felt the question was inappropriate because they no longer used or required the item in question (Figure 3.3).

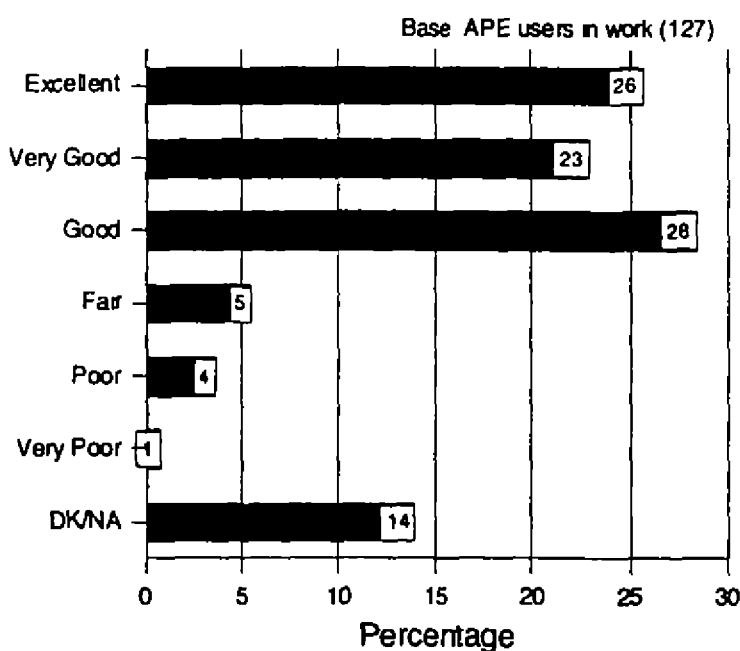


Figure 3.3 Users' rating of adaptations to equipment, vehicles and buildings

These findings indicate that, for a relatively small minority of users, Access to Work provision has not kept in step with changes over time in needs and circumstances. From Figure 3.3 it would seem that further adaptations or additional kinds of support are required for one in ten APE users. They rated the adaptations already in place as no better than 'fair' because they no longer enabled them to do their job fully or properly. Other reported consequences of obsolete or inadequate adaptations included adverse effects on their health and deteriorating relations with their employer

3.3.4 Special aids and equipment

Special aids and equipment, including specially adapted furniture, should meet an individual's particular needs for some time but through normal wear and tear such items will often require ongoing maintenance or complete replacement when repair is no longer cost effective. Damaged, broken or obsolete equipment and furniture, and the delays in getting repairs done or items replaced, can severely disrupt the working lives of those individuals who depend on them to do their job properly. To investigate the implications for individuals, SAE users currently in paid employment were asked for their views about 'repair, servicing or replacement'.

Altogether 299 individuals were questioned and, somewhat surprisingly, one in three did not know who would be responsible for carrying out repairs, servicing or replacement, or thought no one was responsible. This proportion rises to 40 per cent of those who have not so far required any item to be repaired or serviced compared with 18 per cent of those who had. Overall, one in four felt that their employers would be solely responsible for any repairs or maintenance while one in five thought the

DST would take responsibility. This may reflect the change in Access to Work rules on the purchase and ownership of equipment. No more than one in ten users thought that they were at least partly responsible for repairing their own special aids or equipment (Table 3.8)

Table 3.8 Users' understanding of responsibility for repair, servicing or replacement of special equipment and furniture

	<i>Repairs, etc required %</i>	<i>Repairs, etc. not required %</i>	<i>All %</i>
Employer alone	17	28	25
ES/DST/PACT	36	14	20
Supplier	16	6	9
Self alone	7	8	8
Self and employer	4	0	2
Other	3	3	3
Nobody	3	3	3
Don't know	15	37	31
Base: SAE users in paid work	76	221	297

Overall, one in four of these respondents reported that at least one item of equipment and furniture provided through Access to Work had required repair, servicing or replacement in the recent past. They were asked how their work had been affected on those occasions. Just over half said that they could not do their job as required (56%), 16 per cent said they had to reduce the number of hours they worked, 13 per cent said their health or medical condition had been adversely affected, while six per cent said that their relationship with their employer or support worker had suffered. However one in four said there were no particular consequences for them personally, either at home or at work. (Table A.3.8 in the appendices)

Users' uncertainty about who is responsible for repairs and servicing and the difficulties they experience when such needs arise are strikingly evident in their overall opinions of the arrangements for carrying out repairs:

- just over half could not express an opinion, presumably because they were not aware of any such arrangements
- one in four thought the arrangements were 'good' or 'very good' while one in seven described them as no better than 'fair' (Figure 3.4).

Although some users were no doubt apprehensive about difficulties that might arise in the future, these findings do not mean that arrangements are not in place to carry out repairs and servicing. The findings do however draw attention to users' lack of awareness about such arrangements or how they work in practice and the resulting uncertainty and anxiety that could be avoided through being better informed.



Figure 3.4 Users' ratings of arrangements for repair, servicing or replacement of aids and equipment

3.4 Key points

- The most common forms of support are:
 - new furniture or equipment (in two thirds of Access to Work supported jobs)
 - help with fares for travel to work (in over four out of ten such jobs)
 - human support on the job (27%), comprising: support workers (16%), personal readers for visually impaired people (11%) and communicators at work (7%).
- Over half of users receive more than one ES element of support and 17 per cent of users receive three or more support elements.
- Looking at the pattern of use of Access to Work supports by employment sector:
 - SAE, APE and SW are more likely to support public sector users
 - TW and CSI are more likely to support users in the private sector

- private/independent employees are somewhat more likely than those in the public sector to receive several elements of support
- There are striking differences in support according to occupational status:
 - one third of users of human support (SW and CSI) work in professional jobs compared with one fifth of those receiving environmental adaptations (APE and SAE)
 - one third of users of environmental adaptations work in administrative/secretarial occupations compared with one in seven of those receiving human supports
 - TW users are least likely to work in professional and senior managerial occupations.
- Types of support differ according to impairment:
 - half of SW users have a visual impairment and a further quarter have a hearing impairment
 - around one half of users of environmental adaptations and around four in ten TW users have a musculo-skeletal impairment
 - over one third of TW users have a visual impairment
 - users with sensory impairments are more likely than those with other disabling complaints to receive more than one ES element of support.
- More than half of those who had ever received CSI support considered it 'very good' or 'excellent'. One in six thought it no better than 'fair'.
- Three out of four SW users said their support worker hours were about right. Those with a communicator or sign language interpreter at work were least satisfied with the amount of time allocated.
- Where adaptations had been made to premises or equipment at work more than three out of four users rated the extent to which they continued to meet their needs as 'good', 'very good' or 'excellent'.
- Among those users who had received special aids or equipment, one in three did not know who was responsible for carrying out repairs, servicing or replacement. When such a need had occurred, reported by one in four of these users, three quarters reported adverse effects

4 Awareness of Access to Work

Chapter 3 looked at who gets what types of Access to Work support. As potential users need to apply for assistance, they have to be aware of the existence of the programme and the sorts of support it can provide to meet their needs. In this chapter we look at how users heard about and came into contact with Access to Work, their knowledge of what the programme offers, and the implications of not being made aware of support or of the range of ways in which the programme can assist them

4.1 Hearing about Access to Work

Access to Work generally is not promoted to the public at large. When we asked survey respondents how they first heard about it only three per cent mentioned leaflets, newspapers and other media. As shown in Table 4.1, the vast majority relied on other people telling them about it. The prime source was the Employment Service, with one in five (19%) mentioning the Jobcentre, and 14 per cent a Disability Service Team (DST) (or PACT, the old name for a DST) or a Disability Employment Advisor (DEA). Employers, managers and other workplace advisers were mentioned by around one in four (24%). Work colleagues were the next largest source (10%), and it is possible that they include other Access to Work users. Organisations of or for disabled people are known to promote Access to Work, and six per cent cited them as a source of information

Table 4.1 How or where respondents first heard about AtW

<i>Source of information</i>	<i>Per cent mentioning source</i>
Employer/supervisor/manager/etc	24
Job Centre	19
PACT/DST/DEA	14
Colleague(s) at work	10
Organisation of/for disabled people	6
Friend/relative	5
Health professional (GP/nurse/consultant/physiotherapist/etc.)	5
Social Services	3
Leaflet/newspaper/other media	3
College/training organisation/careers advisor	2
Employer at job applied for	1
Other Access to Work user(s)	1
Organisation specialising in/supplying special aids/equipment	1
Can't remember	4
Base: all respondents	628

Although most users applied for Access to Work on their own behalf (89%), many of them were encouraged to do so by someone else. While just over half said it was their own idea to apply (51%), most of the remainder were encouraged to do so by their employer or by someone with managerial or supervisory responsibility at their workplace (23%), or by a DEA or member of a DST or PACT (23%). Other users mentioned a variety of people who encouraged them to apply including health professionals, colleagues at work, and organisations of and for disabled people. Table A.4.1 in the appendices details the full list.

Most users applied for Access to Work when they first heard about the scheme (63%) and one in four said they had applied 'later on' (26%). Some users could not remember when they applied in relation to first hearing about Access to Work but most of the remainder (8% overall) said that someone else had applied on their behalf. This latter group includes five per cent of users whose applications were made by their employers.

More than one in three users (36%) felt they had missed out by not applying for Access to Work earlier than they did. We asked them to explain the ways they thought they had missed out. Many said they had struggled at work without special equipment, aids or adaptations or in the absence of a support worker, and that their employment needs could have been met sooner (accounting for over four in ten of reasons for feeling having missed out). Difficulties in getting to work, including the financial costs, would have been reduced (one in five reasons). A smaller number related to being unable to take up or keep a job, to advance a career or take up professional training (7%). One in seven reasons (14%) related to health, users believing that symptoms, such as fatigue or pain, would have been prevented or deterioration in a condition inhibited, if Access to Work support had been received earlier. Others felt that earlier support would have increased independence and self-esteem.

Moreover, users said they felt they had missed out because information had not been made available to them and they had not been informed about entitlements (over one in five reasons given related to not knowing about Access to Work). The qualitative study confirmed a strong sense of resentment over missed opportunities, linked to concerns about the limited promotion of Access to Work.

4.1.1 Users' views on promotion of Access to Work

Better publicity emerged as the top suggestion for improvement to Access to Work put forward by users in the survey, mentioned by 18 per cent of respondents. Many who praised the service and were happy with their support added the rider that more publicity was needed so that others could benefit from it. Particular concerns were expressed that unemployed people and those wanting to leave incapacity benefits for work were missing out because Access to Work was insufficiently promoted.

A few users in the qualitative study had been told about Access to Work by DEAs helping them to find work. But most said they had learnt about it only 'by chance'. They, and respondents to the survey, believed that medical professionals, especially GPs, should be better informed and recommend Access to Work to their patients. DSTs could make outreach visits to professionals to promote the service. The Benefits Agency, Jobcentres and disability organisations should know about and actively promote the service, many users suggested. There was some frustration over unfamiliarity with the programme among the public services.

Many users felt that knowledge should extend beyond the professional gatekeepers to the public at large and that information should be widely available in the workplace. Greater public awareness, some felt, would not only increase equity of access but also make receiving support appear an entitlement rather than a privilege.

4.2 Awareness of range of Access to Work support

A related concern expressed by users in both the survey and the qualitative study was limited awareness of the range of support available through Access to Work. Users felt that full information about the options should be publicised, especially to those who advise potential users to apply to the programme. As noted in Section 4.1, almost one in four users first hear about Access to Work through their employer; and raising employers' awareness of the range of support was thought to be essential especially as some users experienced employers making applications for specific support on their behalf.

As users pointed out, *'if you don't know what is available you don't know what to ask for'*. Users felt that DSTs could be more proactive in offering a list of the types of support available, and comprehensive booklets and information packs or tapes were improvements suggested in the survey as well as direct contact to explain the range of options in person. Better information about the range of support would offer more scope for choice and self-determination, and allow users to judge whether the solutions put forward by advisers were the most appropriate for them. The impression that advisers were acting as gatekeepers and attempting to control costs in a discretionary system was strong, and users felt that being offered information about what is available might promote their sense of a right to the service and reduce the feeling of *'battling'* for appropriate support. Some were aggrieved at learning about further options only after their support had been approved and felt that they would have applied for different elements or items of support had they known about them. The following chapter considers in more depth the role of DST advisers in informing users of the range of options.

The survey confirmed that users tend not to know what else is available. Before we asked them to identify the types of Access to Work support they received, we asked

respondents, without direct prompting, to describe as fully as possible what they knew about the different types of help and support provided by Access to Work. The results are shown in Table A.4.2 in the appendices. We compared their awareness with the support that they themselves received (as shown in Table A 4.3 in the appendices) and found that Access to Work recipients, not surprisingly, were most aware of those types of support they themselves received. With the exception of specially provided equipment or furniture and fares to work, awareness of those elements which respondents did not themselves receive is particularly low.

4.3 Key points

- The great majority of users first heard about Access to Work through employers and people at work or through the ES and other public agencies.
- Leaflets, newspapers and other media were mentioned as a source of information by only three per cent of users, and disabled people's organisations by six per cent.
- One in three users felt they had missed out by not using Access to Work earlier. Better publicity was a top suggestion for improvement to Access to Work, so that the existence of the programme was more widely known among the general public and not just among those who advise potential users.
- Users are mostly unaware of what else Access to Work can offer. They suggested fuller information about the range of options being made available to potential users and their employers before an application is made and support agreed.
- Access to full information is important to enable choice and self-determination and ensure the most appropriate package of solutions for work-related needs.

5 Service Provided by Disability Service Staff

The Access to Work service is provided by Disability Service Teams (DSTs) which are part of the Employment Service (ES). Disability Service Teams used to be called Placement, Assessment and Counselling Teams (PACTs). Some DSTs have staff members dedicated to Access to Work; in others Disability Employment Advisers (DEAs), usually based in Jobcentres, deal with Access to Work as well as other Disability Service programmes as part of their wider role of supporting disabled people in finding and staying in work.

This chapter reports users' opinions of how these DST staff handled their Access to Work application, drawing on the national survey and the qualitative study findings. We focus on dimensions of service delivery identified in the literature as important to users: staff who listen to users, understand their needs, explain options available, put effort into getting what they need, respect their privacy and keep them informed of progress. The chapter concludes by exploring views of the two main models of service delivery – through dedicated Access to Work advisers and DEAs.

5.1 Rating of DST staff

Survey respondents were asked who had dealt with their only or most recent application for Access to Work. More than four out of ten said it had been handled by a DEA (43%); one in three said a DST or PACT adviser (33%); and seven per cent identified someone else they knew to be associated with the ES. However, one in six either could not recall the person with whom they had contact (13%) or said they had no dealings with anyone from a DST (4%).

The 83 per cent of respondents who could identify someone in a DST (that is, a DEA, DST dedicated adviser or other named person) were asked to rate the handling of their application on five dimensions, as shown in Table 5.1

The results show widespread appreciation among Access to Work users of the role of DST staff in addressing individuals' employment-related needs through Access to Work. Overall, more than half of the respondents (53%) described the DST staff they dealt with as 'excellent' or 'very good'. A further 23 per cent rated DST staff as 'good'. At the other end of the scale, one in eight overall (12%) rated the staff member who handled their application as 'poor' or 'very poor'

Table 5.1 Respondents' ratings of DST staff

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Very poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>Base respondents identifying contact with DST</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
The effort they put into making sure you get what you need	25	33	23	9	6	4	1	526
Their attention to what you say and the questions you ask	24	33	23	8	7	3	2	526
Their explanation of the options to meet your needs	22	29	21	10	10	5	3	526
Their readiness to keep you informed of decisions and what happens next	21	29	22	10	8	7	2	526
Their knowledge and understanding of what you need	21	28	24	14	7	4	2	526
All responses	23	30	23	10	7	5	2	2630

5.1.1 Opinions of DST staff and element of support

Table 5.2 shows that respondents' views of DST staff vary somewhat according to the support agreed or arranged for them through Access to Work. The chief contrast is between SAE, TW and APE users who generally rate DST staff very highly and SW and CSI users who rate them less highly. Around one in five of the latter group described the DST staff who handled their only or most recent application as 'poor' or 'very poor' compared with one in twelve of the former, suggesting that a substantial minority of users felt that there was room for improving the role of DST staff in relation to provision of human support.

Table 5.2 Respondents' ratings of DST staff by element of support

Proportion rating 'very good' or 'excellent'	<i>AtW element</i>					All %
	SAE %	TW %	APE %	SW %	CSI %	
The effort they put into making sure you get what you need	57	66	64	54	50	58
Their attention to what you say and the questions you ask	58	63	54	53	33	57
Their explanation of the options to meet your needs	52	57	54	46	32	51
Their readiness to keep you informed of decisions and what happens next	50	58	49	47	24	50
Their knowledge and understanding of what you need	49	58	53	44	23	49
Base respondents recalling contact with DST	284	172	107	83	28	526

5.2 Users' views on key dimensions

In this section we draw on findings from the qualitative interviews and the national survey to explore the factors contributing to users' ratings of DST staff.

Responses to open-ended questions in the survey and findings from the qualitative interviews indicate that the dimensions listed in Table 5 1 are priorities for users.

Users praised staff who:

- asked relevant questions, listened to their opinions and acted on their suggestions
- were sensitive to the user's needs, particularly those relating to their impairment
- were well-informed with up-to-date knowledge, particularly of specialist equipment, and shared information with users
- explained the full range of support options available
- put effort into getting what was needed and did not need to be 'chased'
- kept the user informed of progress and were easy to contact.

Users also drew attention to inter-personal aspects not fully captured in the dimensions listed in Table 5.1. They praised staff who were friendly and approachable. Being treated as a person first and a disabled person second was important. Users also appreciated staff supportive of them and *'on your side'*.

A combination of all the qualities outlined above led one interviewee to comment that she *'couldn't speak too highly'* of her adviser. For another, the absence of these qualities reduced trust and confidence in the adviser: the adviser always in a rush, feeling just another file in the case load rather than a person in your own right, not being told about the full range of Access to Work services and support options, lack of follow up and the adviser's occasional patronising approach.

Table 5.1 shows that survey respondents were most appreciative of 'the effort they put into making sure you get what you need' and 'their attention to what you say and the questions you ask', with 58 per cent and 57 per cent respectively judging the adviser to be 'excellent' or 'good'. Least highly rated were DST staff's 'explanation of the options to meet your needs', their 'readiness to keep you informed of decisions and what happens next' and their 'knowledge and understanding of what you need'. Here we explore some of the factors contributing to these less positive ratings.

5.2.1 Options to meet needs

Overall fewer than one in eight respondents to the national survey described DST staff as 'poor' or 'very poor'. Table 5.1 shows that this minority are least satisfied with the explanation provided by DST staff of the options available to meet clients' particular needs, with 15 per cent rating it as 'poor' or 'very poor'.

We observed in Chapter 4 that users wished for fuller information about the range of support options at the point of application. The qualitative interviews found that even long-standing users of Access to Work felt uninformed by DST staff about the full range of support options and equipment available. There was a strong feeling that this information should be widely promoted, rather than made available on a 'need to know' basis. Otherwise, choice and control were possible only within the confines of their own knowledge.

Some interviewees knew what they needed. Others who had expected to be told by DST staff what was available were surprised when the onus fell on them to identify solutions. Prompted to do their own investigations, they were better prepared to discuss possible support options. But interviewees could feel vulnerable, and reluctant to apply pressure and *'push too much'* for particular items of equipment in case this *'upset the applecart'*. For some people, *'having to tread carefully'* was seen as an important tactic in sustaining the co-operation of DST staff. For others, feeling *'grateful'* or *'guilty'* or that *'I've had my lot'* was a barrier against asking for further

support or help. Some interviewees commented that they would feel less inhibited were Access to Work promoted as a 'right'.

There were suggestions that less than full disclosure of information about support options was related to financial constraints. Some survey respondents and interviewees felt that staff '*watched*' to ensure that costs were contained. For instance, there were reports that during assessment users were made to feel they were asking for too much, or that staff were suspicious that they were asking for items of equipment they did not really need. Some believed strongly that meeting individual needs should take precedence over cost savings.

Some study participants, on the other hand, found advisers readily gave help and advice. Users' accounts of their needs were taken at face value rather than probed in any detail or corroborative evidence asked for, and people were provided with items of equipment certainly beyond their initial expectations and in some instances over and above what they actually wanted.

5.2.2 Being kept informed

Fifteen per cent of those asked for an opinion of DST staff handling their application rated their 'readiness to keep you informed of decisions and what happens next' as 'poor' or 'very poor'.

Not being kept informed adequately had consequences for users. Lack of regular contact when delays were being experienced in the provision of support created uncertainty in users' minds. This resulted in more work for them in chasing up staff to make sure they had not been forgotten, increasing the difficulties in their lives. General training for DST staff in 'customer care' was recommended, so that staff need not be '*pushed*' or '*reminded of their duties*'.

5.2.3 Understanding of needs

A lack of understanding on the part of DST staff about disability and what it is like to live and work with an impairment was perceived by both survey respondents and interviewees in the qualitative study. Many felt it important that DST staff underwent enhanced training in order to extend their disability awareness. Ideally, they would like to see more disabled people employed as members of DST teams or as trainers.

A lack of medical knowledge about health conditions and impairments and their effects was also noted. For example, the adviser of one interviewee with a visual impairment suggested she delayed return to work until she was 'better', the user had to point out that in fact she would never get better. Some users said they were demoralised by their adviser's assumption that a fluctuating or deteriorating health condition was a barrier to work.

Deaf people felt particularly strongly that staff lacked understanding about the needs (and aspirations) of deaf people. As noted in Section 5.1 2, around one in five CSI and SW users, among whom there are significant numbers of people with hearing impairments, rated DST staff as 'poor' or 'very poor'. People with hearing impairments believed that inadequate attention to their needs could have repercussions for their health and safety at work; for example, when the need for adequate visual fire alarms was not understood. Deaf people found communication with DST staff particularly difficult and were keen that DST staff should be competent in using text phones and have sign language skills.

5.3 Privacy

Surveys of user satisfaction with services commonly ask respondents about the extent to which they feel their privacy is respected. In this study, respondents to the survey were asked their opinion of the degree of privacy afforded them when discussing and assessing their employment needs with DST staff during the application process. They were asked to rate their satisfaction using a four-point scale ranging from 'completely satisfied' to 'not at all satisfied'.

The great majority of users (70%) said they were 'completely satisfied' with the privacy of their discussions when applying for Access to Work; a further 21 per cent said they were 'mostly satisfied'.

Generally speaking, people taking part in the qualitative interviews felt their privacy was protected. This was especially important for those who did not want their employer to know the full extent of their health problem or impairment. Even when assessment took place at work, often in an open plan office, interviewees felt that staff took care to be as discreet as circumstances allowed. Ensuring privacy in telephone discussions can also be important to users. This was highlighted when an adviser using a textphone to speak to a deaf person did not check to whom they were talking and began a conversation with the wrong person.

Ensuring privacy in discussions and being discreet about the user's impairment were singled out as praiseworthy aspects of the adviser's approach.

5.4 Follow-up contact by DST staff

Disability Service standards expect Access to Work advisers to contact users within one month of Access to Work help being in place to check that the support is meeting their needs and that any equipment supplied is functioning properly.

Of those survey respondents who could identify who it was they had dealings with in the DST (526), 512 were asked about follow-up contact. Under half (47%) said they had been contacted since receiving their last Access to Work provision to check if their requirements were met. There were no differences according to the Access to Work element received.

Of those reporting contact

- over half (55%) reported a follow-up contact within one month of support being in place
- 15 per cent reported contact between one and two months after provision was in place
- 16 per cent said contact occurred after more than two months
- 15 per cent could not recall when they had been contacted.

It is possible that some users were followed up after the survey interviews were conducted, but in most cases such contacts would have been more than six months after their application for Access to Work.

Of those who could recall when contact took place, 15 per cent (30) would have preferred someone getting in touch earlier. When asked, they said earlier contact would have helped to resolve problems, as well as reassuring them that they had not been forgotten about.

Six out of ten said they had been contacted by telephone, one third had written contact and just over a quarter (26%) were visited. (Some respondents were contacted more than once in different ways.) Of those contacted in writing or by telephone, 27 per cent (54) would have appreciated a visit. Users of APE and SW in particular were most likely to prefer a visit. The preference for a personal visit was confirmed in the findings from the qualitative interviews. APE users felt that a visit was especially important if the work agreed had not been implemented, though no light was shed on why SW users should prefer a visit. SAE users interviewed felt that an 'aftercare' workplace visit by DST staff once the Access to Work support was in place would be a valued opportunity to check that they were using new equipment correctly or following advice relating to posture.

5.4.1 Unmet need for follow-up

Of those saying they were not contacted at all, over half (54%) said they would have liked someone to get in touch to check if their requirements had been met. Findings from the qualitative interviews indicate that some users are happy to make contact with the DST themselves if the need arises.

Recipients of APE and SW in particular were more likely to want follow-up contact if there had been none. SAE recipients also reported high levels of unmet need for follow-up contact although they were no less likely than other users to have been

contacted by the DST since their application

When asked why they would have liked someone to get in touch, survey respondents volunteered four main types of reasons:

- to review changing or additional needs
- as a check on how they were managing with the support provided
- to communicate on items agreed but not yet in place
- as a matter of courtesy and a demonstration that the service cared.

As many as four in ten reasons given fell into the first group, suggesting an unmet need for follow-up among longer-term users to review the continuing appropriateness of their Access to Work provision. The qualitative study found examples of users six months or so on finding their equipment not providing the solution they had hoped for and no longer useful. In Chapter 3 we noted that users were unsure about who was responsible for repair and servicing of their equipment; and some users felt that follow-up by DST staff would help to clarify the situation. Some users would have welcomed support from the DST to resolve difficulties in aftercare by suppliers of their equipment (for example, hearing aids). As observed in Chapter 4, users generally were unaware of the other types of support Access to Work could offer, and follow-up would give them the opportunity to identify additional ways in which the service could support them in work.

Follow-up to check how users were managing with support newly provided also would have been valued. As noted above, users may need further advice on using equipment provided to the best advantage.

Follow-up to check that support is in place is important. It is clear from users' accounts that DST staff were not always aware that support agreed and paid for had not been implemented by the employer. In one instance, an adviser who had not been in touch with the user for six months was not aware that building adaptations had not commenced. In instances where the full package of support had not been provided intervention by DST advisers would have been welcomed.

Finally, contact was seen as reassuring and a sign of being valued by the organisation providing the service. Some users were surprised that DST staff had not followed through by checking that the support had been acquired.

5.5 Models of service delivery

We examined whether users' views of DST staff differed according to the type of staff dealing with their application; that is, dedicated Access to Work advisers or DEAs. We were also interested in knowing whether previous contact with a staff member influenced users' opinions.

Investigating variations in users' ratings according to who dealt with their application for Access to Work shows a remarkable consistency in their opinions of DST staff. Whether users dealt with a DEA or with a dedicated DST adviser, and whether or not they had previous dealings with the same person, did not affect their ratings.

Dedicated DST advisers were somewhat more likely than DEAs to contact their clients by letter or telephone and as a consequence more of them would have preferred a follow-up visit but the differences are small and not statistically significant. We found small but statistically insignificant differences in users' satisfaction with privacy. Three out of four users who discussed their application with a dedicated DST adviser (74%) compared with 67 per cent of those dealing with a DEA said they were 'completely satisfied' with the privacy of their discussions.

The qualitative interviews shed light on what people valued in each of the two models. Having a dedicated Access to Work adviser had advantages. Advisers were seen as less rushed, with more time to develop their area of expertise in more depth, and with more time for follow-up. Interviewees felt this method of service delivery offered better opportunities for getting hold of advisers, and for building up a better relationship.

In relation to the DEA model, there was a view that dealing with just one person throughout the whole system (that is, finding employment and then providing Access to Work support) could be beneficial. The adviser would know the type of work the user was looking for and how Access to Work could help. On the other hand, some interviewees observed tensions between the DEA Access to Work role and that of finding employment. It was thought that DEAs might be tempted to provide someone with Access to Work support to get them '*off the unemployment statistics*', regardless of the suitability of the job.

5.6 Key points

- Over half of survey respondents described DST staff who handled their last application as 'excellent' or 'very good' overall and only 12 per cent thought they were 'poor' or 'very poor' overall. Opinions varied according to element of support, with users of human support (SW and CSI) rating DST staff less highly.
- Users value advisers who listen to users, understand their needs, explain options available, respect their privacy and keep them informed of progress. These features of DST staff were all widely appreciated, but users were least satisfied with their explanation of options to meet their needs and their readiness to keep users informed of decisions and what happened next. Some users, notably those with a hearing impairment, felt DST staff could be more sensitive to and understanding of the needs of disabled people.

- Nine out of ten users were satisfied with the privacy of their discussions with their adviser, the great majority (70%) saying they were 'completely satisfied'. Users praised advisers who ensured privacy in discussions and were discreet about their impairment and its effects.
- Disability Service standards expect Access to Work advisers to contact users within one month of support being put in place to check if their requirements have been met. Almost half of the survey respondents asked about follow-up by DST staff said they had been contacted since getting their last provision. Overall, one in four were followed up within one month of getting their support.
- Over half of those not contacted would have liked someone to get in touch; recipients of APE and SW were more likely to want follow-up contact, and SAE recipients also reported high levels of unmet need for follow-up. Users wanted contact to check that they were using equipment to the best advantage or to find new solutions. Follow-up by a DST adviser was seen as important to ensure that the support agreed had been put in place by the employer.
- There were no significant differences in users' views of dedicated DST advisers and DEAs who handled their application.

