

# Press release: Grant to support disabled people in the workplace rises by over a third

Hundreds of disabled employees are to benefit from a £15,000 rise in Access to Work grants to assist them at work, following new measures introduced in Parliament today (20 March 2018).

From April 2018, people will be able to claim up to £57,200 annually to help pay for additional support that they may need in the workplace – approximately £15,000 more than the current cap of £42,100.

Access to Work provides financial support to ensure someone's disability or health condition doesn't hold them back at work, and can cover workplace adaptations, assistive technology, transport and interpreters.

Increasing the amount people can receive annually will ensure that more disabled people, particularly from the deaf community, are able to benefit from the grant and achieve their career aspirations.

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Esther McVey, said:

We believe that disabled people should have every opportunity to thrive in the workplace, and the tailored support of Access to Work caters to every individual's unique needs.

By extending this grant we're ensuring that many more disabled people can reach their career potential, which is a key part of our commitment to getting one million more disabled people in work by 2027.

The UK Council on Deafness said:

We are pleased to see that the Department for Work and Pensions has decided to significantly raise the Access to Work cap.

This will help deaf people whose first language is British Sign Language (BSL) to access the communication support so vital to enabling them to thrive and succeed in the workplace.

Access to Work is part of a range of support available to ensure that disabled people can enter, and thrive in, the workplace. This includes supported work experience placements, the government's [Disability Confident scheme](#) and personalised support package. These are all part of the government's ambitious plan to see a million more disabled people in work by

2027.

The new cap will take effect from 1 April 2018.

As we continually seek to improve Access to Work, we will introduce the following measures:

- discretion in exceptional cases of multiple disability, to consider award limits averaged over a longer period – for example, where a customer's ongoing need for a support worker may be below the cap but when coupled with a periodic need for say a wheelchair, would exceed the cap in that year
- introduction of managed personal budgets to enable greater choice and control for customers in the way grants are spent
- taking applications 12 weeks ahead of a job start date rather than the current 6 weeks to allow more time for support to be agreed and put in place
- continuing to invest in our digital improvements such as developing the facility to submit invoices online
- allowing more flexibility in how people can use Access to Work to support short periods of work experience where there is a likelihood of a paid job in the near future

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## [News story: Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Mali in April 2018](#)

Ms Cat Evans has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Mali and non-resident Ambassador to the Republic of Niger.

Ms Cat Evans has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Mali and non-resident Ambassador to the Republic of Niger in succession to The Honourable Alice Walpole OBE. Ms Evans will take up her appointment in April 2018.

### **CURRICULUM VITAE**

Full name: Catherine Angela Evans

2015 – present Addis Ababa, Deputy Head of Mission

2012 – 2015 FC0, Deputy Head, Future of Europe Department

2012 FC0, Deputy Head, Olympic Operations, Counter-Terrorism Department

2011 – 2012 Kabul, Counsellor (Political)

2009 – 2011 Islamabad, First Secretary (Political)

2008 – 2009 Basra, Ministry of Defence (MOD), Policy Adviser, Multi-National Division

2007 – 2008 MOD, Project Manager, Special Projects Integrated Project Team

2006 – 2007 Freetown, Deputy Civilian Adviser to Sierra Leone MOD, Department for International Development (secondment from MOD)

2005 – 2006 MOD, Programme Desk Officer, Defence Change Programme Directorate

2004 – 2005 Merton College (secondment from MOD), Team Leader, Prince's Trust Team Programme

2003 – 2004 MOD, Policy Desk Officer for Afghanistan

### **Further information**

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## **News story: CMA Panel Inquiry Chair appointed**

His role will include chairing groups of CMA panel members making decisions on Phase 2 merger inquiries, market investigations and regulatory appeals. Panel members bring their experience of competition, economics, regulation, business, public policy and consumer law to the CMA's decision-taking.

Stuart will take up his role from 2 April 2018.

He brings with him a wealth of experience, having had a successful career as an economist specialising in regulatory economics, including as an executive Board Member and Group Director at Ofcom, the communications regulator.

He also held senior positions in several private sector organisations including PwC and IBM.

