



# ***Getting There***

## **Disabled people in Hackney and their experiences with transport**

A Hackney Disability BackUp Forum report, prepared by Age UK Hackney.

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## **Preface by Jennette Arnold AM OBE**

This report makes an important contribution to the on-going debate about how we can make our transport network fully accessible for all travellers. I would like to thank the authors and the team involved in this project for their energy and commitment to this important campaign.

As Hackney's representative on the London Assembly I have always sought to champion accessibility as an issue of both justice and equality. I believe that London is a far better city for disabled people than it was ten or fifteen years ago. However, the issues highlighted in this report show that there is still a lot more that needs to be done. Whether the issue is cycling on pavements, the need for audible sounds at all crossings or increased parking spaces for disabled people, this paper sets out how we can move forward.

However, as well as the many individual recommendations, this report also has a broader message. It makes a strong case for forging even stronger links between decision makers and Voluntary organisations like AGE UK and Hackney Disability BackUp. Only through such relationships will it be possible for our transport system to be fully accessible for all travellers.

Jennette Arnold OBE, AM  
Chair London Assembly  
Member for North East London  
Member of the EU-Committee of the Regions



## Executive Summary

A summary of the recommendations in the following report is provided in this section. Survey and other evidence in support of these proposals is dealt with in corresponding sections in the main body of the report.

### Icy Pavements

- A higher priority should be given to salting residential streets in icy conditions in Hackney;
- Accept in principle the proposals of the Ice Free Pavements campaign supported by Living Streets<sup>[1]</sup>, calling on Councils to agree a [winter contract](#) with communities, committing to:
- Clearing snow and ice from pavements, especially the busiest - helping people walk safely to places like schools, doctors' surgeries, shops and bus stops;
- Sending contractors who can't carry out their normal job in bad weather to clear pavements;
- Providing grit to residents and organising teams of volunteer 'snow wardens'.

### Pavement Parking

- LBH should make concerted efforts to enforce the law on pavement parking and parking on crossovers;
- In areas where LBH permits car parking on the footway (and forces pedestrians to walk on the carriageway) this practice should be re-examined and the needs of disabled pedestrians be taken into account.



<sup>[1]</sup> cf Streetlife Winter 2011-12

## **Pedestrian Crossings**

- DBU asks for all pedestrian controlled crossings without audible sounds and tactile rotating cones to be updated by TfL as a matter of urgency;
- Urges TfL to exercise caution and carefully consider the impact on disabled people of the removal of any existing pedestrian crossings;
- More pedestrian crossings in residential streets should be actively considered;
- Reverse the policy of using Toucan crossings (given the likelihood of conflict between cyclists and disabled pedestrians).
- DBU calls upon LBH to retain all existing Zebra crossings in Hackney, recognising that they offer the greatest advantage to disabled pedestrians as they give them priority over all other traffic.

## **Pavements (footways)**

- Targeted measures should be adopted to eliminate uneven pavement surfaces;
- Cycle parking should be positioned on the highway. Wherever it is located on the footway it should be parallel to the kerb, rather than slanted or perpendicular;
- Cycling on footways should be firmly discouraged by the enforcement of sanctions such as spot fines by policing teams and more signage and a Council-led campaign similar to the ones run by Islington Council and other boroughs;





- Cycle tracks on existing footways have a detrimental effect on disabled pedestrians, aid and abett unlawful footway cycling and should be withdrawn.
- Proposals to introduce any further cycle tracks (contra-flow or otherwise) on footways should be scrapped, given their serious impact on pedestrians.
- Higher priority should be given to provision of street seating
- in any street remodelling.
- Signs in Hackney's parks advising that cyclists should dismount, except for designated routes, should be reinstated;

A consistent programme should be maintained of introducing dropped kerbs and textured and colour contrasting paving; LBH should take stricter enforcement measures to remove marketing clutter from the footways and ensure that restaurant and bar premises are properly licensed for occupying part of the footway and sanctioned if they abuse the terms of licensing.

### **Shared Streets/Shared surfaces**

We call upon Hackney Council to stop commissioning shared surface streets as such schemes currently discriminate against pedestrians who are blind or visually impaired and other vulnerable pedestrians;

### **Twenty's Plenty**

We call upon the Mayor of London and TfL to generalise a 20mph speed limit in London in all residential and High Street areas;

### **Buses**

- Bus companies should directly involve disabled people in bus driver training;
- A bus without a properly working ramp should not be in service. Equipment checks, before leaving the garage, should be more thorough;
- Highway authorities (TfL and LBH) should ensure all bus stops are accessible as a matter of priority;
- TfL should include the views of disabled people in bus design;
- Refresher courses for TfL staff on disability equality and awareness, passenger safety and their duty of care to passengers should be robustly institutionalised;

## **Overground and Underground**

- Accessibility investment programmes should be given a clear timetable for implementation on both Overground and Underground systems;
- All ramps installed during the London 2012 Games period should be retained;
- Any move to introduce ticketless stations on the Overground system should be rejected as grossly discriminatory to disabled people;

## **Parking**

- We call for more parking bays accessible and dedicated to disabled people in Hackney

## **Dial-a-Ride/Taxicard/Community Transport**

- Dial-a-Ride operators should be willing to consult an on-line map if the destination postcode is not known to a vulnerable client;
- Given the difficulties experienced by disabled people in using these services, management of them needs to focus upon flexibility and orientation towards the needs of the client;

## **London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games**

- Priority traffic lanes should be available to hospital and urgent medical vehicles;
- Pedestrian crossings should not be removed during the Games;
- Pedestrian routes which have been swallowed up by Greenway cycle/walk routes represent a gross loss of facility and should revert to pedestrian only footways.



## Introduction

About 10% of Londoners report they have reduced access to travel facilities, rising to 30% for Londoners aged over 60. Over 4% of these Londoners are wheelchair users.<sup>[2]</sup>

DBU opened its submission to the consultation on Hackney's Local Implementation Plan (LIP)<sup>[3]</sup> by stating:

*"Transport remains one of the biggest factors in excluding disabled people from playing a full part in public life and enjoying everything that Hackney, and London as a whole, has to offer."*

This report, based on evidence gathered from a survey of disabled Hackney residents, including qualitative comments, as well as other secondary sources in the public domain, addresses this fundamental issue of access and inclusion for disabled people in Hackney and, where possible, makes recommendations for change.

An on-line survey was developed and 600 hard copies distributed in a targeted mailing to disabled people in Hackney, with an option to enter a draw for a small prize as an incentive to return completed surveys. 78 surveys were returned and percentage figures quoted below are from this sample. This is a large enough group of disabled people to reflect more widely held views amongst people in Hackney facing difficulties 'getting there'. Thanks are owed to all those who took time to return a survey and to members of the Disability BackUp Forum who have provided detailed comments in the development of this report.

Age Concern London in its 2009 Report *Breaking Barriers, The Future of Transport for Older Londoners* observed that "...there is still not so much a transport system as a series of separate transport services which, from older and disabled people's point of view, do not link up properly."

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<sup>[2]</sup> Travel in London Report 2, Transport for London. These figures are not repeated in the following two reports.

<sup>[3]</sup> Hackney's Disability BackUp Forum response to the Hackney Local Improvement Plan Nov 2011

This picture of disjointed and patchy provision has not succumbed to significant change in the intervening period. Integration of much more reliable services from agencies such as Dial-a-Ride, taxi based services, health transport and community transport are needed to supplement accessible main transport links. This report sketches some of the remaining failures to achieve this standard and suggests achievable policy measures to address them.

We welcome the commitment of Hackney Council in its 2012 Supplementary Planning Document to an accessible public realm, but are naturally concerned that this commitment is translated into reality. We hope that the present report will be used as a contribution to achieving this laudable goal.

## Walking and Using the Pavements

### Icy Conditions

**Last winter around 20,000 people in the UK were admitted to hospital as a result of slipping on snow and ice.** While many roads are gritted in winter, most pavements (footways) are neglected, turning them into dangerous ice rinks. For disabled people these dangerous conditions can make it almost impossible to venture outdoors.

There was no specific question on icy conditions in the survey, but a number of respondents singled these out as a real mobility problem for them:

*"I live in a small side road which is never salted, so when it snows I cannot get out. I use a crutch and am a pensioner so I have to rely on someone else to get provisions;"*

*"Pavements not salted in icy conditions;"*

*"I fall in the snow regular. I made a claim for 2010 in December when we have the snow. Me and my two grandchildren drop in the road in the snow. The Council dismiss my claim. The road is never salted;"*

*"The road and pavement in my street (Amhurst Rd. N. end) are very dangerous in icy conditions. Our road is generally ignored;"*

*"It needs a lot more improvement when it snow. They don't salt the*

*road. I fell down over and over and hurt myself;"*

We suggest therefore that a higher priority should be given to salting footways and residential streets in icy conditions in Hackney. In a prolonged cold snap, disabled people may be imprisoned in their homes, or risk injury venturing out.