6 Specialist Advice

Part of the service provided by Access to Work is specialist advice on equipment or alterations in the workplace. In some instances, DST advisers are equipped to provide specialist advice themselves. In other cases, the DST adviser might recommend that the user see a specialist. This chapter looks at the types of specialist advice received and reports users' views.

6.1 Receipt of specialist advice

Respondents to the national survey who received physical or environmental support (SAE or APE) were asked whether the person who dealt with their application had arranged for them to see someone else for specialist advice in connection with their Access to Work supported job, that is over and above the advice and information provided by DST staff themselves.

Table 6.1 shows that overall four out of ten of those had received specialist advice arranged through their DST adviser. Around half of those for whom existing equipment was altered, or training was arranged to use new equipment, received specialist advice. Arrangements for seeing someone with specialist knowledge are least likely to have been made for those clients whose employment-related needs required alterations to premises at the workplace.

Table 6.1 Specialist advice on aids, equipment and adaptations

<i>Type of support received in AtW supported job</i>	<i>Receiving specialist advice %</i>	<i>Base. all respondents receiving support</i>
Specially provided equipment or furniture	43	410
Training to use new equipment	52	138
Alterations to existing equipment	50	105
Alterations to building	30	80
Adaptations to own vehicle	42	21
Any of the above	41	458

Clearly, some Access to Work applications are straightforward to process and arrangements to see a specialist adviser in these cases may be viewed by DST staff or users as unnecessary. It may be that clients who received specialist advice are not

always aware that this has been arranged by the DST; we also recognise that some clients will have sought specialist advice through other channels such as Motability or organisations for disabled people such as RNID or RNIB. We did not ask respondents to the national survey whether they had been offered or would have liked, specialist advice. In the qualitative study, some users who did not know it was possible would have welcomed advice from a specialist

6.2 Types of specialist advice received

As Table 6.2 shows, half of those seeing a specialist adviser did so in relation to furniture or equipment, technological or computer-based aids, or both.

Table 6.2 Type of specialist advice received

<i>Area covered by specialist advice</i>	<i>Per cent*</i>
Furniture or equipment	48
Technological or computer-based aids	50
Equipment for people who are deaf or hard of hearing	7
Aids for getting around in the workplace	7
Adaptations to own car	2
Other	12
Base: all respondents receiving specialist advice	180

* percentages sum to more than 100 because some respondents received specialist advice in more than one area described

6.3 Rating of specialist advice

Advice on furniture or equipment was generally highly appreciated by survey respondents: six out of ten described their adviser as 'very good' or 'excellent' overall. Advice on car adaptations was also much appreciated though the small size of the sub-sample (n=3) limits generalisations. However, the role of the adviser in giving advice on technological or computer-based aids, equipment for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and aids for getting around in the workplace was less highly regarded. In these last areas of provision, no more than half the respondents rated their adviser as 'very good' or 'excellent' overall. Some users in the qualitative study in receipt of computer-based equipment, and building adaptations, were critical of the specialist advice that was offered on the grounds that it was misleading or inaccurate, and could lead to further expense to put things right.

Table 6.3 shows how ratings of specialist advice on furniture and equipment compare with those on technological or computer-based equipment. The range of ratings for specialist advice on furniture and equipment and on technological or computer-based equipment is given in Tables A.6.1 and A.6.2 in the appendices.

Table 6.3 Respondents' ratings of specialist advice

	<i>Furniture and equipment</i>		<i>Technological or computer-based equipment</i>	
	'very good' or 'excellent' %	'poor' or 'very poor' %	'very good' or 'excellent' %	'poor' or 'very poor' %
Their knowledge and understanding of what you need	65	6	49	9
Their attention to what you say and the questions you ask	61	5	55	5
Their explanation of the options to meet your needs	55	7	47	7
Their readiness to keep you informed of decisions and what happens next	58	8	47	10
The effort they put into making sure you get what you need	62	13	45	13
Base: respondents receiving specialist advice	83	83	89	89

Table 6.3 shows that specialist advice on technological or computer-based equipment was consistently rated poorer than that on furniture and equipment. The main disparities in 'very good' or 'excellent' ratings relate to the amount of effort specialists put into getting what users need, and their knowledge and understanding of what is needed. Apart from the 55 per cent of users of technological or computer-based equipment who rated 'their attention to what you say and the questions you ask' as 'very good' or 'excellent', fewer than half rated their advice as highly as on other aspects of the adviser's role.

6.4 Accessing and experiencing specialist advice

Specialist advice can be accessed in two ways: by the user visiting an assessment centre (or supplier), or by the specialist adviser visiting the user in the workplace. The

findings from the qualitative interviews show users had mixed reports about each approach

Some users appreciated the opportunity to visit an assessment centre and talk to a specialist about their needs, they found this part of Access to Work '*a really good service*'. Having listened to what they had to say, the specialists would then steer users towards what they thought would be the best sort of equipment to meet their needs, as well as making suggestions and advising on, say, sitting correctly, or workstation layout. Visits to centres lasted two hours or more to enable users to try out different types of chair or desk or footstool. Advisers were described as '*reassuring*', '*friendly*' and '*understanding*'; they put a lot of effort into making sure users got what they needed, at the same time indicating that cost was not an issue but that meeting the users' needs in the best possible way was important.

Other users had quite negative experiences that left them feeling the visit to the assessment centre had been a waste of their time. One user came away '*in tears*', because she felt the specialist adviser had dismissed her own ideas, and so taken away feelings of being knowledgeable, in control and independent. These visits were much shorter, and users felt rushed as if they were '*on a conveyor belt*' and '*just another person with problems*'. Equipment was not always working so could not be tested, and explanations were not given of the differences between apparently similar items. A reported emphasis on saving money rather than finding the best solution to meet users' needs contrasts with some users having equipment that they did not actually want '*foisted*' on them.

Actually travelling to the assessment centre could be an issue for users, especially for those with mobility problems. Difficulties were compounded if there were no nearby car parking spaces.

As far as visits to the workplace were concerned, again users in the qualitative study reported receiving good and poor levels of service. Users reported favourably on specialist advisers who spent time with them; listened and asked questions; took their views into account; took measurements and photographs, produced a written report with recommendations for Access to Work support, including cost details and suppliers. Often, the specialists drew on their own knowledge to make useful suggestions about, for instance, re-arranging the layout of the office, ideas which made a positive difference to the user but which had no cost implications

Workplace visits introduce issues to do with privacy, however, and not all users wanted to be measured and photographed in public whilst sitting at their workstation; one user was '*absolutely mortified*' by the experience. Checking beforehand whether the user is comfortable with this sort of situation is good practice, and means that alternative arrangements - such as replicating the office situation in a private area - can be in place if necessary. Specialist advisers with a negative approach, for

example commenting on users' long-term employment prospects, could affect users' self-esteem

Regardless of whether users accessed specialist advice through an assessment centre or at their place of work, generally they had no choice in who they saw. Specialists had a range of professional backgrounds, and included physiotherapists, occupational therapists, ergonomists and engineers. Some users dealing with specialists whom they considered knowledgeable felt they had received a good service in terms of advice and information. On the other hand, a perceived lack of knowledge, being given misleading or incorrect information, making assumptions, and being too prescriptive were key concerns for others who then lost confidence and trust in the advice they had been given.

Visits to assessment centres tended to be organised promptly, and arranged within two months. The time scale could be longer for workplace visits, taking up to six months in those instances where practitioners were very busy, and compounded by difficulties in ensuring presence of all the relevant parties.

Concerns were raised in cases where specialist advisers were also the suppliers of the items to be provided. Users felt this restricted their choice and control.

Those users who had the opportunity to trial equipment in the workplace (sometimes arranged by DST advisers) felt this was an important stage in the process of choosing support that best met their needs, as well as fitting in with the confines of their working environment. Whilst trying out equipment in an assessment centre was useful, being able to trial equipment in the actual place of work over a period of hours (or better still, days) was considered far more effective in terms of ascertaining levels of comfort, pain relief and manoeuvrability.

6.4.1 Users recommendations

When asked for suggestions to improve Access to Work, respondents to the national survey tended not to offer ideas relating to specialist advice. However, specific recommendations from interviewees in the qualitative study included:

- listening to users; closer understanding of their needs or their working environment
- not making assumptions or being too prescriptive
- using advisers who were knowledgeable about building regulations, and health and safety issues
- being given a choice and the opportunity to test out a range of equipment (in good working order)
- taking time over the process, and not rushing it.

6.5 Key points

- Four out of ten respondents to the national survey who received physical or environmental support had received specialist advice arranged through their DST adviser. Those who required alterations to premises were least likely to see a specialist, while around half of those for whom existing equipment was altered, or training was arranged to use new equipment received specialist advice.
- Half of those seeing a specialist adviser did so in relation to furniture or equipment, technological or computer-based aids, or both. Respondents' ratings of advisers providing advice on technological or computer-based equipment were consistently lower.
- Users in the qualitative study valued visits by specialists to the workplace, especially when privacy was protected. There was some criticism of misleading or over-prescriptive advice. Specialist advice at assessment centres received mixed reports.

7 Employers' Involvement

Access to Work is a service for the individual. A potential user applies to the Disability Service Team (DST) for support, discusses needs and possible solutions with an adviser, makes use of specialist advice and is followed up to ensure needs are met. The focus on the individual rather than the employer as the 'client' is generally welcomed by Access to Work users. However, if Access to Work is to work effectively the active involvement of the employer is required. The employer has to agree to proposed changes in or to the workplace, is expected to procure equipment at a competitive price, has to implement adaptations, is required to verify users' claims (for fares for travel to work) and may employ support workers. Moreover, the employer is likely to be involved financially where existing employees are concerned.⁶

This chapter reports the ways in which employers were involved in the Access to Work applications made most recently by employees in the survey. It then reports those users' opinion of their employer's involvement and examines variations in opinion. Drawing also on the qualitative study, we explore the reasons behind users' ratings of their employer's role.

7.1 Employers' role

Respondents to the survey were asked to think about their only or most recent application and identify, from a list, the ways in which their employer was involved. Responses are shown in Table 7.1 which also shows how employer involvement varied with the Access to Work support elements employees themselves received.

Employers were most likely to be involved in applications for SAE, SW and APE, each of which often require significant changes to the work environment or to working practices, or both. More than one in three SAE and APE users had been put in touch with Access to Work by their employers, suggesting that some employers get involved at an early stage in addressing employment needs arising from disability.

As might be expected, employers were particularly involved in agreeing to the kind of SAE and APE provisions required, in arranging, ordering or installing what was needed, and in purchasing or contributing towards their cost. A sizeable minority of employers also checked that the provisions made under SAE or APE met the users'

⁶ In the case of employees applying after six weeks or longer with the employer, the employer pays all SAE or APE costs below £300 (but since June 1997 only on one occasion in the employee's three year support period) and 20% of the costs for items or work costing between £300 and £10,000. Employers do not contribute towards fares to work, adaptations to the employee's own vehicle or (from February 2000) support workers.

needs. Most employees with human support at work also reported that their employer had agreed to such assistance, with one in five employers directly involved in recruiting a Reader or Support Worker.

Table 7.1 Employers' involvement by element of AtW support

<i>Type of involvement in only or most recent application</i>	<i>Most recent or only AtW element received*</i>					
	SAE	TW	APE	SW	CSI	All
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agreeing what was needed	63	37	63	64	42	52
Purchasing or contributing towards the costs	57	16	48	34	14	36
Arranging, ordering or installing what was needed	49	19	51	33	13	33
Putting applicant in touch with AtW	35	17	33	19	11	26
Checking that the support provided met requirements	30	17	35	25	16	22
Taking responsibility for repair, maintenance or upgrading	15	6	21	18	8	12
Arranging training or instruction	11	8	18	18	11	9
Recruiting a Reader or Support Worker	4	3	7	19	5	4
Something else	5	9	4	5	9	8
Not involved at all	11	38	22	13	33	24
Base: all employees	289	179	112	68	30	543

* percentages sum to more than 100 because some employees reported more than one type of involvement

7.1.1 Non-involvement of employers

Overall one in four employees (24%) said their employers were not involved in applying for support through Access to Work. Employers were least likely to be involved where users received TW or CSI and to a lesser extent with those receiving APE.

The non-involvement of employers in applications for TW and CSI is not so surprising because neither measure relates directly to what goes on at the place of work. It is possible that some employees were not in fact aware of the nature and extent of their employers' involvement in other areas of provision, indeed some users commented that they knew little about what went on '*behind the scenes*'. Users stressed the importance of being kept fully informed of negotiations between Access to Work and their employer, and not being made to feel excluded.

It should be noted here that a minority of Access to Work users do not wish the full extent of their health problem or impairment to be disclosed to their employer (Hillage *et al*, 1998) and positively prefer them not to be involved. As noted in Chapters 5 and 6, users in this study appreciated the discretion of Access to Work advisers, and specialist advisers, faced with the difficult task of introducing aids to the workplace without revealing the full extent of the client's work-related difficulties to the employer.

7.2 Opinion of employers' involvement

Most employees appreciated their employers' involvement in the process of obtaining support through Access to Work:

- over half rated their employers' involvement as 'very good' or 'excellent' (54%); a further 22 per cent described it as 'good' (Figure 7.1)
- over half of those receiving TW, SAE and SW rated their employers' involvement as 'very good' or 'excellent'.

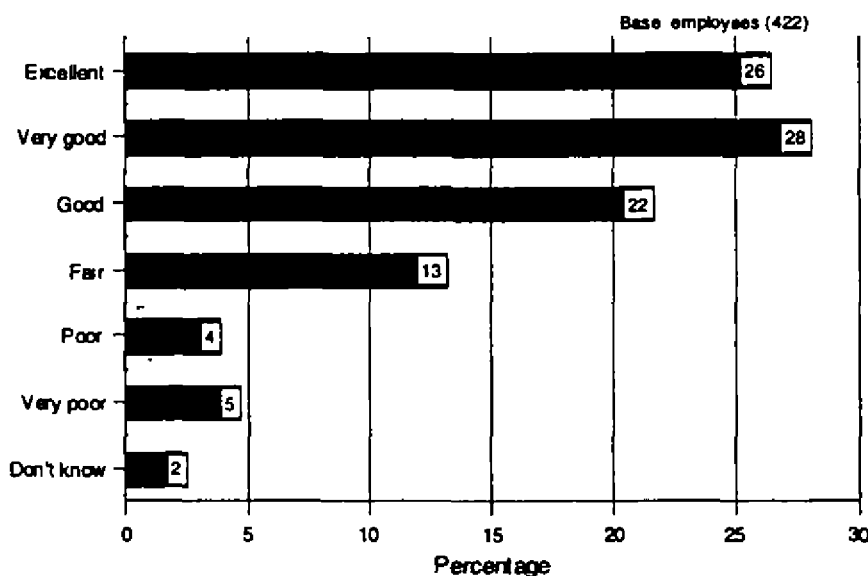


Figure 7.1 Employees' rating of their employer's involvement

Some users in the qualitative study also praised the involvement of their employers in the Access to Work process, commenting that they '*couldn't have done more*' and

'bent over backwards' The key factors that can be drawn out as contributing to high levels of satisfaction include employers who

- contacted Access to Work on behalf of the user
- 'guided' the user through the process, including helping with form completion
- arranged meetings
- kept the user informed of what is happening
- checked regularly with the user that everything was proceeding satisfactorily, and that they were comfortable with the way things were being dealt with
- 'chased up' Access to Work staff to reduce delays.

Generally, users found their employers were keen for the Access to Work support to be put in place as soon as possible, especially in cases where employees could not start work before items of equipment were installed. Some interviewees who had changed employment were now working for employers who had not been involved with disabled staff or Access to Work previously and tended to be naive about the procedures involved. In such cases, users could play an important role in educating their employers. There were other spin-offs from employer involvement in the process, such as the opportunity for the user to make the employer more aware of disability issues.

However, employers' involvement in areas where their role could be important in ensuring improved outcomes for users was more likely to be poorly rated by sizeable minorities:

- one in eight users who received APE or SW in their most recent or only application rated their employers' involvement as 'very poor' (12% compared with 5% overall)
- APE users were also least likely to rate their employer's involvement as 'very good' or 'excellent' (45% compared with 54% overall)
- one in eight users who received SAE in their most recent or only application rated their employers' involvement as 'poor' or 'very poor' (12% compared with 8% overall).

Users' rating of their employers' involvement varied significantly according to whether or not they worked in the public sector:

- users in the public sector are twice as likely as those in the private and independent sectors combined to rate their employers' involvement as no better than 'fair' (28% and 14%)
- 33 per cent of users in the private and independent sectors compared with 23 per cent of users in the public sector rated their employers' involvement as 'excellent'.

Part of the explanation for these last findings lies with the delay in the provision of support to users in the public sector. Four out of ten public sector employees rated the time taken to provide the support they needed as 'poor' or 'very poor' (40%)

compared with one in four employees in the private and independent sectors combined (25%). It is clear from respondents' comments that employers are implicated in delays, and that internal bureaucracy in the public sector especially is a factor

7.2.1 Difficulties with employers

When asked directly, one in seven employees (14%) reported that their employers' involvement or lack of involvement in the process of obtaining Access to Work support had caused problems; they were somewhat more likely to report such problems when their employer was involved (16%) than not (11%). The main problem volunteered was delay. To a lesser extent, difficulties were believed to arise from the requirement for employers to make a contribution towards the costs of the support. A third type of problem was less tangible; for some users the process highlighted employers' lack of understanding of disability issues and added to their perception of negative and discriminatory employer attitudes.

Questioning of those who rated time taken for support to be provided less highly (see Section 8.5) also shows how users saw employer involvement contributing to delay, mostly in relation to workplace equipment or adaptations. Delays were attributed variously to *'long-winded'* internal procedures for agreeing and ordering what was needed, a disorganised approach to paperwork, a tendency to let the case *'drop to the bottom of the pile'* and *'not push things along'*, and some *'dragging of heels'* by employers unenthusiastic about change or concerned to minimise costs. Users could resent taking on tasks to progress their application which they felt employers should be doing.

Other factors thought to contribute to unnecessary hold-ups were poor communication between the employer and the DST, and between the employer and the employee, and conflicting views of appropriate solutions. Employers sometimes were thought to have failed to take action because of poor understanding of what the system expected of them. As noted in Chapter 8, some users in the qualitative study felt that their employer's commitment to accommodating their needs speedily was thwarted by Access to Work 'rules', for example where the employer preferred to use a contractor known to them rather than obtain three quotes for the work required. Sometimes unsatisfactory solutions resulted, and in a few instances no support at all.

Money problems could also contribute to delay, for example when agreement on internal sources of funding had to be reached. In a small number of instances employers were said to refuse to pay their cost-sharing contribution. While most users in the qualitative study also experienced no problems with their employer's involvement in the application process, the employer having to make a financial contribution was the main reported source of difficulty. Employers, it was thought, stalled because of cash-flow problems, delayed incurring large costs of agreed adaptations because of doubts that the employee would return to work, or refused to

make an agreed adaptation for a new employee once the six week period for aid from Access to Work had expired

Even where employers were willing to pay the financial contribution, there could be repercussions for the employee. Internal arguments about which department should pay for the support caused friction felt by the employee. Some interviewees felt 'guilty' if their employer paid for costly adaptations when they were unsure about their long-term commitment to the job, echoing the feelings of obligation to employers who paid for Access to Work support reported in other studies (Thornton and Vernon, 1998)

The other main problem offered by the minority of users in the survey who experienced problems with their employer's involvement is less tangible. For some, the process brought to light their employer's lack of understanding of disability issues or emphasised their lack of interest in the employee. Particularly where employers appeared unwilling to make changes and where conflict arose over appropriate solutions and costs, users' perceptions of negative attitudes and discriminatory behaviour were heightened.

Users in the survey and the qualitative study emphasised the need for fuller and earlier information to employers and increased contact and communication between employers and DST staff, including follow-up. One suggestion was for more face-to-face meetings: to explain to employers how Access to Work functions, and the procedures involved; discuss any (potential) problems; and make decisions about division of labour and who is responsible for doing what. More direct contact between the user and the employer would help to ensure that needs were communicated fully and accurately.

7.3 Key points

- Three out of four employees (76%) reported that their employer had been actively involved in facilitating their most recent or only Access to Work application. Employers were least likely to be involved where users received TW or CSI and to a lesser extent with those receiving APE.
- Most employees valued their employers' support in obtaining support through Access to Work. Over half rated their involvement as 'very good' or 'excellent' (54%); a further 22 per cent described it as 'good'. Over half of those receiving TW, SAE and SW rated their employers' involvement as 'very good' or 'excellent'.
- One in eight (12%) of those receiving APE or SW in their most recent or only application rated their employers' involvement as 'very poor' (compared with one in twenty overall).

- Users in the public sector are twice as likely as those in the private and independent sectors to rate their employer's involvement as no better than 'fair' (28% and 14%). One in three users in the private and independent sectors, compared with 23 per cent in the public sector rated their employer's involvement as 'excellent'
- One in seven employees said that their employers' involvement (or non-involvement) had caused them problems. The main problem attributed to employers was delay in getting the support required.
- Users wanted better communication between the employer, Access to Work and users themselves.

8 Administration of Access to Work

This chapter focuses on the two aspects of the administration of the Access to Work programme which the Employment Service (ES) felt warranted particular examination in the study: the time taken for support to be provided; and the extent to which users are informed about progress. Although the national survey asked no specific questions about application and claims procedures, concerns were volunteered by users and are reported here, along with insights from the qualitative study.

The chapter begins by looking at survey respondents' opinions of the time taken for their support to be provided, whether they were told about how long it might take and how far they felt informed about progress. Users' estimates of the actual time taken are examined next. Drawing also on the qualitative study, the chapter then reflects users' understanding of the reasons for extended waiting periods and the impact of delay on them; and some of their suggestions for improvement are cited. The chapter concludes by looking at views expressed on the application and claims procedures.

8.1 Opinion of time taken for support to be provided

Survey respondents were asked for their opinion of the time taken from application to receipt of support, in respect of their only or most recent application. To obtain results which could be aggregated across all respondents, they were presented with a six-point scale and asked to rate the time taken for each item of support applied for as 'excellent', 'very good', 'good', 'fair', 'poor' or 'very poor'.

The summary of ratings in Table 8.1 indicates that respondents' views range widely across the full scale, with a bias towards the positive end of the scale. Overall, almost half the responses indicate that the time taken so far for all the items that had been agreed was considered better than 'fair' whereas almost one in three rated the time taken as 'poor' or 'very poor'. These findings draw attention to wide variations in respondents' subjective experience of service delivery.

It should be noted that not all items of support were in place at the time of interview, with over one in five users (22%) still waiting for one or more items (see Section 8.4.1) and, perhaps not surprisingly, those who said they were still waiting for a support item to be provided rated time taken (so far) less favourably. When ratings by those still waiting are omitted, an overall more positive opinion of time taken emerges, as shown in the second row of Table 8.1.

Table 8.1 Respondents' ratings of time taken for all types of support

	<i>Excellent</i> %	<i>Very good</i> %	<i>Good</i> %	<i>Fair</i> %	<i>Poor</i> %	<i>Very poor</i> %	<i>Don't know</i> %	<i>Base number of responses*</i>
All items agreed	11	17	19	16	16	15	5	1137
All items provided	13	20	22	15	14	11	5	928

* respondents were asked to give an opinion for each type of support agreed in their only or most recent application

8.1.1 Opinion of time taken and type of support

Respondents' ratings of the time taken (so far) according to the types of support they had applied for are shown in Table 8.2. (The ratings omitting those still waiting are shown in Table A.8.1 in the appendices.)

Fares for travel to work was most highly rated with 77 per cent rating the time taken as 'good', 'very good' or 'excellent'. By comparison, only one in three of those whose applications involved alterations to the workplace, special furniture or equipment rated the time taken as highly. Differences of this magnitude may be attributable in part to variations in the actual time it takes to process applications for different types of support; it is probably easier and quicker to agree to and provide fares to work than to assess the need for, order and install a new piece of equipment or alter premises at the place of work.

However, respondents' ratings of the time taken are more likely to reflect differences between their expectations of how long an application should take to process and their experience of what actually happened. It is not possible to elicit respondents' expectations in a retrospective survey but it seems unlikely that they would have the same expectations regardless of what they have actually applied for. On the contrary, it seems reasonable to assume that most applicants would anticipate that different items of support would take longer to provide than others. If so, variations in the subjective experience of delivery times point to areas where performance assessment and audit could be usefully focused. On this assessment, the processing of applications for alterations to building, training to use new equipment, special equipment or furniture, and alterations to existing equipment warrant particular attention: in each case, four out of ten or more of the applicants for these items felt that the time taken to provide what had been requested was 'poor' or 'very poor'.

Table 8.2 Respondents' ratings of time taken (so far) for support to be provided

<i>Type of support</i>	<i>Excellent</i> %	<i>Very good</i> %	<i>Good</i> %	<i>Fair</i> %	<i>Poor</i> %	<i>Very poor</i> %	<i>Don't know</i> %	<i>Base*</i>
Specially provided equipment or furniture	6	14	14	20	22	20	4	402
Travel to work fares	20	28	29	9	6	4	4	204
Training to use new equipment	2	10	16	22	19	25	6	130
Support worker	18	13	18	14	13	16	7	95
Alterations to building	0	14	20	14	34	14	5	78
Alterations to existing equipment	11	13	18	15	22	18	3	75
Communicator or sign language interpreter at work	10	18	18	10	23	10	13	55
Personal reader	17	24	26	20	0	13	0	48
Communicator or sign language interpreter at interview	10	33	19	5	14	5	14	32
Adaptations to own vehicle	14	21	7	7	0	29	21	18

* Base respondents with type of support agreed in only or most recent application

8.2 Information on how long to expect

Around one in three respondents recalled being told how long to expect from the time they applied for Access to Work to when a particular item of support would be provided, while one in five could not remember if they had been told. Table 8.3 shows that only in the cases of travel to work fares and personal readers did more respondents believe they had been told when to expect than not.

Table 8.3 Respondents told how long to expect by type of support

<i>Type of support</i>	<i>'Were you told how long to expect?'</i>				Base: all applicants
	Yes %	No %	Can't recall %	Don't know %	
Specially provided equipment or furniture	32	49	18	1	312
Travel to work fares	39	38	23	-	193
Training to use new equipment	22	61	13	5	90
Support worker	32	48	18	3	84
Alterations to existing equipment	25	55	17	4	62
Alterations to building	21	60	15	4	51
Communicator or sign language interpreter at work	13	58	26	3	48
Personal reader	46	33	19	2	43
Communicator or sign language interpreter at interview	31	35	29	4	32
Adaptations to own vehicle	26	50	22	2	13
All responses	32	47	19	2	899

As might be expected, users' opinions of the time taken for support to be provided were shaped in part by whether or not they were told how long to expect. Two thirds of those who were told how long to expect rated the time taken as better than 'fair' compared with little more than a third of those who were not told how long it might take to deliver the support they required: 68 per cent and 38 per cent respectively. (The comparable proportion for those who could not recall being told how long to expect is 60 per cent)

8.3 Feeling informed about progress

All respondents in the survey were asked to what extent they felt informed about progress with getting what they required. One in three felt 'completely' informed (35%) and a further 28 per cent felt 'mostly' informed about progress. However, one in five said they felt 'not at all' informed (20%).

- Those who applied for Travel to work fares were somewhat more likely than other users to have been informed about the progress of their applications: 74 per cent said they had been 'completely' or 'mostly' informed.
- SAE and CSI users were most likely to feel in the dark although over half said they had been at least 'mostly' informed (58% and 54% respectively).

Whether or not respondents felt informed about their applications for Access to Work support seems to have influenced their opinions of the time taken for the support to be provided. The more users were kept informed about progress, the better they rate the time taken to provide the support required:

- 82 per cent of those who felt 'completely' informed and 57 per cent of those who felt 'mostly' informed about progress rated the time taken as better than 'fair'
- the comparable proportions for those who felt 'a little' informed and those who felt 'not at all' informed are 23 per cent and 15 per cent respectively.

8.4 Estimates of time taken

The ES hoped that the national survey would provide information about service delivery times for the different elements of Access to Work support to assist it in assessing Disability Services standards.⁷

Relevant data is available from the survey in two forms: survey respondents' reports of types of support still outstanding at point of interview; and respondents' estimates of the time taken for the support requested in their only or most recent Access to Work application to be provided.

8.4.1 Support outstanding at time of interview

As described in Chapter 1, the survey was designed to include not only users who had an application for Access to Work approved in January or February 2000 but also others receiving Access to Work support from an earlier application. It is not possible to identify from the survey data those respondents whose application was approved in January and February 2000 as respondents were asked for the date of application, which in many instances would pre-date that period. Accordingly, we report on support outstanding for all respondents.

According to users' reports, their only or most recent applications date from January 1994 up to and including the survey period. Thus, at the point of interview (that is, between late July and early September 2000) the minimum period that could have elapsed since application was two weeks and the maximum just over five and a half years. Three in ten of those who could supply information said they last applied in 2000, 37 per cent applied between July and December 1999 and 14 per cent between January and June 1999 (Table A.8.2 in the appendices).

⁷ On 1 April 2000 new 'customer expectation standards' were introduced specifying the target number of days for first help to be in place for each AtW element. Previously a common standard applied to all elements: receipt of first help within 60 working days of receipt of application.

Table 8.4 shows that at the time of interview most of the items in users' only or most recent application had already been provided. It should be noted that almost one in five users (19%) said they had applied since February 2000. Removing those individuals from the analysis makes no substantive difference to the findings.

