



Autumn 2013 Newsletter

Office Address: Harrison House 10 Harrison Road Halifax HX1 2AF

TEL HX 346040 & 346950 FAX 322338

Email: calderdaledart@hotmail.co.uk

Website: www.calderdaledart.org.uk

Telephone & reception opening hours Monday, Tuesday Thursday 10 am to 4pm.

Wednesdays & Fridays office appointments only, by arrangement

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter we hope you find it useful and informative.

Funding news

Our Transition Funding from Calderdale Council funding came to an end on 30th September. We have recently been successful with an application to the Economic Fighting Fund to deliver an 'Early Intervention Service' for a 6 month period which commenced on 1st October.

The funding will enable us to deliver a service for a 6 month period to the end of March 2013. This service will be to assist vulnerable clients with ESA/AA/PIP application forms in the hope that through receiving advice at an early stage in the process, they will be less likely to have their claims rejected than if they received no help. Therefore we will be targeting our service to the most vulnerable clients e.g. those with learning disabilities; mental health problems; sensory impairments and those with severe physical health problems. The limited amount of funding will mean that we will not be able to help everyone and we may need to offer self-help resources to some clients or signpost clients to other services.

The current proposals for welfare reform are planned to continue until 2020.

And whilst we appreciate the continuing financial support we have just received from Calderdale Council, the planned changes will mean our client group will need ongoing support for the foreseeable future. For our client group the major changes that will affect them are those around the transfer from Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to Personal Independent Payments (PIP); Universal Credit; the "bedroom tax", and the proposals that council tax assistance be reduced for all claimants. There will also be issues around changes in care charges for many of our client group.

In August we received a decision on our lottery 'Reaching Communities' application. The decision was not to offer us a grant for our project. We were told that at the panel meeting we

were recommended for funding but there were 87 bids, seeking in excess of £24.7 million and as they only had £10.5 million available to spend and that they had to make difficult decisions and were only able to support those applications that best demonstrated the strongest fit with their criteria. We were told that there was nothing to stop us resubmitting our application in the future although the assessment process is changing shortly. This would involve a more detailed first stage application with fewer applications going to the second stage but those that did would have a much better chance of success than the current 1 in 3 success rate.

We continue to deliver our cancer support service funded by the Calderdale & Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust and we now deliver a 6 hour per week advice service to the Calderdale Carers Project for an 18 month period.

Advice Quality Standard

Our current certification is due to expire in November and we have started the process of renewal. An audit visit is to take place in December. The cost of the audit is over £1,000 + VAT. Having the Quality Mark is essential for DART, as some funders including the Council make it a Funding requirement.

Safeguarding policy

Tracey McWhire from Voluntary Action Calderdale recently attended a DART meeting to advise us on a safeguarding policy for DART along with a whistle blowing policy and a Disclosure of Offences statement. Tracy has also offered training to all DART staff and Trustees and this is due to take place on Wednesday 6th November at VAC.

Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

Jo Bolland from VAC also attended a recent DART meeting to offer advice on the process of DART becoming a CIO. We had previously been looking at becoming a limited company but this new structure was felt to be more appropriate to our needs. Much of the new Constitution is a standard requirement of the Charity Commission. Jo has offered to help DART with the application process. Our thanks go to Jo and Tracy for their support.

The new minister for disabled people

Mike Penning, the Conservative MP for Hemel Hempstead, was until recently the minister responsible for trying to persuade politicians in Northern Ireland to accept the coalition's controversial programme of welfare cuts and reforms. But he has now replaced Esther McVey, who after just a year in the post is promoted to employment minister, another key role for disabled people and one which includes responsibility for the much-criticised work capability assessment (WCA). She replaces her Tory colleague Mark Hoban, who has been sacked.

In early October Esther McVey told Disability News Service (DNS) that she would not rule out scrapping the Work Capability Assessment if there was proof that it had fallen below a certain standard.

In Labour's reshuffle, Anne McGuire has been replaced as shadow minister for disabled people by Kate Green, former chief executive of the Child Poverty Action Group, a long-standing campaigner on employment and social justice, and a former member of the Commons work and pensions committee.

