

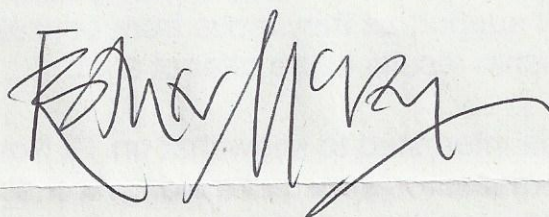
- ceasing to operate a list of standard equipment Access to Work will not fund; instead Access to Work advisers will continue to work constructively with employer and employee to identify where Access to Work can assist.
- piloting extending Access to Work to eligible disabled people undertaking business start up activity on the New Enterprise Allowance scheme in the Merseyside region from 3 December. Subject to effective operation in Merseyside, we will aim to roll out the measure nationally in the New Year.

In addition to these measures we are also implementing a number of recommendations made by the Access to Work expert panel, chaired by Mike Adams from the Essex Coalition of Disabled People (ECDP). The measures include funding the physical transfer of equipment to make it for users to move between employers, introducing a 'fast-track' application process where appropriate, and working with employers to find more imaginative solutions to support individuals. The full announcement can be viewed online at:

[http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-vote-office/November\\_2012/19-11-12/9-DWP-AccessToWork.pdf](http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-vote-office/November_2012/19-11-12/9-DWP-AccessToWork.pdf).

Whilst it is not possible to directly involve every organisation that represents disabled people, the panel members have been selected for their expertise in the sector, and particularly their experience of Access to Work. Some are disabled themselves, some represent employers working with individuals using Access to Work, and many work for or are connected with disabled people's organisations. The panel has fed in views based on their experiences but has also drawn on wider input. This has included, for example, looking at the responses to the consultation that we ran on Liz Sayce's proposals, where a wide variety of individuals and organisations contributed their views.

Thank you for taking the time to write to me.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Esther McVey', with a stylized, flowing script.

**Esther McVey MP**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Minister for Disabled People





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*Star Jim*

Thank you for your letter of 16 November about Access to Work.

We are committed to ensuring that all disabled people have the opportunities, chances and support that they need to get a job and remain in employment and we have a range of provisions in place to help them which includes Access to Work.

Following Liz Sayce's review of Specialist Disability Employment Programmes, 'Getting in, staying in and getting on', we have already announced significant improvements to Access to Work. This includes an additional £15 million over this Spending Review period, availability of the scheme to young disabled people undertaking work experience under the Youth Contract, a targeted marketing campaign and support for the Department for Education's Supported Internships for 16-25 year olds with the most complex learning difficulties or disabilities. This ensures Access to Work is in place to support young people accessing the Supported Internship trials, enabling them to receive a seamless package of support as they move from education into employment where their internship results in the offer of a job.

You may be interested to know that on 19 November I announced a number of measures aimed at making Access to Work more responsive and easier to use, these include:

- removing cost share for small employers, which will make it easier for small businesses to support a disabled person using Access to Work, as well saving them up to £2,300 per employee who uses the fund;