Table 8.4 Support provided (so far) in only or most recent application

<i>Type of support applied for</i>	<i>Provided in full %</i>	<i>Provided in part %</i>	<i>Nothing provided %</i>	<i>Don't know %</i>	<i>Base: all applicants</i>
Specially provided equipment or furniture	77	17	4	2	333
Travel to work fares	94	3	2	1	201
Training to use new equipment	68	18	12	2	104
Support worker	87	8	4	1	89
Alterations to existing equipment	82	11	2	5	67
Personal reader	93	5	2	-	44
Alterations to building	54	27	19	-	59
Communicator or sign language interpreter at work	80	11	4	5	52
Communicator or sign language interpreter at interview	91	-	7	2	37
Adaptations to own vehicle	65	20	15	-	15
All items	82	12	5	2	1001

As might be expected, building alterations at the workplace are most likely to be outstanding: one in five of the applicants said that nothing so far had been done and a further quarter were still waiting for the work to be completed. In addition, no more than two out of three car adaptations had been completed by the time of interview, though here the number of applicants is too small to draw firm conclusions.

However, sizeable minorities of applicants were still waiting for special aids and equipment or the training to use such items; taken together, they represent 15 per cent of all users interviewed. Somewhat smaller proportions were waiting for alterations to existing equipment or for a support worker or communicator at work.

Overall, 22 per cent of users were waiting for one or more of the items shown in Table 8.4.

8.4.2 Respondents' estimates of time taken

As it is known that survey respondents can find it difficult to recall the timing of events, respondents were asked not only to give the dates of both application and the support being provided but also, as a check, to estimate the time that elapsed. The questions did not work as well as expected and usable responses had to be classified according to the rather broad categories shown in Table 8.5

Taken together, the findings show that a majority of Access to Work users said they got the support they requested within 12 weeks of their application. User estimates set out in Table 8.5 should be treated cautiously, however, as recall may not always have been precise or accurate.

Table 8.5 Estimates of time taken for only or most recent type of support to be provided

<i>Type of support received**</i>	<i>Number of weeks</i>						<i>Base*</i>
	1 to 4 %	5 to 12 %	13 to 26 %	27 to 39 %	40 to 52 %	53 or more %	
Special Aids and Equipment	16	40	24	9	8	3	278
Travel to Work	71	25	2	1	1	-	151
Adaptations to Premises and Equipment	27	37	20	10	4	2	96
Support Worker	42	28	15	2	12	2	66
Communicator Support at Interview	68	12	13	-	8	-	21

* Number of users receiving element in their only or most recent application

** Where respondents had applied for two or more items which fall within the same element the time taken for the latest item to be provided is recorded

A sizeable minority of eligible respondents, around one in five, were unable to provide an estimate of the time taken.⁸ Part of the explanation lies with the inclusion of respondents for whom the question was not applicable on some items because they were still waiting for some of that item to be provided. But this by no means accounts for most non-estimates of time taken. Over half of those not giving an estimate of time taken were recipients of fares to work or human support who said

⁸ In the IES survey of users 13 per cent of eligible respondents interviewed between five and nine months after their application did not know or could not recall how long it took before they received *all* of their support. Recalculated from Hillage *et al* (1998) Table A3 48

their support had been provided in full. For them the concept of time taken may be open to different interpretations - such as authorisation to recruit a support worker, the first occasion on which the support worker was used, or repayment of expenditure on fares to work - possibly leading to uncertainty in giving a definitive answer. More speculatively, non-response might result in part from an unwillingness to be used as a source of routine management information, a point strongly expressed by Panel members and some users in the qualitative study, as reported in Chapter 10.

As might be expected there are variations in the estimated time taken according to the kind of support applied for. It can be seen that seven out of ten TW users got help with fares to work within four weeks and a further one in four within 12 weeks. Other Access to Work elements are not so speedily provided. The main contrast is between the provision of SW, which seven out of ten users said they received within 12 weeks, and the provision of SAE or APE, which fewer than two out of three received within that time. Indeed a sizeable minority of both SAE and APE users, almost one in five, waited more than six months for all the support agreed in their application to be provided. However, fewer than one in 20 waited more than 12 months. Although the number of CSI users is small, the findings indicate that two out of three get support at a job interview within four weeks of their Access to Work application.

Table A.8.3 in the appendices shows the estimated time taken for the different types of support within these elements. Apart from training to use new equipment and building alterations at the work place, most items of support were provided within 12 weeks.

When environmental adaptations and human supports are distinguished (that is, excluding fares for travel to work), it becomes apparent that nearly three quarters of human support was provided within 12 weeks (73%) compared with 56 per cent of environmental adaptations, as shown in Table 8.6.

The scope of the study did not extend to investigating the reasons for Access to Work elements of support taking longer than the Disability Service standard, though those users who rated delivery times negatively were asked why, in their opinion, support was taking longer than they would have liked (see Section 8.5). It is possible that extended gaps between application and delivery are attributable to changes in circumstances, such as periods of ill-health or job changes. It is worth noting that for some users obtaining the right solution is the priority, even if the time taken to achieve it is extensive. Users in the qualitative study appreciated opportunities to trial ergonomic equipment, and combinations of equipment, until the best solution was arrived at.

Table 8.6 Estimates of time taken for environmental adaptations and human support to be provided from only or most recent application

<i>Number of weeks</i>	<i>Environmental adaptations %</i>	<i>Human support %</i>
1 to 4	18	43
5 to 12	38	30
13 to 26	24	15
27 to 39	10	2
40 to 52	8	8
53 or more	3	3
Base*	308	122

* Number of users receiving element in their only or most recent application

8.4.3 Users' views and estimates of time taken

Not surprisingly, users appreciate shorter delivery times. As a consequence, their views of the time taken for support to be provided tend to be more positive the shorter the estimated time actually taken. The relationship is not clear cut however, suggesting that many users have quite realistic expectations of the time required to provide different types of support. As we have observed, users are likely to hold more positive views of the time taken when they are told how long to expect and kept informed of progress. Thus, there is no difference in the proportions rating time taken as better than 'fair' between those who waited three to nine months for support to be provided and those who waited longer (33% and 30% respectively).

Nonetheless, the findings suggest that a critical threshold is reached around three months after an application has been made:

- 41 per cent of those who received support within 12 weeks rated the time taken as 'very good' or 'excellent' (66% if those rating 'good' are included)
- 51 per cent of those whose support took longer than 12 weeks to provide rated the time taken as 'poor' or 'very poor' (68% including those rating no better than 'fair').

8.5 Delay and its consequences

8.5.1 Users' explanations of delay

199 respondents who rated the time taken (so far) for support to be provided as 'fair', 'poor' or 'very poor' were asked which items of equipment or building adaptations were taking longer. Altogether 260 items were recorded. The largest category mentioned was furniture and associated items (37%) followed by computer equipment (29%), telephone equipment (11%), and alterations to the building (10%). Braille equipment, speech equipment, wheelchairs, and training were each mentioned by almost seven per cent of these respondents. Hearing equipment and vehicle adaptations were mentioned by four and two per cent respectively; fire equipment including alarms was also mentioned by two per cent.

When asked why they thought these items were taking longer, over one in ten could not say and some of those stated that they had not been informed of the reason.

As confirmed in the qualitative study, delays in getting equipment and building adaptations were attributed mostly to the perceived complexity of the administrative process of applying for Access to Work support: employers taking a long time to complete the paper work; the time and effort involved in obtaining three quotations; negotiating cost-sharing, waiting formal authorisation in order to start; confusion about where responsibility for ordering lay; and inadequate communication and consultation between employer, user and Access to Work staff at different stages of the process. As was noted in Chapter 7, employers' reluctance to engage in the process could be an additional contributory factor.

The next most common set of explanations given by respondents to the survey related to supply: a suitable item could not be found; the item was custom made or had to be imported; manufacturers, suppliers or building contractors were slow; wrong or ill-functioning equipment delivered had to be replaced; or a lack of other parts of the support package meant the item provided could not be used.

When asked, the 73 users of SW and TW who rated the time taken as 'fair', 'poor' or 'very poor' tended to suggest that 'bureaucracy' held things up, though over one in ten could offer no explanation. TW users were critical of the time-consuming and difficult requirement to obtain quotes from three taxi companies. Some SW users commented that the processes of agreeing support and recruiting a support worker could be lengthy, further illustrated by users in the qualitative study who spoke of the time-consuming process of justifying need and producing cost estimates.

Very few users in the survey attributed delay entirely to Access to Work staff, though some acknowledged that their heavy workload made it hard to respond speedily, that

internal co-ordination could be poor, and that staff turnover led to discontinuities, points also made by users in the qualitative study. Delays in answering telephone calls, providing forms and arranging meetings could be frustrating. Users in the qualitative study were critical of the constraints within which DST staff had to operate, commenting on delays caused by '*red-tape*'

It should be noted that many users saw delay as cumulative, rather than attributable to a single factor. For example, a visually impaired user in the qualitative study illustrated how an adviser with workload pressures, shortfalls in communication, difficult paperwork and a prolonged search for a suitable solution together led to an eight months wait for computer equipment. Another user explained how delays were compounded by her six months absence from work, technical problems in finding the right equipment, disputes over financial responsibility and delays on the part of the manufacturer. A third blamed disputes between Access to Work staff and the employer over appropriate contractors, the time taken to obtain three quotations and delays in the adviser obtaining authorisation for expenditure.

8.5.2 Temporary arrangements

One in four of the respondents who were waiting for some or all of the support that had been agreed said that temporary arrangements had been made. Such arrangements covered the whole spectrum of Access to Work provision but mostly related to the use of special equipment or furniture. The numbers are too small for detailed analysis but it is apparent that most users were dissatisfied with the arrangements that had been made: more than two out of three rated them as no better than 'fair' (on the same six-point scale described in Section 8.1).

8.5.3 Effects of delays in the provision of support

Respondents who rated as no better than 'fair' the time taken to provide fares to work, a support worker, reader or communicator/sign language interpreter at work were asked how the less than desirable wait for support had affected their work. More than four out of five (85%) reported an adverse effect.

Table 8.7 shows that the main effect of such support taking longer was to reduce users' ability to work fully and effectively. Over one in three felt that the quality of their work was adversely affected while over one in four felt that their performance at work had been impaired. Nearly one in ten said that they could not start or continue work until the support was in place. More than one in eight said that waiting for support to be provided had damaged their health or delayed an improvement they expected when the support would be in place. Smaller numbers of respondents reported various other ways in which their personal and working lives had been

disrupted, including worsened relationships at work, affects on home life and extra cost incurred

Table 8.7 Effect on work of waiting for support to be provided

	<i>Per cent*</i>
Could not / cannot do the job as well as required / preferred	35
Could not work as quickly / effectively as required / preferred	27
Affected health / made condition worse	14
Could not work as many hours as required / preferred	7
Could not get to work as easily / quickly	7
Affected home life	5
Could not /cannot start job until support was provided	4
Made relations with employer / co-worker worse	4
Could not / cannot return to job until support was provided	3
Prevented health / condition improving	2
Lost job offer	1
Could not get to work at all	1
Other	15
Not at all	15
No particular effect	15
Base: respondents rating time taken (so far) to provide support as 'fair', 'poor' or 'very poor'	174

* percentages sum to more than 100 because some respondents mentioned more than one effect

Comments volunteered by respondents to the national survey and findings from the qualitative study shed more light on these results. Users spoke of being left unsupported to investigate lack of action and having to '*push things along*' themselves in time they could ill-afford. These factors, as well as anxiety about the outcome, contributed to users experiencing stress that was '*unbelievable*' or '*hideous*'. A user in the qualitative study whose application had been subject to very lengthy delays lost all hope that essential building adaptations would ever go ahead, yet she wanted to work for as long as she could. For her, taking part in paid work made her feel a valuable member of society and in any case was her right. As well as having detrimental effects in terms of users' well-being, delays in the provision of support could also jeopardise people's physical safety. There were examples in the

study of users with mobility problems who had suffered the indignity of falling over and then having to struggle to get up on their own whilst using temporary - and inadequate - arrangements

Sometimes, delays in the provision of equipment could exacerbate poor relations with employers and users felt they were '*lucky*' to be kept on during the waiting period. Being seen as not contributing could lead to friction and bad working relationships with work colleagues.

There were financial implications for users when the provision of support was delayed, for instance the number of hours that some people could work was restricted. Some users were hard pressed financially to pay out taxi fares and wait for reimbursement. Delays in reimbursement of claims for travel to work fares caused further hardship. On occasions, the slow pace of applications being processed prompted long-standing users of Access to Work to use their own money to purchase items of equipment rather than endure the anticipated '*hassle*' and delays.

8.6 Speed of provision and opinion of DST staff

It is clear from the comments offered by users in the study that the time taken from application to support being in place can detract from their evaluation of DST staff. Users who thought the staff '*excellent*' nevertheless felt let down by the time taken to get their support.

The survey findings confirm that respondents' views about DST staff who handled their application reflect how speedily provision was arranged through Access to Work. Those who judged the time taken for providing the support they required as 'very good' or 'excellent' held more positive views about the role of DST staff than those who felt the timescale had been 'poor' or 'very poor' (Table A.8 4 in the appendices).

Feeling informed about progress also influenced respondents' views about DST staff. When asked how well informed they had felt about getting what they required, those who replied 'completely' or 'mostly' generally had higher regard for the role of DST staff than those who felt they had been kept informed 'a little' or 'not at all' (Table A.8 5 in the appendices).

8.7 Users' suggestions for improving the speed of provision

When asked for comments to assist the ES in making improvements to Access to Work those users concerned about delays to provision focussed on speeding up and streamlining the processes of claiming, assessing needs, approving estimates, payment and delivery of the support required. Priorities were improving co-ordination among the parties concerned, better advance information about the process and who is responsible for what, and more attention to employees' specification of their requirements.

Specific suggestions included:

- eliminating the need for three quotations
- allowing DST staff greater authority to make decisions without referral to their managers
- allowing the employer to put the provision in place and later claim the Access to Work grant
- providing support on loan with Access to Work retaining ownership
- automatic payment by Access to Work of less expensive items
- oversight of employers by Access to Work to ensure that support was put in place
- recommendation by Access to Work of competitively priced suppliers
- ordering of equipment by Access to Work rather than the employer
- better technical advice to ensure that appropriate support is provided in the first place
- less attention to trying to achieve the cheapest support at the expense of appropriate provision.

8.8 Application and claims procedures

Although the national survey asked no specific questions about application and claims procedures these emerged as concerns when respondents were asked if they wished to make suggestions to help the ES make improvements to Access to Work, as well as when they were asked about factors contributing to delays. The interviews with a follow-up sample (the qualitative study) explored experience of the procedures in more depth.

Reducing 'red tape' was a prime suggestion for improvement. Long-term users felt that Access to Work had become increasingly bureaucratised over recent years and that now there were '*bureaucratic hoops to jump through to get anywhere*'. Respondents spontaneously commented on what they saw as an excessive amount of paperwork, often duplicated; repeatedly having to write down national insurance numbers was one example given. Users renewing their claims were particularly

resentful of the need to provide information which they assumed was already held on DST records. This was seen not only as a waste of effort (particularly in those cases where things had not changed), but also as work that should more rightly have been done by DST staff. Interviewees also criticised the tendency for insufficiently completed forms to be returned to them when they had already supplied the information in previous applications.

Users in receipt of travel to work support raised a number of concerns. Obtaining three quotations was sometimes difficult, so much so that some people might be inclined to *'throw in the towel'*. There might not be three taxi firms with vehicles adapted for wheelchair users in their area; it could be hard to find reputable firms; taxi firms could be uncooperative or unprofessional about providing written quotations (a proforma quotation form, supplied by the ES, might increase their willingness). An interviewee with mobility problems explained how exhausting and time consuming she had found the effort of contacting taxi firms in person, an exercise which took her and her husband a whole day.

A few users found travel to work claims procedures straightforward. However, keeping receipts and getting signatures from both the taxi firm and the employer was seen as a *'hassle'* and an added burden by many. These procedures demanded even more effort from people who had to ask for additional help in completing the forms, for example visually impaired users and those unable to write. The need for signatures, suggesting that people's integrity was being called into account, was also questioned. The efficiency and sense of returning a travel to work claim form which was six pence out, together with an accompanying letter, was questioned. As noted, some users suffered financially due to delays in reimbursement of taxi fares. Suggestions to help alleviate hardship included introducing a system of grants. Users suggested taxi firms could invoice the ES direct to lessen the burden of paperwork and avoid the financial pressure they were experiencing. Alternatively, the ES could contract with the firms itself.

Deaf people found the amount of form filling for CSI difficult, especially if they were not accustomed to the English language. Visually impaired users would have welcomed forms being available in braille or on e-mail. Asking for help from a friend or relative had implications for privacy. Alternative communication media was a key suggestion for improvement by people with sensory impairments.

There was evidence of tensions between Access to Work's requirement to obtain three quotations for building adaptations or items of equipment and the employer's preference (or rule) to use a contractor already known to them, a practice that was common for organisations in the public sector. Arranging workplace visits in order to

obtain all three quotes was a time consuming business that contributed towards delays. At the same time, having to adhere strictly to Access to Work's procedures that did not fit with those of the employer was potentially damaging in terms of good working relationships between the various parties involved.

Finally, not everyone was critical of the 'red tape' involved and applying could be '*a perfectly painless process*'. Some users, however, were surprised at how little their need was questioned and felt that screening of claims should be more rigorous.

8.9 Key points

- Opinions of time taken range widely. Overall, almost half the responses indicate that time taken was better than 'fair' but almost one in three rated it as 'poor' or 'very poor'. Four out of ten applicants for alterations to buildings, training to use new equipment, special equipment or furniture, and alterations to existing equipment felt that the time taken to provide what was requested was 'poor' or 'very poor'.
- Respondents' opinions of the speed of provision reflect their views about DST staff.
- Around one in three respondents recalled being told how long to expect support to be in place, and a further one in five could not remember if they had been told.
- One in three survey respondents said they felt 'completely' informed about progress but one in five said they felt 'not at all' informed.
- Being told how long it might take for support to be provided and being informed about its progress help to shape users' appreciation of the time taken for that support to be provided. Being informed about progress also had a positive influence on respondents' views of DST staff.
- At the time of interview, more than one in five respondents were still waiting for at least one item of support. Among the outstanding items building alterations and car adaptations were most prevalent, although 15 per cent of all users interviewed were still waiting for special aids and equipment or training to use such items.
- Based on respondents' estimates of the time taken for their support to be provided, most Travel to Work fares and Communicator Support at Interview were provided within four weeks. Most environmental adaptations, apart from

training to use new equipment and building alterations at the work place, and human support were provided within three months

- Three months waiting for support to be provided seems to be a critical threshold for users. Within this timescale most users are satisfied with the time taken; beyond it users become increasingly dissatisfied.
- Users offered many explanations for delays but attributed them primarily to 'red-tape' and poor liaison between employers, users, specialist advisors, suppliers and Access to Work staff in an overly complex administrative process. Many users saw delay as cumulative, rather than attributable to a single factor
- More than four out of five of respondents who rated as no better than 'fair' the time taken to provide fares to work, a support worker, reader or communicator/sign language interpreter at work reported an adverse effect on their work.
- Users felt that procedures were overly bureaucratic and that much of the paperwork and form filling was duplicated and often unnecessary. Making claims for reimbursement of travel to work fares was a particular cause for concern, involving regular, repetitive form completion. Obtaining three quotations could be difficult, and contributed towards delays.
- People with sensory impairments in particular called for alternative media, such as Braille and e-mail to make form-filling easier.

9 Overall Opinion of Access to Work

To assess users' overall views about Access to Work, survey respondents were asked to rate the support agreed or arranged for them on three scales. The aim was to provide subjective measures of users' attitudes to the appropriateness, usefulness and acceptability of Access to Work provision. We summarise the results of each in turn and conclude this chapter by examining agreement across the three measures.

9.1 Appropriateness

The first scale describes how far respondents felt that the actual support agreed or arranged as a result of their Access to Work application, as distinct from aspects of service process and delivery, met their requirements. Responses were scored on a four-point scale from 'completely', through 'mostly' and 'a little' to 'not at all'. The results, summarised in Figure 9.1, show that more than nine out of ten users (92%) considered that the support through Access to Work met their needs 'completely' or 'mostly'.

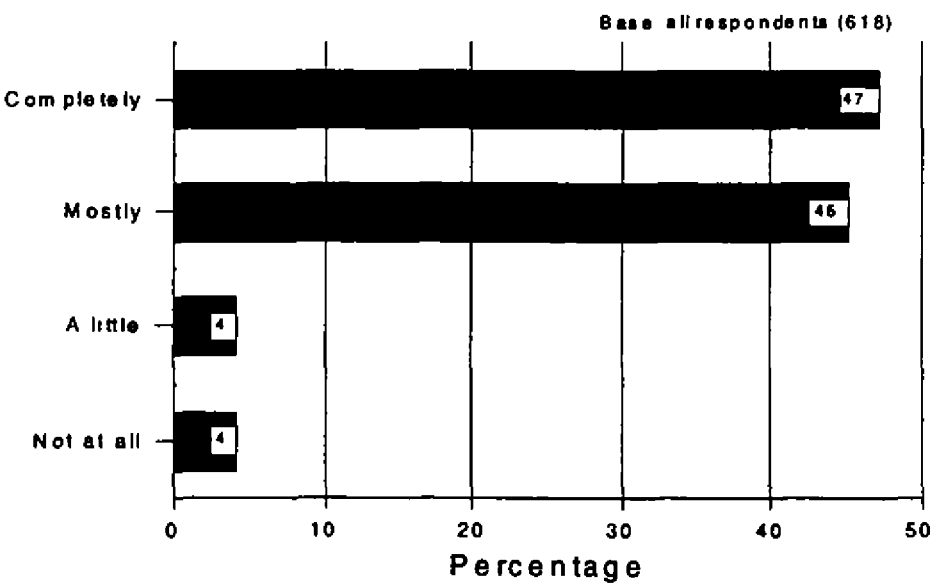


Figure 9.1 Users' rating of the appropriateness of Access to Work

There are variations according to whether or not respondents received work-related support over and above that provided through Access to Work. Almost all those who relied wholly on Access to Work to meet their current needs at work gave a positive evaluation, while those who got support at work in addition to Access to Work provision were less fulsome. These findings are summarised in Table A.9.1 in the appendices.

9.1.1 Rating of appropriateness by support element

Irrespective of the Access to Work element agreed or arranged, the vast majority said that Access to Work met their needs 'mostly' or 'completely', as shown in Table 9.1 TW users were more likely to report that the support 'completely' met their needs while SW, APE and CSI users were least likely to do so. One in five users of CSI felt that Access to Work met their needs only 'a little' or 'not at all'.

Table 9.1 Respondents' views of the appropriateness of AtW by support element

<i>'Would you say AtW meets your requirements ...'</i>	<i>AtW element received</i>					<i>All %</i>
	<i>SAE %</i>	<i>TW %</i>	<i>SW %</i>	<i>APE %</i>	<i>CSI %</i>	
Completely	43	57	34	36	33	47
Mostly	48	39	57	53	46	45
A little	5	2	6	7	14	4
Not at all	4	2	4	4	8	4
Base: all respondents	405	230	191	171	44	618

Table 9.2 shows that while users of human support (that is, SW and CSI) were as likely as users of environmental adaptations (SAE and APE) to say that Access to Work support met their needs 'completely' or 'mostly', only one in three (34%) of the former, compared with nearly half (48%) of the latter, felt that their Access to Work support met their needs 'completely'.

Table 9.2 Respondents' views of the appropriateness of AtW by environmental adaptations and human support

<i>'Would you say AtW meets your requirements ...'</i>	<i>Environmental adaptations %</i>	<i>Human support %</i>
Completely	48	34
Mostly	44	56
A little	4	6
Not at all	3	3
Base. all respondents	539	205

9.1.2 Rating of appropriateness by employment situation

There are predictable variations in respondents' views on the appropriateness of Access to Work according to their current labour force status. As might be expected, those currently not in paid work were least likely to say that Access to Work 'completely' met their needs and more likely to rate Access to Work as 'not at all' appropriate (Table A.9.1 in the appendices.)

Employees in the private and independent sectors combined were more likely than those in the public sector to report that Access to Work 'completely' met their requirements (Table A.9.2 in the appendices).

Most employees in supported employment felt that Access to Work 'completely' met their requirements (60%), with 37 per cent saying it met their needs 'mostly'. By comparison, those not in supported employment were divided as to whether Access to Work 'completely' or 'mostly' met their needs (46% in each case). (Table A.9.3 in the appendices)

9.1.3 Rating of appropriateness by disabling complaint

Table 9.3 shows that most respondents reporting visual impairments and mental health problems said that Access to Work met their requirements 'mostly' (58% and 63% respectively) while over half of those reporting musculo-skeletal complaints said it met their needs 'completely' (53%). Those users reporting hearing impairments were most likely to say that Access to Work met their needs 'a little' or 'not at all' (17%), with the remainder almost evenly divided in thinking their requirements were met 'completely' and 'mostly' (41% and 42% respectively). (Table A.9.4 in the appendices shows rating by another classification of disabling complaint)

Table 9.3 Respondents' rating of the appropriateness of AtW by four types of disabling complaint

<i>'Would you say AtW meets your requirements . '</i>	<i>Musculo-skeletal complaints %</i>	<i>Eye complaints %</i>	<i>Ear complaints %</i>	<i>Mental health problems %</i>
Completely	53	36	41	31
Mostly	39	58	42	63
A little	5	4	10	3
Not at all	3	2	7	3
Base: all respondents	260	175	113	27

9.2 Usefulness

The second rating scale aimed to assess the extent to which users felt that Access to Work enabled them to work. Respondents were asked to indicate their views from 'could not work without it', through 'a great deal', 'quite a lot', 'not much' to 'not at all'. The findings indicate that Access to Work played a central part in the working lives of most users. Figure 9.2 shows that almost half said that they could not work without the support they received through Access to Work and a further one in three felt that the support they receive helps 'a great deal' in enabling them to work.

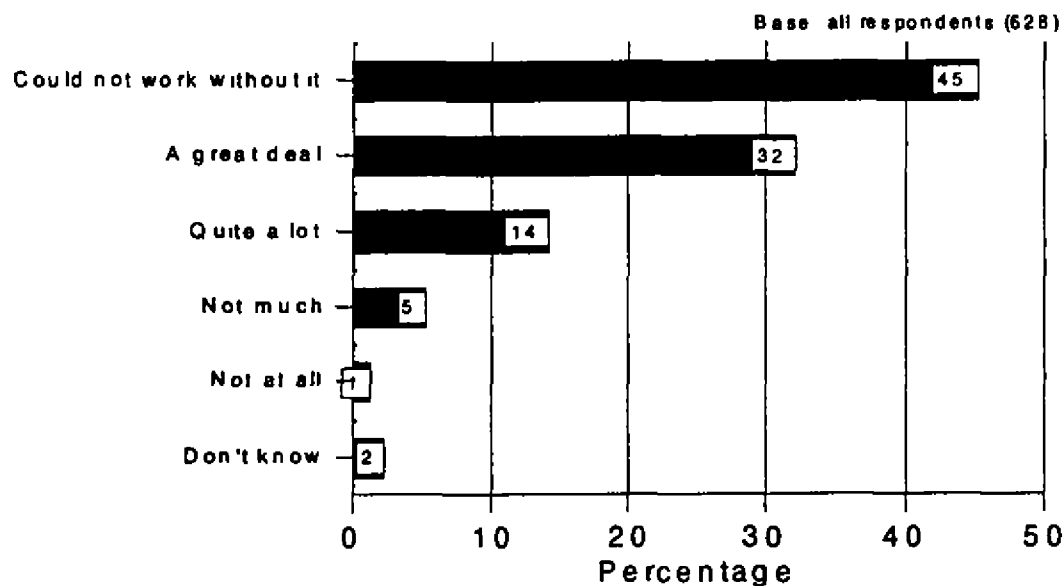


Figure 9.2 Users' rating of the usefulness of Access to Work

Respondents were asked about how Access to Work enabled them to work. The open ended responses can be grouped into two categories: the far larger group of explanations that was positive and described features that facilitated the ability to work, and a minor group that was negative and referred to obstacles perceived to act as a barrier to working.

Users described how Access to Work support enabled them to deal better with the physical environment, for instance:

- subsidised taxi fares meant that users could get to work, or travel between different work sites, if there was no suitable alternative public transport available; the additional financial support made working a viable proposition, especially for those on low incomes
- building adaptations made the physical environment more accessible and safer; wider access made it possible to socialise with work colleagues more, and so be less isolated.

As far as users' actual jobs were concerned, respondents reported how invaluable they found items of equipment and support workers. The overall impact of such support was to make jobs easier and more pleasant, as well as increasing efficiency and productivity. For example, users reported being able to work for longer periods at a time, with improved levels of concentration. Some were able to broaden the type of activities they could undertake, including taking on more difficult tasks.

Opportunities for participating and contributing on equal terms with non-disabled colleagues increased. Those with hearing impairments were able to communicate better with hearing people at meetings. Some respondents reported the Access to Work support enabled them to take on more responsibility, leading in some cases to promotion to senior levels.

Users' physical and emotional health and well-being was positively affected by Access to Work support. Items of equipment, special chairs or desks for instance, alleviated health problems and meant respondents experienced less pain or fatigue, or fewer relapses in their medical condition; and sickness absence was reduced. At the same time, levels of confidence and self-esteem increased; work was less stressful and more relaxed. Users welcomed being more independent and no longer having to rely on others to step in and help them (which in turn reduced pressure on other people involved).