Liam Byrne, who was disliked by many disabled activists for seeming to mirror the hard-line coalition stance on social security, has been replaced as shadow work and pension's secretary by Leeds West MP Rachel Reeves, a former economist and one of the party's rising stars, who was only elected for the first time in 2010.

Liz Sayce, chief executive of Disability Rights UK, said she hoped Penning would work cross-government "to make sure that skills, employment, education, social care and equality are pulled together to make a difference to disabled people's lives".

She added: "I hope the new minister will meet disabled people and disabled people's organisations and grasp the really important agenda which is about independent living and participation and not letting the clock turn back."

But Linda Burnip, co-founder of DPAC, said: "Penning seems to be yet another minister for disabled people foisted onto us who has very limited experience of disability issues and of having shown interest in them.

"His opposition to same-sex marriages will serve to add to the concerns of the LGBT [lesbian gay bisexual transgender] disability community."

(-Disability News Service 10 October 2013-)

Personal budgets

Buying social care for adults

A Personal Budget is a regular sum of money that can be used to buy the social care you need. Asking for a Personal Budget will help you to:

- ❖ Say what your needs are
- ❖ Make choices that are right for you
- ❖ Say how and when you want your care and support
- ❖ Choose how the money will be spent
- ❖ To meet your personal and social needs.

You may be able to have a Personal Budget if you are:

- A person with a physical disability
- A person with a sensory impairment
- A person with a learning disability

A person who is over 65
A person with mental health support needs
A young person with a disability moving into Adult Care
A parent carer of a disabled child

To make sure we provide help fairly the Government has set levels of need that you must have to get social care from the Council.

This information does not apply to people under the age of 18. The Council's Children and Young People's Services may be able to help people under the age of 18.

Simple steps to getting a Personal Budget

Gateway to Care:

Contact Gateway to Care on **0845 11 11 103**

The Gateway to Care advisor will talk about what your needs are. We may ask you to try Reablement to help you to regain your independence before using a Personal Budget. This can take up to eight weeks and there may be a charge for this service. If, after Reablement, you still need help we will continue with your application for a Personal Budget.

The "My Outcomes" Form:

When you apply for a Personal Budget you will be asked to fill in a My Outcomes form. This will help you to look at and tell us what areas of your life you would like to be better. It covers all areas of how you live, such as your personal care needs, keeping safe and being part of your community.

Your friends and family can help you to complete the My Outcomes form. If you have a social care worker they can help too. We will use the answers you give to check if you are able to have a Personal Budget.

Money:

You may have to make a contribution towards your Personal Budget. To make sure this is as little as possible we will arrange for someone from the Council's Fairer Charging Team to visit you at home to offer you a benefits check and financial assessment.

Support Plan:

If we are able to give you a Personal Budget we will help you to make a Support Plan. The Support Plan will set out how your Personal Budget will be spent to meet your social care needs.

GPs to be paid £33 when they complete the new Personal Independence Payment (PIP) report form

The report form will be used by GPs where someone has claimed PIP and the Department for Work and Pensions requests further information about the claimant in addition to the Health Care Professional's report.

The report asks about the claimant's:

- Disabling conditions
- Medical history
- Symptoms and variability of condition
- Relevant clinical findings
- Treatment and prognosis
- Effects of the disabling condition on day to day life

Personal Independence Payment update

The Government recently held a consultation on the PIP 'Moving Around' assessment criteria. All the responses received are being carefully considered before the Government makes a decision about whether changes to the criteria are necessary. The DWP are therefore delaying the start of natural reassessment for existing working age DLA recipients by three weeks to 28 October, to give the Government more time to consider.

From 28 October, claimants approaching age 16, those who report a change in their health condition or disability or those whose fixed term award is due to expire will be asked to claim PIP rather than DLA. The same applies to existing DLA claimants who want to claim PIP rather than wait for the Department to contact them.

Audio Recording of WCA assessments

The DWP has produced frequently asked questions (FAQ) on the audio recording of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) Work Capability Assessments

The FAQ states that:

You do not have a legal right to have your face-to-face assessment recorded but all requests will be accommodated where possible.

You should always request audio recording in advance.

You must sign a consent form.

