

## Minutes of Forum Meeting 18 September 2009

**Present: 6 professionals, 23 members**

### **Introductions**

Everyone introduced themselves and told the group what they had for dinner.

### **Language Code**

Disability Backup has launched its language code. Each member has been given a pack with copies of the code and a sign up sheet. Members are asked to sign up and get others signed up!

Copies will be sent with the next newsletter.

### **Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA)**

3 speakers attended the group, Julie Amory, Margaret Hickish and Steve Sugden.

Julie Amory is the Equality and Inclusion Manager at the ODA. She works to ensure that the Olympics and Paralympics Games are enjoyed by everyone and that suitable actions are taken place to make this happen. The ODA aims to ensure that every venue is accessible and that everyone is able to enjoy watching, or participating in sports.

The ODA aims to make sure that the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games leave a legacy that local people can enjoy. This is making sure that the parks are opened to the public and that the venues continue to be used in the future.

Margaret works both with the ODA and London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympics Games (LOCOG) she is the Principal Access Officer and has been working closely with the design teams to ensure that they adopt inclusive standards when designing the venues and infrastructure for the Olympic and Paralympics Games. It is her job to make sure that the games are accessible and fun for all. We will make these games the most accessible ever, and people will have the choice to have disabled access or go through the main entrances, people will not be segregated due to disability. We want accessible, equal games for all.

Steve Sugden is the ODA's Employment & Skills Manager. He works on the Olympic park site and within the Equality, Inclusion, Employment and Skills team. Steve works closely with the contractors to get people from within primarily the five Host Boroughs jobs on the Park. Many people assume that construction is all about physical building work, and that usually it is white males who do this sort of work. The ODA are trying to change this misconception and have women's projects and a disability project. Steve stressed that the disability project does not have a large amount of funding at the moment.

Steve works with the skills team to ensure that people are given the training or adaptations that would be necessary for them to work. His team support contractors

to be able to employ disabled people, he supports and gives them the disability training they may need.

**Q. Are there office jobs in construction?**

A. Yes, there are many different roles in construction, catering, admin etc.

**Q. What support do the workers have once the construction is completed?**

A. We will work closely with local construction companies and contractors to ensure that as many of the workers as possible can go on to find local work. It is the same with any construction job but we support these workers as much as possible.

**Q. When will the Olympic park be open after the games?**

A. The park will be fenced in for a time after the games to take down the Olympic decorations, flags etc. The main green space will be open to the public as soon as possible. We are working to ensure that we leave a good legacy and that the park will have all of the facilities that we need in parks. For example, toilets, cafes, seating. The water feature will be made available soon after the games. The whole park will also have an accessible route to ensure that anyone can enjoy it.

**Q. I went to Wembley Stadium via the main gates and got trapped in the railings as I couldn't keep up with the crowd. Are there alternative entrances/exits and methods of transport available at the games?**

A. Yes, we will have a games mobility service with a variety of equipment that can be loaned. This will include golf buggies, mobility scooter, wheelchairs etc. People do not have to enter via the main entrance, there will be alternative entrances for disabled people. During the games there will be seats no more than 50metres apart and level areas for wheelchair users to rest.

**Q. Many times large events or venues have good accessibility but do not tell people about it. This information must be made available before the games to encourage people to attend. Members gave examples about Hyde Park, Emirates and Wembley.**

A. Yes, I totally agree. I recently spent an hour trying to find out about the accessibility of a large venue. This information needs to be readily available before the event, not just available on the day. This information needs to be available in a variety of ways, not just the internet.

**Q. Sarah Salem, a forum member is now volunteering for the Olympics through the personal best scheme. I had to fill out a parks health form for the ODA and want to report that it was very frightening. I was made to disclose things about myself when there were other people waiting in the room. If you want disabled people to volunteer at the game you must give them support and privacy.**

A. Yes, I had the same experience, we will pass this on.

**Q. Training of staff needs to be the priority, it is not enough to have accessible equipment etc if the staff do not know how to use it.**

A. Yes, we are giving all of our staff training and aim to ensure that all our volunteers and staff have good disability equality training. We would like to have volunteers with disabilities as this will help.

**Q. Will you have a range of seating? Sometimes having a bench is not accessible.**

A. Yes, we have a group of disabled people who test our designs and we have developed a wide range of seating. Some with arms, some without, some perching stools, different heights etc. Some of these will be removed after the games due to the quantity. I went to Beijing and I can say that our games are going to be more accessible than theirs.

**Q. Will there be charging points for electric wheelchairs?**

A. There will be a repair shop where you can charge your battery, or you could use one of the games wheelchairs for the day.

**Q. How will you prepare for the volume of people?**

A. We don't know yet! LOCOG are still deciding how to calculate the tickets and we do not know how much demand there will be. This is the first time that the Olympics and Paralympics have been run together by the same team and we have the highest level of provision than any event. There will be 1% wheelchair accessible which is a large amount.

Catherine thanked the team for coming to talk to us and encouraged to come again and to contact us if you need volunteers.

**Hackney Olympic and Paralympics Unit**

Thomas Smith came to talk from Hackney's Olympic Unit. The Olympics needs 70,000 volunteers to make it work and we want to get more people from Hackney to volunteer. Hackney has a Personal Best Scheme which trains people to become volunteers.

Thomas is also working on increasing sports and the level of participation in Hackney. The Olympics aim to ensure that each borough increases the amount of sport available for all. It is agreed that Thomas will attend a future forum meeting with the London Sports Forum to discuss getting disabled people into sport.

Thomas will also provide Catherine with information about the personal best scheme.

**Cindy Fayenfumni- Crown Prosecution Service**

We will be having a future forum meeting to discuss the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) The CPS decides who gets prosecuted and wants to know about the communities view on crime. Cindy will be attending a future meeting to discuss disability and how disabled people feel about reporting crime.

Meeting ends.