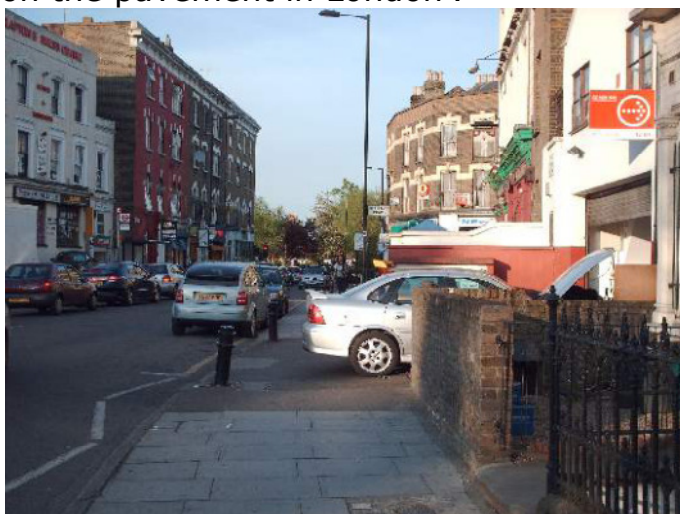
DBU therefore supports in principle the Ice Free Pavements campaign promoted by Living Streets<sup>[4]</sup>, calling on Councils to agree a [winter contract](#) with communities, committing to:

- Clearing snow and ice from pavements, especially the busiest - helping people walk safely to places like schools, doctors' surgeries, shops and bus stops
- Sending contractors who can't carry out their normal job in bad weather to clear pavements
- Providing grit to residents and organising teams of volunteer 'snow wardens'.

### **Pavement parking**

Vehicles parked on pavements can force people to walk unsafely on the road. This is particularly a problem for people with mobility and visual impairments, but is a danger to all pedestrians. Costs for pavement repairs are also pushed up by this practice.

Pavement parking is banned throughout the 32 London boroughs and the City of London under the Greater London (General Purposes) Act 1974. The [Highway Code](#) states 'You MUST NOT park partially or wholly on the pavement in London'.



<sup>[4]</sup> cf Streetlife Winter 2011-12

All councils in London can and should enforce this law by issuing parking tickets to any vehicles parked on pavements, unless there is a sign there that specifically permits it. Hackney Council has for some years had a policy of removing pavement parking where it has been previously explicitly permitted and not introducing new permissions, a policy which DBU supports.

Nevertheless enforcement against abuses is weak. To take just a single example, one DBU member reports that Lee Conservancy Road in Wick, outside the Mabley Green Astroturf site, invariably has its pavements blocked by parked cars at weekends and occasionally on weekdays.

We therefore recommend LBH makes concerted efforts to enforce the law on pavement parking.

In areas where LBH permits car parking on the footway (and forces pedestrians to walk on the carriageway) this practice should be re-examined and the needs of disabled pedestrians must be taken into account.

Drivers, in particular drivers of commercial vehicles, frequently block crossovers and Parking officials are resistant to taking action when this occurs. We suggest LBH gives greater prominence and publicity to the role of Enforcement - in anticipation of when people may encounter this problem - and ensure the resources are available for it to carry out its duties promptly. We will also call upon the local police to play a clearer role, either taking action as regards the obstruction of the highway (including the footway) or, where feasible, assisting disabled people by signposting or making referrals to the Enforcement Team.

### **Crossing the road**

Even in the absence of abusive pavement parking, for many visually impaired and other disabled people, it can be difficult to cross the road when vehicles block access to the road and there is a shortage of pedestrian crossings.



88.3% of respondents to the survey agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that *'Finding a safe and easy place to cross to the other side of the street can be difficult for me. For example, there is no crossing space and nothing prevents cars parking close together (nearly bumper to bumper).* Of these more than two thirds strongly agreed. This adds emphasis to the need, in residential streets, for pedestrian crossing spaces on which parking is not permitted. With modest pedestrian traffic, such measures need not significantly impede traffic flow and only a metre or so of parking space is sacrificed.

Comments by respondents included the following:

*"Junction of Graham Rd/Mare St not enough time to cross road. Green man far on opposite side and not in the middle area. Probably problem also for deaf and hard of hearing/eye problems too. Can't hear bleep. Not enough space between crossing carriageways with fear of other pedestrians pushing you into road as I am in a wheelchair."*

*"You get 14 seconds to cross the road at the signals - it's not enough time for old people to cross the road."*

The Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) has warned recently that 18 crossings in Hackney are dangerous for visually impaired people.<sup>5</sup> These crossings, which include ones in busy centres like Mare St and Kingsland Rd, lack the audible sounds and tactile rotating cones, which help visually impaired people to cross the road safely.

<sup>[5]</sup> [Blind and partially sighted people risking their lives at unsafe crossings in 31 London boroughs](#)

According to the RNIB there are 39,315 registered blind and partially sighted people in London, so such considerations affect substantial numbers of people.

RNIB rates Hackney as the fourth worst in London for dangerous crossings for blind and visually impaired people. This is why DBU members joined Living Streets and Transport for All (TfA) in protesting against Transport for London's plans to remove the pedestrian crossing on Curtain Rd. in Shoreditch. The crossing, near Rivington St is used by people on route to the nearby Moorfields Eye Hospital. Naturally, many of its users are visually impaired.

We welcome the decision by TfL to review this decision, but have a wider concern that a preoccupation with promoting vehicular traffic flow will be at the expense of disabled people and indeed of all pedestrians. This preoccupation is reflected in the decision to remove about 65 pedestrian crossings and shorten crossing times at those that remain. We regret the overall direction of this move and welcome it being reviewed.



A very large majority of respondents wanted to see more Zebra and Pelican pedestrian crossings in Hackney. 89.5% agreed or strongly agreed that more crossings were needed to allow them to cross the road safely and confidently. We therefore call on TfL and LBH to consider reversing the trend towards the elimination of such crossings and to provide more of them and not fewer.



However, given respondents' very strong opposition to the sharing of space between pedestrians and cyclists, the use of Toucan crossings should be avoided in all cases (and their negative impact on disabled pedestrians should be acknowledged and promptly acted on).

On dropped kerbs and textured pavings, most respondents also felt that more of them were needed to allow them to cross the road safely and confidently. 85.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed (60.5% strongly) that more provision in these areas was needed. It is understood that such modifications have costs, but we urge that a consistent programme of phasing in improvements such as these, including the use of contrasting colours of paving should be maintained.



### Obstacles and surfaces

Questions in the survey focused on perceptions of obstacles created by thoughtlessly placed or unregulated street furniture.

However, respondents also raised issues of uneven and broken surfaces as well as other obstacles. For example:

*"Uneven pavements are most dangerous for me;"*

*"Uneven pavements are a big issue for children in wheelchairs - our son hates walking in Hackney roads in his wheelchair – we always have to drive out of area first."*

*"There are a lot of uneven pavements in Hackney. The slope near the Britannia Leisure Centre is far too steep;"*

*"The pavements are uneven which means that I find it hard to drive in a straight line. I tend to drift towards the cars. People do not think. I have found bikes locked to lamp posts and bollards on the*

*path. Bins are located in the same space which narrows down the pavement."*

*"Tree roots a major hazard. Some traffic calming platforms (humps) have one inch kerb to pavement eg Northwold Rd. Broken pavements and roads are hazardous;"*

*"The main problem is the poor condition of roads and pavements in some areas of Hackney e.g. the road across Broadway Market which is becoming as wavy as the sea."*

These concerns on surfaces seem to us to be legitimate and serious ones, which should be addressed in as targeted a way as possible.