If recording equipment is not available you may have to wait longer than normal for their face-to-face assessment. Although this may slow down the benefit process it will not effect your entitlement to benefit.

You can request to have a home based assessment recorded.

You may be allowed to use your own recording equipment providing you give DWP/Atos notice and it meets DWP/Atos Healthcare requirements. This includes providing two copies of the recording in such a way to ensure that the recording has not been tampered with and is a reliable and accurate record of the assessment.

Approved recording media are standard CD and audio tapes only. Video recording of assessments is not permitted.

If you are caught making a secret recording your assessment will be terminated.

Any recording made will not form part of your benefit claim records. Copy recordings will not be returned to the DWP with case papers or be considered as part of the initial decision making

process. Recordings will be stored securely by Atos Healthcare for a period of 14 months after which time they will be destroyed.

You can ask a Tribunal to consider a recording as additional evidence during an appeal. The acceptance of the recording as evidence is at the discretion of the Tribunal.

There are no plans to offer audio recording to PIP claimants. The Department intends to look closely at the Employment and Support Allowance experience and is evaluating the impact of audio recording, before taking any decisions on whether to include it as part of the PIP process in the longer-term.

Information about audio recording is available on the [Atos Healthcare](#) (*right click and open hyperlink*) website for claimants who wish to have their face-to-face assessment recorded. DWP and Atos Healthcare will also amend written communications with claimants to provide more information about the recording facility and how to request a recorded assessment.



Thank you for supporting our organisation; since we joined local giving we have raised approximately £4,000

Your support is important to us so we want to tell you about Localgiving.com, the fundraising website we use.

Donating to us through Localgiving.com lets you claim Gift Aid*, giving us an additional 25% at no extra cost to you!

Sponsored by the Office for Civil Society, Grow Your Tenner 2013 begins at 10am on Tuesday, October 15.

Local Giving will double all donations up to £10, so a tenner becomes £20, or £22.50 with Gift Aid. And on monthly donations, they will double up to £10 a month for six months.

Grow Your Tenner 2013 runs until all £500,000 has been allocated.

The campaign is open to all eligible charities in England on the Localgiving.com website.

To make a donation to Calderdale DART on or after 15th October you can go to our website www.calderdaledart.org.uk and click on the top of any page which shows the make a donation banner or go to: <https://localgiving.com/charity/calderdale-dart> (*right click and open hyperlink*)

Or visit any page on our website and click on the "make a donation" banner

Thanks again for your generosity and support. We hope you'll continue to support us through Localgiving.com

Housing advice

The Housing Options Service, based at Doorways, offers free and confidential advice to anyone who has housing problems, or who is homeless or threatened with homelessness.

There is an experienced team of housing advisers who can advise on a range of housing issues including:

- Rent and mortgage arrears
- Benefits
- Rights of landlords and tenants
- Local housing options
- Possession proceedings
- Relationship breakdown
- Domestic violence
- Applications for social housing (Pennine Housing 2000 and other housing associations)

Who can use the service?

Anyone who is over the age of 16 can approach the Housing Options Service with any housing related problem.

How to access the help you need

Visit the Housing Options Service at Doorways, 18-20 The Square, Woolshops, Halifax, HX1 1RJ.

If you have a problem that needs urgent attention, we will see you normally within the same day. Alternatively, we will arrange an appointment for you at a time to suit you.

If you are homeless or threatened with homelessness, we will see you on the same day you contact us. Depending on your circumstances, we will refer you to the Temporary Accommodation and Support Service team or to a hostel.

Temporary accommodation and support

The Temporary Accommodation and Support Service team provides accommodation for those who are and who, it is believed, may be eligible for assistance with temporary accommodation under homelessness legislation. Before accommodation can be provided a homeless person must be interviewed by an adviser at Doorways. For more information, contact the Housing Options Service on 01422 392460. E-mail doorways@calderdale.gov.uk

Drop-in times

Day	Times
Monday	10am - 12.30pm
Wednesday	10am - 12.30pm
Friday	10am - 12.30pm

Council can spy on support spending thanks to new 'gold card' accounts

By John Pring- Disability News service

Disabled people who receive direct payments to pay for their support have been forced to close their bank accounts and transfer their funding to new accounts controlled by their local council. York council is now able to spy on every spending decision a service-user makes, and intervene if they see expenditure they do not like showing up in their new Cashplus account. The Cashplus accounts come with a debit card – known as the “gold card” – that allows a disabled person to pay for services such as their personal assistant.