Some respondents pointed out that their employers would not have been able to afford the support items if they had been required to fund them on their own. The implication was that without support from Access to Work, users might not have been able to hold down a job. It was thought likely that the availability of support encouraged employers to take on disabled people against whom they might otherwise discriminate, and at the same time encouraged disabled people to (stay in) work.

Not all respondents viewed Access to Work in a positive light. As Figure 9.2 shows, a small minority felt that Access to Work had been of little use in enabling them to work, or even none at all. Some of the reasons behind these judgements related to the way Access to Work was administered (as reported in Chapter 8):

- delays in responding to applications or in the delivery of items of support
- the 'hassle' of dealing with different actors
- not having enough information
- users being provided with minimal or poor quality support (or none at all) so they did not gain very much (or even 'lost out', for example, by having the number of hours they worked reduced)
- equipment breaking down and not being repaired.

Other explanations for less positive views were not so much under the control of Access to Work as related to the user in question and the existing circumstances:

- users were working already, and the support from Access to Work just made their work that little bit easier
- users were determined to work and would have funded the support (for instance, travel to work fares) themselves, even if that meant suffering the financial consequences
- users devised alternative arrangements (for example, using toilets that were further away, or that had not been adapted for disabled people).

9.2.1 Rating of usefulness by support element

As Table 9.4 shows, TW users rated the usefulness of Access to Work most highly whereas CSI users were less certain, one in five (22%) of whom felt that the support did not help much at all.

Table 9.4 Respondents' rating of the usefulness of Access to Work by support element

<i>'To what extent has support from AtW enabled you to work?'</i>	<i>AtW element</i>					<i>All %</i>
	<i>SAE %</i>	<i>TW %</i>	<i>SW %</i>	<i>APE %</i>	<i>CSI %</i>	
Could not work without it	42	55	46	47	37	45
A great deal	35	31	33	28	19	32
Quite a lot	14	10	15	18	22	14
Not much	6	3	5	6	16	5
Not at all	1	1	1	1	6	1
Don't know	2	0	0	1	-	2
Base: all respondents	410	234	193	172	45	628

There are only small differences in users' rating of the usefulness of Access to Work according to use of environmental adaptations and human support (Table A.9.5 in the appendices).

9.2.2 Rating of usefulness by employment sector

Employees in the private and independent sectors were more likely than public sector employees to report that they could not work without their Access to Work support (53% compared with 40%). However, fewer than one in fourteen in either sector distinguished here said that Access to Work had helped 'not at all' or 'not much'. The findings suggest that factors other than Access to Work are important in

enabling public sector employees to continue working (Table A.9 6 in the appendices)

9.2.3 Rating of usefulness by disabling complaint

Variations in the perceived usefulness of Access to Work by disabling complaint, as shown in Table 9.5, centre on differences in the proportion of respondents who felt that their Access to Work support helped 'a great deal' or they 'could not work without it'. For example, respondents with mental health problems and visually impaired users (53% and 55% respectively) were most likely to report that they could not work without Access to Work while those with musculo-skeletal complaints were more likely to say that Access to Work helped 'a great deal'. Respondents with a hearing impairment only were most likely to question the usefulness of Access to Work. Although a majority of the latter group felt that Access to Work enabled them to work 'quite a lot' or more so, 13 per cent said that Access to Work support was not much help or did not help at all in enabling them to find or keep a job. (Table A.9.7 in the appendices shows ratings according to another classification of disabling complaint)

Table 9.5 Respondents' rating of the usefulness of AtW by four types of disabling complaint

<i>'To what extent has support from AtW enabled you to work?'</i>	<i>Musculo-skeletal complaints %</i>	<i>Eye complaints %</i>	<i>Ear complaints %</i>	<i>Mental health problems %</i>
Could not work without it	40	55	43	53
A great deal	34	31	25	25
Quite a lot	16	9	17	9
Not much	6	2	9	9
Not at all	1	2	4	-
Don't know	3	1	1	3
Base. all respondents	261	179	116	27

9.3 Acceptability

The acceptability of Access to Work was ascertained by asking users to rate their overall experience of using it as 'excellent', 'very good', 'good', 'fair', 'poor' or 'very poor'. Figure 9.3 shows that nearly eight in ten (79%) rated Access to Work as *better* than 'fair' (which might be equated with the view that Access to Work was 'alright' or

'OK'). Over half (55%) said that in their experience Access to Work was 'very good' or 'excellent' and a further one in four described their experience as 'good'.

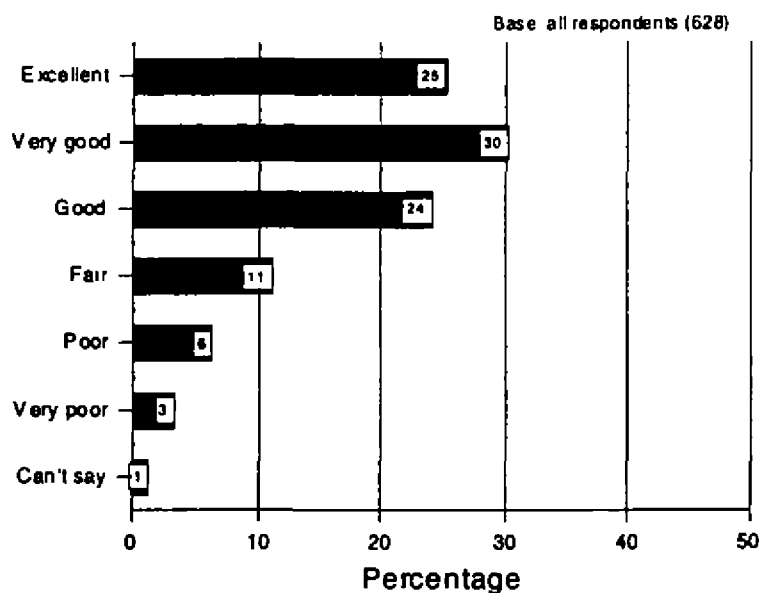


Figure 9.3 Users' overall opinion of the acceptability of Access to Work

9.3.1 Rating of acceptability by Access to Work element

Variations in perceived acceptability by the Access to Work element agreed or arranged are shown in Table 9.6. These findings indicate that TW users rated the acceptability of Access to Work most highly while a substantial minority of SW and CSI users, one in three or more, rated Access to Work as no better than 'fair'. Those receiving SAE and APE lie between these two contrasting groups of users.

Table 9.7 shows more clearly the differences in ratings by users of environmental adaptations and human support. Fewer users of the latter rated it as 'excellent' and more said it was 'poor' or 'very poor'.

Table 9.6 Respondents' overall opinion of the acceptability of AtW by element

'How would you rate AtW?'	AtW element					All %
	SAE %	TW %	SW %	APE %	CSI %	
Excellent	21	29	14	20	8	25
Very good	30	33	31	33	21	30
Good	24	26	22	24	29	24
Fair	13	8	13	12	17	11
Poor	8	2	11	8	16	6
Very poor	3	2	8	3	4	3
Can't say	1	0	1	-	4	1
Base: all respondents	410	234	193	172	45	628

Table 9.7 Respondents' overall opinion of the acceptability of AtW by environmental adaptations and human support

'How would you rate AtW?'	Environmental adaptations %	Human support %
Excellent	26	14
Very good	30	30
Good	24	23
Fair	11	13
Poor	6	11
Very poor	3	7
Can't say	1	1
Base: all respondents	546	207

9.3.2 Rating of acceptability by employment sector

Employees in the private or independent sectors were more likely than those in the public sector to rate the acceptability of Access to Work as better than fair: the proportions are 86 per cent and 74 per cent respectively (Table A.9.8 in the appendices).

9.3.3 Rating of acceptability by disabling complaint

Variations by disabling complaint indicate, as shown in Table 9.8, that those respondents with musculo-skeletal complaints and mental health problems rate the acceptability of Access to Work most highly while one in three of those with a hearing impairment and almost one in four (24%) of those with a visual impairment rate it as no better than 'fair'. (Table A.9.9 in the appendices shows ratings according to another classification of disabling complaint)

Table 9.8 Respondents' overall opinion of the acceptability of AtW by disabling complaint

<i>'How would you rate AtW?'</i>	<i>Musculo-skeletal complaints</i> %	<i>Eye complaints</i> %	<i>Ear complaints</i> %	<i>Mental health problems</i> %
Excellent	31	19	15	31
Very good	27	35	23	31
Good	24	21	25	25
Fair	10	14	16	3
Poor	5	7	11	6
Very poor	1	3	6	3
Can't say	1	1	4	-
Base: all respondents	261	179	116	27

9.3.4 Rating of acceptability by rating of DST staff

Findings from the qualitative study indicate that users' views of Access to Work might be related to how they are treated as individuals with particular employment needs, who require advice, information and practical support, and have views of their own about how those needs might best be met. DST staff might be expected, therefore, to play a key role in shaping users' perceptions of the quality of service. To investigate this further, we examined the association between users' overall opinion of the acceptability of Access to Work and their opinion of how their application for support was dealt with by DST staff (see Section 5.1)

The findings shown in Table A.9.10 in the appendices indicate that the more positive ratings of DST staff are associated with affirmative views of AtW:

- almost four out of five respondents who rated DST staff as 'very good/excellent' described the overall acceptability of AtW as 'very good/excellent' compared with fewer than one in five of those rating DST staff as 'poor/very poor'.

These findings indicate that users' overall views about Access to Work are influenced by the substance and quality of their relationships and discussions with those members of the DST who processed their applications for Access to Work.

9.3.5 Rating of acceptability by opinion on time taken

It was hypothesised that respondents' views on the overall acceptability of Access to Work might be associated with the time taken to provide what had been applied for. Indeed, it is clear from the comments offered by users in the study that the time taken from application to support being in place can detract from their overall evaluation of the service. Users who felt that Access to Work is '*a very good scheme*' and who were '*positive about it overall*' nevertheless felt let down by the time taken to get their support.

As we have observed, respondents' views about the time taken range widely over the six-point scale used (Table 8.1) whereas their views about acceptability cluster towards the positive end of the same scale (Figure 9.3). These contrasting distributions influence the pattern of association between the two scales. In general, those who rate the time taken as 'good' to 'excellent' also rate the overall acceptability of Access to Work in a similar way, suggesting that time taken is an important ingredient shaping users' views about quality of service. However, those who rate the time taken as 'poor' or 'very poor' are as likely to place the overall acceptability of Access to Work anywhere from 'poor' to 'good' (see Table A.9.11 in the appendices). As a consequence, respondents' views on the overall acceptability of Access to Work are not invariably related to their views about delivery times. In particular, those respondents who report negatively about the time taken for support to be provided are almost as likely as not to give a positive assessment of the overall acceptability of Access to Work.

This does not mean that delivery targets are not important; clearly most applicants would prefer support to be provided sooner rather than later. However, the findings indicate that there are other aspects of the service process which are as important as delivery deadlines, or more so, in shaping users' views about the acceptability of Access to Work.

9.4 Appropriateness, usefulness and acceptability

So far we have examined users' overall views of Access to Work according to three rating scales considered separately in turn. We recognise that each scale has not been properly validated for this respondent group and provides no more than a 'rough and ready' assessment of users' views about their experiences of Access to Work and the extent to which it enables them to remain in or take up paid employment. Further development and testing would produce more robust measures

and raise the level of confidence that can be placed in such scales for monitoring and evaluating trends in users' views.

In the meantime, one test of how well these scales perform in practice is to examine the levels of agreement between the different sets of scores. Such an approach investigates how far users' views of what we have called 'appropriateness' are consistent with their views of 'usefulness' or 'acceptability'. Cross-tabulations of each scale against the other two indicate that they are positively correlated. Variations in users' views on the extent to which Access to Work enabled them to work are strongly associated with variations in their overall opinions of their experience of using the scheme and how well it meets their employment needs. Statistically speaking the findings are very significant.⁹

Whatever the three scales are actually measuring, therefore, it is clear that each is tapping a single, common dimension with one end point representing more positive views of Access to Work and the other representing more negative views. It would be idle to pretend that these scales provide a definitive assessment of how users evaluate Access to Work or the support they receive. At face value, however, these findings indicate that it is possible to represent, in a practical and consistent way, the views of users who have favourable or not so favourable experiences of Access to Work. As well as providing an overall summary of their views, such scales can be used to understand better the experiences of subgroups of users and draw comparisons. If repeated over time, they might also form part of a system for monitoring the impact of changes in service inputs and processes and the extent to which users feel that Access to Work enables them to remain in or take up paid employment. In the next chapter, we consider users' comments and suggestions on those aspects of Access to Work that might be routinely monitored.

9.5 Key points

To assess users overall views about Access to Work survey respondents were asked to rate the support agreed or arranged for them on three scales.

⁹ Two statistical tests were used: the chi-square test and Kendall's tau-c. In each case the observed significance levels were less than 0.001

How far Access to Work met users' needs

- More than nine out of ten users said that Access to Work support met their requirements 'completely' or 'mostly'
- TW users were most likely to report that their support 'completely' met their needs, while SW, APE and SAE users were least likely to do so. One in five users of CSI felt that Access to Work met their needs only 'a little' or 'not at all'. Only one in three users of human support, compared with half of users of environmental adaptations, said that Access to Work met their needs 'completely'.
- Employees in the private and independent sectors combined were more likely than those in the public sector to say that Access to Work 'completely' met their needs.
- Views vary according to disabling complaint reported. Half of the users reporting musculo-skeletal complaints said that their needs were met 'completely' while most users reporting visual impairments and mental health problems said that Access to Work met their needs 'mostly'. Users with hearing impairments were most likely to say that Access to Work met their needs 'a little' or 'not at all'.

How far Access to Work enabled users to work

- Asked how far support from Access to Work enabled them to work, almost half of users said they 'could not work without it' and a further one in three felt that the support they received helped 'a great deal'.
- TW users rated the usefulness of Access to Work in enabling them to work most highly. One in four users of CSI felt the support they received helped 'not much' or 'not at all'.
- Employees in the private and independent sectors combined were more likely than public sector employees to say that they could not work without Access to Work support.
- Users' ratings of the usefulness of Access to Work in enabling them to work vary according to reported impairment. Users with mental health problems and visually impaired users were more likely to say that they 'could not work without it' while those with musculo-skeletal complaints were more likely to say that Access to Work helped 'a great deal'. Users with a hearing complaint only were most likely to rate the usefulness of Access to Work less highly.

Users' overall opinion of Access to Work

- Asked to rate their overall opinion of Access to Work on a six point scale, over half of users said that in their experience it was 'very good' or 'excellent' and a further one in four described their experience as 'good'.
- TW users rated Access to Work most highly, rated 'excellent' or 'very good' by over six in ten. A substantial minority of SW and CSI users, one in three or more, rated it as no better than 'fair'. Overall, users of human support rate Access to Work less highly than users of environmental adaptations.
- Employees in the private or independent sectors were more likely than those in the public sector to rate their experience of Access to Work as better than 'fair'.
- Opinions of Access to Work vary according to health conditions or impairments reported by users. Survey respondents with musculo-skeletal complaints and mental health problems rate it most highly, while one in three of those with a hearing impairment and almost one in four visually impaired users rate it as no better than 'fair'.
- Opinions of Access to Work are associated with positive ratings of DST staff.
- Users' opinions on Access to Work overall are not invariably related to their views about the time taken for their support to be provided. In general, those who rate the time taken as 'good' or 'excellent' also rate Access to Work overall in similar ways. However, those who rate the time taken as 'poor' or 'very poor' are as likely to place the overall acceptability of Access to Work anywhere from 'poor' to 'good'.
- Variations in users' overall opinions of Access to Work are strongly associated with variations in views on how well it meets their needs and the extent to which it enables them to work.

10 Monitoring Users' Views

One aim of the study was to advise the Employment Service (ES) on how users' views of Access to Work might be monitored. At the time of the study, many of the nine Regional Disability Services, or individual DSTs, had carried out *ad hoc* self-completion questionnaire surveys of Access to Work users' satisfaction. These surveys were designed and implemented at local or regional level, using non-standardised methods and questions. A consistent approach with a common design would allow information to be collated across regions, to give a national picture as well as to show any differences between regions, and if administered systematically and routinely could show changes in user satisfaction over time.

If routine monitoring of users' views is to be effective, self-completion questionnaires must appeal to the potential respondents, and must address in an accessible fashion topics they think are important (Nocon and Qureshi, 1996). In designing the national survey, we had asked members of a small Panel of Access to Work users to say which were the important topics to cover and to advise on the way the questions were asked (see Appendix C.3.3). (We were not able to test out different approaches to asking questions in the survey itself.) We returned to the Panel for advice on approaches which ES might adopt for obtaining users' views routinely. We then explored topics relating to routine monitoring in qualitative interviews with a sub-sample of 20 respondents to the national survey. (Details of the Panel meeting and the follow-up study are given in Appendix C.8 to C.11.) This chapter presents the findings from the Panel and the 20 qualitative interviews.

To set the context, we begin with a short discussion of monitoring and satisfaction surveys and describe current practice in relation to Access to Work (Sections 10.1 and 10.2). The sections that follow present users' ideas on content (Section 10.3) and accessibility, including preferred question types and formats and appearance of the questionnaire (Section 10.4). Section 10.5 relates to anonymity issues. Ideas for enhancing response rates and overcoming barriers to participation are discussed in Section 10.6. Section 10.7 looks at timing of surveys of Access to Work users. We conclude by drawing out the main things to consider when constructing a self-completion questionnaire for users of Access to Work (Section 10.8).

10.1 Routine monitoring surveys

It is now common practice for organisations in the public sector to undertake customer surveys which provide feedback on service delivery and a benchmark for improvement (Craig, 1995; Turtle and Woolley, 1996; Hutton *et al.*, 1998; MORI, 1998a, b; Public Attitude Surveys, n.d.). Essentially, service users are asked to rate

the quality of service provision and the processes involved. They may, or may not, be asked about satisfaction with the outcome.

The relationship between specific parts of the process of obtaining a service or benefit and satisfaction with the final outcome is complex (Williams *et al.*, 1995) but is often masked by the use of global satisfaction questions. A qualitative study (Elam and Ritchie, 1997) of customer satisfaction with the Benefits Agency's local offices found that global satisfaction measures were influenced by a considerable number of factors. These included the quality of the service experienced; the outcomes of recent transactions; and the quality of the user's on-going relationship with the agency. Other factors also influenced satisfaction ratings, thus adding to the complexity. Amongst these were users' past experiences of, and pre-conceptions about, the service; desired outcomes; and the service at the last contact. These diverse variables were not weighted evenly, and some were found to have a stronger influence than others on overall satisfaction. Accordingly, if a questionnaire is to include a 'global' question on overall satisfaction with Access to Work, it is important to consider carefully which components of the service are to be assessed individually.

10.2 Regional Access to Work surveys

We were provided with copies of blank Access to Work customer survey forms from five Disability Service Regions. There was some variation but the questions tended to be fairly similar. The forms were of varying quality, as noted by Panel members when shown the examples we had been given. One form was described positively as 'ordered' and 'businesslike'; another was seen as having a disappointingly low level of very general questions about standards of service that could apply to any organisation.

The questionnaires did have some strengths. They were short, and had a time cue indicating they would not take long to complete. The questions were easy to answer, comprising mainly Yes/No or 'tick box' responses; some had a small amount of space underneath individual questions so that respondents could expand their answers. Questionnaires covered different stages of the Access to Work process, and usually ended by asking respondents to rate levels of satisfaction with the service provided. Most had space at the very end of the form for respondents to write down suggestions for improvements. Reply-paid labels or envelopes were included to encourage higher response rates. One particular form that was praised by the Panel offered people the opportunity to see the results of the survey. It also gave respondents the chance for a personal reply if they included their name and address in the space provided. This invitation, though, has implications for violating principles of confidentiality or anonymity (as discussed in Section 10.4).

An important weakness with the various questionnaires was that the questions were not designed to help understand *why* respondents are satisfied or dissatisfied with Access to Work. In addition, the questions focussed on some components of the service more than others. It is not clear that the areas selected as important for monitoring purposes matched what users of Access to Work might regard as key determinants of satisfaction.

Some research methods text books (Bourque and Fielder, 1995; Fink, 1995) suggest that, instead of devising new survey questionnaires, it is preferable to adopt or modify standard questions and response choices that have been developed and tested in other settings. This approach means that the validity and reliability of the questions have been established. Even so, given the views of the Panel members and the other weaknesses just alluded to, on balance it would seem preferable to construct a new set of questions directly relevant to users' experience of Access to Work. The remainder of this chapter reports the suggestions of interviewees and Panel members on developing a suitable self-completion questionnaire.

10.3 Purpose and content of the questionnaire

10.3.1 Purpose

Although not specifically asked to comment, Panel members and some users in the qualitative interviews spontaneously queried the point and value of user surveys. They were concerned that a survey should not substitute for proper internal information systems; rather, it should generate meaningful feedback to help shape Access to Work's service. These misgivings reflect Tricker and Green's (2000: 95) point that surveys should be restricted to those situations where it is not possible to collect information in any other way. Otherwise, organisations run the risk of provoking 'research fatigue' and resistance amongst potential respondents.

There is scope for misunderstanding about the uses to which the information provided will be put if surveys are confused with follow-up questionnaires sent to individual users to identify problems which need specific attention. A minority in this part of the study suggested collecting information on personal circumstances, such as changes to the on-going situation and the continuing appropriateness of existing support. It is important that potential respondents are clear that the purpose of a survey is to collate views and levels of satisfaction with aspects of Access to Work and not to respond to individual queries or changes in circumstances.

10.3.2 Content

People taking part in the qualitative interviews had been asked which aspects of Access to Work influenced levels of satisfaction. To identify key content areas for a questionnaire, this line of questioning was continued by asking interviewees what they would like to see in a two-page satisfaction survey of Access to Work users. Since many interviewees regarded all the elements of the service as part of an

interacting whole, prioritisation proved quite difficult. However, the interviews did shed light on preferences about certain critical factors that people felt should be included in any survey. Quite often, the areas suggested arose from interviewees' past experiences that they wished to highlight; some reflected examples of good practice, whereas others were more likely to be causes of concern or perceived gaps in the service.

DST advisers

The majority of interviewees felt that the questionnaire should ask about Access to Work staff. Aspects to cover included DST advisers'

- attitude
- effort and helpfulness
- quality of communication, and readiness to give people the opportunity to explain perceived difficulties
- ease of contact
- competence, including the ability to respond quickly and appropriately to individual queries, to make decisions and to identify needs
- understanding and knowledge about disability issues generally, and including the varying impacts of living and working with specific impairments.

Specialist advisers

Asking questions about people who were seen for specialist advice during the assessment process was also suggested. Aspects to cover included:

- levels of specialist knowledge
- their approach to the individual, including attention to user-defined needs
- the effort put into tailoring outcomes to fit individual situations.

To interpret findings, users felt it would be important to ask for brief information about the type of specialist seen.

Efficiency and procedures

Another key topic area highlighted for inclusion is users' views on efficiency, time scales and procedures, specifically:

- acceptability of waiting times between the different stages of the Access to Work process, and also overall
- expediting the process; if, or how often, users had to 'chase up' Access to Work staff and/or suppliers
- procedures in general; how smoothly they went, whether they were duplicated
- paperwork and form filling (including Travel to Work claims), including how easy or difficult these tasks were.

Contact with Access to Work

Monitoring the amount and quality of contact users had with the Access to Work service was identified as important

- the frequency of contact, both during the application process and after support had been put in place; the nature of any contact (face-to-face or telephone); who initiated contact
- privacy and not being overheard (especially if discussions happened in the workplace)
- preferences about future contact.

As a related issue, the initial meeting was singled out as meriting inclusion, to check whether users felt welcomed and if processes and procedures were fully explained.

Information

Questions asking about information issues were also seen as important, in particular to try to establish the amount and helpfulness of information given. Specifically, a questionnaire could ask whether respondents had been told about:

- the full range of support that Access to Work could offer
- the processes and procedures involved
- the ways particular items of equipment were likely to meet their needs
- how the support would be provided; who the supplier was, and where they were based (this last point related to the convenience and logistics of aftercare)
- the respective aftercare responsibilities of users of Access to Work, employers and the service itself.

Access to Work support

The support provided by Access to Work was high on the priority list for inclusion in a survey, for instance:

- did the support (still) meet the user's needs; was it a good solution; could a better solution have been found if more money had been available
- the difference the support made.

Other questions could be aimed at assessing the amount of choice users had, such as whether respondents been given a range of options, or the opportunity to see or trial equipment beforehand.

Aftercare

Problems relating to 'aftercare' once support had been put in place gave rise to suggestions that questions on levels of satisfaction about this aspect of the service should be included.

Other question areas

Interviewees identified two other specific areas for inclusion in a questionnaire. The first related to the employer's involvement, how supportive they were of the user and how well this part of the process had worked. The second concerned training, with questions covering its nature, adequacy and length.

Some general questions were recommended. These included asking respondents if they would use Access to Work again or recommend it to others, and whether they had suggestions for further improvements

The proposed questionnaire cannot cover all eventualities, and some suggestions of questions related to very specific experiences; if included, they would have little relevance for many potential respondents. The majority view was that there should be space for 'Any other comments' so that such instances could be reported.

It can be seen that, in very many respects, users' recommendations on questionnaire content are close to the survey instrument used in this study (see Appendix D), which itself was derived from users' expressed priorities (through the literature review and discussions with the Panel).

10.4 Developing a user-friendly questionnaire

Surveys by post using a pen and paper instrument that respondents complete on their own have many advantages: they are relatively inexpensive to administer; the same form can be sent to a large number of people; and respondents can complete the questionnaire at their own convenience. There are disadvantages, though, in particular the fact that response rates are very often low (Oppenheim, 1992; Tricker and Green, 2000). To help increase participation, it is important to devise an effective questionnaire that follows current best practice in mailed surveys (see, for example, Oppenheim, 1992; Bourque and Fielder, 1995; Arksey and Knight, 1998; McColl *et al.*, 1998). A danger in using a self-completion questionnaire is that respondents might be discouraged from reporting accurately or thoughtfully. Krosnick (2000) has introduced the concept of 'satisficing', which means giving minimally acceptable answers, rather than optimal answers. So, respondents may select the first reasonable option in a list of response categories (thus avoiding having to read the rest of the list), simply agree with assertions, respond 'don't know', or not differentiate in rating questions (for example, choosing the same response option or answer in lists). Accordingly, question form and the mix of questions used need careful attention.

This section discusses views on question form and moves on to consider users' opinions of questionnaire appearance and length, focussing on ways of engaging attention and cooperation to obtain reliable and useful answers.

10.4.1 Forms of question

Interviewees and Panel members were shown (or had described to them) different types of question: tick boxes; ranking scales, attitude; Yes/No; and open (examples are given in the text below).

As would be expected, there was a range of preferences. Most strongly held opinions related to the way in which the questions were written: closed questions, where respondents select an answer from a set of pre-specified response categories, or open questions where respondents answer in their own words. Closed questions were seen as useful in 'black and white' situations but were less able to accommodate grey areas; furthermore, closed questions 'forced' respondents into the questionnaire designer's categories rather than allowing them free expression. Consequently, the majority viewpoint favoured open questions, with the addition of a small number of prompts or examples to provide pointers as to the range of possible answers. It was felt that open questions would appeal particularly to people with strongly held views, encourage respondents to think and produce better data that gave a more complete picture.

The popularity of open questions with interviewees and the Panel is not consistent with expert opinion (Oppenheim, 1998) which recommends that open questions should be used sparingly in self-completion questionnaires. They are more complex and require more thought, and questionnaires dominated by open questions are likely to have low response rates; at the same time, forms that are returned will often have missing or irrelevant data (Bourque and Fielder, 1995; Hague and Jackson, 1996). Moreover, open questions are generally far more difficult and time-consuming to code and analyse, even when using specialist qualitative data analysis software. This reflects having to develop coding frames or categories to manage and synthesise the data, as part of the process of identifying significant themes, ideas and relationships.

Certainly, a minority of interviewees were not keen on using open questions, suggesting that they might encourage respondents to 'ramble'. It was pointed out that written English can be a barrier for people from linguistic minorities including Deaf people who might prefer short questions and response categories containing single words. This is a reminder of how important literacy skills and the ability to cope with form-filling are for self-completion questionnaires, and that the 'one size fits all' notion has the potential to exclude people who do not have the appropriate language levels and so are unable to respond even if they want to. Research shows that the less educated, less well qualified, lower social classes, those in manual jobs, and men, seem to be less likely than others to fill in self-completion questionnaires (Lynn, 1996; McColl *et al.*, 1998).

Apart from what respondents find easy to answer, a separate key issue relates to how well the question – open or closed – provides information which is representative of the views of users. There is generally a demand in a monitoring system for statistically generalisable data which is much harder to produce from open-ended questions.

There are different forms of closed questions, some of which were more attractive to interviewees and members of the Panel than others.

'Tick box' questions

A 'tick box' question, as shown below, is where a statement is given and respondents tick one or all the boxes that apply. This sort of question was popular, because it was quick to complete

After your last contact with your Access to Work adviser, were you left feeling.

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Encouraged</i> | ☐ |
| <i>Better informed</i> | ☐ |
| <i>Confused</i> | ☐ |
| <i>Worried</i> | ☐ |
| <i>Angry</i> | ☐ |

Attitude questions

Opinion was more or less divided over attitude questions. These forms of question imply evaluation and are concerned with how people feel about an issue. A statement is made, and respondents are asked to indicate their level of agreement in a positive or negative direction (see below for an example) The suggestion was made that if attitude questions were used, it would be better to exclude middle/neutral responses to avoid people taking the easy way out, rather than taking time to think about which side their attitude leans towards.

How satisfied are you with the service provided by Access to Work?