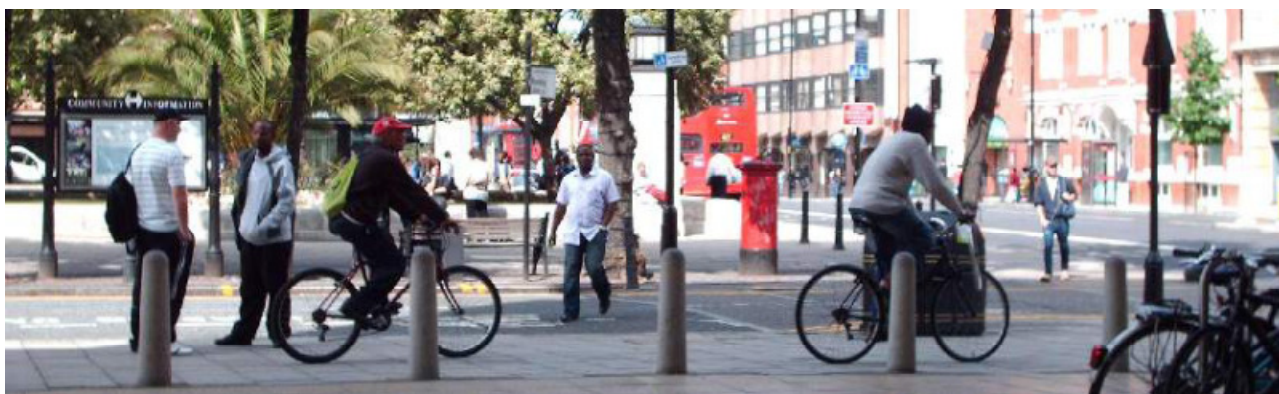
### **Cycle parking and racks**

We welcome the organised provision of cycle parking, which represents an improvement on ad hoc shackling of bicycles to street furniture, creating unpredictable obstacles.

However, we argued in our submission to LIP2 that the default positioning of cycle racks should be on the carriageway and that their positioning on the pavement should be avoided as much as possible. That this concern is shared by many disabled people is evidenced by the fact that 74.4% of the sample agreed or strongly agreed that: *Cycle parking and cycle racks on the pavement are a problem for me.* Of these nearly half of all respondents 'strongly agreed.'



We therefore reiterate our call for cycle parking wherever possible to be positioned on the highway and, in the rare cases where it is located on the footway, to be parallel to the kerb, rather than slanted or perpendicular, so minimising the obstacle presented.



### Cycling on the footway

Those who have taken the trouble to listen to the views of disabled and older people on this matter are not likely to underestimate the strength of feeling. For example at a joint meeting in March 2011 between the City & Hackney Older People's Reference Group and the Hackney Community Engagement Board, police representatives at the meeting were left in no doubt by the uproar that was prompted by this issue, that concern about the failure to enforce the law on this is not a marginal grumble. People with reduced mobility, or with visual or hearing impairments intensely dislike the possibility of cyclists coming up behind them and are all too sensitive to the danger of possibly serious injury arising from a collision.

Comments by survey respondents included remarks such as:

*"Cyclists on pavements are the most dangerous hazard."*





The results of this survey on this point are unmistakably clear. 96.1% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: *I find cyclists on the pavement are frightening and dangerous.* Of these, 81.8% held this view 'strongly.' On this basis we call for the rigorous enforcement of sanctions such as spot fines to reverse the cultural change which has made this practice appear acceptable in Hackney and put an end to it.

One major contributing factor to this anti-social behaviour is the cycle tracks which Hackney Council's Streetscene has designed and located on the footway in several areas of the borough. Contra-flow cycle tracks on existing footways e.g. Lower Clapton Road, have a



profound detrimental effect on disabled pedestrians, aiding and abetting unlawful footway cycling and should be withdrawn. Proposals to introduce any further cycle tracks on footways should be scrapped, given their serious impact on (and loss of facility for) disabled pedestrians. We firmly believe the current focus in Hackney is wrong. We believe pavements should be made safe for pedestrians and roads should be made safe for cyclists.

Similar issues arise from cyclists riding in Hackney's parks, about which feeling is also strong. 81.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: *'Cyclists riding on footpaths through Hackney's parks discourage me and put me off from walking in the park.'* (52% strongly agreed). 3.9% disagreed and 1.3% strongly disagreed.

It seems to us to be wholly unacceptable that such a high proportion of Hackney's disabled people should be deterred from using our parks. We are also puzzled by the apparent change in bye-laws that may have made this possible. Not so many years ago signs clearly advised that cyclists should dismount in parks, with

the exception of a few designated routes. These signs have all now disappeared. Streetscene are unable to shed any light on when and how this decision was arrived at. We call for it to be reversed and a public information campaign be launched to curb this anti-social practice.



We also note, with concern, that signs have appeared in many of Hackney's parks showing the symbol of a bicycle above the symbol of pedestrians. These signs give the impression to park visitors that cyclists have priority over pedestrians and we call upon LBH to remove these signs at the earliest opportunity.

### Public seating

Possibly motivated by a commendable desire to reduce street clutter, or by a less commendable wish to reduce possible sites for street sleeping, public seating appears to be disappearing from London's streets. Hackney Council committed itself nearly ten years ago to "*providing more street seats so older people can rest while out or while waiting for a bus*"<sup>[6]</sup> (the same need obviously applies to many disabled people) but little appears to have been done in this area.

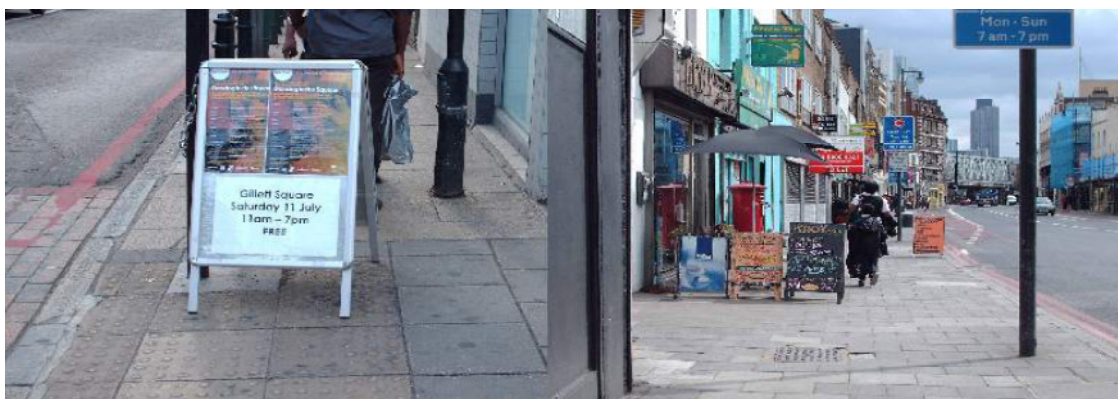
It is important for many disabled people to sit down and rest, in a shop, on the street or in a public park. Local objections on grounds of possible anti social behaviour should, in our view be accorded less weight than the needs of disabled people, should not be sacrificed to meet a policing



<sup>[6]</sup> Well Old Well Valued: Hackney Council's Plan for Older People 2003 p.19

issue. Attention to ergonomic design, backs and arm rests are important to make seating suitable for those who need it most. The presence of arm rests in the middle of seats can discourage use for street sleeping, if necessary (although this is clearly no substitute for more constructive policies to deal with homelessness and alcoholism).

Thus 80.8% of respondents agreed with the statement *'If I knew there were going to be more public seats available to break my journey and rest on, I would walk more often and walk further distances.'* Of these 53.9% agreed strongly. It is our view therefore that higher priority should be given to provision of street seating in any street remodelling.



### **Advertising "A" Boards/Tables and chairs**

Anecdotally, disabled people complain about street obstacles of this kind. Transport for London's decision that minimum footway widths can be, under certain circumstances, only one metre threatens many wheelchair users, parents with double buggies and guide dog users the freedom to walk along the pavement, unhampered by advertising boards and other street furniture. The survey was therefore a useful opportunity to test the strength of this feeling.

There are stronger objections to advertising 'A' boards than to tables and chairs and a much stronger minority accepting tables and chairs on footways than of 'A' boards and similar displays cluttering free passage.

78.2% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: *'Advertising 'A' board signs and shop displays are a hazard and a problem for*



me.' 51.3% of these strongly agreed. 9% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

By contrast, 70.5% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that 'Tables and chairs blocking the pavement are a problem for me,' of which 41% strongly agreed. 16.7% were however neutral on this issue and 12.8% disagreed.

In both cases however those concerned with these issues are in the majority of those surveyed. Respondents commented that:

*"Shop keepers put stuff out on the pavement blocking my way;"*

And that:

*"...pretty bad dumping, shop keepers don't understand and put things out;"*

We therefore call upon LBH to take stricter enforcement measures to remove marketing clutter from the footways and to ensure that restaurant and bar premises are properly licensed for occupying part of the footway and sanctioned if they abuse the terms of licensing. A cautionary word which is subsequently ignored is not sufficient to deal with the hazard presented to disabled people on the pavements. We would prefer to see a zero tolerance approach to unlicensed obstacles on the footway.



