

Action on Disability
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Life beyond barriers

Patron: Baroness Wilkins

October 31st 2016

Government cutbacks will prevent disabled people working

The Government is undermining its own attempts to increase the employment of disabled people by introducing a cap on the amount of money a disabled person can receive from the Access to Work scheme.

The Access to Work scheme plays a vital role in enabling disabled people to obtain and maintain a job. It helps disabled people to work by paying for specialist equipment, support workers or the extra costs someone might face if they are unable to use public transport. The scheme encourages companies to employ disabled people by minimising the costs employers might potentially incur if they recruit a disabled person.

In April 2018 the Government will be placing a cap on how much existing recipients can claim under the scheme. Disabled people will not be able to claim support worth more than one and a half times the national average salary, equivalent to £40,800 a year on current rates. This change came into effect for new applicants in October last year. More than 200 disabled people will be affected.

Action on Disability argues that this will make it almost impossible for severely disabled people to work. It also seems to contradict the Government's desire to increase the number of disabled people in employment.

Only one per cent of Access to Work scheme recipients receive over £35,000 per year and only £3 million will be saved, yet this change in the rules will cause enormous distress for some and have profound practical consequences for the most disabled people in the workforce.

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Moreover, this proposal does not make economic sense. Research shows that for every £1 spent on the Access to Work Scheme, £1.48 comes back to the Exchequer in tax, national insurance or savings to the benefits bill.

Paid employment not only gives a disabled person an income and raises their standard of living but also gives them dignity and a chance to contribute positively to their community.

Action on Disability calls on the Government to put the needs of disabled people first, avoid short-term thinking, and abandon the idea to impose a cap on Access to Work support.

Kamran Mallick, CEO of Action on Disability, is available for interview – 07960 035806, kamran.mallick@actionondisability.org.uk (PA Julia Watkins – 0207 4718511, julia.watkins@actionondisability.org.uk)

Note for editors:

In 2013 to 2014 Access to Work spent £108m to help 35,540 disabled people enter or remain in work.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Kamran Mallick', written in a cursive style.

Kamran Mallick
CEO of Action on Disability