

# Minutes of Forum Meeting 22nd April 2010

Topic: Review of door to door services and personalisation

Present: 29 people attended

## 1. Introductions

The group introduced themselves and told their favourite hobbies

## 2. Jeannette Arnold, London Assembly Member North East London

Jennette asked all members present whether they were satisfied with the door-to-door services they used. Of the 20+ members present, no one stuck their hand up

There was however, a general consensus that services had improved over the past year. Nevertheless, the following complaints were shared with us by the forum:

### **Dial-a-Ride**

- One lady has now been waiting for over a month to get her dial-a-ride user card.
- Dial-a-ride is only good when you take trips that you do regularly i.e. on a weekly basis, same time to the same location. However, as soon as you request some flexibility by doing a one-off trip or a trip that you do once a fortnight, the service appears to be unable to cope.
- One user said she tried to use the service once, it never showed up for which reason she decided to give on DAR altogether.
- It often happens that 5 people arrive at the same location in 5 different DAR vans. This seems like a waste of resources.
- Drivers often fail to contact you if they run late and you have to call them. This is poor service to users and it would be courteous if they'd contact the user if running late.
- One user had a bad experience with the service when the driver couldn't find her place and just took off while she sat there waiting without any notice.

### **Taxicard:**

- Sometimes the cab doesn't turn up and you end up phoning time after time
- There was a consensus that the taxicard booking service should ask users if they want a black cab or a minicab. For some users minicabs are difficult to get in and out whilst other experience difficulty getting in and out a black cab.
- Many users also felt it was difficult to recognise a minicab as such from you house when they're waiting outside your house. Also, you often expect a black cab and then fail to look out for a minicab
- Drivers should ring the front door upon arrival to notify the users rather than just sit in the car.
- Some drivers are great but others are terrible saying they'll pick you up around the corner and then just leave. Also, if you try to stop them at stations

they drive off as soon as they see your disabled pass. It just seems that some drivers just don't like to take disabled passengers.

- Although the situation seems to have improved over the past year, there are some drivers who just refuse to help you out of the car and then when you ask just stand on the pavement staring at you struggling to get out. Or some are not very helpful when you ask them to get the step out.
- Communication in general between drivers and users could be greatly improved.
- One deaf member says she doesn't use any door-to-door service because it is too difficult to communicate with drivers. They never understand where she wants to get to.
- Drivers of minicabs hardly ever offer to help you out of the house or carry your bags or cases.
- It's often difficult to get through to the phone service.
- Services often arrive too late, sometimes as much as half an hour

### **Other services in Hackney:**

- Royal London Hospital transport service is appalling.
- Hackney carriage is a great service with very good drivers who have been properly trained. Some are mobility impaired themselves.
- Lewis day minicabs is a good company which properly supports disabled users.

### **3. Paul Knipe, Tracey Sinclair and Phil Chatterton from Personalisation team, Hackney Council**

-The group were asked about Personalisation. Firstly, it was clear that not many people knew what it meant.

#### **-Paul explained the changes to adult social care:**

- If you are receiving a care package from the council (like a carer) you will be able to have more control over the type of care you receive
- Instead of being given a carer from an agency, you can choose your own care, maybe a relative or friend, or using another service like going to the gym or hairdressers.
- You will have more control over your money so you can have a better outcome.

#### **-Phil talked to the group about the social care hub**

- The council are going to make a website of all the different places where you can get your services from
- This is for you, carers, social workers, voluntary groups and anyone!
- It will be similar to eBay, with peoples' feedback about the services and the costs
- It will also be available in other ways, not just online

#### **-Tracey asked the group for feedback:**

"I wouldn't be happy about costing; I'd want help to organise this even if I was able"  
"When you become ill, you sometimes don't know what you want. You don't know what your service needs are"

"I know about myself, but I don't necessarily know what my needs are, or the services I need"

"Agencies are a problem sometimes"

"There needs to be more, clearer communications"

"Getting through to the Council switch board is difficult. Will it be quicker and easier in the new system?"

"The Council / social workers often fail to respond"

"I can be assertive and help others, but I find it difficult to be assertive on my own behalf"

"Self- assessment is a failure. It shouldn't focus on the negatives; I shouldn't have to imagine myself in the worst possible scenario to get the right support"

"There is lots of best practice elsewhere, such as Canada"

What now?

- We meet with Disability Backup every other month to continue these discussions
- we get together a group to review and work through accessibility issues for the web and Hackney Hub
- We can provide you with a list of things we need help with on a regular basis
- Disabled people need to know where to go for information. You can get help from us to get this right