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Very satisfied</i> | ☐ |
| <i>Fairly satisfied</i> | ☐ |
| <i>Fairly dissatisfied</i> | ☐ |
| <i>Very dissatisfied</i> | ☐ |

Ranking scales

A ranking scale is used when trying to determine the level of importance or value of a number of items; respondents are presented with a list of items and asked to place

them in rank order (see below) More people disliked than liked ranking scale questions They were described as 'confusing', and it was felt that it was easy to get the ordering the wrong way round This is consistent with the view that ranking questions can impose a considerable burden on respondents (Krosnick, 2000).

What do you feel are the more important qualities in an Access to Work adviser?

Please rank the following in order of importance to you. Number them from 1= most important, to 7 = least important.

Treats me like an individual
Is experienced and knows what s/he is doing
Friendly and approachable
Explains what s/he is doing and keeps me informed
Understands my problems
Listens and has time for me
Responds quickly and makes quick decisions

Yes/No questions

The dichotomous question that asked for a Yes/No response was liked (see below), because it could be answered quickly and 'spurred you on'. However, this type of question was frustrating for some interviewees, as the Yes/No response alternatives were seen as too restrictive. People voluntarily commented that things were never just 'black and white', and such inflexibility did not give insights into the full picture and/or provide useful information.

Are you satisfied with the service you get from your Access to Work adviser?

Yes ☐ No ☐

It seems important, then, to be clear about the precise issue being addressed and to allow room for respondents to expand their answer (Nocon, 1997).

Were you able to say everything you wanted to when the assessment was carried out?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please add your comments:

.....

.....

Opinion-rating questions

Opinion-rating questions had been used and appeared to work well in the national survey and were not discussed in the qualitative follow-up interviews. (Examples are given in Tables 5.1 and 6.3.) Respondents are asked to rate on a scale from excellent to very poor their opinion of an attribute or quality; for example 'the effort advisers put into making sure you get what you need'. In developing these questions it is important to make sure that the dimensions being rated reflect the main interests of the respondents, for example through prior discussion with users. The risk with such questions is respondents choosing the same response option if opinions are asked for on several dimensions; however, the survey found that respondents did differentiate between attributes, albeit not markedly.

Question mix

The consensus was that the questionnaire should comprise a variety of question types. One recommendation was that the first few questions should be the easier to complete Yes/No type, followed by tick box and attitude questions, before finishing with the more difficult open questions. This easy-to-difficult progression follows the order of questions recommended by experts in survey design (see, for example, Moser and Kalton, 1971).

Most people, confirming conventional survey wisdom, felt it desirable to include a category of 'Other, please specify', and/or space for individual comments, in closed questions in order to gather more detailed information. Likewise, it was felt important to have a blank space at the end of the questionnaire, so respondents could add additional comments if they so wished.

One recommendation was that questions asked should steer towards constructive suggestions for service delivery so, for instance, a question like 'Was it too long to wait?' could then be followed by 'What contributed towards the delay?' Similarly, 'Were your needs met' could be succeeded by 'How could a better outcome have been achieved?'

10.4.2 Asking the questions

The general view was that questions should be short, appear easy to complete and be specific rather than general. Simple words should be used, avoiding jargon and technical terms. Another piece of advice was that questions should be interesting and 'punchy', and not repetitive.

10.4.3 Questionnaire appearance and length

It is known that paying attention to the presentation of a questionnaire can help achieve higher response rates (Tricker and Green, 2000). There were suggestions that the form could be made more interesting through, say, graphic illustrations and 'smiley' face symbols. The use of attention-grabbing titles such as 'What do you

think?' or 'How are we doing?' was also proposed. It was thought that questions consisting of long lists of response options should be avoided, because they looked boring.

As far as the length was concerned, it was a case of the shorter the better: one or two double-sided sheets of A4 was the majority preference. However, it can be fairly meaningless to talk about questionnaire length as measured by number of pages because this obviously depends on the type of the questions that are asked and the way they appear on the page (Lynn, 1996).

With regard to spacing, it was felt that questions should not be presented in a crowded or cramped way. In addition, the typeface should be large and clear to enhance readability and accommodate people with some visual impairment. However, for one or two people large typeface could appear patronising, and thus had the potential to deter would-be respondents from actually completing and returning the form. Two braille users introduced the idea of providing a braille version of the survey questionnaire.

10.5 Anonymity

It was felt vital to ensure anonymity, principally to avoid the risk of jeopardising relationships or future dealings with Access to Work advisers, or of getting staff into trouble. The general feeling was that respondents would not be honest or critical if they thought it likely that advisers would see named responses. One particular exception to this view was that advisers' awareness might be increased if they knew the identity of the respondent - for example, a deaf person identifying gaps in services for deaf people.

Commissioning the survey from an independent research organisation was thought to have a number of advantages: respondents might be more open minded, give more realistic and truthful answers, and take the whole exercise more seriously. Two concerns were expressed, however. One related to the possibility of receiving 'junk' mail, and the other to being confident about the ability of the organisation undertaking the work. This latter point is particularly relevant in that security and confidentiality can become very important issues in surveys that are contracted out (Dengler, 1999).

10.6 Enhancing participation

Interviewees and Panel members were asked for their ideas about stimulating participation and the barriers to be overcome.

10.6.1 Cover letter

The covering letter was regarded by interviewees as critical to engage the respondent's attention in the first place and persuade them to take part in the study. The letter needed to have a strong appeal. It should explain what the survey was about; emphasise its importance and value; indicate that the results would be used, and how; and state the importance of the particular contribution of the respondent in question. Indeed, it was felt that the covering letter should create the impression that the respondent was being asked personally and that with today's word processing technology a personalised salutation and inside address could be achieved quite easily. A sentence starting with 'We value your views' would further emphasise that people's views were considered important.

People also need to be reassured that completing the questionnaire form would not affect their benefits, and that there were no links between Access to Work and other local or central government agencies, for example the Housing Department or the Benefits Agency. As already noted, not disclosing the identity of the respondent was considered essential. Giving assurances of anonymity and confidentiality in the covering letter, including how this would be dealt with, was identified as a key way to increase response rates.

10.6.2 Pre-paid reply envelopes

A minority view was that providing pre-paid and addressed envelopes for the return of questionnaires would encourage respondents to return them. In fact, reducing monetary costs to respondents is considered a must in mailed surveys (McColl, 1998). There is some evidence that 'real' stamps (rather than business reply envelopes) indicates trust and will increase response rates (Oppenheim, 1992).

10.6.3 Incentives to participate

As an alternative to distributing the survey with an accompanying letter, a novel suggestion was to include the questionnaire as part of a newsletter containing useful information about Access to Work and sent to all users. The results could then be reported in a subsequent issue.

The majority of interviewees said that the promise to send them a summary of the results of the survey would encourage them to complete the questionnaire, as would feeling that action would be taken on the findings. In fact, research indicates that offering feedback is not effective in stimulating response (McColl, 1998). At the same time, though, it is good practice and might serve to inspire confidence in the service as well as increasing users' perceptions that Access to Work is prepared to listen to them. Furthermore, respondents enjoy being able to compare their responses to overall survey results (Bourque and Fielder, 1995). Feedback reports might also be made available to new applicants to Access to Work.

Offering to supply respondents with a summary version of the findings is a relatively inexpensive means of increasing participation. Interestingly, there were no recommendations to introduce financial or other material incentives as token recompense for the time and effort required to complete the questionnaire. Providing monetary incentives to increase response rates is controversial amongst experts in survey methods (Bourque and Fielder, 1995). There is a concern that the use of incentives to 'buy' data from people who might otherwise not have taken part could lead to unreliable data.

In the present study, people taking part in the qualitative interviews and members of the Panel were given a gift of £15 as a token of appreciation for participating. Everyone approached to take part in a qualitative interview was keen to make a further contribution to the study if they felt it could lead to improvements in Access to Work. For them, the gift made no difference to their decision to take part or not, an attitude found in other studies (Hughes, 1999). Most appreciated the incentive, although a small handful did query this use of public money. Some donated it to charity.

Other motivators for completing a questionnaire form were less under the control of the designers of a questionnaire about Access to Work; indeed, there was some suggestion that whether people did or did not complete survey forms was part of their make-up and little if anything could be done to change that. Nonetheless, some people held the view that loyalty to Access to Work, feelings of obligation and/or altruism, and self-interest (knowing the service was useful and wanting the scheme to continue) would encourage higher participation levels. So, too, would having had either very good or very bad experiences, resulting in respondents being keen to either really praise or really criticise the service.

10.6.4 Disincentives to participation

Perceptions of the time and effort required to complete the questionnaire were believed to have an impact on response rates. Forms that looked too complicated, long, boring or patronising, or ones that used jargon or inappropriate wording were deterrents. Consequently, forms should look easy, not too long, interesting to complete and possibly, as Panel members suggested, with attention-grabbing and thought-provoking questions.

Feeling that the survey was just an information gathering exercise with no meaningful purpose to it was also identified as a disincentive to complete a form. So, too, was the possibility that Access to Work would start to send out too many questionnaires. A further deterrent was the likelihood that advisers would 'pester' respondents afterwards, for instance telephone users to discuss answers. Other possible barriers that people identified related to general cynicism about bureaucracy, the number of forms that people have to complete these days and the survey being administered by Access to Work rather than an independent organisation.

10.7 Timing and targeting of an Access to Work survey

As just noted, there was a concern that Access to Work might introduce multiple and/or successive monitoring surveys. One person made the point that it was important not to inundate new users to the system with too many forms. Having said that, on being asked about opportune times to implement a survey, there was some support for having questionnaires at different points in the process. One pattern that was suggested was an initial questionnaire to find out users' views about the first meeting with the adviser; a further questionnaire between six weeks and three months after the support had been put in place, and at intervals thereafter. A series of questionnaires tailored to specific stages in the process might be difficult to administer, however, particularly if an independent organisation is involved.

There was some uncertainty about the value of introducing repeated surveys at, say, 12 monthly intervals. This reflected the common belief that there were too many forms around, which served to make people cross or bored, and leads to 'research fatigue'. However, annual surveys were seen as possibly useful for users whose needs or circumstances might have changed during the previous 12 months, and have new perspectives on Access to Work as a result. In any case, routine monitoring tied to application needs to distinguish between first time users and existing users who apply again.

10.8 Conclusion

Table 10.1 synthesises those suggestions made by interviewees and members of the Panel with current good practice, and identifies issues to be covered when constructing a questionnaire to assess users' views of the Access to Work service.

Panel members and some interviewees spontaneously offered to pilot or review any questionnaires that are developed. This is important, and shows users value the Access to Work programme and are prepared to give up yet more of their time if they think it will contribute to service improvements. Reviewing and piloting via potential respondents is especially valuable in terms of the content of the questionnaire. They can confirm how relevant and sensible questions are, suggest any others that should be added, and help work out pre-specified responses to closed questions.

Developing a new questionnaire form and involving users (and staff) in the process also helps create a sense of ownership and commitment, and has the potential to increase participation rates.

Finally, it is worth noting that a small number of interviewees took more of a holistic view about Access to Work, and suggested implementing additional questionnaires surveys, one for employers and one for support workers/personal readers. These

would be aimed at finding out the extent to which these two groups were satisfied with their involvement in the Access to Work service

Table 10.1 Issues and possible solutions for an Access to Work questionnaire

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Possible solutions</i>
Content of questionnaire	• Cover specific areas identified as important (Staff, Efficiency and procedures, Contact, Information, Support, Aftercare) • Include blank space for 'Any other comments' to enable respondents to report on issues or experiences not covered elsewhere • Different section areas should be inter-relating and work together to address the topic area as a whole
Questions	• Use a range of questions types, with minimal use of open questions • Start with easy questions and progress to more difficult ones • Pilot pre-specified response options for closed questions with potential respondents to ensure they are appropriate Include an 'Other, please specify' option to capture responses that do not fit into given categories • Keep questions (and response options) short and focussed • Avoid jargon and patronising terms • Include interesting questions to sustain respondents' attention through to completion
Appearance and layout	• Short questionnaire, that is easy and attractive looking • Adequate space for answers, and between questions • Clear instructions
Accommodating people who have difficulty reading	• Appropriate language levels • Clear and simple questions • Large print; clear layout • Electronic version • Braille version (It is possible to reproduce braille on plastic with 'bumps' which the braille user pushes down to indicate their answers. These can be read by a sighted person analysing the responses.)
Anonymity	• Explain procedures for protecting anonymity and confidentiality • Could maintain anonymity yet still offer follow up to respondents by using a combination of an unnamed questionnaire and an identifiable postcard to be returned separately
Engaging respondent's attention	• Highlight the 'interest factor' in a covering letter appealing to concerns to improve the Access to Work service • Develop a questionnaire with an interesting title and attractive layout, possibly including graphic illustrations
Maximising response rates	• Personalised, covering letter • Anonymity • Provision of pre-paid addressed return envelopes • Questionnaire that looks quick, easy and interesting to complete • Promise of feedback
Timing of questionnaire	• Six weeks to three months after support is put in place • Possibly earlier or later in the process as well, but a series of questionnaires tailored to specific stages in the process might be difficult to administer

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Appendix A

Survey tables

Table A.2.1 Ethnic groups

<i>Ethnic group</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
White - British	89
Indian	3
Pakistani	2
Black Caribbean	1
Black African	1
White - Irish	1
Bangladeshi	0
Black Other	0
Other	2
Base: all respondents	628

Table A.2.2 Employment situation at time of interview

<i>Employment situation at interview</i>	<i>Women %</i>	<i>Men %</i>	<i>All %</i>
Working as an employee	88	82	85
Working as self-employed	4	12	7
Temporarily off sick / on sick pay	3	2	3
Not in work, waiting to start a job already obtained	0	1	0
Unemployed and actively seeking work	2	2	2
Long-term sick or disabled	1	0	1
Retired	0	-	0
Other	2	1	2
Base all respondents	356	272	628

Table A.2.3 Type of disabling complaint by gender

<i>Disabling complaint</i>	<i>Women</i> %	<i>Men</i> %	<i>All</i> %
Eye complaints only	17	30	22
Musculo-skeletal complaints only	17	8	13
Ear complaints only	11	10	11
Other complaints only	15	12	14
Musculo-skeletal and other complaints	34	24	29
Two or more complaints (other combinations)	6	16	10
Base: all respondents	356	272	628

Table A.3.1 Year of application

<i>Year</i>	<i>%</i>
2000	7
1999	37
1998	11
1997	7
1996	6
1995	9
1994	20
Can't remember	3
Base: all respondents	628

Table A.3.2 Number of applications

<i>Number of applications for AtW</i>	<i>%</i>
1	58
2	24
3	8
4 or more	9
Not known	1
Base: all respondents	628

Table A.3.3 Combinations of AtW elements received

<i>From only or most recent application</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>Relating to AtW supported job</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
SAE	34.0	SAE	23.9
TW	27.0	TW	21.7
SAE, SW	3.3	SAE, SW	9.2
TW, SAE	6.8	TW, SAE	9.0
APE, SAE	6.7	APE, SAE	7.3
TW, APE, SAE	3.1	TW, APE, SAE	5.1
SW	5.1	SW	3.8
APE, SAE, SW	1.1	APE, SAE, SW	3.7
TW, SAE, SW	1.6	TW, SAE, SW	3.4
TW, APE	2.2	TW, APE	2.8
TW, APE, SAE, SW	.5	TW, APE, SAE, SW	1.9
	-	CSI, SAE, SW	1.7
APE	2.9	APE	1.4
TW, SW	1.0	TW, SW	1.4
CSI, SW	.2	CSI, SW	.8
APE, CSI, SAE, SW	.2	APE, CSI, SAE, SW	.6
CSI	1.9	CSI	.6
APE, SW	.2	APE, SW	.3
CSI, SAE	1.2	CSI, SAE	.3
TW, APE, SW	.3	TW, APE, SW	.3
	-	APE, CSI, SW	.2
TW, CSI, SAE, SW	.2	TW, CSI, SAE, SW	.2
APE, CSI	.2	APE, CSI	.1
TW, CSI	.1	TW, CSI	.1
	-	TW, CSI, SW	.1
	-	TW, APE, CSI	0
Base: all respondents	628		628

Table A.3.4 Hours worked at the time of interview by AtW support

<i>Hours worked</i>	<i>AtW element received</i>					<i>All %</i>
	<i>SAE %</i>	<i>TW %</i>	<i>SW %</i>	<i>APE %</i>	<i>CSI %</i>	
Working fewer than 30 hours a week	23	28	23	26	12	25
Working 30 hours or more a week	73	67	70	70	79	70
Not known	-	1	1	-	-	0
Not in paid work	4	5	7	5	9	4
Base: all respondents	410	234	193	172	45	628

Table A.3.5 Employment sector by AtW support

<i>Employee sector at time of interview</i>	<i>AtW element received</i>					<i>All %</i>
	<i>SAE %</i>	<i>TW %</i>	<i>APE %</i>	<i>SW %</i>	<i>CSI %</i>	
Public sector	58	45	57	52	35	53
Private/independent sector	42	55	43	48	65	47
Base: all employees in paid work	359	213	158	148	38	550

Table A.3.6 Supported employment by AtW support

<i>(At time of interview)</i>	<i>AtW element received</i>					<i>All %</i>
	<i>SAE %</i>	<i>TW %</i>	<i>APE %</i>	<i>SW %</i>	<i>CSI %</i>	
Supported employment	9	19	15	10	8	12
Unsupported employment	90	79	83	90	88	87
Don't know	1	2	2	0	4	1
Base: all employees in paid work	359	213	158	148	38	550

Table A.3.7 Standard Occupational Classification by AtW support

<i>Standard Occupational Classification</i>	<i>AtW element received</i>					<i>All %</i>
	<i>SAE %</i>	<i>TW %</i>	<i>SW %</i>	<i>APE %</i>	<i>CSI %</i>	
Managers/Senior	10	7	11	8	11	8
Professional	24	15	55	21	18	20
Associate Professional	14	8	15	12	16	13
Administrative/Secretanal	37	37	14	45	5	33
Skilled Trades	4	4	9	3	3	5
Personal Service	5	5	10	6	12	5
Sales/Customer Service	2	7	1	5	2	5
Process/Plant/Machine	1	3	2	-	14	3
Elementary	1	11	2	-	9	7
Not known	1	3	1	-	10	2
Base respondents employed or self-employed	388	219	177	163	39	593

Table A.3.8 Effect of specially provided equipment or furniture requiring repair, servicing or replacement

<i>Effect</i>	<i>Per cent*</i>
Cannot do job as well	56
Limits the hours worked	16
Affects health, makes condition worse	12
Makes relations with employer / support worker worse	6
Affects home life	3
Has to take time off work	2
Prevents health / condition improving	2
Other	12
No particular effect	25
Base: SAE users in paid work whose specially provided equipment or fumture has required repair, servicing or replacement	76

* percentages sum to more than 100 because some respondents reported more than one effect.

Table A.4.1 Source of encouragement to apply for Access to Work

<i>Source</i>	<i>Per cent*</i>
User's own idea to apply	51
Employer/supervisor/manager/human resource manager/ occupational health dept at work	23
DEA / DST / PACT	18
GP/practice nurse/hospital consultant/nurse/ physiotherapist/chiropractor/acupuncturist/other medical worker	4
Colleague(s) at work	4
Charity/organisation for/of disabled people	3
Friend/relative	2
Employer at job applied for	2
Social services	1
Other Access to Work user	1
Organisation specialising in/supplying equipment or adaptations	1
College / training organisation/careers adviser	0
Can't recall	1
Base: users who applied for AtW on their own behalf	557

* percentages sum to more than 100 because some users mentioned more than one source

Table A.4.2 Respondents' awareness of the support available through Access to Work

<i>Type of support available through Access to Work</i>	<i>Per cent mentioning type of support*</i>
Specially provided equipment or furniture needed to do the job (eg computer, hearing equipment, chair)	71
Money towards travel to and from work, such as taxi fares	51
A support worker to assist on the job or in getting to/from work	21
Alterations to the building at place of work (eg ramp, lift, disabled toilet, widened doorways, lighting)	16
Alterations to existing equipment needed to do the job, including company vehicles	15
A personal reader at work for someone who is visually impaired	14
Training to use new equipment	11
A communicator or sign language interpreter at work	10
Advice on improvements in the workplace	6
A communicator or sign language interpreter for a job interview	5
Money to make adaptations to users car or van	5
Information about what is available/can be done to meet requirements at work	4
Chance to try out equipment or furniture	3
None known about	2
Base. all respondents	628

* percentages sum to more than 100 because some respondents mentioned more than one type of support available through AtW

Table A.4.3 Respondents' awareness of the support available by receipt of Access to Work*

<i>Type of support available through Access to Work</i>	<i>AtW element received</i>					
	SAE %	TW %	SW %	APE %	CSI %	All %
Specially provided equipment or furniture needed to do the job (eg computer, hearing equipment, chair)	91	57	78	85	56	71
Money towards travel to and from work, such as taxi fares	41	92	41	50	6	51
A support worker to assist on the job or in getting to/from work	24	18	50	31	15	21
Alterations to the building at place of work (eg ramp, lift, disabled toilet, widened doorways, lighting)	18	18	18	30	13	16
Alterations to existing equipment needed to do the job, including company vehicles	17	13	17	21	7	15
A personal reader at work for someone who is visually impaired	17	10	34	14	3	14
Training to use new equipment	14	7	18	17	9	11
A communicator or sign language interpreter at work	10	4	27	11	68	10
Advice on improvements in the workplace	7	4	7	8	3	6
A communicator or sign language interpreter for a job interview	5	1	10	7	30	5
Money to make adaptations to users car or van	6	5	8	12	3	5
Information about what is available/can be done to meet requirements at work	4	4	5	5	-	4
Chance to try out equipment or furniture	4	2	3	5	1	3
None known about	1	1	1	1	9	2
Base: all respondents	410	234	193	172	45	628

* percentages sum to more than 100 because some respondents mentioned more than one type of support available through AtW.

Table A.6.1 Respondents' ratings of specialist advice on furniture and equipment

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Very poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>Base*</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Their knowledge and understanding of what you need	28	37	17	12	5	1	-	83
Their attention to what you say and the questions you ask	30	31	21	12	5	-	2	83
Their explanation of the options to meet your needs	23	32	25	12	6	1	1	83
Their readiness to keep you informed of decisions and what happens next	27	31	27	8	7	1	-	83
The effort they put into making sure you get what you need	33	29	11	10	8	5	4	83

* Base respondents receiving specialist advice on furniture and equipment.

Table A.6.2 Respondents' ratings of specialist advice on technological or computer-based equipment

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Very poor</i>	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>Base*</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Their knowledge and understanding of what you need	21	28	29	9	7	2	4	89
Their attention to what you say and the questions you ask	21	34	32	5	1	4	4	89
Their explanation of the options to meet your needs	15	32	36	7	4	3	4	89
Their readiness to keep you informed of decisions and what happens next	19	28	34	8	5	5	1	89
The effort they put into making sure you get what you need	19	26	28	7	6	7	7	89

* Base respondents receiving specialist advice on technological or computer-based equipment

Table A.8.1 Respondents' ratings of time taken for support to be provided

<i>Type of support received</i>	<i>Excellent</i> %	<i>Very good</i> %	<i>Good</i> %	<i>Fair</i> %	<i>Poor</i> %	<i>Ver poor</i> %	<i>Don't know</i> %	<i>Base*</i>
Specially provided equipment or furniture	8	17	18	21	19	15	4	312
Travel to work fares	21	29	30	8	6	2	4	193
Training to use new equipment	2	10	20	21	17	24	5	90
Support worker	21	15	21	12	11	12	8	84
Alterations to existing equipment	13	15	22	15	18	15	2	62
Alterations to building	0	25	29	17	21	4	4	51
Communicator or sign language interpreter at work	9	20	20	11	20	9	11	48
Personal reader	20	24	29	17	0	10	0	43
Communicator or sign language interpreter at interview	10	33	19	5	14	5	14	32
Adaptations to own vehicle	20	30	0	10	0	10	30	13

* Base: respondents receiving type of support in most recent or only application for AtW

Table A.8.2 Date of only or most recent application for Access to Work

<i>Time period</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
January 2000 onwards	30
July to December 1999	37
January to June 1999	14
July to December 1998	6
Prior to July 1998	14
Base: all respondents*	539

* incomplete information was provided by 89 respondents

Table A.8.3 Time taken for only or most recent support to be provided

Type of support received	Number of weeks						Base*
	1 – 4 %	5 – 12 %	13 – 26 %	27 – 39 %	40 – 52 %	53 or more %	
Specially provided equipment or furniture	16	40	24	9	8	3	278
Travel to work fares	71	25	2	1	1	-	151
Training to use new equipment	8	30	34	16	7	4	71
Support worker	41	29	15	2	12	2	65
Alterations to existing equipment	25	43	16	13	2	2	54
Alterations to building	33	10	32	10	10	4	39
Communicator or sign language interpreter at work	45	31	12	4	4	4	34
Personal reader	38	35	17	-	6	3	31
Communicator or sign language interpreter at interview	68	12	13	-	8	-	21
Adaptations to own vehicle	23	43	32	-	3	-	11

* number of users receiving item in their only or most recent application

Table A.8.4 Respondents' overall ratings of DST staff by their ratings of the time taken to provide support

Ratings of DST staff	Ratings of time taken						Total %
	Very poor %	Poor %	Fair %	Good %	Very good %	Excellent %	
Very poor	17	8	2	3	2	1	6
Poor	16	12	7	6	3	2	8
Fair	21	16	12	11	6	7	12
Good	20	33	26	32	15	10	24
Very good	12	23	34	35	45	22	29
Excellent	14	8	20	14	29	58	22
Base: number of responses	835	808	779	869	809	494	4594

Table A.8.5 Respondents' overall ratings of DST staff by how well they felt informed about the progress of their application

<i>Ratings of DST staff</i>	<i>Informed about progress</i>				<i>Total</i>
	<i>Not at all</i>	<i>A little</i>	<i>Mostly</i>	<i>Completely</i>	
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Very poor	16	6	3	0	5
Poor	18	10	6	2	7
Fair	17	19	8	5	10
Good	22	26	30	17	23
Very good	20	26	35	36	31
Excellent	7	12	19	40	23
Base: number of responses	482	461	719	913	2575

Table A.9.1 Respondents' views on the appropriateness of AtW support they had received

<i>'Would you say AtW meets/ met your requirements ...'</i>	<i>In paid work</i>		<i>Not in paid work, not waiting to take up a job</i>	<i>All</i>
	<i>AtW only</i>	<i>AtW plus*</i>		
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Completely	52	36	12	47
Mostly	41	57	64	45
A little	4	3	12	5
Not at all	3	3	12	4
Base Number of respondents	462	128	28	618

* Respondents who used 'special equipment, assistance or arrangements at work or for getting to or from work' *not* provided under Access to Work

Table A.9.2 Respondents' views on the appropriateness of AtW support they had received by employment sector

<i>'Would you say AtW meets your requirements ...'</i>	<i>Public sector</i> %	<i>Private/ independent sector</i> %
Completely	44	51
Mostly	48	42
A little	5	2
Not at all	3	5
Base employees in paid work	210	156

Table A.9.3 Respondents' views on the appropriateness of AtW support they had received by supported employment

<i>'Would you say AtW meets your requirements ...'</i>	<i>Supported employment</i> %	<i>Unsupported employment</i> %
Completely	60	46
Mostly	37	46
A little	-	4
Not at all	3	4
Base: employees in paid work	31	329

Table A.9.4 Respondents' rating of the appropriateness of AtW by disabling complaint

<i>'Would you say AtW meets your requirements ...'</i>	<i>Eye complaints only</i> %	<i>Ear complaints only</i> %	<i>Musculo-skeletal complaints only</i> %	<i>Other complaints only</i> %	<i>Musculo-skeletal and other complaints</i> %	<i>Two or more complaints (other combinations)</i> %
Completely	36	41	63	52	48	48
Mostly	60	45	31	40	42	43
A little	3	8	5	2	5	5
Not at all	1	6	1	6	4	5
Base all respondents	128	87	80	84	180	59

Table A.9.5 Respondents' rating of the usefulness of AtW by environmental adaptations and human support

<i>'To what extent has support from AtW enabled you to work?'</i>	<i>Environmental adaptations %</i>	<i>Human support %</i>
Could not work without it	47	44
A great deal	33	32
Quite a lot	13	16
Not much	5	6
Not at all	1	2
Don't know	2	-
Base: all respondents	546	207

Table A.9.6 Respondents' rating of the usefulness of AtW support by employment sector

<i>'To what extent has support from AtW enabled you to work?'</i>	<i>Public sector %</i>	<i>Private/ independent sector %</i>	<i>Other %</i>
Could not work without it	40	53	38
A great deal	32	33	32
Quite a lot	19	8	17
Not much	6	4	7
Not at all	1	1	5
Don't know	3	1	2
Base: all respondents	289	261	78

Table A.9.7 Respondents' rating of the usefulness of AtW support by disabling complaint

<i>'To what extent has support from AtW enabled you to work?'</i>	<i>Eye complaints only %</i>	<i>Ear complaints only %</i>	<i>Musculo-skeletal complaints only %</i>	<i>Other complaints only %</i>	<i>Musculo-skeletal and other complaints %</i>	<i>Two or more complaints (other combinations) %</i>
Could not work without it	52	37	27	48	45	56
A great deal	34	28	45	30	30	27
Quite a lot	12	19	18	13	16	6
Not much	1	12	5	3	7	6
Not at all	1	3	-	2	1	3
Don't know	-	-	5	5	2	2
Base. all respondents	132	90	80	86	181	59

Table A.9.8 Respondents' overall opinion of the acceptability of AtW by employment sector

<i>'How would you rate AtW?'</i>	<i>Public sector %</i>	<i>Private/independent sector %</i>	<i>Other %</i>
Excellent	24	29	14
Very good	29	32	27
Good	21	25	32
Fair	15	5	14
Poor	8	4	6
Very poor	2	4	5
Can't say	1	2	1
Base: all respondents	289	261	78

Table A.9.9 Respondents' overall opinion of the acceptability of AtW by disabling complaint

<i>'How would you rate AtW?'</i>	<i>Eye complaints only %</i>	<i>Ear complaints only %</i>	<i>Musculo-skeletal complaints only %</i>	<i>Other complaints only %</i>	<i>Musculo-skeletal and other complaints %</i>	<i>Two or more complaints (other combinations) %</i>
Excellent	20	14	34	21	31	25
Very good	37	21	29	33	26	31
Good	18	26	23	31	24	26
Fair	15	14	7	5	11	6
Poor	7	14	6	5	5	3
Very poor	2	8	-	3	2	8
Can't say	-	5	1	2	1	2
Base: all respondents	132	90	80	86	181	59

Table A.9.10 Respondents' overall opinion of the acceptability of AtW by their overall ratings of DST staff

<i>'How would you rate AtW?'</i>	<i>Ratings of DST staff</i>						<i>Total %</i>
	<i>Very poor %</i>	<i>Poor %</i>	<i>Fair %</i>	<i>Good %</i>	<i>Very good %</i>	<i>Excellent %</i>	
Very poor	27	5	5	2	1	0	3
Poor	27	27	12	5	2	2	7
Fair	21	21	26	12	4	1	9
Good	14	24	31	42	20	12	24
Very good	8	17	19	29	48	23	30
Excellent	3	6	7	9	26	62	26
Base: number of responses	134	200	296	602	767	556	2555

Table A.9.11 Respondents' overall opinion of the acceptability of AtW by their ratings of the time taken to provide support

'How would you rate AtW?'	<i>Ratings of time taken</i>						Total %
	Very poor %	Poor %	Fair %	Good %	Very good %	Excellent %	
Very poor	12	5	1	1	1	2	4
Poor	23	17	5	2	4	0	9
Fair	24	20	13	4	4	6	12
Good	18	25	37	41	18	10	26
Very good	14	26	36	34	42	27	30
Excellent	9	6	8	17	32	56	20
Base number of responses	184	197	186	207	187	115	1076

Appendix B

Census tables

Table B.1 Age

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
16 - 24	315	6
25 - 44	2895	55
45 - 64	2005	38
65+	42	1
Not known	47	1
Total	5306	100

Table B.2 Combinations of AtW elements

<i>Combination</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
SAE	1683	31.7
TW	1647	31.0
SW	676	12.7
SAE / SW	442	8.3
TW / SAE	398	7.5
TW / SW	146	2.8
CSI	76	1.4
TW / SAE /SW	58	1.1
APE /SAE	33	0.6
CSI / SW	31	0.6
APE / SAE / SW	22	0.4
TW / APE / SAE	20	0.4
APE	19	0.4
APE / SW	17	0.3
TW / APE	16	0.3
CSI / SAE	13	0.2
CSI / SAE / SW	4	0.1
TW / APE /SW	3	0.1
APE / CSI	1	0.0
TW / CSI	1	0.0
Total	5306	100.0

Table B.3 Gender by AtW element

	AtW element					All %
	SAE %	TW %	SW %	APE %	CSI %	
Women	59	52	46	58	37	54
Men	41	48	54	42	63	46
Base: all users	2673	2289	1399	131	126	5306

Table B.4 Disabling complaint by AtW elements

Disabling complaint	AtW element					All %
	SAE %	TW %	SW %	APE %	CSI %	
Musculo-skeletal complaints only	35	23	10	37	2	26
Eye complaints only	22	23	38	3	-	22
Ear complaints only	14	1	27	19	86	13
Mental health problems only	6	15	5	25	-	9
Other complaints only	19	32	16	13	10	25
Musculo-skeletal and other complaints	3	4	2	3	-	3
Two or more complaints (other combinations)	1	3	2	1	2	2
Base: all users*	2571	2222	1354	126	123	5123

* information on the disabling complaints of 183 users is missing.