## The Roads

### Shared spaces/surfaces

The verdict from respondents on shared spaces/surfaces is unequivocal. 94.8% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'The introduction of Shared Spaces (where walking and cycling and

*car driving are all mixed together in the same space) would put me off walking there.'*

Unfortunately however LBH's Streetscene continues to endorse 'shared surfaces' schemes, which we have lobbied against for example in the plans for redevelopment of the Goldsmith Row area.<sup>[7]</sup>

Guide Dogs have explained the case succinctly:

*"In shared surface street design of the road and its surroundings are altered to cause changes in the behaviour of drivers, encouraging them to be extra cautious as they negotiate the new road layout. Pedestrians, motorists and cyclists need to make eye contact to establish who has priority. However this puts blind and partially sighted people at a serious disadvantage. Blind and partially sighted people, particularly guide dog owners and long cane users are trained to use the kerb as a key navigation cue in the street environment. Its removal, without a proven effective, alternative feature, exposes blind and partially sighted people to greater risk, undermines their confidence, and so creates a barrier to their independent mobility."*<sup>[8]</sup>

Consideration needs to be given to the wider impact shared surfaces and shared spaces have on blind and partially sighted and other disabled people. DBU shares Guide Dogs' position that for shared space streets to work for everyone there needs to be a 'safe space' where vulnerable pedestrians can be confident they will not encounter a vehicle. Unfortunately there is little indication that planners have made significant progress in establishing how this can be achieved. As a result, many disabled people are forced to avoid using shared surface streets.

The advice to those looking to develop shared space schemes must be to clearly delineate footways for vulnerable pedestrians. Currently there is no proven effective delineator other than a kerb with regular dropped kerb crossing points and Guide Dogs most recently commissioned research shows that such kerbs need to be at least 60mm to be effective.

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<sup>[7]</sup> DBU Submission to Goldsmith Row Phase 2 Consultation 2 December 2011

<sup>[8]</sup> [Say No To Shared Spaces Guide Dogs 2009](#)

The concept of shared space (as opposed to shared *surfaces*) in which streets are configured to provide low-speed traffic environments where road vehicles are not dominant, would be welcome. But until such safeguards as we've highlighted are properly incorporated into plans, we call upon Hackney Council to stop commissioning shared spaces and shared surface streets as such schemes currently discriminate against blind and partially sighted people.



On the closure of pavements for road works and the provision of safe and accessible alternative routes, opinion was more evenly balanced, doubtless reflecting differing personal experience. There have been instances, such as the long-running closure of the southern pavement on Dalston Lane for the construction of the Dalston Square development, and the refurbishment of Ridley Road, where alternative routes were poor to non-existent and clearly dangerous situations were created. In many other developments this has been successfully avoided.

36.4% of the sample agreed or strongly agreed (19.5%) that the Council always provided a safe alternative route. 50.7% took the opposite view and 13% were neutral.

Whilst opinion is more evenly divided, it is still the case that more than half of the sample were concerned about such arrangements. We suggest therefore that more scrupulous attention is needed to the design of alternative arrangements for pedestrians during necessary road works.

## Twenty's Plenty

### **Tragically 77 pedestrians were killed on London's streets last year.**

The 5% of streets controlled by the Mayor of London are among the most dangerous, with a quarter of the city's fatal and serious casualties occurring on them.

In the areas of London where 20 mph speeds have been introduced, fatal or serious collisions have been cut by almost half. Introducing a 20 mph speed limit on the streets where we live, play, work and shop is therefore an imperative.

At locations without pedestrian crossings, pedestrians need to identify a gap in the traffic to be able to cross. To cross two lanes of traffic most pedestrians will accept a 4 to 6 second gap but some people need gaps of 10 to 12 seconds due to limited mobility.

The availability of gaps depends on factors like traffic volumes, density, time of day and, crucially, vehicle speeds. Currently pedestrians have to assume that traffic on 30mph roads is going faster than the law allows as 49% of drivers speed in 30mph areas and the police tend not to penalise drivers below 36mph. At 36 mph a five second gap is a distance of 80 metres and a 10 second gap is 160 metres. At 18 mph a five second gap is a distance of 40 metres and a ten second gap is 80 metres.<sup>[9]</sup>

How often is it possible to see traffic clearly for a tenth of a mile (160m) in either direction? Sight lines are often blocked due to parked vehicles at either side of the road, corners and obstructions – it is no wonder that disabled people struggle to cross roads safely in current conditions.<sup>[10]</sup>

It is therefore very welcome that LB Hackney has become the second London Borough, after Islington, to decide that all residential roads in the Borough are to be designated with a maximum speed limit of 20 miles per hour.

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<sup>[9]</sup> [Don't Blame Pedestrians! A 20's Plenty for Us Briefing, March 2012](#)

<sup>[10]</sup> [Department for Transport, Local Transport Note 1/95.](#)

At the January 2012 meeting of the Council, Cllr Feryal Demirci, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, confirmed that the Council was on schedule to complete works to support this scheme by the end of the current financial year i.e. by 31st March 2012.

The London Borough of Camden has linked the traffic lights on Camden High Street to build in a natural “green wave” of 20 mph: travelling faster than this will simply result in the next set of lights the driver approaches remaining red. We recommend this course to Hackney Council as a low cost and effective means of enforcement.

A high proportion of casualties, especially in the more serious categories, are on roads for which the Council is not the highway authority. Policy by TfL and the Mayor of London are therefore key elements.

In the run up to the London mayoral election in May 2012, Living Streets, Sustrans and a coalition of 27 prominent organisations called on the future Mayor of London to commit to introducing 20 mph speed limits on the streets where we live, work and shop. Whilst at least tacit support for the limit on residential roads was indicated in the major manifestos, only the Greens included a commitment to impose the limit on Red Routes and other TfL controlled roads.

## **Modes of Transport**

### **Buses**

Substantial progress has been made in recent years in providing step-free access, wheelchair spaces and ramps in buses. Drivers also receive training in disability awareness and passenger safety. However, anecdotal evidence aplenty is available that buses remain in service without working ramps; the bus driver did not pull over to the kerb, or that the driver pulled away too fast when people had not yet sat down or were still climbing the stairs.

*On the Buses*, a report jointly made by Age UK London and Transport for All in September 2011 highlights the extent of problems older and disabled people face on London’s buses. The report found that:

- one in four buses did not pull right into the kerb
- on 42% of buses passengers were not given time to sit down



- on 48 occasions the wheelchair ramps did not work.



Issues ranging from lack of information for blind and visually impaired people at bus stops; how to make sure those with learning impairments feel safe from harassment or abuse on the bus; and getting hearing loops installed on all London buses.

The verdict on the use of bus ramps from the survey is mixed. 22.4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed (6.6%) that wheelchair access ramps worked well, but almost as many – 31.6% (11.8% strongly) took the opposite view. This must reflect differing personal experiences and bears out the research conducted for *On the Buses*. We are strongly of the view that a bus without a properly working ramp should not be in service.

DBU supports *On the Buses'* demands for:

- **Bus companies to directly involve older and disabled people in bus driver training**

Currently, while all drivers receive some training on disability awareness, there are concerns that the content of this training is inadequate and not sufficiently practical and 'real life'. Bus drivers must be rigorously trained to pull in tightly to the kerb, not move off before they have reached the bus stop; ask buggy users to vacate the wheelchair space and give passengers time to sit down before the vehicle moves.



- **Highway authorities to ensure all bus stops are accessible**

Only 54% of bus stops in London are fully accessible<sup>11</sup> – though this varies from 83% in Kingston on Thames to only 34% in Richmond. Hackney to its credit scores relatively highly in comparison with other London boroughs. TfL have however recently cut their target for making bus stops accessible from 75% to 65% by 2017/ 2018. Transport for All - and DBU - think the target should be 100%.

- **TfL to include the views of older and disabled people in bus design**

Accessible vehicle design – including seats which are high enough that people with mobility impairments can rise from them easily and a wheelchair space large enough that wheelchair and pushchair users need not compete for it – is crucial to buses which everyone can use.

Progress on access to buses has not been assisted by the introduction of the new Routemasters, replacing the much vilified 'bendy buses.' These were not perfect, but they did provide good space for wheelchair users and assistance dogs. The new Routemaster has space for only one wheelchair and many powered wheelchair users complain that even that space is inadequate, thus denying them access to public transport.

