

Having the proactive support of Emma Bateman from Deaf Positives Action for my Access to Work renewal process has made an enormous difference to me as a busy deaf company director.

While I highly value and appreciate Access to Work - without it I simply would not be able to do my job - dealing with staff and communicating with people who are mainly non-specialist, can be time-consuming and at times, somewhat frustrating. Requesting support is a very personal activity and, when we encounter barriers and misunderstandings which may feel as if they threaten our potential support, this can be emotionally draining. Sometimes I have felt this in the past.

The process of giving permission to DPA to take on my case was simple and clear. It was a relief to hand over this to them, I will admit.

Emma's calm professionalism and considerable knowledge as an advocate and ethics expert shone through in the way she advocated for me with Access to Work. I appreciated her pragmatic, determined approach, her patience and transparency in relaying to me what had happened in the negotiations.

Issues for deaf people can be complex and subtle. Deaf Positives Action has the big advantage of being a Deaf-led organisations which not only understands but lives the issues. I had confidence that DPA would take me seriously and achieve the best possible result on my behalf.

The impact of DPA's advocacy was:

- more time and energy to focus on my business, rather than negotiating support.
- confidence that I would secure, with their help, sufficient support for the future from AtW
- a record of the topics and questions discussed which I can refer to in future if I need.
- feeling less stressed about my support and more confidence.

I warmly recommend Emma and DPA to any D/deaf person who could benefit from their support and advocacy. I had never in 26 years as a deaf professional, used advocacy services, but I will definitely be doing so again!