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7 December 2012

The Work and Pensions Committee
House of Commons
7 Millbank
London
SW1P 3JA

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Inquiry into the Work Programme – users experience

As Chair of UKCoD, I would like to welcome the opportunity to provide evidence to the select committee on the above.

UKCoD is an umbrella charity in the field of deafness, representing over 100 member organisations. We have a special interest group, that has been working closely with officials from DWP around issues related to deaf people gaining the maximum benefit from Access to Work and as part of that work we have looked at the Work Programme and deaf peoples experiences of the programme.

Please find attached our report to users experience of the Work Programme, we continue to gather data and will happily send further information into the appropriate officials in due course.

In addition I would wish to highlight that UKCoD welcomed the announcement by Esther McVey on the 27th November to strengthen and add further resources to the ATW scheme. The range of changes announced are key to ensuring more deaf people are able to gain and retain work that reflects their abilities and skills.

We believe this announcement combined with the Inquiry may offer the Government the opportunity to raise the profile of the Access to Work Scheme and hence the importance of providing credible equality during Work Programme and into gainful employment for deaf people, by enhancing the access to essential communication support.

We would be happy to provide further support and assistance to the Inquiry on ways to strengthen the involvement of deaf people.

Yours faithfully

Jim Edwards

Chair
UK Council on Deafness