



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP
Minister of State
Department for Work and Pensions
by Email

Our Ref: EC21450/TM

27 July 2026

Dear Stephen

Re: Access to Work Delays

I write on behalf of constituents who are experiencing unacceptable delays with Access to Work applications.

My constituents have reported facing considerable delays stretching into months and sometimes years before they receive any update on their application.

One such constituent also described double standards in relation to deadlines. She states that she has waited nine months for her application to be picked up by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). They have now referred her for an assessment with their contractor, Reed in Partnership. She received an email from DWP to inform her that Reed would contact her to make an appointment within the next two days. She was also warned that if they failed to make the appointment within this timeframe the referral would be closed.

Her employer received a similar request for information and despite replying promptly did not get a reply for a week, to give notice that they would call the same afternoon. I am sure that you can appreciate this was a tight deadline for her employer to manage.

This system of long delays for the applicant followed by tight deadlines seems to be organised for the convenience of the contractor without consideration for the people involved.

Dr Ellie Chowns MP

Member of Parliament for North Herefordshire
House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

Please could you advise what action the DWP are taking to reduce delays for Access to Work applications?

Could you also advise why DWP and Reed in partnership set such short deadlines for applicants and employers to respond to their requests?

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E Chowns', written in a cursive style.

Dr Ellie Chowns MP
Member of Parliament for North Herefordshire