A significant proportion of disabled people fear obstacles of this kind and are therefore not using the bus system. Reports on attitudes of drivers and of members of the public are mixed – some are very positive. 27.6% of respondents agreed that bus drivers are generally helpful to disabled people (6.6% strongly), but rather more 36.9% (14% strongly) disagreed.

A slightly more positive impression emerges on the attitudes of the general public. 42% of respondents agreed that other passengers are generally helpful to disabled people in Hackney (8.8% strongly) – but a significant proportion, 38% (13.2% strongly) took the contrary view. It is clear however that public and professional education remain of great importance.

<sup>[11]</sup> TfL 2011/12 Quarter 1 Performance Report October 2011

Hence we would like to see refresher courses for TfL staff on disability awareness, passenger safety and their duty of care to passengers. Bus drivers need to be able and willing to operate all the accessibility features, such as lowering or 'kneeling' the bus, turning on the audiovisual next stop announcements, ensuring the wheelchair spaces are not occupied by buggies which, invariably, can be folded and that wheelchair ramps are always operational, as a condition of the vehicle being in service.

Bus stop facilities have also generally improved, but this improvement is far from universal and coherent targets need to be set to arrive at a situation where all disabled people have a safe, accessible bus stop within easy walking distance or can access 'hail and ride' buses going through residential areas.

63.1% of respondents declared that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (30.3%) with accessibility and facilities at bus stops in Hackney and thought they needed improving. By contrast, only 11.9% indicated they were satisfied.

The need for improvement is particularly clear where there is a conspicuous failure to design an effective transport interchange, such as at the newly built Dalston Junction.

Provision of separate stops dedicated to different routes (e.g. westbound or south-bound), shelters, seating, timetables and countdown signs, wide pavements, public telephones, litter bins and access to alternative transport such as taxi cabs nearby should be elements in a systematic upgrade of bus stops and interchanges to make them accessible for disabled people and generally user friendly to a wider public.

Similar considerations apply to the design of accessible taxi ranks. There are only five TFL appointed taxi ranks in Hackney and none of these are in busy shopping centres such as Dalston or Mare Street.

An increased presence of black cabs in newly fashionable Dalston would justify a rank in the area. We would argue that considerations of physical accessibility should be taken fully into account before provision of a new rank is agreed.

## Dial-a-Ride, Taxicard and Community Transport

There are problems with the reliability and quality of Dial-a-Ride, Taxicard and Capital Call services. Whilst there are management and planning issues involved to meet service user needs more fully, the underpinning issue has to be the provision of ring fenced funding ensuring that an integrated service is sustainable and affordable to service users. There also needs to be much more emphasis on running flexible service-user focused services.

There is also a need for an accessible and transparent assessment and complaints system. Applications, appeals procedures and eligibility criteria need to be systematically based on the Social Model of Disability.<sup>[12]</sup>

### Dial-a-Ride

Views on this service from those who had used it (48.7% had not) were divided. Dissatisfied users however significantly outnumbered positive ones. 15.8% thought the service was good or very good (7.9%), but nearly a quarter, 23.9%, thought it was bad or very bad (9.2%).



The absolute requirement for a full postcode can leave disabled and other vulnerable people floundering. It is hard to see why resort to an on-line map (or a copy of a London A-Z) by operators is ruled out if a better service could be delivered by doing this.

Time is obviously important for a call centre, but one client reported to us spending half an hour on the 'phone to Dial-a-Ride and giving up in despair. The following comment is representative: *"Dial-a-Ride service is poor. The destination postcode is needed when booking, but this doesn't always indicate the actual drop location. (e.g. the community room at Navarino Mansions postcode registers as Navarino Grove which is at least 300 yards*

<sup>[12]</sup> [A concise definition of the social model vis-à-vis other models is provided by Southampton Centre for Independent Living](#)

*from the actual address... Drivers often have to pick up too many people from too many different locations making the journey overlong for people in ill health.*"<sup>[13]</sup>

Another user commented:

*"Dial-a-Ride has got much worse over the last few years and much less flexible. I find it works reasonably well for advance bookings for timed appointments, although it is hopeless for same day and next day bookings. They always insist on bookings being scheduled earlier than is necessary – the computer seems always to know best, but it's not at all smart. It is not a flexible or client-focused service."*

The difficulty is therefore that Dial-a-Ride is not a reliable way of getting to a destination at a particular time unless a booking is made a fortnight ahead and thus many potential users are deterred from using the service. There also appear to be some problems in triage: users complain that they could not secure a booking but buses are touring in their area with very few passengers onboard.

This is absolutely not an argument for cutting the service – people find it very useful. It is an argument for making it more accessible and we therefore recommend more flexibility by operators in agreeing a destination with clients.

Another issue is the management of subcontractors. Computercab will put a job out to a company, which then passes it on to another operator. Similarly, Dial-a-Ride uses cabs, for example from the London Bridge forecourt. In both cases there appears to be no performance management of drivers, who will on occasion abuse this situation.

Furthermore, owing to the chain of subcontracting, there is no way of amending an order – there is no-one to have recourse to, once a job has been passed on down the chain. This is a particularly unfortunate situation for a clientele which includes many people whose condition or state of health may vary unpredictably from day to day. This means that if changes have to be made, the earlier

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<sup>[13]</sup> Chat 1, conducted by Lin Lahm, researching service users views on transport for Commissioning for Personalisation workshop 22.2.12

booking must be cancelled, which means that the service may be lost altogether. If a cab fails to arrive there is no facility, through Computercab, to ascertain the location of the driver.

Another difficulty in the use of cabs is a pervasive application of unrealistic journey times. The service may deliver a client an hour and a half early, or with not enough time (just 20 minutes from Stoke Newington to Euston to catch a train was quoted by one member). The computer system used for estimating journey times appears not to take into account traffic conditions and to be unduly inflexible in its use.

### **Taxicard**

The verdict on Taxicard from the survey is more positive, with 29% of respondents rating it good or very good (6.6%). More than a third of respondents had not used the service and 19.7% rated it bad or very bad (7.9%).

Critical comment is summarised succinctly by the following:

*"Dial a Ride requires long waits Taxicard is a good service – but sometimes they don't come and that is awful."*

*"Taxi card: you have to give them post code. You don't know sometimes..."*

*"The Taxicard service is not reliable, so I do not use it. Dial a Ride is OK when you can get it.."*

*"They often have more time on the clock when they pick you up than they are allowed" [£3.20] "None like this pointed out and a refund is never offered."*

*"When I first used Taxicard you could get from Stoke Newington to Tottenham Court Rd. Now you can only get as far as the Angel" [without exceeding the £10.80 subsidy] "It is cheaper to use a minicab than to use Taxicard and pay the excess to go on to Oxford St from Hackney."*

Comments from DBU members indicate that Taxicard drivers vary in how helpful they are. Some are excellent; some are unwilling to offer or give assistance. Reduction of the maximum subsidy from £11.80 to £10.80 has obviously aggravated the situation described by the respondent above.

On the use of minicabs as substitutes when black cabs are not available, one DBU member had the following to say:

*"The use of minicabs as a supplementary service is most welcome, as it increases the chance of getting a cab and is generally cheaper for passengers, since the charge is based on mileage, rather than a meter. The quality of the service is however very variable. The call takers at the call centre always confirm what help is needed when a booking is made. Some mini-cab drivers claim they know nothing about this, so do not ring the doorbell and do not offer help and dislike being asked for assistance, for example with a folding wheelchair."*

Management of the Taxicard service needs to ensure that mini cab firms that work for Taxicard both train their drivers properly and manage their performance.



### **Community Transport**

Only about a third of respondents had used this service and a further 21% were neutral in their view of it, so the strength of the return must not be overstated.

However 10.5% thought the service was good or very good (5.3%) and 6.6% thought the service was bad or very bad (4%). Some unfortunate experiences must be reflected in the 4% who thought it was very bad, but at least positive experiences outweigh negative ones.



One critical comment from a DBU member was that:

*"I would happily use this service, but waiting times to get through on the phone are so long that I have never managed to make a booking."*

DBU warmly welcomes the promise of greater flexibility afforded by the introduction of the YourCar service by HCT, which offers a low cost accessible alternative to using minicabs and taxis and is being promoted as designed specifically to meet the needs of disabled and other vulnerable people.