But if the council sees funding allocated to the personal budget not being used – for example, because someone is saving up funds to spend on a one-off trip that requires extra support – it can withdraw the excess funds directly from the account, without asking permission.

The first gold cards were issued in June, and from this month (October) all service-users who manage their own direct payments have been moved onto the new accounts.

Although the council claims there “is no difference to how traditional direct payments work”, it admits that each account “is opened by the council, and the council has full rights to view transactions”. Andy Pollin, treasurer of York People First, who lives independently and employs his own personal assistant, is one of those who have been forced to open a gold card account. He has looked after his own support funding for 10 years, filling in his own time-sheets and writing his own cheques, and has enjoyed the independence and control it has given him. He said: “This makes me really, really mad. It is taking my independence away from me. It is not very good for people with learning difficulties. I am just worried about the gold card if it happens to anyone else.”

Pollin said he had previously been able to save up his hours after his personal assistant quit unexpectedly, and then travel to Spain to see a friend with the support funding he saved. He believes this is the kind of choice he and other disabled people will not be able to make in the future. Pollin has written to the council to complain about the loss of choice and independence. He said: “It’s wrong. You need to ask a person with learning difficulties if it is alright [to look at their account]. “It is really upsetting what is going on, it’s frustrating. If it happens to me, it might happen to my other friends who have learning difficulties as well.”

A council spokeswoman said in a statement: “There is no change to the control that people have on the support they use to meet their eligible needs.

“As before, the support plan and outcomes to be met will be agreed with care managers. The change is to the bank account.” But she admitted there had been no public consultation process before the new accounts were introduced.

She said: “We were asked by our auditors to move to a more robust system for monitoring the use of public money. “Throughout our communications with residents, we have asked them to let us know if they would have problems with the new system and have worked with residents and care managers to respond to their comments, concerns and questions. We will continue to do this.”

The council has so far failed to respond to repeated attempts to provide more clarity on its position.



The Motability Scheme enables disabled people to use their government-funded mobility allowance to lease a new car, scooter or powered wheelchair. In fact, since the Scheme was set up in 1978, Motability has helped over 3 million people get mobile with a brand new vehicle.

Scheme benefits

There are currently over 620,000 people enjoying the benefits of Motability. The following are included in our worry-free package:

- A brand new car, powered wheelchair or scooter every three years, or Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) every five years
- Insurance, servicing and maintenance
- Full breakdown assistance
- Annual tax disc sent to you in the post
- Replacement tyres (and batteries for scooters and wheelchairs)
- Windscreen repair or replacement
- 60,000 mileage allowance over three years for cars; 100,000 for WAVs
- Many adaptations at no extra cost
- Two named drivers for your car

The Motability Scheme is directed and overseen by Motability, a national charity that also raises funds and provides financial assistance to customers who would otherwise be unable to afford the mobility solution they need.

Motability Operations is a not-for-profit company responsible for the finance, administration and maintenance of Motability cars, scooters and powered wheelchairs.

Contact details:

City Gate House, 22 Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HB

Bristol Park House, 610 Bristol Business Park, Coldharbour Lane, Bristol, BS16 1EJ

Phone our customer services team on **0845 456 4566**

Website <http://www.motability.co.uk/> (right click open hyperlink)

One-off transitional support for customers who lose eligibility to remain on the Motability Scheme

Since 2010, Motability has maintained a close dialogue with DWP as they developed their plans for the introduction of PIP through a number of public consultations. Over the last two years, Motability has also consulted disability organisations including Disability Rights UK, Disabled Motoring UK and groups representing customers with specific impairments, as well as undertaking considerable research with our own customers, to discuss what help would

be most useful for those customers who are no longer eligible to use the Scheme. We are very grateful to all of the organisations and individuals who have helped us in developing and prioritising proposals for how we support these customers.