Table B.5 Disabling complaints by AtW elements

<i>Disabling complaint</i>	<i>AtW element</i>					<i>All</i>
	<i>SAE</i>	<i>TW</i>	<i>SW</i>	<i>APE</i>	<i>CSI</i>	
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	
Musculo-skeletal complaints	38	27	12	40	2	29
Eye complaints	23	25	40	4	2	24
Ear complaints	15	2	29	19	88	14
Mental health problems	6	16	5	26	-	9
Other disabling complaints	22	37	18	15	10	28
Base all users*	2571	2222	1354	126	123	5123

* information on the disabling complaints of 183 users is missing; percentages sum to more than 100 because some users have more than one disabling complaint

Table B.6 Disabling complaint by number of AtW elements

<i>Disabling complaint</i>	<i>Number of AtW elements</i>			<i>All</i>
	<i>One</i>	<i>Two</i>	<i>Three</i>	
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	
Musculo-skeletal complaints only	28	18	29	26
Eye complaints only	19	34	33	22
Ear complaints only	12	19	9	13
Mental health problems only	8	9	18	9
Other complaints only	28	14	8	25
Musculo-skeletal and other complaints	3	4	3	3
Two or more complaints (other combinations)	2	2	-	2
Base all users*	3957	1059	107	5123

* information on the disabling complaints of 183 users is missing

Table B.7 Disabling complaints by number of AtW elements

<i>Disabling complaint</i>	<i>Number of AtW elements</i>			<i>All</i>
	<i>One</i>	<i>Two</i>	<i>Three</i>	
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Musculo-skeletal complaints	31	22	32	29
Eye complaints	21	37	33	24
Ear complaints	13	21	9	14
Mental health problems	9	10	19	9
Other disabling complaints	32	17	10	28
Base: all users*	3957	1059	107	5123

* information on the disabling complaints of 183 users is missing; percentages sum to more than 100 because some users have more than one disabling complaint.

Table B.8 Disabling complaint by type of support combined

<i>Disabling complaint</i>	<i>Type of support</i>				<i>All</i>
	<i>Environmental adaptations only</i>	<i>Human support only</i>	<i>Environmental and human support</i>	<i>TW only</i>	
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	
Musculo-skeletal complaints only	41	8	12	22	26
Eye complaints only	17	34	39	18	22
Ear complaints only	10	30	32	1	13
Mental health problems only	7	5	4	15	9
Other complaints only	21	19	8	38	25
Musculo-skeletal and other complaints	4	2	2	3	3
Two or more complaints (other combinations)	1	2	2	3	2
Base: all users*	2075	895	548	1605	5123

* information on the disabling complaints of 183 users is missing

Table B.9 Disabling complaints by type of support combined

<i>Disabling complaint</i>	<i>Type of support</i>				<i>All %</i>
	<i>Environmental adaptations only</i>	<i>Human support</i>	<i>Environmental and human support</i>	<i>TW only</i>	
	<i>%</i>	<i>only %</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	
Musculo-skeletal complaints	45	10	15	25	29
Eye complaints	18	36	41	20	24
Ear complaints	11	31	34	2	14
Mental health problems	7	5	5	16	9
Other disabling complaints	24	21	10	43	28
Base all users*	2075	895	548	1605	5123

* information on the disabling complaints of 183 users is missing, percentages sum to more than 100 because some users have more than one disabling complaint

Table B.10 Gender by region

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Northern</i>	<i>Yorkshire & Humberside</i>	<i>East Midlands & Eastern</i>	<i>London & South East</i>	<i>South West</i>	<i>Wales</i>	<i>West Midlands</i>	<i>North West</i>	<i>Scotland</i>	<i>Total</i>	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	No	%
Men	39	43	44	49	51	55	47	41	40	2462	46
Women	61	57	56	51	49	45	53	59	60	2844	54
Total	142	651	245	1882	299	279	710	930	168	5306	100

Table B.11 AtW elements by region

<i>AtW element</i>	<i>Northern</i>	<i>Yorkshire & Humberside</i>	<i>East Midlands & Eastern</i>	<i>London & South East</i>	<i>South West</i>	<i>Wales</i>	<i>West Midlands</i>	<i>North West</i>	<i>Scotland</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
SAE	75	58	58	40	46	43	44	67	57
TW	27	36	33	47	51	52	50	35	40
SW	19	21	27	32	24	28	24	21	24
APE	2	5	1	2	3	0	2	2	2
CSI	-	2	4	3	1	-	4	2	1
Base: all users*	142	651	245	1882	299	279	710	930	168

* percentages sum to more than 100 because some users have more than one element.

Table B.12 Type of support combined by region

<i>Type of support</i>	<i>Northern</i>	<i>Yorkshire & Humberside</i>	<i>East Midlands & Eastern</i>	<i>London & South East</i>	<i>South West</i>	<i>Wales</i>	<i>West Midlands</i>	<i>North West</i>	<i>Scotland</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Environmental adaptations only	65	51	49	31	35	32	35	55	50
Human support only	8	13	20	24	13	16	18	10	18
Environmental and human support	11	10	9	10	12	12	9	13	7
TW only	15	26	22	35	40	41	38	22	25
Base: all users	142	651	245	1882	299	279	710	930	168

Appendix C Research methods

C.1 Introduction and background

The study was carried out in two consecutive parts.

- a national survey comprising computer-aided face-to-face interviews with a representative sample of 628 users; and
- a follow-up qualitative study of 20 users

The study was conducted by the Disability Services Research Partnership on behalf of the Employment Service (ES). Within the Partnership, the teams at the Social Policy Research Unit (SPRU) at the University of York and the Social Research Unit within Ipsos-RSL led on the study elements as shown below, with overall responsibility resting with SPRU.

- national survey of users (sections C.2 to C 7)
 - survey and questionnaire design. SPRU and Ipsos-RSL
 - sample design and sampling Ipsos-RSL and SPRU
 - census conduct and collation: Ipsos-RSL
 - fieldwork: Ipsos-RSL
 - data processing. Ipsos-RSL
 - table and data provision: Ipsos-RSL
 - analysis and substantive reporting SPRU
 - technical report Ipsos-RSL and SPRU
- qualitative study of users (sections C.8 to C.11)
 - study design SPRU
 - fieldwork conduct: SPRU
 - analysis and reporting SPRU
 - technical report: SPRU

Following discussion of design proposals put forward by SPRU and Ipsos-RSL, the study formally began in May 2000, with an advance report of the survey findings required for early October, and a final report to be delivered in November 2000. Despite an exacting timetable for survey fieldwork and an unexpectedly lengthy sample collation exercise, interviews were completed almost within schedule and the reports delivered on time.

C.2 Survey sample design

The survey aimed to produce results representative of the population of Access to Work users. When the survey was being planned, it was hoped that information on all users might be available centrally through the ES DiSC database system. This is a monitoring system which contains the records of all those making applications to the Access to Work programme. However, at the time of the survey the system was in operation at local rather than national level with no overall information on the characteristics of users, or their contact details, available centrally.

It was thus necessary to conduct a Census of all Access to Work users to collect the relevant characteristics and names and addresses. This meant collating the information from the DiSC database in each ES office responsible for monitoring the programme.

C.2.1 Census definitions and coverage

The Disability Partnership and the ES agreed the criteria for the Census. The Census was devised to collate the DiSC records of all 'current users' of the programme in the period between 1 January and 29 February 2000. Current users were defined as follows:

- Access to Work clients receiving support for which payments were made between 1 January and 29 February 2000.
- new applicants to Access to Work whose application was approved between 1 January and 29 February 2000.

As the financial records from which the first group of clients was traced were made available for the January and February period only, this approach excluded those clients receiving ongoing support during the reference period but for whom no payments were made in that period; for example, someone may not have used their support worker or travel to work during that period. More importantly, the larger group of clients still using an aid, piece of equipment or an alteration which had been paid for before the census period were not specifically included.

The five main elements of support from the programme used for the sampling procedure were:

- Special Aids and Equipment (SAE)
- Travel to Work (TW)
- Support Worker (SW)
- Adaptations to Premises and Equipment (APE) or
- Communicator Support at Interview (CSI).

Those categorised as receiving *only* the ES category 'miscellaneous' support (hence not able to provide information on the five main types of support listed above) were not included. This group constituted a very small proportion of all support provided (around 3%). As in most instances miscellaneous support was provided jointly with one of the five main types, the majority of those receiving miscellaneous support were included. Cases of miscellaneous support being provided 'alone' mainly involve assessment costs, and costs not possible to attribute to other elements, such as awareness training for staff or colleagues.

C.2.2 Census collation

Local records of Access to Work users are held in the offices of 32 Disability Service Teams (DSTs) and one Regional Disability Service Office (where there are no DSTs). To collect the information required for the Census, it was necessary to arrange for fieldworkers to visit all offices. Beforehand, the fieldworkers were fully briefed by ES Head Office staff on the requirements of the Census and issued with written instructions detailing the procedures to be followed. The ES also established a 'help-line' to call if fieldworkers encountered any difficulties.

Fieldworkers had to follow a three-stage procedure:

- familiarising themselves with the DiSCbase system holding Access to Work user records;
- identifying the relevant records by scrolling through all the Access to Work records on the local DiSCbase system to
 - check that dates of approved applications were within the relevant time period (to identify the new applicants), and
 - compare the records with computer print-outs of ES financial reports showing those clients who had received payments in the relevant time period (to identify the existing clients);
- printing the records identified by the above processes.

The briefing of nine fieldworkers took place in Sheffield on 15 June 2000 and visits to each of the 33 offices were scheduled for the following two weeks. The visits were scheduled to last for either half days or whole days, depending on the DST caseload size. Thus the Census was intended to be complete by the end of June. However, the process of identifying individual records was much more time consuming than anticipated because of the unwieldiness of the DiSCbase system and the fieldworkers' inexperience at handling it, exacerbated by the difficulties of printing out the records in busy offices. As a result of these difficulties, the ES sent an experienced member of staff to help with the process in several of the larger offices. With the help of this staff member the Census collation was completed by the middle of July 2000.

Once all the relevant records were printed off in each office, they were sent to Ipsos-RSL. The information contained on each record was then manually entered into a data file. This data file was then checked and cleaned to remove any duplicates, incomplete records, out-of-scope or deadwood cases. An initial total of over 7,000 records was returned from the 33 offices. Following the checking and cleaning these were distilled down to 5,306 individuals who were on the 'current caseload' for Access to Work. These 5,306 individuals formed the 'population' of Access to Work users from which the sample was drawn.

C.2.3 Sample design, priority coding and sampling procedure

As mentioned, the sampling procedure used for the survey was designed to produce a representative sample of people on the Access to Work caseload in January and February 2000, noting the exceptions explained in C.2.1.

The Census found 5,306 people on the caseload who altogether had received 6,618 different elements of support. Thus, many of the people covered by the Census had received more than one, and in some cases several elements of support. It is important to note, however, that the sample design was based on *people* rather than Access to Work elements.

The sample aimed to ensure that sufficient interviews for analysis were conducted with individuals receiving each of the five types of support. To do this, it was necessary for each individual in the Census to be identified by one element code only. Therefore, before the sample was selected, the 5,306 individuals were each assigned a priority code. The priority coding was based on the inverse of the reported number of instances of each of the five main elements as recorded on the ES database: that is, the smaller the number of instances recorded, the higher the priority code given.

Table C 1 compares the absolute numbers and percentages within each of the five elements, both before and after the priority coding. Note that because of the priority coding the 'Census %' and the 'Priority %' columns show different proportions for some of the elements, most noticeably the fourth priority code, SAE.

Table C.1 Comparison of Census and priority coded elements of support

<i>Priority code</i>	<i>AtW element</i>	<i>Census numbers</i>	<i>Census %</i>	<i>Priority numbers</i>	<i>Priority %</i>
1	CSI	126	2	126	2
2	APE	131	2	130	3
3	SW	1399	21	1322	25
4	SAE	2673	40	2081	31
5	TW	2289	35	1647	39
Totals		6618		5306	

Once the priority codes were allocated, a two-stage procedure was used to select the sample:

- 1) A stratified selection of individuals receiving at least one of the five main elements of Access to Work support. The stratified selection was necessary because the numbers of users of two of the elements, CSI and APE, were so small; all users of CSI and APE were selected, amounting to 126 and 130 individuals respectively; from each of the remaining three elements (SAE, SW, TTW) 250 individuals were randomly selected.

Taken together, this first part of the procedure produced 1,006 individuals.

- 2) The clustering and allocation of the selected 1,006 individuals into manageable and equally sized fieldwork areas. This stage resulted in the removal of 141 records. These were made up of 93 'outliers' (that is, they were more than 25 miles from a centroid based on the geographic distribution of other individuals selected from the same office); and 48 cases that were low on the priority coding list (that is, they had been allocated priority codes 3, 4 or 5).

This second part of the procedure reduced the selected total to 865 people.

The 865 individuals are classified in Table C.2 below in terms of their priority code. This shows the affect of the stratified approach and the 'over-sampling' of the two smallest elements, CSI and APE. As planned, the stratification produced equal sized groups of SW, SAE and TW, while the over-sampling increased the proportionate size of the smallest two elements to ten per cent each, compared with their actual proportions of two per cent each.

Table C.2 Sample selected by element of support

<i>Priority code</i>	<i>AtW element</i>	<i>Numbers in sample</i>	<i>% of sample</i>
1	CSI	86	10
2	APE	85	10
3	SW	230	26
4	SAE	233	27
5.	TW	231	27
Total		865	

C.3 Survey questionnaire development and piloting

The survey questionnaire was designed by SPRU in consultation with ES and in collaboration with Ipsos-RSL

C.3.1 Review of the literature

To inform the design of the survey questionnaire a review of the literature on Access to Work was conducted. Key sources were the two Access to Work surveys carried out for ES by SCPR (Beinart *et al.*, 1996) and IES (Hillage *et al.*, 1998) and the ES-commissioned survey of PACT clients by SCPR (Beinart, 1997b). The design also drew on user experiences in the RNIB/RADAR (1995) report on the early days of the Access to Work programme, the RNIB study of the extra costs facing people with visual impairment (Thornton and Vernon, 1998, Baker *et al.*, 2000), the experiential account by Glickman (1996) and unpublished accounts made available to SPRU by disability organisations in the course of a review of disability employment research (Barnes *et al.*, 1998).¹ The researchers also were given access to the unpublished report to ES by Sue Maynard Campbell of a consultation day in May 2000 with Access to Work users most of whom worked for disability organisations.

To determine the best ways of asking users' opinions about Access to Work a review of approaches to assessing satisfaction with services was also carried out.

C.3.2 Familiarisation with the programme

Development of the survey questionnaire required understanding how the Access to Work programme works in practice. Dialogue with ES operational managers and access to guidance was complemented by a visit by a member of the SPRU research team to a DST office to learn from Access to Work staff how they implement the programme and observation of their practice.

C.3.3 User panel

So that the design might be directly informed by users' perspectives a small 'panel' of Access to Work users was recruited through the Yorkshire and North Humberside DST and other sources known to the research team. Individual meetings with panel members explored their experiences of the programme and questions to address in the survey. These meetings also were used to 'pre-pilot' early versions of the questionnaire, with panel members advising on question format, wording and order.

¹ For sources, see References.

In recognition of their contribution to the research, each panel member received a gift of £15

C.3.4 Telephone pilot

Because of time limitations, it was not possible to conduct the usual full-scale pilot of the fieldwork procedures and the questionnaire. Instead, it was agreed that the questionnaire should be piloted by telephone.

Two DST offices, selected to reflect urban and rural areas and different models of delivery of AtW, provided the names and contact telephone numbers of ten current Access to Work users. They sent the advance opt-out letter to the individuals concerned and passed on details of those not prepared to be contacted for the purposes of piloting.

The telephone piloting began on 14 July and continued until 18 July 2000. Ipsos-RSL research staff assigned to the survey conducted the telephone interviews. In the time available, a total of 11 interviews were obtained. Interviews were mostly undertaken in the afternoons and early evenings, as most of the pilot sample were working in the morning. Indeed, the nine individuals who were not interviewed were either out at work, or it was not possible to establish contact with them.

The interviews varied in length between 25 and 60 minutes. Most respondents were happy with the interview and gave a lot of positive feedback. Specific feedback on question order, ease of understanding and respondent interest was reported to SPRU and fed into the questionnaire design.

C.4 Survey data collection

The interviewing was conducted using computer assisted personal interviewing (CAPI). All interviews were completed between 25 July and 15 September 2000 by fully trained Ipsos-RSL interviewers. In total, 28 experienced interviewers worked on the project. Each was monitored to Interviewer Quality Control Scheme (IQCS) standards and to ensure that they were at ease with the project. Senior supervisors and regional controllers conducted the monitoring, with signed monitoring notes being kept in each interviewer's file.

C.4.1 Making contact: advance letters, opt-outs and calling procedure

An advance letter on ES headed paper (see Appendix D) was sent to each selected individual in the sample, prior to fieldwork. Ipsos-RSL's Postal Department conducted the mailout of advance letters. The letter explained the reasons for the survey and requested co-operation and participation. If the individual did not wish to participate in the survey, they were asked to contact the ES or the survey manager to have their name withdrawn from the sample.

Seven to ten days after the mailout of the letters, interviewers began making personal contact to attempt to secure an interview. In total interviewers were instructed to call up to four times at the addresses of sample members in order to make contact.

Interviewing was conducted between 9.00am and 8.30pm during the week and 11.00am to 5.00pm at the weekends, unless the respondent requested otherwise.

These are the best times of the day to ensure that interviews are achieved with 'hard-to-reach' respondents, such as young people (16-24 years), males and, particularly relevant for this survey, those with jobs. If respondents requested a call back at another time the interviewer, after checking with her Regional Controller, scheduled this.

C.4.2 Site of interviews

The interviewers were issued with the home addresses of the respondents in order to make contact with them. Consequently, more often than not, interviews were conducted at respondents' homes. Most respondents were happy with this arrangement. However, interviewers were instructed that, if the respondent preferred, the interview could be completed anywhere else within reason. Several respondents wished to be contacted and interviewed at work – often because they had communicator assistance there. Once the permission of the employer involved had been agreed, the interviews were then completed in the normal manner at the site of work.

C.4.3 Using interpreters and other communicators to assist at interview

It was known that some people in the sample might wish their interviews to be conducted using a Sign Language Interpreter (SLI). To allow maximum time for the necessary arrangements to be made, interviewers were instructed to make contact first with those that the sample information indicated might wish such assistance (that is, they were priority codes CSI or SW). The interviewers were issued with special instructions explaining how to make arrangements for an SLI to attend an interview. If respondents expressed no preference for a SLI known to them, arrangements were made with a 'short notice' interpreting agency under contract to SPRU.

It was recognised that other people in the sample might wish to have someone such as a relative, friend or carer present during the interview. Specific instructions to interviewers stressed that the interview was to be conducted *with* the Access to Work users themselves, and not with their assistants who were only to be allowed as a conduit for information from the user and not as a source of information themselves.

C.4.4 Interviewer guidance and materials

Before starting work on the survey, all interviewers were given full written project instructions explaining the background and purpose of the survey, as well as detailing the workings of the questionnaire. In particular, the instructions contained detailed guidance on interviewing people with different types of impairment.

§:

The guidance included a procedure for interviewers to follow, which was designed to ensure that everyone selected for the survey would have the opportunity to participate, should they wish to. The interviewers were instructed to:

- 1) explain to the respondent exactly how the interview was to be carried out (that is, face to face in home using CAPI)
- 2) ask if the respondent required any adjustments to be made to this process
- 3) if so, whether the respondents could make the adjustment(s) themselves and could the adjustment(s) be made there and then?
- 4) if not, to re-schedule the interview and make arrangements for the necessary adjustments (using equipment or services as appropriate).

§

In addition to these instructions and their standard materials (such as their identity card, appointment cards, letter of authority, etc.), the interviewers were given several other materials to complete the survey work.

- copies of the ES advance letter
- showcards
- instructions for arranging SLIs
- sample Issue Sheets
- paper copy of the CAPI questionnaire for reference

C.4.5 Interview length

The interviews were 37 minutes long on average. They ranged between the shortest of 18 and the longest of 72, although over two-thirds (69%) were between 35 and 45 minutes in length.

C.4.6 Permission to be re-contacted

At the end of the interview, respondents were asked two questions concerning their willingness to be re-contacted for the purposes of further research:

ASK ALL

- Q1 The Employment Service may want another study about Access to Work in the future. If so, would you be willing to take part?

Yes/No

ASK IF RESPONDENT WILLING TO TAKE PART IN FUTURE ATW STUDY

- Q2 Do you give your permission for your details to be given to a researcher so that they can contact you about taking part in another study about Access to Work?

Yes/No

598 (95%) of the 628 respondents said that they would be willing to take part in future research and 574 (91%) gave permission for their details to be given to a researcher.

C.5 Response rate and representativeness of issued and achieved samples

C.5.1 Response rate

Of the 865 individuals selected for the survey and sent an advance letter 42 responded saying that they did not wish to be contacted about the survey. This left a starting sample of 823 who were issued to interviewers.

Table C.3 shows that 628 interviews were achieved, representing an overall response rate of 76 per cent. Before fieldwork started, a total of 640 interviews (that is, a response rate of 78%) had been hoped for. However, a combination of factors meant that this number was not quite obtainable

- the limited time available to conduct interviews to meet the reporting deadline (because of the delay in collating the sample, fieldwork was late starting)
- the higher than average proportion of the sample 'in work' (94%) and hence hard to contact and/or who could only be interviewed in the evenings or at weekends; and
- fieldwork being conducted over the peak holiday season (August), limiting availability of respondents on leave.

Almost one in five potential respondents refused (19%) It was not possible to establish an outcome for the remainder, either because there was not sufficient time (3%) or because the respondent was not available in the survey period (2%)

Table C.3 Overall response rate

	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Sample available for interview	823	100
<i>Of which</i>		
refused (including terminations)	154	19
unresolved (no interview in available time/call back - no reply / broken appointments)	24	3
other (moved, ill, on holiday, etc)	17	2
interviewed	628	76

The overall percentage figures given in Table C.3 are based on the sample of 823 people issued to interviews. Adding a further 42 people declining to be approached about the survey into the response figures, and then re-percentageing on the base of the 865, gives an overall response rate of 73 per cent, a refusal rate of 23 per cent and an unresolved rate of four per cent.

Table C 4 shows the response rate for each of the five main priority elements. The productive response rates and levels of refusal were very similar between the APE, TW, SAE and SW elements. However, among the CSI element both the refusal rate and the numbers of unresolved cases were markedly higher and, hence, the response rate much lower.

Table C.4 Response rate by priority element of support

<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Element of support</i>				
	<i>APE</i>	<i>CSI</i>	<i>TW</i>	<i>SAE</i>	<i>SW</i>
Sample available for interview	80	73	223	226	221
<i>Of which:</i>					
refused (including terminations)	12 (15%)	25 (34%)	35 (16%)	40 (18%)	42 (19%)
unresolved (no interview in available time - no reply/broken appointments)	1 (1%)	10 (14%)	5 (1%)	3 (1%)	5 (1%)
other (moved, ill, on holiday, etc.)	0 (0%)	3 (4%)	4 (1%)	5 (1%)	5 (1%)
interviewed	67 (84%)	35 (48%)	179 (80%)	178 (79%)	169 (76%)

C.5.2 Representativeness of the achieved sample

In order to check the representativeness of the sample interviewed for the survey,

it is necessary to compare it with the Census, as there is no other available profile of 'current users'. The most useful comparisons are with the main demographic variables – gender, age and region, together with the main analytical variable – element of support received. Table C.5 below contains the details ²

Note that the bases in Table C.5 differ between the demographic variables and the elements of support. For the gender, age and region variables, the base is 'all respondents', that is, all 5,306 people covered by the Census or all 628 people interviewed in the survey. For elements of support, the base is all 'instance(s) of support received (by the respondent) from their most recent application'. That is, the 628 respondents were asked which element(s) of support they had received in relation to their most recent application. The table shows that a total of 771 instances of support had been received following the respondents' most recent applications. This is compared with the 6,618 instances of support recorded as having been received by the 5,306 people covered in the Census.

Table C.5 shows a very close match between the profiles of the Census and the interviewed sample in terms of gender, age and region. The final column in the table shows that there is no difference greater than $\pm 3\%$ (the normal confidence limit for samples of this size) in these three variables. Among the 16 categories covered by the three variables, five match exactly, four are within $\pm 1\%$, three within $\pm 2\%$ and four within $\pm 3\%$.

There is also a high degree of correlation in the proportions of three elements of support – SAE, TW and CSI. These also all match within $\pm 3\%$. The remaining two elements, SW and APE, are under-represented and over-represented respectively in equal proportions. These under- and over-representations of $\pm 11\%$ are the result of several factors.

- The difficulty of securing interviews that involved a 'third party', that is a reader, support worker or SLI. Without prior arrangement such interviews are often not possible, and trying to make the arrangements at a time that suited all three parties added considerably to the complexity of the interviewer's task. This contributed to the shortfall in the number of SW elements.
- Receipt of combinations of different elements of support. The Census data shows that of the 1,399 instances when SW support was received, 723 (52%) were received in combination with other elements. Similarly, of the 131 instances of APE, 112 (85%) were received in combination with other elements. These proportions were markedly higher than the number of instances of combinations among the other three elements. 1,682 (33%) out of 5,088 instances of receipt.