### **Travel during the London 2012 Games**

The Olympic Delivery Authority's Accessible Transport Strategy for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games aimed to create a "Games network of accessible transport" bringing together accessible mainstream public transport such as buses, Underground and national rail, complementary transport such as Door to Door and community transport, provision of Blue Badge parking, accessible design of stations and facilities and encouraging walking. Best practice customer service was the aim across all transport modes. The ODA claimed that it intended to use all means of outreach so that disabled people, older people and all other passengers could access detailed information on their journey options.

These aspirations were welcome, but indications that hospital and emergency vehicles were not to be allowed to use the priority lane during the Games cast some doubt on assurances that disabled people would be fully accommodated. If injuries are not dealt with quickly, or fatalities occur owing to traffic jams, then knowledge that the Ambassador of a participating country has been able to get to his or her destination quickly will not calm public outrage. We recommended that priority lanes are available to hospital and urgent medical vehicles.

We were particularly concerned that the removal of pedestrian crossings was being motivated by a desire to speed up traffic flow during the London Games, with consequent permanent loss of amenity to disabled people.

London Games Greenway: We are also strongly opposed to the introduction of mixed cycle/pedestrian footways in areas like Hackney Downs, which reduce the utility of the Park to disabled people. To date, the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games has had a negative effect and, if remedial action is not taken, will likely leave a lasting detrimental legacy for disabled pedestrians in Hackney.

### **Overground and Underground Rail Services**

Hackney has no underground stations, but Hackney residents access the system from links provided by buses and the overground lines.

There are chronic problems with accessibility to both overground and underground systems and it is recognised that remedying these, through the universal provision of lifts and other changes, is a long term investment issue.

On the local overground stations, respondents comments are rather sad:

*"Why do new stations not have lifts ? eg Dalston Kingsland"*

*"Hackney Downs station has no lift and so many stairs that I cannot now use it. It's badly lit on entering;"*

It should be noted however that of 270 Tube stations, only 62 have level access to the platform. And, at the time of writing just ten – less than 4% – are step-free all the way from the street to onboard the train. The chances therefore of the start station, the destination station and any changes all being step-free for a disabled traveller, are miniscule. <sup>[14]</sup>

It cannot be restated often enough or too loudly therefore that inadequate transport provisions make parts of the city a no-go zone for many of London's disabled travellers.

Although commitments have been made by successive London mayoral administrations, there are clear signs that progress is slipping. For example in 2010-11 TfL cut their targets for making

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<sup>[14]</sup> Map of accessible stations published by the London Assembly Transport Committee in November 2011.

stations stepfree to the platform from 29% to 26% by 2017/2018 and cut 650 of the [frontline station staff](#) on the Underground who provide the advice and assistance which enables disabled people to travel.

London Travelwatch researchers found that TfL's claim that its own research that "staff are present in ticket halls in 98% of visits" is highly dubious. Examination of 57 stations for 130 surveys in October and November 2011 showed that in 48% of instances ticket barriers were either not staffed consistently or were frequently deserted and at times unstaffed without an open gate, likely to cause problems for passengers with faulty tickets or Oyster Cards and particular problems and hazards for disabled people.<sup>[15]</sup>

In the wake of the McNulty Report<sup>[16]</sup> natural apprehensions have arisen that a number of Hackney's overground stations are likely to lose some or all of their staff. Hackney seems likely to be the borough which suffers most from this programme of cutbacks. We rely heavily on local railway stations because of the absence of local tube stations. McNulty's recommendations imply that ticket office staff would be cut completely at Homerton, Rectory Road, Stamford Hill, Stoke Newington and Hackney Wick stations, with staff cuts at Hackney Central, Dalston Kingsland and Clapton. This would mean that, for example, people with visual impairments will be unable to ask for and receive directions.

There are also safety implications for disabled people, who are particularly vulnerable to harassment and crime. With already very limited access for disabled people, these stations – after staff cutbacks – would become even more inaccessible. We regard this as unacceptable. A number of respondents to the survey raised concerns about ticketless stations unprompted:

*"There should always be staff at stations to make it safe for us. I tend not to travel by train after 8.00pm because of this - I take the bus instead, even though the train would be more comfortable and faster."*

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<sup>[15]</sup> [Ticket Office Mystery Shop Survey on 23/01/2012](#)

<sup>[16]</sup> [Independent Rail Value for Money Study 19 May 2011](#)

*"Do not close stations or allow them to be unstaffed. Buying tickets at local stations is important as there are long queues at Waterloo. The hours at Haggerston Station are very short for buying tickets."*

*"Many of the disability doors are hard to open and I need help to get through. I walk slowly ... if stations not manned I cannot get through;"*

In DBU's submission to the consultation on the Mayor of London's Accessibility Implementation Plan (Nov 2011) we expressed our regret at slippage in improving physical accessibility of the system and at the general absence of precise targets for implementation of accessibility improvements.

For example there is no mention in the Implementation Plan of provision of accessible toilets at stations. There should be a commitment to make sure that whenever a station is refurbished accessible toilets are provided, as an integral feature of station redesign. There is also a notable absence of Changing Places toilets at any transport facility within Hackney.



The new London Overground East London Line's stations appeared to, quite properly, set new standards of physical accessibility. However, it is worth noting that when DBU members initially embarked on a survey of the new stations from the new Dalston Junction Station the trip was unable to proceed as lifts at the new station were out of order.

We were also disappointed to see that nearly all the stations on this new line were inaccessible to many wheelchair users, with the exception of Dalston Kingsland, Haggerston, Hoxton and Shoreditch

High Street. We were assured that interchanges would be available between the East London Line and the North London Line via Highbury & Islington station but the gap and height difference between the new trains and the newly built platforms at both Highbury & Islington and Canonbury stations deny independent travel and interchanges for wheelchair users.

More than half of respondents were neutral or simply had not used the line. 18.4% agreed or strongly agreed (2.6%) that the line was accessible. However 11.9% took the opposite view and those who did so were stronger in their criticism with 10.5% 'strongly disagreeing.'

Two concrete comments were that no large print maps were available and that ticketing areas needed to be larger, so that those wishing to purchase tickets for the rail system could conveniently access it, thus avoiding long queues at mainline terminals.

We note and welcome TfL's travel mentoring service's provision of training and support to enable disabled Londoners to gain the necessary knowledge and confidence to use all of London's mainstream public transport modes and National Rail services. Nearly 8,000 escorted trips were completed during 2010-11<sup>[17]</sup>

## Parking

Disabled people who use cars feel that there are not enough parking bays dedicated to their use. 81.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed (60%) that there were not. Since disabled people may not be able to be mobile at all without their own transport, our view is that this low cost measure (the only real cost



<sup>[17]</sup> Travel in London Transport for London Report 4 2011



being a small reduction in non-disabled people's parking bays) should be sharply increased in application. We call for more parking bays which are accessible and dedicated to disabled people.

## Conclusion

Perhaps the most apposite general conclusion should be in the words of respondents.

*"They should give existing staff disability awareness training and send mystery shoppers to assess whether staff are helpful to disabled passengers."*

*"Transport officials to recruit a disabled person in their decision making;"*

In short, the direct involvement of disabled people in planning dispositions can often avoid gross inconvenience to disabled people which arises from thoughtlessness and lack of awareness, rather than the absence of major investment.



## **Appendix 1 - Contacts**

### **Capital Call**

Capital Call provides subsidised door to door transport for people with mobility difficulties and/or impairments. It complements the London Taxicard scheme, using minicabs and private hire vehicles in the parts of London where London black taxis are less easy to obtain. It is necessary to be already a member of Taxicard before registering for Capital Call.

[http://www.hctgroup.org/our\\_services/capital\\_call#where](http://www.hctgroup.org/our_services/capital_call#where)

Transport Co-ordination Centre

C/o HCT Group

Ash Grove Bus Depot

Mare Street

London

E8 4RH

T: 020 7275 2446

[info@hctgroup.org](mailto:info@hctgroup.org)

### **Disabled Motoring UK**

Disabled Motoring UK: campaigning charity in the UK that represents the interests of Blue Badge holders and disabled motorists at a national level. Membership costs £20 pa

Ashwellthorpe

NORWICH NR16 1EX

T: 01508 489449

E: [info@disabledmotoring.org](mailto:info@disabledmotoring.org)

<http://www.disabledmotoring.org/>

### **Forum of Mobility Centres**

A network of 17 independent organisations covering England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, who offer professional, high quality information, advice and assessment to individuals who have a medical condition or are recovering from an accident or injury which may affect their ability to drive, access or egress a motor vehicle.