In order to ensure that the Motability Scheme is sustainable for the long term to continue to help the disabled community for at least another 35 years, we have the responsibility to identify risks, long term as well as short term, especially in these uncertain times. Taking account of these considerations as well as of our customers' needs, Motability and Motability Operations have concluded that the following support can be provided to customers leaving the Car Scheme as a result of a PIP reassessment:

- DWP has already announced that they will allow DLA payments to continue for four weeks after they make their decision regarding PIP. In addition to this, the Scheme will allow customers to retain their vehicle for up to a further 3 weeks from the date the DLA payments end. The customer will therefore be able to retain their vehicle for close to two months after the DWP decision is made.
- Customers will need to return the car to the dealership in good condition and within the agreed timeframe in order to qualify for the following transitional support:
 1. For customers who entered into their first lease agreement with the Scheme before January 2013 and therefore could not have been aware of PIP and the associated risks when they joined (the vast majority of customers), we will provide transitional support of £2,000. For many customers, this will enable them to continue to have mobility by purchasing a used car.
 2. For customers who entered into their first lease agreement with the Scheme with an awareness of PIP being introduced and of the risk that they could lose eligibility following a future PIP reassessment i.e. after January 2013 and up to December 2013, we will nonetheless provide transitional support of £1,000. We will review these levels of transitional support during 2015 to take account of economic conditions and of any possible changes the Government may be making to PIP at that time.
- For customers who have made an Advance Payment (an additional upfront payment to lease a larger or more complex vehicle on the Scheme), the Scheme will continue to refund any Advance Payment on a pro-rata basis. No further costs will be applied to customers whose leases end early as a result of a PIP reassessment.
- We will work with our Scheme suppliers, including RSA and RAC, to provide general information on motoring, insurance and other motoring services outside of the Scheme. This will include information, for example, on buying a new or used car, and arranging insurance and other services such as breakdown cover. In particular, we are working with a leading UK insurance broker who will offer insurance quotes to former Scheme customers that will recognise their no-claims history on the Scheme. We are also working with manufacturers and dealers to ensure that they are aware of the issues faced by these customers and are able to discuss possible alternatives to maintain their mobility once they have left the Scheme.
- The Scheme will offer customers an opportunity to purchase their vehicle following the end of the lease. The payments that they would otherwise have received upon returning the vehicle can be directed towards the purchase price.

- We will work with customers who have Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles on the Scheme on a case by case basis to understand and assist with their future mobility arrangements including, where appropriate, enabling them to retain their current vehicle.
- For customers with adaptations, we will help them with the costs of fitting the same adaptations to a non-Scheme vehicle.

The Motability Scheme will also provide a package of support and advice to customers currently leasing a scooter or powered wheelchair, with the objective of allowing them to retain their current product wherever possible.

As the DWP plans to begin reassessments of existing DLA recipients in October 2013 and each reassessment will take several months to complete, we do not expect any Scheme customers to become eligible for this support until early 2014. We will monitor customers' feedback on the support and advice we provide and we may make changes to it based on experience. We will also formally review all aspects of our support package in Autumn 2015, to take account of economic circumstances and any possible changes the Government may be making to PIP at that time.

In the years to come, the Motability Scheme will receive applications from recipients of PIP as well as from recipients of DLA and we will continue to meet the needs of disabled people, as we have done since 1977.

Lord Sterling

Chairman, Motability Board of Governors

September 2013

New jobseekers will have to account more clearly for their efforts to find work to get their benefit.

Starting on 14th October 2013, new jobseekers will have to account more clearly for their efforts to find work in order to receive their benefit.

New claimants to Jobseeker's Allowance will now need to sign a Claimant Commitment which sets out more fully what they need to do in order to receive state support – building on current support and providing clear information about the consequences of failing to meet requirements.

Work coaches will help claimants set out a detailed statement of what they will do to find work using a new personal work plan. Claimants will also use the plan to record what they have done. They will renew their Claimant Commitment on a regular basis.

Claimants will have to provide evidence to prove they have met the requirements in their Claimant Commitment. Those who fail to do so without good reason risk losing their benefits.

Employment Minister Esther McVey said:

“The Claimant Commitment marks the start of a redefinition of the relationship between the welfare state and claimants. In return for state support, we expect claimants to do all they can to meet their responsibilities to return to work.

