Present:
13 people present

Apologies:
8 apologies

Introductions
Catherine welcomed the group. Everyone introduced themselves.

Feedback from Focus Group - Transport

The Transport Focus Group met on the 3rd December. The main issues covered were: Blue Badges, Companion Badges, Freedom Passes, Taxi card and Dial a Ride. The group identified 14 action points around these issues. Please see the Transport Focus Group Minutes for details of these action points and the issues that were raised.

At the Forum Meeting a further 5 action points were added, they are:

- Is there a map of all disabled parking bays in Hackney?
- Why is more seating not available at Morning lane?
- Why is the Blue Badge due for renewal every 3 years and the Companion Badge yearly? Why are they not timed to expire at the same time?
- Which Petrol Stations provide assistance with filling petrol? Are all stations obligated to now assist under DDA?
- Are the Bendy Buses going to be discontinued?

Feedback from Focus Group - Leisure

The Leisure Focus Group met on the 11th December. The main issues covered were: accessibility of Local Leisure Services, e.g. leisure centres. Leisure cards and local parks. The group identified 15 action points around these issues. Please see the Leisure Focus Group Minutes for details of these action points and the issues that were raised.

At the Forum Meeting a further 3 action points were added, they are:

- Are there any local swimming lessons that are accessible for disabled people in the Borough?
- Are there any local walking group that is accessible for disabled people (being unable to walk as quickly as other members etc)
- Can you take cars into any local Parks, other than Finsbury Park (for those with mobility issues)

New Focus Groups

It was suggested to bring new topics to the forum first. Further focus groups could be started after a first round in the forum.

It was also suggested to invite someone from the borough to the first round. Possible topics: housing, allocation, accessibility / repairs.

Disability Backup's model of working, looking at the Social Model of Disability - Gill Jackson

Gill briefly summarised the Social Model of Disability which identifies that people are disabled by society, not by their impairment.

For example, "It is not because I am a wheelchair user that prevents me from entering your shop. It is because your shop door doesn't have an accessible entrance".
"It is not my fault you don't know sign language."

"I didn't hit that sign outside your shop because I am blind, move the sign to a safe place."

Gill would like to see Disability Backup work to the social model of disability, identifying the weaknesses in society that are preventing disabled people to be equal to other members of society.

Gill also raised the issue of wording, suggesting that we are not people with disabilities (which suggest the disability is ours) but that we are disabled people, disabled by a society which is not accessible. Another example was disabled toilet, suggesting that the toilet was disabled! It is in fact an accessible toilet, for everyone to be able to use.

Mr Ray Boyce, Transformation Officer, Individualised Budgets

Ray introduced the new Individualised Budgets scheme which will replace current social care assessments.

This will affect people who receive a care package from Hackney, for personal care or direct payments. The idea behind the scheme is that instead of having your entitlement decided by a social worker, the individual will be able to have a say on how they would like their care to be delivered.

Individualised Budgets will be able to be used on anything that will improve the quality of life for that person. They won't have to be used for personal care only. This new scheme will allow people to be more flexible with their care, for example instead of having funding to go to a day centre, the person could join a gym and get more involved in the community. The aim of this is to allow individuals to have control and freedom over choosing their care needs, taking the power from social workers and empowering the individual.

It is currently being trialed in Hackney and will be coming into affect in the next few years.

Questions session to Ray Boyce

One member asked Ray whether the scheme is means tested. Ray replied that there is a charge for the services if you are earning over the threshold. This is based on your own income.

One member asked Ray if Disability Backup could work with the team when designing the self-assessment forms. It is felt that peer support and user involvement should be vital to the development of Individualised Budgets.

Action points:

It was agreed that Ray would keep Disability Backup informed of future developments.

Ray would also contact Disability Backup to consult about the scheme and to get members ideas and suggestions, e.g. when designing forms etc.

Any Other Business

* 3rd December 2009 - Disability Backup event - Disability Backup is looking into holding an event to celebrate international day of disabled people.
* Circulating Information via Disability Backup: It was agreed that whenever possible, Disability Backup will circulate any relevant information through its newsletter.

Catherine thanked everyone for attending.

Meeting closed.