Free phone number **0800 559 3636**. or

[mobility@rcht.cornwall.nhs.uk](mailto:mobility@rcht.cornwall.nhs.uk) or for enquiries regarding the

wider work of the Forum and to contact the Forum Chief Executive,  
**[ed.passant@virgin.net](mailto:ed.passant@virgin.net)**

The Forum of Mobility Centres  
c/o Providence Chapel  
Warehorne  
Ashford  
Kent  
TN26 2JX

### **Freedom Pass**

You can get a **Disabled Person's** Freedom Pass if you:

- Are blind or partially sighted
- Or are profoundly or severely deaf
- Or are without speech
- Or, as the literature states, "have a disability", or have suffered an injury which makes walking more difficult
- Or have no arms or have a long-term loss of the use of both arms Or have a learning "disability"
- Or have been refused a licence "on the grounds of your disability".

### **Living Streets**

Living Streets (formerly The Pedestrians Association) is the national charity standing up for pedestrians. It has a local branch in Hackney.

4th Floor, Universal House  
88-94 Wentworth Street  
London  
E1 7SA  
T: 020 7377 4900  
[info@livingstreets.org.uk](mailto:info@livingstreets.org.uk)  
<http://www.livingstreets.org.uk/>

### **London TravelWatch**

London TravelWatch is the independent, statutory watchdog for transport users in and around London. It speaks for all London transport users on all modes of transport. It looks into [complaints from people unhappy with the response they have received](#) from their [transport provider](#).

London TravelWatch  
6 Middle Street  
LONDON  
EC1A 7JA  
T: 020 7505 9000  
[info@londontravelwatch.org.uk](mailto:info@londontravelwatch.org.uk)  
<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk>

### **Motability Scheme**

For general enquiries about the Car, Scooter and Powered Wheelchair Scheme please contact:

Motability Operations  
City Gate House  
22 Southwark Bridge Road  
London  
SE1 9HB  
Telephone: 0845 456 4566 (8.30am till 5.30pm Monday to Friday)

### **Taxicard**

London Taxicard provides subsidised transport in taxis and private hire vehicles for people who have serious mobility or visual impairment.

You can request an application form by phone, e-mail, post or by downloading the application form from: [London Taxicard](#)

Taxicard  
London Councils  
59½ Southwark St  
London  
SE1 0AL  
T: 0845 415 4156 or 020 7934 9791  
F: 020 7934 9699  
[taxicard@londoncouncils.gov.uk](mailto:taxicard@londoncouncils.gov.uk)

In Hackney the following rules apply:

Trips: 104 per annum  
£8.30/£9.30/£10.80 maximum subsidies per trip  
Maximum run in: £3.40

Minimum Fare: £2.50

Double swiping allowed. This allows Taxicard users to swipe their cards twice in a single trip and use two trip allocations to cover one longer journey

### **Transport for All**

TfA is an organisation of older and disabled people. It was formerly known as Dial-A-Ride and Taxicard Users (DaRT) and was formed through the amalgamation of the user groups of these two services.

Transport for All  
336 Brixton Rd,  
London  
SW9 7AA  
T: 020 7737 2339  
[contactus@transportforall.org.uk](mailto:contactus@transportforall.org.uk)

### **Travel Mentoring Service**

Escorting service to assist disabled people in using the transport system.

020 3054 4361  
[travelmentor@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:travelmentor@tfl.gov.uk).

### **Twenty's Plenty**

Campaigning for a UK wide 20mph limit in residential areas.

<http://www.20splentyforuk.org.uk/>

20's Plenty for Us  
24 Grange Street  
York  
YO10 4BH  
T: 07572 120439  
[anna.s@20splentyforus.org.uk](mailto:anna.s@20splentyforus.org.uk)

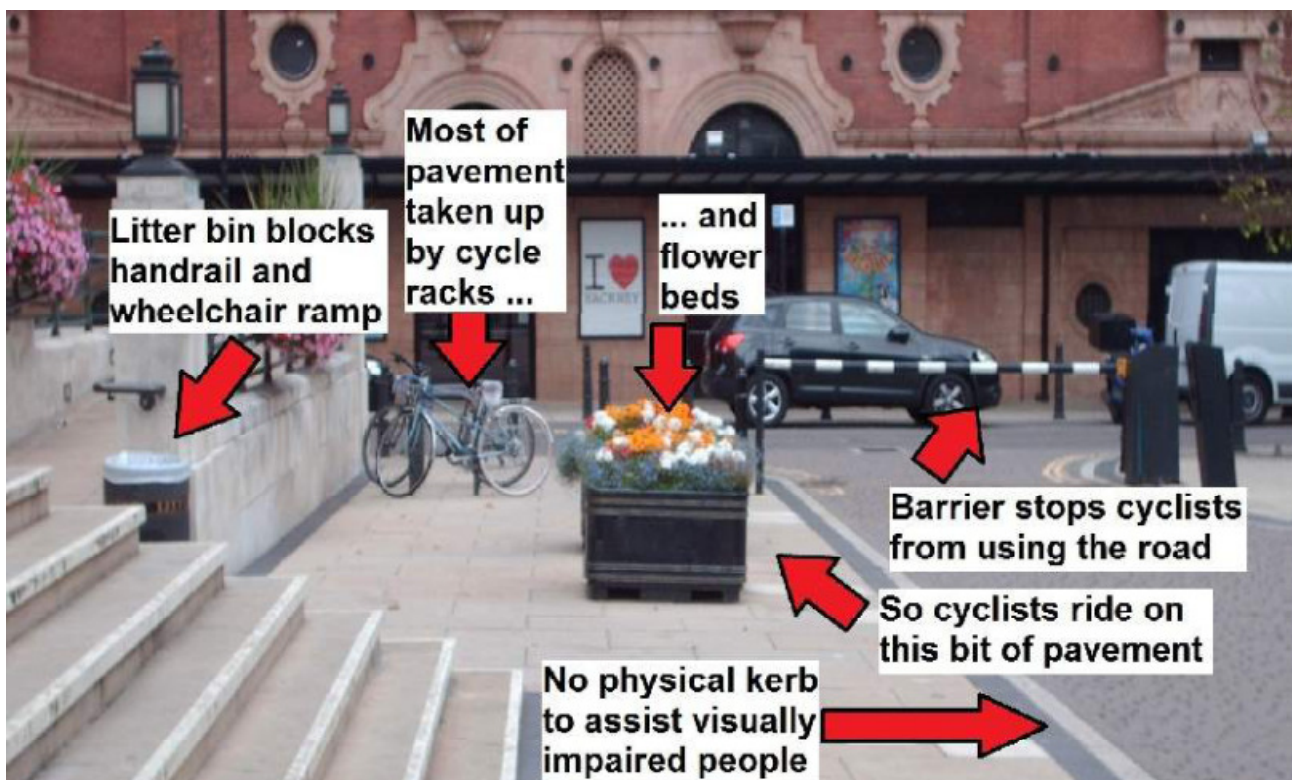
### **YourCar**

Accessible membership-based minicab service.

[www.YourCar.org.uk](http://www.YourCar.org.uk)  
T: 020 7275 2402  
[info@hctgroup.org.uk](mailto:info@hctgroup.org.uk)



HCT Group  
Ash Grove Bus Depot  
Mare St.  
London  
E8 4RH



## **Appendix 2 - Results for survey: Hackney Disability BackUp - Transport accessibility survey – 2012**

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**We want to know what you and other disabled people in Hackney like - and do not like – about getting around in Hackney. What you tell us will help form a report we will give to Hackney Council and Transport for London. This report can then influence their decisions about how they spend money on improving transport facilities in Hackney.**

**Walking\* and using the pavements in Hackney**

**\* By "walking" we include both moving about on foot and using a wheelchair or other mobility aid.**

**Question 1\***

**If I knew there were going to be more public seats available to break my journey and rest on, I would walk more often and walk further distances:**

Strongly Agree	42	53.85%
Agree	21	26.92%
Neutral	11	14.10%
Disagree	4	5.13%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%

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**More about walking in Hackney ...**

**Think about where you walk, or would like to walk, most often.**

**Are obstacles on the pavement a problem for you getting about? If so, which obstacles create difficulties? See below.**

**Question 2\***

**Advertising 'A' board signs and shop displays are a hazard and a problem for me.**

Strongly Agree	40	51.28%
Agree	21	26.92%
Neutral	10	12.82%
Disagree	5	6.41%
Strongly Disagree	2	2.56%

### **Question 3\***

**Tables and chairs blocking the pavement are a problem for me.**

Strongly Agree	32	41.03%
Agree	23	29.49%
Neutral	13	16.67%
Disagree	8	10.26%
Strongly Disagree	2	2.56%