² Table C.5 compares Census and survey data as a comparison of the Census data for the 628 respondents with the complete Census data for all 5306 individuals would not have shown any differences. This is because of the sampling and weighting strategies used. These over sampled particular elements and then weighted the achieved sample to match the Census distribution of elements.

- The significance of these combinations of elements of support relates to the use of the priority coding and the weights subsequently attached to the data:
 - Many of the SW 'combinations' were with elements having a lower priority code. The lower code meant that these SW elements were down-weighted
 - Conversely, many of the APE combinations were with elements having a higher priority code. These APE elements were, therefore, up-weighted

Table C.5 Comparison of Census and achieved sample (weighted)

	<i>Census numbers</i>	<i>Census %</i>	<i>Sample numbers</i>	<i>Sample %</i>	<i>+/- difference</i>
Gender					
Women	2844	54	356	57	-3
Men	2462	46	272	43	+3
Age					
16 to 24	315	6	37	6	0
25 to 44	2895	55	345	55	0
45 to 64	2005	38	239	38	0
65+	42	1	7	1	0
Not available	47	1	-	-	-1
Region					
Northern	142	3	39	6	-3
Yorkshire & Humberside	651	12	84	13	-1
East Midlands and Eastern	245	5	22	4	+1
London and South East	1882	35	238	38	-3
South West	299	6	24	4	+2
Wales	279	5	16	3	+2
West Midlands	710	13	85	13	0
North West	930	18	98	16	+2
Scotland	168	3	22	4	-1
<i>Base for gender, age and region</i>	<i>5306</i>		<i>628</i>		
Element of support					
CSI	126	2	23	3	-1
APE	131	2	99	13	-11
SW	1399	21	77	10	+11
SA	2673	40	331	42	-2
TW	2289	35	241	32	+3
<i>Base for element</i>	<i>6618</i>		<i>771</i>		

C.6 Data preparation

C.6.1 Coding

Coding conducted on the data collected covered: coding of numeric answers into ranges; coding up of open-ended answers; and back-checking of any 'other' answers (to re-code them onto the existing codes, if possible).

For the open-ended questions, code frames were specified by SPRU for the 'new' questions included in the survey. Coding of previously used questions drew on existing frames, such as the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC 2000).

C.6.2 Editing

The CAPI questionnaire used on the survey meant that much of the normal editing conducted on surveys using paper questionnaires was unnecessary; the range, filter and routing checks that form the bulk of such a process were built into the questionnaire itself. Nevertheless, once the coding of the individual data records was complete, computer editing of the entire dataset was undertaken to check for any internal inconsistencies in the data. Ipsos-RSL programmers completed this computer editing and were assisted in dealing with any queries by the researcher responsible for the project.

The only inconsistencies found in the data related to the questions concerning the length of time that respondents had had to wait for support to be provided. The difficulties with the data were caused by a combination of:

- 1) respondents giving inconsistent answers (because of the problem of re-calling accurately events that had taken place some time ago); and
- 2) interviewers keying answers in an ambiguous manner (data was asked for in the form of days, weeks, months *or* years – but some interviewers misunderstood this and gave answers as days, weeks, months *and* years).

Following a manual check by the researcher, nearly all of these queries were resolved and a separate set of 'weekly times' produced for everyone answering the questions. That is, all of the answers were converted to 'weeks' and these manually deduced times were added to the dataset and used in the relevant section of the report.

C.7 Data format, weighting and analysis

C.7.1 Data format

Data were provided in two formats – tabular and SPSS, both weighted and unweighted.

C.7.2 Weighting

In order to ensure the representativeness of the data collected, weights were added to the data. These weights matched the distribution of the five main priority coded elements of support within the sample to the overall distribution of priority codes identified by the Census figures. Thus the weights corrected for:

- the stratified sampling of the SAE, TW and SW elements;
- the over-sampling of the CSI and APE elements; and
- any differential response rates that had occurred between the five elements.

For statistical reasons, the weights were calculated to retain the achieved sample of 628 respondents. The weight added to each respondent was based on the priority code.

1	CSI	=	0.42
2	APE	=	0.22
3	SW	=	0.93
4	SAE	=	1.12
5	TW	=	1.35

C.7.3 Analysis

The initial analysis of the data collected was undertaken by cross-tabulations and derived variables, specified by SPRU and provided by Ipsos-RSL. Further analysis was conducted by SPRU on the SPSS dataset provided by Ipsos-RSL.

C.8 Follow-up qualitative study: design and selection of the sample

Depth interviews were conducted with a sample of 20 respondents to the national survey who had given their permission to be recontacted, as explained in Section C.4.6

The sample was drawn from survey respondents in receipt of Access to Work support in five DSTs in two ES Regions. The DSTs were chosen to cover the two main models of service delivery; Access to Work co-ordinators were used in one Region and DEAs in the second. DSTs were selected to include both urban and rural employment situations. *Because of reporting pressures, selection had to be made before the main fieldwork was complete.* Approximately 500 interview records were searched to identify 56 respondents in the selected DSTs who had given their permission to be recontacted for a further study of Access to Work.

From this population, a sample was designed to reflect the following primary variables:

- element(s) of Access to Work support (including some users who had received training to use equipment)
- positive and negative overall evaluations of Access to Work.

Secondary sampling variables were gender and age.

In making a final selection of users we aimed to achieve a fair geographical spread within the five DSTs, and experience of a range of health conditions and impairments including mental health problems, learning difficulties and long-term illness as well as hearing impairment, visual impairment and muscular-skeletal conditions.

With exception of the over-representation of women and a slight bias towards the 45+ age groups, and the absence of a user with learning difficulties (none had been interviewed in the relevant DSTs when the sample was drawn), the aims of the sample selection were met. Table C.6 shows the key characteristics of the achieved sample.

Table C.6: User Study Group Profile

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Number of users</i>
Region 1	13
DST 1	6
DST 2	4
DST 3	3
Region 2	7
DST 1	5
DST 2	3
*Support element	
SAE	8
SAE + APE	2
SAE + SW	1
SAE + TW	1
SAE + TW + SW	1
SAE + APE + SW	1
SAE + APE + TW	1
SAE + SW	1
APE	1
TW	2
CSI	1
*Rating of AtW	
Excellent	4
Very good	4
Good	4
Fair	4
Poor	3
Very poor	-
Don't know	1
Sex	
Men	6
Women	14
Age	
16-24 years	2
25-44 years	8
45-64 years	10
65 years and over	-
Number of AtW applications	
1	9
2	6
3	3
4+	2
Sector	
Public	12
Private/voluntary	8
Employment status	
Employed**	18
Self-employed	2

* Primary sampling variables

** Two interviewees were no longer in paid work at the time of the qualitative interview

C.9 Recruitment and conduct of qualitative interviews

C.9.1 Recruitment

A letter explaining the qualitative stage of the research was sent by the SPRU researcher to 20 potential interviewees at the end of August 2000 (see Appendix D). One week later, the researcher contacted people by telephone or textphone to discuss what was involved in taking part in a further interview, including ways in which the interview could be facilitated, and to give reassurances about confidentiality. The telephone numbers for some of the sample were not immediately available. Although this caused some slight difficulty and delay, telephone contact was eventually made with all but one of the original sample. In this last instance a substitute was made to ensure that the target number of 20 was achieved. Once telephone contact had been made, there were no refusals to take part in a second interview. Indeed, people were very keen to have the opportunity to further elaborate their opinions and ideas about Access to Work.

C.9.2 Conduct of interviews

Interviews were carried out over a five week period from 7 September 2000 to 12 October 2000. Some 14 interviews took place at the interviewee's home; the remainder (6) took place at people's work premises. Interviews lasted about one hour and a quarter, on average. Sign language interpreters were used for the two interviews with deaf people. All the interviews were tape recorded with participants' permission, and comprehensive notes were made. As explained in the advance letter, all participants were offered a gift of £15 for helping with the research.

C.10 Content of interviews

The topic areas covered in the depth interviews were informed by a review of the literature, in particular a qualitative study exploring customer satisfaction with services provided by local offices of the Benefits Agency (Elam and Ritchie, 1997). The content of the interviews and approaches to questioning were discussed at a meeting of the user panel (see C.3.3 for recruitment of the panel). Members made helpful recommendations about how best to start the interviews, and the extent to which the interview should draw on people's responses to questions in their previous interview for the national survey.

The topic guide had two parts. The first (and longer) part aimed to explore experience of Access to Work and determinants of satisfaction and dissatisfaction and covered the following areas:

- update on current situation, including any changes since the first interview
- the role of the Access to Work co-ordinator/DEA, including manner, approach and helpfulness; communication, information giving and levels of knowledge; nature and type of contact, follow up
- Access to Work procedures, including experiences of any delays and/or perceived inefficiencies
- the input of specialist advisers, including their professional background and willingness to give full information about the range of options available

- the employer's involvement, what it was and the extent to which the interviewee was involved in any discussions between the employers and Access to Work staff
- Access to Work support, including its suitability and the extent to which it met people's needs in work
- the outcome of Access to Work support, in particular the difference it made to people's working lives
- overall appraisal of Access to Work, which was then compared to the evaluation given at the time of the first interview
- perceived priority areas of Access to Work, and which aspects had a high or low influence on levels of satisfaction with the service

Interviewees were asked to describe their levels of satisfaction with the above parts of the Access to Work process. They were also asked for their opinions about what worked well and what worked less well, together with any improvements they would like to see implemented. In addition, the discussions aimed to tease out issues to do with users' ability to exercise choice and control in any decision making.

The second part of the interview, which concentrated on approaches to routine monitoring exercise of Access to Work, followed on from the themes and issues pursued in the previous set of questions. The topics covered were:

- issues to focus on in an Access to Work survey form
- preferred question types (examples of different forms of questions were shown/described to interviewees)
- confidentiality issues
- methods to maximise response rates
- the timing of an Access to Work survey(s).

C.11 Analysis of the qualitative data

The interview data were analysed using the 'Framework' method³, a proven approach to analysis in applied policy research. The technique involved constructing charts that systematically indexed all the interview material according to core themes, and then drawing out key dimensions and associations.

³ Ritchie, J. and Spencer, L. (1994) 'Qualitative data analysis for applied policy research', pp 173-94 in A. Byman and R. Burgess (eds), *Analyzing Qualitative Data*, London: Routledge

Appendix D

Research instruments

Employment Service

Serving People through Jobcentres

Research and Development

Employment Service

Level 2

Rockingham House

123 West Street

Sheffield S1 4ER

Telephone 0114-259 6278

GTN Code 5301 6278

Fax 0114-259 6463

e-mail red.es.rh@gtmet.gov.uk

July 2000

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to ask for your help with some important research. Your name has been randomly selected from Employment Service records of people who have received support under Access to Work. We would like your views on how well Access to Work is working and whether any improvements need to be made to it.

We have asked Ipsos-RSL, an independent research organisation, to interview 650 people in England, Scotland and Wales. The interview lasts about 40 minutes and can be arranged at a place and time of day to suit you. Taking part is entirely voluntary and will not affect your Access to Work support in anyway.

I can assure you that the information you give the interviewer will be treated in the strictest confidence. When they have talked to everyone, the researchers will write a report for us at the Employment Service. They will make sure that nobody taking part in the survey can be identified in any way.

An interviewer from Ipsos-RSL will contact you during July or August to tell you more about it and answer any questions you have about what is involved. If required, arrangements to assist with communication during the interview can be discussed when the interviewer gets in touch to make an appointment. If you feel that you do not want to help with this research, please leave a message at any time for Nigel Tremlett at Ipsos-RSL on 020 8861 8027 by July 21st at the latest, or tell the interviewer when they call.

I do hope that you will be able to take part in this research. It is important to know what people such as yourself think about Access to Work and your contribution to the study would be greatly valued. Many thanks in anticipation of your help

Yours sincerely



Leroy Groves



Ipsos-RSL Ltd Kings House Kimberley Road Harrow HA1 IPT United Kingdom Tel +44 (020) 8861 8000 Fax +44 (020) 8861 5515

A SURVEY OF USERS' VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES OF ACCESS TO WORK

Conducted for the
Social Policy Research Unit (SPRU),
University of York
on behalf of the Employment Service

CAPI questionnaire contents

- A. Employment status
- B. Applying for/awareness of Access to Work
- C. Support provided
- D. Disability service
- E. Specialist advice
- F. Employers
- G. Time taken for support to be provided
- H. Overall view of Access to Work
- I. Background information

A EMPLOYMENT STATUS

ASK ALL

- A1 I would like to start by asking about what you are doing at the moment
Which of these best describes your situation at the moment?

SHOW CARD A (READ OUT IF APPROPRIATE)

CODE ONE ONLY

- a working in a paid job as an employee - go to A2
- b working in a paid job on a self-employed basis - go to A8
- c have a paid job but temporarily off sick / on sick pay - go to A2
- d not in paid work but waiting to start a job already obtained - go to A1b
- e unemployed and actively seeking work - go to A1a
- f Something else SPECIFY (CODE ONE ONLY)
 - A full-time student - go to A1a
 - Not working because long-term sick or disabled - go to A1a
 - Retired from paid work - go to A1a
 - Other - go to A1a

ASK IF RESPONDENT UNEMPLOYED AND SEEKING WORK OR DOING SOMETHING ELSE

- A1a Can I check, are you waiting to start a paid job already obtained?

Yes - go to A1b

No - go to B1

ASK IF RESPONDENT WAITING TO START A JOB

- A1b Are you waiting to start a paid jobREAD OUT.

.as an employee - go to A2

. on a self-employed basis - go to A8

ASK QUESTIONS A2 TO A7a IF RESPONDENT IS:

- EMPLOYEE,
- IN A PAID JOB, BUT TEMPORARILY OFF SICK OR
- WAITING TO START A JOB AS AN EMPLOYEE

- A2 What kind of organisation (do you / will you) work for?

SHOW CARD B (or READ OUT if appropriate)

CODE ONE ONLY

- A private firm or business
- Central government or Civil Service
- Local government or council
- A health authority or NHS trust
- A local authority controlled school or college
- A university or further education college
- Police / fire service
- Other public service (WRITE IN _____)
- A charity, voluntary organisation or trust
- Other

- A3 How many employees are there in total at the place where (you work / will work)? That is, at the site. READ OUT AND CODE FIRST TO APPLY

. Less than 15,

. 15 - 49,

. 50 - 99,

. 100 - 249,

...250 - 449,

500 +?

DK

- A4 In the organisation/firm where (you work /will work), what is the main job that (you do /will do)?
PROBE FOR JOB TITLE, OCCUPATION, PROFESSION, ANY SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS
NEEDED FOR JOB - CODE TO STANDARD OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION (SOC 2 digits)

A5 In your job (do you / will you) supervise or have managerial authority for the work of other people?

Yes

No

DK

A6 How many hours a week (do you / will you) usually work, including any normal overtime?
READ OUT AND CODE FIRST TO APPLY

less than 16,

16 to 29,

30 to 39,

40 to 49,

50 or more?

DK

A7 (Are you working / will you work) in supported or sheltered employment?

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION EXPLAIN TERMS OF SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT AS NECESSARY¹

Yes - go to A7a

No - go to B1

DK- go to B1

ASK IF RESPONDENT WORKING IN SUPPORTED/SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT, THEN GO TO B1

A7a In what kind of organisation (do you / will you) work?
ONE CODE ONLY

Remploy factory/workshop

Other factory/workshop

Supported placement in an ordinary firm

Other (PLEASE SPECIFY _____)

DK

GO TO B1

ASK QUESTIONS A8 TO A10 IF RESPONDENT IS

- SELF-EMPLOYED OR

- WAITING TO START WORK AS SELF EMPLOYED

A8 (Do you work / will you work) on your own or (do you have / will you have) employees?

On own / with partners but no employees - go to A9

With employees - go to A8a

ASK IF SELF-EMPLOYED RESPONDENT HAS EMPLOYEES

A8a How many people (do you / will you) employ?

WRITE IN

If varies - PROBE in an average week?

A9 In your self-employed activity (what is / will be) the main job that you do?

PROBE FOR JOB TITLE, OCCUPATION, PROFESSION, ANY SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS
NEEDED FOR JOB - CODE TO STANDARD OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION (SOC 2
digits)

A10 How many hours a week (do you / will you) usually work, including any normal overtime?
READ OUT AND CODE FIRST TO APPLY .

.. less than 16,

. 16 to 29,

...30 to 39,

. 40 to 49,

...50 or more?

DK

B APPLYING FOR / AWARENESS OF ACCESS TO WORK

ASK ALL

- B1 As I mentioned, you have been selected to take part in this survey because you have received or applied for support under the Government's Access to Work programme. Can I just check, when did you *first* apply for support from Access to Work? PROBE In which year/month was that?
INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION IF NECESSARY PROMPT RECALL BY USING CALENDAR –
USE BEST ESTIMATE Year (RANGE 1994-2000)
Month (RANGE 01-12) ALLOW DK

ASK ALL

- B2 Since then, have you made any further applications for support from Access to Work?
Yes - go to B2a
No - go to B3

ASK IF FURTHER APPLICATIONS MADE

- B2a How many applications have you made in total; that is, counting your first application?
WRITE IN (allow 2 digit code) (NB Answer must be 2 or more)
DK / can't recall

ASK IF FURTHER APPLICATIONS MADE

- B2b Have any of those applications been turned down?
Yes - go to B2c
No - go to B2d
DK/Not sure - go to B2d

ASK IF ANY APPLICATIONS TURNED DOWN

- B2c How many applications have *not* been approved?
WRITE IN (allow 2 digit code)
DK / can't recall

ASK IF FURTHER APPLICATIONS MADE

- B2d When was the *last* time that you applied for support from Access to Work? PROBE: In which year/month was that? INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION IF NECESSARY PROMPT RECALL BY USING CALENDAR– USE BEST ESTIMATE Year (RANGE 1994-2000)
Month (RANGE 01-12) ALLOW DK

ASK ALL

- B3 Can I check, when you (applied / last applied) for support from Access to Work, were you
.. READ OUT AND CODE FIRST TO APPLY.
 working in a paid job as an employee,
 . working in a paid job on a self-employed basis,
 .. not in paid work?

ASK B3.1a – B3.1h IF RESPONDENT IS NOT CURRENTLY IN PAID WORK AND NOT WAITING TO TAKE UP A JOB, BUT WAS IN PAID WORK AT TIME OF LAST APPLICATION

- B3 1a What kind of organisation did you work for when you last applied for Access to Work?
SHOW CARD B (or READ OUT if appropriate)
CODE ONE ONLY
 A private firm or business
 Central government or Civil Service
 Local government or council
 A health authority or NHS trust
 A local authority controlled school or college
 A university or further education college
 Police / fire service
 Other public service WRITE IN
 A charity, voluntary organisation or trust
 Other

B3 1b How many employees were there in total at the place where you worked? That is, at the site
READ OUT AND CODE FIRST TO APPLY

Less than 15,
15 - 49,
50 - 99,
100 - 249,
250 - 449,
500 +?

DK

B3 1c In the organisation/firm where you worked, what was the main job that you did? PROBE FOR
JOB TITLE, OCCUPATION, PROFESSION, ANY SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS NEEDED FOR JOB -
CODE TO STANDARD OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION (SOC 2 digits)

B3 1d In your job did you supervise or have managerial authority for the work of other people?

Yes
No
DK

B3 1e How many hours a week did you usually work, including any normal overtime? READ OUT
AND CODE FIRST TO APPLY.

. less than 16,
16 to 29,
30 to 39,
. 40 to 49,
50 or more?

B3 1f Were you working in supported or sheltered employment?

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: EXPLAIN TERMS OF SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT AS
NECESSARY)

Yes - go to B3 1g
No - go to B3 1h
DK - go to B3 1h

ASK IF RESPONDENT WORKED IN SUPPORTED/ SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT

B3 1g In what kind of organisation did you work?
ONE CODE ONLY

Remploy factory/workshop
Other factory/workshop
Supported placement in an ordinary firm
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY _____)
DK

B3 1h When you last applied for support from Access to Work, were you applying for support in
connection with .READ OUT AND CODE

. the job you were actually doing at that time, - go to B4
.. a different job with your then employer, - go to B4
.. a job with a different employer, - go to B4
.. working on a self-employed basis? - go to B4

**ASK B3.2a - B3.2e IF RESPONDENT IS NOT CURRENTLY IN PAID WORK AND NOT
WAITING TO TAKE UP A JOB, BUT WAS SELF-EMPLOYED AT TIME OF LAST
APPLICATION**

B3.2a Did you work on your own at the time of your last application for Access to Work or did you
have employees?

On own / with partners but no employees - go to B3 2c
With employees - go to B3.2b

ASK IF SELF-EMPLOYED RESPONDENT HAD EMPLOYEES

B3 2b How many people did you employ?

WRITE IN

(If varied - PROBE in an average week?)

B3 2c In your self-employed activity what was the main job that you did?
PROBE FOR JOB TITLE, OCCUPATION, PROFESSION, ANY SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS NEEDED
FOR JOB - CODE TO STANDARD OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION (SOC 2 digits)

B3 2d How many hours a week did you usually work, including any normal overtime? READ OUT
AND CODE FIRST TO APPLY less than 16,
16 to 29,
. 30 to 39,
. 40 to 49,
50 or more?

B3 2e When you last applied for support from Access to Work, were you applying for support in
connection with
. READ OUT AND CODE FIRST TO APPLY.
.. the work you were actually doing at that time, - go to B4
.. different work on a self-employed basis, - go to B4
a job you were applying for as an employee? - go to B4

ASK IF RESPONDENT IN WORK OR WAITING TO START A JOB

B3 3 When you (applied / last applied) for support from Access to Work, were you applying for
support in connection with (the job you do now /the job you told me you are waiting to start)?
Yes - go to B4
No - go to B3 4

ASK IF (LAST) APPLICATION CONCERNED A DIFFERENT JOB FROM CURRENT ONE

B3 4 When you last applied, was this in connection with . READ OUT AND CODE FIRST TO
APPLY.
CODE ONE ONLY ...a job you applied for but did not get, - go to B4
. a different job with your current employer, - go to B3.12
.. a job with a different employer, - go to B3.5
.. working on a self-employed basis, - go to B4
. OR something else? - go to B4

ASK B3.5- B3.11 IF (LAST) APPLICATION CONCERNED A JOB WITH A DIFFERENT EMPLOYER

B3 5 What kind of organisation did you work for at the time of your most recent application?
SHOW CARD B (or READ OUT if appropriate)
CODE ONE ONLY A private firm or business
Central government or Civil Service
Local government or council
A health authority or NHS trust
A local authority controlled school or college
A university or further education college
Police / fire service
Other public service WRITE IN
A charity, voluntary organisation or trust
Other

B3 6 How many employees were there in total at the place where you worked? That is, at the site.
READ OUT. .
..Less than 15,
. 15 - 49,
..50 - 99,
. 100 - 249,
..250 - 449,
.500 +?
DK

B3 7 In the organisation/firm where you worked, what was the main job that you did at the time of
your most recent application? PROBE FOR JOB TITLE, OCCUPATION, PROFESSION, ANY
SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS NEEDED FOR JOB - CODE TO STANDARD OCCUPATIONAL
CLASSIFICATION (SOC 2 digits)

B3 8 In your job did you supervise or have managerial authority for the work of other people?

Yes
No
DK

B3 9 How many hours a week did you usually work, including any normal overtime? READ OUT
AND CODE FIRST TO APPLY less than 16,

16 to 29,
30 to 39,
40 to 49,
50 or more?

B3 10 Were you working in supported or sheltered employment?

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION EXPLAIN TERMS OF SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT AS
NECESSARY)

Yes - go to B3 11
No - go to B4
DK - go to B4

ASK IF RESPONDENT WORKED IN SUPPORTED/ SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT

B3 11 In what kind of organisation did you work?

Remploy factory/workshop - go to B4
Other factory/workshop - go to B4
Supported placement in an ordinary firm - go to B4
Other - go to B4
DK - go to B4

ASK IF DIFFERENT JOB WITH SAME EMPLOYER

B3 12 What was the main job that you did at the time of your most recent application?

PROBE FOR JOB TITLE, OCCUPATION, PROFESSION, ANY SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS
NEEDED FOR JOB Code to SOC (2 digits)

ASK ALL

B4 How or where did you first hear about Access to Work?

DO NOT READ OUT CODE ALL THAT APPLY

PROMPT Did you hear about it in any other ways?

- Employer/supervisor/manager/human resource manager/occupational health dept at work
- Colleague(s) at work
- Employer at job applied for
- PACT/DST/DEA
- Job Centre
- Other Access to Work user(s)
- GP/practice nurse/hospital consultant/nurse/physiotherapist/chiropractor/acupuncturist/
other medical worker
- Organisation specialising in / supplying equipment or adaptations
- Social services
- Friend/relative
- Charity/organisation for/of disabled people
- Leaflet / newspaper / other media
- College/training organisation/careers adviser
- Other WRITE IN
- Can't recall/DK

ASK ALL

B5 Did you apply for Access to Work round about the time you first heard about it or later on?

When first heard about it
Later on
Can't recall/DK
(Employer applied on behalf of respondent)
(Someone else applied on behalf of respondent (SPECIFY_____))

ASK ALL

- B6 Do you feel that you missed out in any way by not applying for Access to Work before you did?
INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: IF EMPLOYER OR SOMEONE ELSE APPLIED ON
RESPONDENTS BEHALF ASK, " Do you feel that you missed out because the application was
not made earlier?"
Yes - go to B6b
No - go to B7
Can't say - go to B7

ASK IF RESPONDENT MISSED OUT BECAUSE APPLICATION NOT MADE EARLIER

- B6b In what ways do you think that you missed out?
WRITE IN

ASK ALL EXCEPT THOSE WHOSE EMPLOYER OR "SOMEONE ELSE" APPLIED ON THEIR BEHALF

- B7 Thinking now about (when you applied / the last time that you applied) for Access to Work, whose idea was it that you (apply/apply again)?
DO NOT READ OUT CODE ALL THAT APPLY
PROMPT Did anyone else suggest that you apply?
- My own idea to apply
- Employer/ supervisor/manager/human resource manager/occupational health dept at work
- Colleague(s) at work
- Employer at job applied for
- PACT/DST/DEA
- Job Centre
- Other Access to Work user(s)
- GP/practice nurse/hospital consultant/nurse/physiotherapist/chiropractor/acupuncturist/ other medical worker
- Organisation specialising in / supplying equipment or adaptations
- Social services
- Friend/relative
- Charity/organisation for/of disabled people
- Leaflet / newspaper / other media
- College/training organisation/careers adviser
- Other WRITE IN _____)
- Can't recall/DK

ASK ALL

- B8 Access to Work provides many different types of help and support Which ones do you know about?
DO NOT READ OUT CODE ALL THAT APPLY
PROMPT What else? Can you think of any other ways in which Access to Work can help?
- Specially provided equipment or furniture needed to do the job (eg computer, hearing equipment, chair)
- Training to use new equipment
- Alterations to existing equipment needed to do the job, including company vehicles
- Alterations to the building where you work (eg ramp, lift, disabled toilet, widened doorways, lighting)
- Money to make adaptations to your car or van
- Money towards travel to and from work, such as taxi fares
- A support worker to assist you on the job or in getting to/from work
- A personal reader at work for someone who is visually impaired
- A communicator or sign language interpreter at work
- A communicator or sign language interpreter for a job interview
- Information about what is available / can be done to meet requirements at work
- Advice on improvements in the workplace
- Chance to try out equipment or furniture
- Other WRITE IN _____)
- None (known about)

C SUPPORT PROVIDED

ASK ALL
C1 I would now like to ask you about the support provided for you under Access to Work I want to know about support (that relates to) (your current paid employment / the new job you are waiting to start / your most recent paid employment or job interview / you were receiving or applied for earlier this year)

I will read out a list of the types of support available under Access to Work READ OUT CODES a TO j BELOW THEN ASK FOR EACH Is this something ever agreed or arranged for you through Access to Work that is, in relation to (your current paid employment/ your most recent paid employment or job interview / your new job (if waiting to start work)/ the support you were receiving or applied for earlier this year)?

Yes - go to C1 1a
No (never agreed/arranged under Access to Work) - ask about next code

(N B RANDOM ROTATION OF a-d THEN e-j)

a	specially provided equipment/furniture needed to do the job, e g computer, hearing equipment, chair
b	training to use new equipment
c	alterations to existing equipment needed to do the job including company vehicles
d	alterations to the building where you work e g ramp, lift, disabled toilet, widened doorways
e	money to make adaptations to your car or van
f	money towards travel to and from work, such as taxi fares
g	a support worker to assist you on the job or to get to or from work
h	a personal reader at work for someone who is visually impaired
i	a communicator or sign language interpreter at work
j	a communicator or sign language interpreter for a job interview

ASK FOR EACH TYPE OF SUPPORT EVER RECEIVED (EXCEPT CODE j)
C1.1a Can I just check, have all the arrangements agreed for you in the way of ((Type of support codes a – i) – N B SEE GRID BELOW FOR TEXT FILLS TO USE) . READ OUT AND CODE .
...been provided in full,
...are you still waiting for some of them or,
...are you still waiting for all of them to be provided?
...DK/Not sure

ASK IF SUPPORT CODE j EVER RECEIVED
C1.1b Has the communicator or sign language interpreter been provided or are you still waiting?
Been provided
Still waiting
DK/Not sure

ASK IF SUPPORT CODE j NEVER RECEIVED
C1 1c Can I check, have you ever received or applied for help through Access to Work for a communicator or sign language interpreter at a job interview?
Yes
No
DK

ASK IF RESPONDENT HAS MADE MORE THAN ONE APPLICATION AND REPEAT FOR EACH TYPE OF SUPPORT EVER RECEIVED

C2 Can I check, did the (Type of support codes a – j in table below) you mentioned form part of your most recent application for Access to Work?