He has served as a panel member at the CMA since October 2017, following an appointment process run by BEIS and in accordance with the requirements set down in the Commissioner for Public Appointment's Code of Practice.

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# News story: Civil news: next steps for 2018 civil contracts tender process

The Legal Aid Agency (LAA) will now advise those organisations that have been successful in bidding for the remaining face to face categories:

- Family
- Welfare Benefits
- Immigration and Asylum (including Immigration Removal Centres)
- Mental Health
- Community Care
- Clinical Negligence
- Claims against Public Authorities
- Public Law
- Family Mediation

This follows the closure of tenders for face to face contracts on 10 November 2017 and the notification in January 2018 of those who were successful in bidding for face to face contracts in the Housing and Debt categories.

For completeness, the LAA will re-confirm to those who were successful in the Housing and Debt categories under the face to face contract procurement process.

Those organisations taking part in the procurement process for the Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme (HPCDS) contracts will be notified of the outcome in due course.

## **How will these notifications on face to face contracts be made?**

The LAA will formally write to each affected organisation via the e-Tendering system, advising them of the status of their tenders, from week commencing 19 March 2018.

We anticipate that most notifications will have been sent out by Friday 30 March. Applicants who have bid for face to face contracts and have not received notification by 3 April should contact the LAA through the e-Tendering system message board.

## **When will services under new contracts begin?**

Services under new face to face contracts will begin on 1 September 2018.

Services under new Civil Legal Advice (specialist telephone advice) contracts will also begin from 1 September 2018, and services under new Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme contracts will begin from 1 October 2018.

## **How long will the contracts last?**

Each contract will initially run until 31 August 2021, with an option for the LAA to extend for up to a further 2 years.

## **What will happen next?**

Following notifications, the LAA will work with organisations to complete the verification process described in the letter of notification through the Bravo system. However, organisations are reminded that the award of the contract is conditional on them satisfactorily verifying their bids.

It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure they provide all the necessary information to evidence they meet the relevant verification requirements no later than 23:59 on 20 July 2018.

## **Further information**

Further information about the process can be found on our tender page:

[Civil 2018 contracts tender page](#)

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## **Press release: UK aid is helping to protect vulnerable Rohingya people ahead of devastating floods**

This is ahead of the fast-approaching annual cyclone and monsoon season which has the potential to cause significant devastation and loss of life.

Almost a million persecuted Rohingya people, who have fled neighbouring Burma, live in the fragile and cramped camps.

The UN estimates 102,000 of them are living in areas at risk of flooding and 12,000 people are at risk from landslides.

Alongside international aid organisations International Organisation for Migration and UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), the UK has helped to ensure more than 158,000 people have received reinforced shelter and sandbags to protect them from winds and flood water.

Work has also begun on the reinforcement of pathways through camps needed to deliver supplies and services.

Plans to cope with the aftermath of flooding and landslides are also being stepped up.

Water-borne diseases are common in the aftermath of a flood, and UK aid is ensuring that more than 250,000 people will continue to have access to safe drinking water throughout the rainy season.

More than 5,000 new latrines have been constructed and have been strategically placed throughout the camps and plans to move more than 6,700 latrines to safe grounds have already begun.

UK-supported cholera, measles and diphtheria vaccination campaigns have also taken place in readiness for the monsoons.

These will provide protection against some of the most common diseases in the camps, which can be more widespread during the rainy season.

So far, 391,000 children under the age of seven have been vaccinated, with a further 400,000 children due to receive the vaccinations planned by the end of March.

Healthcare workers are also being trained to prevent, identify and treat common illnesses likely during the rainy season and to manage higher caseloads.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

With the cyclone and monsoon season in Bangladesh imminent it is time to firmly focus our efforts on Cox's Bazar where nearly a million persecuted and displaced Rohingya people now live.

The Rohingya people have suffered so much already and now they are living in constant fear of the imminent floods causing utter devastation and destruction.

Our swift response can save lives. Right now UK aid is strengthening roads and pathways to ensure vital medication and food can reach the very centre of the camps. UK aid is also reinforcing shelters to protect vulnerable families at risk of flood water and landslides.