It also strengthens the ability of Jobcentre Plus staff to support claimants back into work at the earliest opportunity. Work coaches and jobseekers will agree regular specific tasks and training opportunities and the penalties claimants could face for failing to meet their responsibilities to get into work will be clearly spelt out”. The Claimant Commitment is being introduced in around 100 Jobcentres a month, until it is in place across the country by the spring.

A personal plan setting out what claimants will do to prepare for and find work will be based upon the discussion between the jobseeker and their work coach and will be reviewed on a regular basis. The new commitment is an important part of the cultural transformation that Universal Credit will bring and will place a strong focus on the responsibilities that claimants must fulfil.

Other developments to support the cultural transformation ushered in by Universal Credit include:

6,000 new computers in Jobcentres across the country for claimants to look and apply for jobs online, replacing the dated job points

new activities trialled in Hammersmith Jobcentre Plus including claimants having 3 face-to-face interviews with their work coach within the first 2 weeks of their Universal Credit claim – this will enable their work coach to assess that claimants are completing up to 35 hours of positive job-seeking activity each week

Between now and the spring, 25,000 Jobcentre Plus advisers will receive additional training to deliver the Claimant Commitment

Rugby and Inverness will be the first Jobcentres to put the Claimant Commitment into practice for new claimants of Jobseeker’s Allowance with national rollout completed by spring 2014.

The Universal Credit Claimant Commitment has been trialled since April this year – as a part of the early running of Universal Credit in the Manchester area.

Universal Credit replaces income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit and Housing Benefit – and will be rolled out nationally by 2017.

For Jobseeker’s Allowance claimants, work coaches and claimants will agree a Claimant Commitment, based on their individual circumstances, which will clearly set out the jobseeker’s responsibilities to find work.

(Gov.uk website)

Access to work

1. What is access to work?

If you want to work but have a disability that makes working a problem you may be able to get help from the access to work scheme. This provides practical advice and support to help you overcome work-related obstacles. It can also give you grants towards extra employment costs.

2. Who can get help?

You can get help if you are:

Disabled or have a health condition that impacts your ability to work
Aged 16 or over and any of the following apply:

- You are in need of help at a job interview with an employer;
- You are about to start employment or be in employment, whether as an employed or self-employed person. This employment can be full time, part time or temporary. (Access to Work is not available to enable you to undertake voluntary work)
- You are about to start a Jobcentre Plus work trial;
- You are about to start a work experience opportunity under the Youth Contract;
- You are setting up your own business through the new enterprise allowance (NEA). Support is available from the date you are accepted onto the NEA mentoring phase and have attended your first meeting with your mentor.
- You are on a supported internship as part of Department for Education programme
- You are on a traineeship as part of a Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and Department for Education programme (Places will begin to be available from August 2013).
- You are on a sector-based work academy offering pre-employment training and work placements in growth industries with a guaranteed job interview.
- You are on a self-made work trial (these enable young disabled people to set up their own trial with a local employer if there is a realistic prospect of a job at the end of the trial).
-

Disabled has the same meaning as in the Equality Act 2010 which defines disability as 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on [your] ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

Disabled can also include disabilities that are only apparent in the workplace. An example of this might be where you started work and found that your eyesight was affected by computer screens but had not noticed this problem before you started work.

3. What help is available?

Whatever the employment status of the applicant, Access to Work will pay 100 per cent of the approved costs of:

Additional costs of travel to work for people who are unable to use public transport;
Fares to work if public transport can't be used;
A support worker or reader to provide help in the workplace;
A communicator for support at job interviews
Access to work also offers other help, which includes special aids or equipment for employment and adaptations to premises and existing equipment.

Equality Act 2010 places a duty on an employer to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees. Access to Work funding cannot be used to support these adjustments.

Access to work will also not fund items which are regarded as standard equipment, standard business costs or standard health and safety requirements. This means that any item which would normally be needed to do the job, whether a person is disabled or not, will not be paid for.

If you are starting a new job and make a claim for Access to Work during the first six weeks of commencing this employment, Access to Work will pay 100% of all approved costs. It is therefore very important that if you need help in work, you contact Access to Work as soon as you can so your employer does not have to share any costs.