Yes No DK

Text fills to use for various types of support,

a	equipment or furniture
b	training to use new equipment
c	alterations to existing equipment
d	alterations to the building
e	money to make adaptations to your car or van
f	money towards travel
g	support worker
h	personal reader
i	communicator/sign language interpreter at work
j	communicator/sign language interpreter for a job interview

ASK IF SUPPORT J EVER PROVIDED

C3 How would you rate the arrangements for communicator/sign language interpreter for a job interview for you under Access to Work? Would you say they are .. READ OUT .

- . very poor, - go to C3a
- . poor, - go to C3a
- . fair, - go to C3a
- . good, - go to C4
- . very good - go to C4
- . or excellent? - go to C4
- DK/can't say - go to C4

ASK IF SUPPORT J PROVIDED WAS VERY POOR, POOR OR FAIR

C3a Why do you say that?

WRITE IN

ASK IF RESPONDENT NOT IN PAID WORK AND NOT WAITING TO START A PAID JOB

C4 Thinking of the support you told me that Access to Work provided for you, overall would you say it met your requirements .READ OUT ..

- . completely, - go to filter before C5
- . mostly, - go toC4a
- . a little or - go toC4a
- . not at all? - go toC4a

ASK IF SUPPORT PROVIDED AT C4 MOSTLY, A LITTLE OR NOT AT ALL MET REQUIREMENTS

C4a What else would you have liked to have?

RECORD VERBATIM
THEN GO TO FILTER BEFORE C5

ASK IF RESPONDENT IN PAID WORK AND SUPPORT I PROVIDED IN FULL

C5 You told me that you have a communicator/sign language interpreter at work For how many hours a week do you usually have a communicator/sign language interpreter at work?

WRITE IN

If varies, PROBE for average hours per week.

ASK IF RESPONDENT IN PAID WORK AND SUPPORT i PROVIDED IN FULL

- C6 Is that READ OUT enough hours,
about right,
or not enough?
DK/can't say

ASK IF RESPONDENT IN PAID WORK AND SUPPORT g PROVIDED IN FULL

- C7 You told me that you have a support worker to assist you on the job or to get to and from work
For how many hours a week does your support worker usually support you?
WRITE IN
If varies, PROBE for average hours per week

ASK IF RESPONDENT IN PAID WORK AND SUPPORT g PROVIDED IN FULL

- C8 Is that READ OUT enough hours,
about right,
or not enough?
DK/can't say

ASK IF RESPONDENT IN PAID WORK AND SUPPORT g PROVIDED IN FULL

- C8 1 What does your support worker do?
DO NOT READ OUT CODE ALL THAT APPLY PROMPT Anything else?
Drives me to and from work
Drives me during the working day
Escorts me to and from work (other than driving)
Gives personal care, eg helps me to use the toilet
Shows me how to do the job (a 'jobcoach')
Helps me to speak about problems on the job (an 'advocate')
Does some parts of the job for me (a 'job-aide')
Takes notes during meetings to help me communicate (a 'note-taker')
Reads for me
Other WRITE IN (-----)

ASK IF RESPONDENT IN PAID WORK AND SUPPORT h PROVIDED IN FULL

- C9 You told me that you have a personal reader at work For how many hours a week do you
usually have a personal reader? WRITE IN
If varies, PROBE for average hours per week

ASK IF RESPONDENT IN PAID WORK AND SUPPORT h PROVIDED IN FULL

- C10 Is that . READ OUT . enough hours,
about right,
or not enough?
DK/can't say

ASK IF RESPONDENT IN PAID WORK AND SAE SUPPORT PROVIDED IN FULL

- C11 Thinking about the equipment or furniture provided through Access to Work for your current
paid job, has anything required repair, servicing or replacement?
Yes - go to C12
No - go to C12
Not sure - go to C12

ASK IF RESPONDENT IN PAID WORK AND SAE SUPPORT PROVIDED IN FULL

- C12 Who is responsible for repair, servicing or replacement if required?
DO NOT READ OUT CODE ONE ONLY
Self alone
Employer alone
Both self and employer
Employment Service/PACT/DST
Supplier
Other
Nobody is responsible
Not sure/DK

- ASK IF ANY EQUIPMENT/FURNITURE PROVIDED HAS NEEDED REPAIR**
- C13 When it needs repair, servicing or replacement how does that affect you at work?
DO NOT READ OUT CODE ALL THAT APPLY
PROMPT What else?
- Limits the hours I can work
 - Have to take time off work
 - Can't do the job as well
 - Affects my health / makes my condition worse
 - Prevents my health / condition improving
 - Makes relations with employer / co-workers worse
 - Affects my home life
 - Other WRITE IN (_____)
 - Varies
 - No particular effect (SINGLE CODE)
- ASK IF ANY EQUIPMENT/FURNITURE PROVIDED HAS NEEDED REPAIR**
- C14 Is there any repair, servicing or replacement needed at the moment that hasn't been seen to?
- Yes - go to C14a
 - No - go to C15
- ASK IF ANY EQUIPMENT/FURNITURE NEEDING REPAIR HAS NOT BEEN SEEN TO**
- C14a Why is that?
DO NOT READ OUT CODE ALL THAT APPLY
- Haven't done anything about it myself (yet)
 - Employer hasn't done anything about it (yet)
 - Need for repair, etc. arose only recently
 - I can't afford to pay
 - Employer refuses to do/pay anything
 - Waiting for repair etc to be completed
 - Subject to a current/new AtW application
 - Don't know what to do
 - Not worth repairing, servicing or replacing
 - No longer need the equipment
 - Other (Please specify_____)
- ASK IF RESPONDENT IN PAID WORK AND SAE SUPPORT PROVIDED IN FULL**
- C15 Overall, would you rate the arrangements for the repair, servicing or replacement of the aids and equipment provided under Access to Work as READ OUT .
- . very poor, - go to filter before C16
 - ...poor, - go to filter before C16
 - ...fair, - go to filter before C16
 - ...good, - go to filter before C16
 - .. very good or - go to filter before C16
 - . excellent? - go to filter before C16
 - DK/Can't say - go to filter before C16
- ASK IF RESPONDENT IN PAID WORK AND APE SUPPORT PROVIDED IN FULL**
- C16 Thinking about alterations that have been completed under Access to Work, how would you rate the way they continue to meet your needs READ OUT
- ..very poor, - go to C16a
 - .poor, - go to C16a
 - ..fair, - go to C16a
 - .good, - go to C17
 - very good or - go to C17
 - . excellent? - go to C17
 - Doesn't apply / no longer need /use it - go to C17
 - DK/Can't say - go to C17

ASK IF APE SUPPORT PROVIDED VERY POOR, POOR OR FAIR AT C16

C16a How does that affect you at work?

DO NOT READ OUT CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Limited the hours I could work - *go to C16b*

Had to take time off work - *go to C16b*

Could not do the job as well - *go to C16b*

Affected my health / made my condition worse - *go to C16b*

Prevented my health / condition improving - *go to C16b*

Made relations with employer / co-workers worse - *go to C16b*

Affected my home life - *go to C16b*

Other WRITE IN - *go to C16b*

Varies - *go to C16b*

No particular effect - *go to C17*

ASK IF APE PROVISION AFFECTS WORK

C16b Do you expect these difficulties to be resolved in the near future?

Yes - through Access to Work - *go to C17*

Yes - other source - *go to C17*

No - *go to C16c*

DK /not sure -*go to C16c*

ASK IF DIFFICULTIES CAUSED BY APE PROVISION WILL NOT BE RESOLVED IN NEAR FUTURE

C16c How will it affect you if these difficulties are not resolved in the near future?

WRITE IN

ASK IF RESPONDENT IN PAID WORK

C17 At the moment, do you use any *other* special equipment, assistance or arrangement at work or for getting to or from work? That is, anything that is *not* provided under Access to Work

Yes - *go to C18*

No - *go to C17a*

DK / not sure - *go to C17a*

ASK IF RESPONDENT IN PAID WORK ONLY USES EQUIPMENT/ASSISTANCE PROVIDED THROUGH ATW FOR GETTING TO AND FROM WORK

C17a Thinking of the support that you told me that Access to Work currently provides for you, overall would you say it meets your requirements ... READ OUT. .

.completely, - *go to D1*

mostly, - *go to C17b*

. a little or - *go to C17b*

not at all? - *go to C17b*

ASK IF EQUIPMENT/ASSISTANCE PROVIDED THROUGH ATW ONLY MOSTLY, A LITTLE OR NOT AT ALL MEETS REQUIREMENTS

C17b What else would you like to have?

RECORD VERBATIM

ASK IF RESPONDENT IN PAID WORK USES EQUIPMENT/ASSISTANCE PROVIDED THROUGH ATW AND OTHER EQUIPMENT/ASSISTANCE FOR GETTING TO AND FROM WORK

C18 Thinking of *all* the special equipment, assistance or arrangements you have, including Access to Work, overall would you say it meets your requirements . . READ OUT AND CODE FIRST TO APPLY. .

.completely, - *go to D1*

.mostly, - *go to C18a*

. a little or - *go to C18a*

not at all? - *go to C18a*

ASK IF ALL EQUIPMENT/ASSISTANCE USED ONLY MOSTLY, A LITTLE OR NOT AT ALL MEETS REQUIREMENTS

C18a What else would you like to have?

RECORD VERBATIM

D DISABILITY SERVICE

ASK ALL

- D1 Access to Work is run by Disability Service Teams which are part of the Employment Service Disability Service Teams used to be called PACTs. I now want to ask your views about how your (IF 2+ APPLICATIONS most recent) application for Access to Work was dealt with by your Disability Service Team. Do you know, who was the person who *mainly* dealt with your (IF 2+ APPLICATIONS most recent) application?
CODE ONE ONLY PROMPT Was it

a Disability Employment Adviser (DEA),
a Disability Services / PACT Adviser,
other (specify)

Can't recall who it was - go to E1

Had no dealings with DEA/DST/PACT/etc - go to E1

IF MENTIONS MORE THAN ONE PERSON, PROMPT: Please think about the person you had most contact with. IF RESPONDENT USES THE PERSON'S NAME, WRITE IN - DO NOT ASK FOR NAME

ASK IF DEA, DST/PACT ADVISOR OR OTHER MAINLY DEALT WITH MOST RECENT APPLICATION

- D2 Thinking about how this person / DEA / Disability Services / PACT Adviser / name dealt with your (most recent) Access to Work application, how would you rate...READ OUT STATEMENTS THEN ANSWERS - CODE FOR EACH STATEMENT

(RANDOM ORDER FOR STATEMENTS)

- . their knowledge and understanding of what you need?
- . their attention to what you say and the questions you raise?
- . their explanation of the options to meet your needs?
- . their readiness to keep you informed of decisions and what happens next?
- . the effort they put into making sure you get what you need?

Is it...

...very poor,

...poor,

.. fair,

..good

..very good or
excellent?

DK/ Can't say

ASK IF DEA, DST/PACT ADVISOR OR OTHER MAINLY DEALT WITH MOST RECENT APPLICATION

- D3 When you met this person to discuss your requirements, how satisfied were you with the privacy of your discussions? .. READ OUT AND CODE FIRST TO APPLY.

Completely satisfied,

Mostly,

a little or

not at all?

Did not meet

ASK IF DEA, DST/PACT ADVISOR OR OTHER MAINLY DEALT WITH MOST RECENT APPLICATION

- D4 Had you any dealings with the person who mainly dealt with your application *before* you (last) applied for Access to Work?

Yes - go to D4a

No - go to D5

Can't recall - go to D5

ASK IF RESPONDENT HAD DEALINGS WITH DEA/PACT ADVISOR BEFORE LAST APPLICATION

- D4a Why was that?
CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Was my DEA

Dealt with previous Access to Work application

Other reason (specify _____)

ASK IF RESPONDENT HAS EVER RECEIVED ANY SUPPORT a - j

D5 Has this person or someone else from the Disability Service Team / PACT contacted you since you received your last Access to Work provision to check if your requirements were met?

Yes - go to D5a

No - go to D5d

Can't recall/DK - go to D5d

ASK IF RESPONDENT CONTACTED BY DST/PACT SINCE LAST PROVISION

D5a Did they contact you
CODE ALL THAT APPLY

..in writing? - go to D5ai

..by phone? - go to D5bi

..by visiting you? - go to D5b

ASK IF RESPONDENT CONTACTED IN WRITING OR BY PHONE BY DST/PACT

D5ai Would you have liked them to visit you?

Yes

No

DK/ Can't say

ASK IF RESPONDENT CONTACTED BY DST/PACT SINCE LAST PROVISION

D5b How long after you received the support did they first contact you?

Within one month

Between one and two months

More than two months

Can't recall

ASK IF RESPONDENT CONTACTED BY DST/PACT WITHIN ONE MONTH, 1-2 MONTHS OR 2+ MONTHS AFTER RECEIPT OF SUPPORT

D5c Would you have liked them to have got in touch earlier?

Yes - go to D5ci

No - go to E1

DK - go to E1

ASK IF RESPONDENT WOULD HAVE LIKED TO BE CONTACTED EARLIER

D5ci Why would you have liked them to get in touch earlier?

WRITE IN THEN GO TO E1

ASK IF RESPONDENT NOT CONTACTED BY DST/PACT SINCE LAST PROVISION

D5d Would you have liked someone to get in touch with you?

Yes - go to D5di

No - go to E1

DK - go to E1

ASK IF RESPONDENT WOULD LIKED TO HAVE BEEN CONTACTED

D5di Why do you say you would have liked them to get in touch with you?

WRITE IN

E SPECIALIST ADVICE

ASK IF RESPONDENT'S ONLY/MOST RECENT SUPPORT AGREED/ARRANGED IS a - e
E1 Can I check, did the person who dealt with your application arrange for you to see someone else for special advice?

Yes - go to E2

No - go to F1

DK - go to F1

ASK IF RESPONDENT SAW SOMEONE FOR SPECIAL ADVICE
E2 Was this advice on... SHOW CARD C (or READ OUT if appropriate)
CODE ALL THAT APPLY

- A Furniture or equipment to make you physically comfortable at your work
(such as a chair, writing slope or a special keyboard)
- B Technological or computer-based aids
(such as Braille printer, scanner, large-size monitor, voice activated computer)
- C Equipment for people who are deaf or hard of hearing
(such as text telephone, telephone adaptations, loop microphone, hearing aid)
- D Aids for getting around in the workplace
(such as a wheelchair)
- E Adaptations to your own car
(including a car obtained from Motability)
- F Other (specify_____)

ASK FOR EACH TYPE OF SPECIAL ADVICE RECEIVED BY RESPONDENT
E3 Thinking about the person or persons who advised you on (type of advice), how would you rate...

READ OUT EACH STATEMENT THEN CODE ANSWER

(RANDOM ORDER)

- . their knowledge and understanding of what you need?
- . their attention to what you say and the questions you raise?
- . their explanation of the options to meet your needs?
- . their advice on what is most suitable for you?
- . the effort they put into making sure you get what you need?

Was it .

- .very poor,
- ...poor,
- ...fair,
- ...good,
- ...very good or
- ...excellent?
- DK/Can't say

F EMPLOYERS

ASK IF RESPONDENT AN EMPLOYEE AT TIME OF APPLICATION

- F1 I would now like to ask you some questions about your employer's involvement. Thinking about your (last) application for Access to Work, in which of these ways was your employer involved?
SHOW CARD D (READ OUT if appropriate) CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Putting you in touch with Access to Work
Agreeing what was needed
Arranging, ordering or installing what was needed
Recruiting your reader or support worker
Purchasing or contributing towards the costs
Arranging training or instruction
Checking that the support provided met your requirements
Taking responsibility for repair, maintenance or upgrading
Something else (specify _____)
Not involved at all (SINGLE CODE)

ASK IF RESPONDENT AN EMPLOYEE AT TIME OF APPLICATION

- F2 Did any problems arise from your employer's involvement or lack of involvement?
Yes - go to F2a
No - go to F3

ASK IF PROBLEMS AROSE BECAUSE OF EMPLOYER'S INVOLVEMENT

- F2a What was the main problem?
WRITE IN

ASK IF RESPONDENT'S EMPLOYER WAS INVOLVED

- F3 Overall, would you rate your employer's involvement as .
READ OUT AND CODE FIRST TO APPLY.

. very poor,
. poor,
. fair,
. good,
. very good or
. excellent?
DK/can't say

G TIME TAKEN FOR SUPPORT TO BE PROVIDED

ASK G1 – G3a FOR SUPPORT a – i IF EITHER:

- **RESPONDENT HAS MADE ONLY ONE ATW APPLICATION AND ANY OF SUPPORTS a – i HAVE BEEN PROVIDED IN FULL/PARTIALLY**
- **RESPONDENT HAS MADE MORE THAN ONE APPLICATION AND ANY OF SUPPORT a – i HAVE BEEN PROVIDED IN FULL/PARTIALLY FOLLOWING MOST RECENT APPLICATION**

REPEAT FOR ALL SUPPORT a – i FITTING ABOVE FILTER

AND ASK G1 – G3a FOR SUPPORT j IF:

- **RESPONDENT HAS MADE ONLY ONE ATW APPLICATION AND SUPPORT j HAS BEEN PROVIDED**
- **RESPONDENT HAS MADE MORE THAN ONE APPLICATION AND SUPPORT j HAS BEEN PROVIDED FOLLOWING MOST RECENT APPLICATION**

G1 (ADD IN FIRST TIME ONLY I would like to ask you now about the time taken for support to be provided) You told me earlier that you applied for (. SUPPORT a – i) in (MONTH /YEAR) When was that actually provided? That is, when was what you required in place?

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION; IF RESPONDENT SAYS MORE THAN ONE ITEM IN SUPPORT AND THAT DATES VARY: PROMPT: What was the date when the *last* item of support was provided?

IF NECESSARY PROMPT RECALL BY USING CALENDAR – USE BEST ESTIMATE

Year (RANGE 1994-2000)

Month (RANGE 01-12)

Date (RANGE 01-31)

ALLOW DKs

G1a Can I just check, about how many (INTERVIEWER ASK AS APPROPRIATE days/weeks/months/years) would you say it took from when you applied for (SUPPORT a - j) to when the support was provided?

IF NECESSARY PROMPT RECALL BY USING CALENDAR – USE BEST ESTIMATE

Years

Months

Weeks

Days

ALLOW DKs

G2 Can I check, were you told how long to expect, that is the time it would take from when you applied to the support being provided? (IF YES How long were you told?)

Yes - WRITE IN number of days/weeks/months - go to G3

No - go to G3

Can't recall - go to G3

G3 How do you rate the time it took for the support to be provided?

READ OUT AND CODE FIRST TO APPLY Was it

...very poor, - go to G3a

..poor, - go to G3a

fair, - go to G3a

..good, - go to G3a

. very good or - go to G3a

. excellent? - go to G3a

DK/can't say - go to G3a

ASK ALL

- G3a To what extent did you feel informed about progress (with getting what you required)?
- Completely,
 - Mostly,
 - a little or
 - not at all?
 - DK/ Can't say

ASK G4 – G7a IF RESPONDENT WAITING FOR SOME/WAITING FOR ALL OF SUPPORT a-i TO BE PROVIDED. REPEAT FOR EACH SUPPORT WAITING FOR

- G4 Earlier you told me that you are still waiting for (SUPPORT a - i). Can I check, were you told how long to expect, that is the time it would take from when you applied to the support being provided?

Yes *WRITE IN number of weeks/months - go to G4a*
No - *go to G5*
Can't recall - *go to G5*

ASK IF RESPONDENT TOLD HOW LONG WAIT WOULD BE

- G4a So far, has it taken longer than you were told?
- Yes
 - No
 - DK

- G5 How do you rate the time it has taken so far for the support to be provided? **.READ OUT AND CODE FIRST TO APPLY**

..very poor,
- poor,
fair,
good,
..very good or
..excellent?
DK/can't say

- G6 To what extent do you feel informed about progress (with getting what you required)?
- Completely,
 - Mostly,
 - a little or
 - not at all?
 - DK/ can't say

- G7 Have any temporary arrangements been made while you wait for the support to be provided?
- Yes - *go to G7a*
 - No - *go to G8*

ASK IF TEMPORARY ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE WHILE RESPONDENT WAITS FOR PROVISION OF SUPPORT

- G7a How do you rate these temporary arrangements? **.. READ OUT AND CODE FIRST TO APPLY**

very poor,
..poor,
fair,
- .good,
very good or
..excellent?
DK/can't say

ASK G8 – G8a IF EITHER

- **RESPONDENT HAS MADE ONLY ONE ATW APPLICATION AND ANY OF SUPPORTS a, c, d, e HAVE EVER BEEN PROVIDED IN FULL/PARTIALLY AND RESPONDENT RATED TIME TAKEN (SO FAR) TO PROVIDE SUPPORTS a, c, d, e AS VERY POOR, POOR OR FAIR**
- **RESPONDENT HAS MADE MORE THAN ONE APPLICATION AND ANY OF SUPPORT a, c, d, e HAVE BEEN PROVIDED IN FULL/PARTIALLY FOLLOWING *MOST RECENT APPLICATION* AND RESPONDENT RATED TIME TAKEN (SO FAR) TO PROVIDE SUPPORTS a, c, d, e AS VERY POOR, POOR OR FAIR**

G8 Can you tell me, what items of equipment or alterations took / are taking longer
WRITE IN ALL

G8a In your opinion why is this?
WRITE IN

ASK G9 – G10 IF EITHER

- **RESPONDENT HAS MADE ONLY ONE ATW APPLICATION AND ANY OF SUPPORTS f, g, h, i HAVE EVER BEEN PROVIDED IN FULL/PARTIALLY AND RESPONDENT RATED TIME TAKEN (SO FAR) TO PROVIDE SUPPORTS f, g, h, i, AS VERY POOR, POOR OR FAIR**
- **RESPONDENT HAS MADE MORE THAN ONE APPLICATION AND ANY OF SUPPORT f, g, h, i HAVE BEEN PROVIDED IN FULL/PARTIALLY FOLLOWING *MOST RECENT APPLICATION* AND RESPONDENT RATED TIME TAKEN (SO FAR) TO PROVIDE SUPPORTS f, g, h, i AS VERY POOR, POOR OR FAIR**

G9 In your opinion, why did your support take longer / why is it taking longer?
WRITE IN

G10 How did the support taking longer to arrive affect your work?
DO NOT READ OUT **CODE ALL THAT APPLY**
Could not/cannot start job until support was provided
Could not/ cannot return to job until support was provided
Could not /cannot do the job as well as required/preferred
Could not work as many hours as required/preferred
Could not work as quickly/effectively as required/preferred
Could not get to work at all
Could not get to work as easily/quickly
Lost my job
Unable to attend interview at arranged time
Lost job offer
Affected my health / made my condition worse
Prevented my health / condition improving
Made relations with employer / co-worker worse
Affected my home life
Other **WRITE IN**
Not at all
No particular effect

H OVERVIEW OF ACCESS TO WORK

ASK ALL

H1 I now want to ask your overall opinion of Access to Work based on your experience of using it
Overall, how would you rate Access to Work .READ OUT AND CODE FIRST TO APPLY

very poor,
poor,
fair,
good,
very good or
...excellent?
DK/Can't say

ASK ALL

H2 In your view, to what extent has support from Access to Work enabled you to work?
ONE CODE ONLY

Could not work without it - go to H2a
A great deal - go to H2a
Quite a lot - go to H2a
Not much - go to H2a
Not at all - go to H2a
DK - go to I1

ASK IF RESPONDENT GIVES ANSWER OTHER THAN DK AT H2

H2a Why do you say that?

RECORD VERBATIM

I BACKGROUND INFORMATION

INTERVIEWER CODE

I1 Gender
Male
Female

ASK ALL

I2 May I ask, which of these age bands are you in. .

. 16-24,
. 25-44,
. 45-64,
..65 plus?
Refused

ASK ALL

I3 To which of these groups do you consider you belong?
SHOW CARD E (or READ OUT if appropriate)

White – British	Pakistani
White – Irish	Bangladeshi
Black Caribbean	Chinese
Black African	Any other group including mixed
Black other	SPECIFY _____
Indian	Prefer not to say

ASK ALL

- 14 People who apply for Access to Work often have a long-term health problem, disability or impairment When you (ADD IF MORE THAN ONE APPLICATION = YES last) applied for support under Access to Work, what was your health problem, disability or impairment?
CODE ALL THAT APPLY

PROMPT What else?

PROMPT For example, were you taking any medicine or tablets for nerves? (if anxiety, depression, phobia or other nervous illness not already mentioned)

Problems or disabilities (including arthritis or rheumatism) connected with the arms or hands

Problems or disabilities (including arthritis or rheumatism) connected with the legs or feet

Problems or disabilities (including arthritis or rheumatism) connected with the back or neck

Difficulty in seeing

Difficulty in hearing

Severe disfigurement

Skin conditions, allergies

Chest or breathing problems, asthma, bronchitis

Heart, blood pressure or blood circulation problems

Stomach, liver kidney or digestive problems

Diabetes

Anxiety, depression, phobia or other nervous illness (PLEASE

SPECIFY _____)

Epilepsy

Specific learning difficulties (excluding dyslexia)

Dyslexia

Severe learning difficulties (mental handicap)

Progressive illness not included elsewhere (eg cancer not included elsewhere, multiple sclerosis, symptomatic HIV, Parkinson's disease, muscular dystrophy)

Other health problems or disabilities (PLEASE SPECIFY _____)

ASK ALL

- 15 The Employment Service has asked for this survey to see if the Access to Work Programme can be improved Is there anything else you would like to say about Access to Work?
WRITE IN

ASK ALL

- 16 Thank you very much for your help. The Employment Service may want another study about Access to Work in the future If so, would you be willing to take part?
Yes
No

ASK IF RESPONDENT WILLING TO TAKE PART IN FUTURE ATW STUDY

- 16a Do you give your permission for your details to be given to a researcher so that they can contact you about taking part in another study about Access to Work?
Yes, permission given
No, permission refused

THANK AND END

ENDNOTE

1 At: A7, B3.1f, B3.10

Interviewers were instructed to explain follows

'Supported and sheltered employment are terms in common use to describe a variety of paid employment provision for severely disabled people who can work but who are unlikely, because of their limited productivity, to get and keep jobs in open or mainstream employment without some support. Employment is in supported placements with firms, or in workshops or factories specially for disabled people '

HA/SP

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E-mail ha4@york.ac.uk

[Date]



Dear []

Users' views of Access to Work

The Employment Service has asked the Social Policy Research Unit at the University of York to carry out a study of users' views of the Access to Work programme. You recently took part in an interview as part of a large national survey carried out on our behalf by a survey company called Ipsos-RSL. We are very grateful for your contribution.

In that interview you said that you would be prepared to take part in further research on Access to Work and you agreed to your name being passed to a researcher. I am writing to you now to ask if you are willing to talk to us in more depth about your opinions of Access to Work. We are especially interested in understanding why users rate some aspects of the service more highly than others. The aim of the research is to help the Employment Service to improve the Access to Work service, so it is very important to understand more about what matters to its users.

The interview will take no longer than 90 minutes. I will telephone you in the next few days to tell you more about it and answer any questions you may have. We can then arrange to meet at a time and place that is convenient for you. Of course, I will quite understand if you do not wish to take part on this occasion.

As a small token of thanks for their help everyone who takes part will be offered a gift of £15

Continued/...

.../2

Please note that the Social Policy Research Unit is an independent research organisation and not part of the Employment Service. The information you give us will be treated as strictly confidential and nobody outside the research team will know who has taken part. Our research report for the Employment Service will be written so that no individual can be identified. We will send a short summary of the findings to everyone who takes part in this part of the research.

I look forward to 'phoning you soon. If you have any questions in the meantime, you may contact me on 01904 432626 (Voice or Text) or e-mail me at ha4@york.ac.uk. If you wish to ask the Employment Service about the research directly you may contact Leroy Groves, Research and Development, on 0114 259 6216 or e-mail leroy.groves@employment.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Hilary Arksey
Research Fellow

Access to Work is a programme for people with long-term health conditions or impairments who need extra practical support to do their jobs or take up work. The programme helps towards the costs of three main types of support: environmental aids and adaptations in the workplace, human support, and fares for travel to work.

As part of a review of the programme, the Employment Service commissioned the Social Policy Research Unit and Ipsos-RSL to carry out a study of users' views and experiences of Access to Work. The study comprised a national survey conducted between late July and mid September 2000 and a qualitative follow-up study. A small panel of users advised on aspects of the study design.

The report covers users' opinions of the service provided by Disability Service staff and specialist advisers, and opinions of their employers' role. The research also explored users' experiences of and views on speed of provision and follow-up contact. Users' overall opinions of Access to Work are reported, including their ratings of its appropriateness in meeting their work-related needs and usefulness in enabling them to work. Throughout, the report comments on differences in opinion according to the characteristics of users, their employment situation and the support they receive from Access to Work.

The final chapter of the report, drawing on the qualitative elements of the study, outlines factors for the Employment Service to consider in constructing a self-completion questionnaire for Access to Work users.

All reports and their summaries are available from

Research Management
Employment Service
Research and Development
Level 2, Rockingham House
123 West Street, Sheffield, S1 4ER

Tel 0114 259 6217
Fax 0114 259 6463
red.es.rh@gt.net.gov.uk

This Report is also available in Braille and Large Print formats upon request.
Note: all WAE publications are available free of charge.
However this policy is under review and the position may change.

Report Ref ESR 72, March 2001