Put simply, you will get 100% of all approved costs if you are:

Unemployed and starting a new job

Working for an employer and have been in the job for less than six weeks

Self-employed

Setting up your own business through the new enterprise allowance (NEA) Support is available from the date you are accepted on to the NEA mentoring phase and have attended your first meeting with your mentor.

Otherwise, if you have been in your job for 6 weeks or more when you first apply for help, access to work will pay a proportion of the costs of support as follows:

Employers with less than 10 staff – access to work can pay 100% of the approved costs

Employers with 10 to 49 staff – access to work can pay 100% of the approved costs

Employers with 50 to 249 staff – employer will have to pay the first £500 and access to work can then pay 80% of the approved costs up to £10,000

Large employers with 250 or more staff – employer will have to pay the first £1,000 and access to work can then pay 80% of the approved costs up to £10,000

Access to work would normally cover all additional costs over £10,000

Businesses with up to 49 employees will save up to £2,300 for any employee who uses the fund by no longer paying a contribution towards the extra costs faced by disabled people in work.

Help available for people with mental health conditions

Remploy is the sole provider of the mental health support service for Access to Work.

The service provides a wide range of support for people with mental health conditions for a period of six months and includes:

Work focused mental health support tailored to the individual

Assessment of an individual's needs to identify coping strategies

Personalised support plan, detailing the steps needed to remain in, or return to work

Advice and guidance to enable employers to fully understand mental health and how they can support employees who have a mental health condition

Identifying reasonable adjustments within the workplace or within the confines of working practice

4. How do I claim?

Contact the access to work centre directly where you will be offered advice and guidance from an access to work advisor.

You can find details of your local work centre by going to <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/how-to-claim>

You could also contact your local Jobcentre or Jobcentre Plus office and ask to talk to an access to work adviser or a Disability Employment Adviser (DEA) for advice and an application form.

5. How long is Access to Work funding available for?

Access to Work funding is available for up to three years. At the end of this period your need's will be reviewed to assess if continued or further funding is required. As long as you need the funding, you should continue to get it.

You can get more information on Access to Work at www.gov.uk/access-to-work. The DWP have produced a factsheet available at www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/employee-factsheet-atw.pdf and a guide for employers available at www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/employer-guide-atw.pdf and access to work provider guidance at

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/pg-access-to-work-needs-assessment.pdf>

This factsheet is a basic overview of the access to work scheme. You can find out more detailed information in the Disability Rights Handbook. This and all other Disability Rights UK publications are available from their shop at www.radar-shop.org.uk/. You can also place orders by contacting Disability Rights UK on 020 7250 3222 (this is not an advice line) or by fax on 020 7247 8765.

150,000 complaints made against Atos

Figures obtained by Sky News reveal that Citizens Advice has been inundated by huge numbers of complaints about assessments carried out by Atos.

More than 150,000 people have raised serious concerns about fit-for-work tests administered by a private healthcare company on behalf of the Government.

Citizens Advice warns that genuinely disabled and seriously ill people are being stripped of benefits following inadequate tests.

Meanwhile, doctors are warning that the service is "unfit for purpose".

Gillian Guy, the chief executive of Citizens Advice, warned: "Atos is failing to do its job properly, failing to give taxpayers value for money and worst of all, failing thousands of sick and disabled people who bear the brunt of wrong assessments."



➤ **BEQUESTS / DONATIONS**

Although we receive funding from Calderdale Council (until the end of September) the Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust and Calderdale Carers Project it does not cover all of our expenses.

Calderdale D.A.R.T. therefore welcomes bequests and or donations at any time.

You can be assured that any bequest or donation will be put to very good use in helping us to maintain a specialised advice and information service to people with disabilities throughout Calderdale.

If you would like to send us a cheque, make it payable to Calderdale D.A.R.T.

If you would like to consider leaving something to D.A.R.T. in your will, you will need our Charity Registration number, 1000710.

All donations are acknowledged with a receipt.

Thank you

Whilst every effort is taken to ensure that the information given is accurate, Calderdale DART cannot accept responsibility for the description or other circumstances relating to information given in this newsletter