### **Question 4\***

**Cycle parking and cycle racks on the pavement are a problem for me.**

Strongly Agree	37	47.44%
Agree	21	26.92%
Neutral	13	16.67%
Disagree	6	7.69%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.28%

### **Question 5\***

**Finding a safe and easy place to cross to the other side of the street can be difficult for me.**

**For example, there is no crossing space and nothing prevents cars parking close together (nearly bumper to bumper).**

Strongly Agree	48	62.34%
Agree	20	25.97%
Neutral	7	9.09%
Disagree	2	2.60%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%

### **Question 6\***

**I find cyclists riding on the pavement are frightening and dangerous.**

Strongly Agree	63	81.82%
Agree	11	14.29%
Neutral	1	1.30%
Disagree	2	2.60%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%

### Question 7\*

**Cyclists riding on footpaths through Hackney's parks discourage me and put me off from walking in the park.**

Strongly Agree	40	51.95%
Agree	23	29.87%
Neutral	10	12.99%
Disagree	3	3.90%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.30%

### Question 8\*

**The introduction of Shared Spaces (where walking and cycling and car driving are all mixed up together in the same space) would put me off walking there.**

Strongly Agree	52	67.53%
Agree	21	27.27%
Neutral	3	3.90%
Disagree	1	1.30%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%

### Question 9\*

**When there are road works, which force Hackney Council to close the pavement on one side of the road, the Council should always provide a safe and accessible alternative route for disabled pedestrians. Do you agree or disagree that the Council does this?**

Strongly Agree - the Council always provides a safe alternative route	15	19.48%
Agree - the Council always provides a safe alternative route	13	16.88%
Neutral	10	12.99%
Disagree - the Council rarely provides a safe alternative route	23	29.87%
Strongly Disagree - the Council never provides a safe alternative route	16	20.78%

### Question 10

**Any other comments on hazards which make it difficult for you to walk about freely in Hackney, e.g. clutter, broken or uneven pavements, tree roots, too steep a camber [slope], lack of textured and high contrast paving, lack of kerb, pavements are not salted in icy conditions, not enough time**

**to cross signalled crossings? Please add your comments in the box below.**

**Text Answers (15)**

- broken and uneven pavements are very dangerous as people trip over and could have a very nasty fall, break bones. lack of kerbs on pavement. I have to carry/lift walker and it's too heavy. There is no consistency.
- There are not alternative ramps when there are stairs/steps to climb. tree roots. Not enough time to cross signalled crossings. Tree roots and pavements not cleared of wet leaves. Blocked drains causing water and rubbish in the gutters. Electricians working at boxes, not barriered off properly make walking around difficult. Homerton Library had benches outside which were removed. Why? Barnabas Road, although a main thoroughfare for pedestrians going to Homerton Station is very difficult to negotiate
- if you are mobility impaired. Awnings above vegetable displays in front of shops often hang low. hazards presented to me include unlevelled/broken pavements as the put me at risk of falling.
- hazards presented to me include unlevelled/broken pavements as the put me at risk of falling Tree roots are major problem which leads to broken pavements. Some slopes have difficult camber.
- Crossing points are a hazard in quality especially dropped kerbs, some traffic calming platforms have non flat surfaces to pavements The area outside Hackney Town Hall sets a very bad example for the rest of the borough Broken or uneven pavements, tree roots, unsalted pavements in icy conditions, not enough time to cross signalled crossings are all a big hazard to me due to poor sight and poor balance - I fall easily I have requested proper dropped kerb around where I live. These were promised in 2010-11 but (...queried with client) I can't manoeuvre my wheelchair over the existing one. I live in a small side road which is never salted, so when it snows I cannot get out. I use a crutch and am a pensioner so I have to rely on someone else to get provisions.
- The pavements are uneven which means that I find it hard to drive in a straight line. I tend to drift towards the cars. People do not think. I have found bikes locked to lamp posts and bollards on the path. Bins are located in the same space which narrows down the pavement.



- Clutter. tree roots. Pavements not salted. More time at crossing roads at signals.
- Junction of Graham Rd/Mare St not enough time to cross road
- Green man far on opposite side and not in the middle area.
- Probably problem also for deaf and hard of hearing/eye problems too. Can't hear bleep. Not enough space between crossing carriageways with fear of other pedestrians pushing you into road as I am in a wheelchair.
- Uneven pavements most dangerous for me Pavements not salted in icy conditions. Not enough time to cross signalled crossings, especially when cars block the crossing at traffic lights. Confusing crossing signals outside Hackney Empire. Uneven pavements are a big issue for children in wheelchairs - our son hates walking in Hackney roads in his wheelchair - we always have to drive out of area first. There are a lot of uneven pavements in Hackney. The slope near the Britannia Leisure Centre is far too steep.

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### **Using streets and roads in Hackney ...**

#### **Question 11\***

**There need to be more dropped kerbs and textured paving to allow me to cross the road safely and confidently.**

Strongly Agree	46	60.53%
Agree	19	25.00%
Neutral	9	11.84%
Disagree	1	1.32%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.32%

#### **Question 12\***

**There need to be more pedestrian crossings (Zebras, Pelicans, etc) to allow me to cross the road safely and confidently.**

Strongly Agree	53	69.74%
Agree	15	19.74%
Neutral	8	10.53%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%

### Question 13

**In Hackney, there are not enough parking bays dedicated to disabled people.**

Strongly Agree	45	60.00%
Agree	16	21.33%
Neutral	14	18.67%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00%

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**Transport in Hackney**

### Question 14\*

**I have used Dial-a-Ride and the service is:**

Very Good	6	7.89%
Good	6	7.89%
Neutral	9	11.84%
Bad	11	14.47%
Very Bad	7	9.21%
I have never used this service	37	48.68%

### Question 15\*

**I have used Taxicard and the service is:**

Very Good	5	6.58%
Good	17	22.37%
Neutral	13	17.11%
Bad	9	11.84%
Very Bad	6	7.89%
I have never used this service	26	34.21%

### Question 16\*

**I have used Hackney Community Transport and the service is:**

Very Good	4	5.26%
Good	4	5.26%
Neutral	16	21.05%
Bad	2	2.63%
Very Bad	3	3.95%
I have never used this service	47	61.84%

### **Question 17\***

**On buses in Hackney the wheelchair access ramps work well.**

Strongly Agree	5	6.58%
Agree	12	15.79%
Neutral	20	26.32%
Disagree	15	19.74%
Strongly Disagree	9	11.84%
I have never used (or seen) this service in operation	15	19.74%

### **Question 18\***

**In addition to high kerbs throughout, bus stops at interchanges should contain facilities similar to the one on the left (Dalston Junction in the mid-1980s):**

**Separate stops dedicated to different routes (West-bound or South-bound), shelters, seating, timetables and Countdown signs, wide pavements, public telephones, litter bins, access to alternative transport such as taxi cabs nearby, etc. (The interchange on the right – Dalston Junction in 2011 – contains none of these things.)**

**Are you satisfied with accessibility and facilities at bus stops and interchanges in Hackney or do you think they need improving?**

Very Dissatisfied	23	30.26%
Dissatisfied	25	32.89%
Neutral	14	18.42%
Satisfied	8	10.53%
Very Satisfied	1	1.32%
I don't know I never need to use buses in Hackney	5	6.58%

### **Add comments here**

- definitely need more bus stops there, shelters and seats (suitable), they don't shelter you properly need to stop coaches from stopping at bus stops and blocking them off completely  
Some are fine; some are terrible e.g. Broadway Market by London Fields

### **Question 19\***

#### **Bus drivers are usually helpful to disabled people in Hackney.**

Strongly Agree	5	6.58%
Agree	16	21.05%
Neutral	20	26.32%
Disagree	12	15.79%
Strongly Disagree	8	10.53%
I don't use buses in Hackney	5	6.58%

### **Question 20**

#### **Other bus passengers are usually helpful to disabled people in Hackney.**

Strongly Agree	8	10.53%
Agree	23	30.26%
Neutral	20	26.32%
Disagree	12	15.79%
Strongly Disagree	8	10.53%
I don't know I don't travel by bus	5	6.58%

### **Question 21**

#### **Do you have anything else you want to say about obstacles to you getting about independently on the streets in Hackney? Please type your comments in the box below:**

##### **Text Answers (15)**

- In order to be independent, pavement needs to be even with easy to walk surfaces, no bumps or anything that would make me skip or trip and then fall.
- There are no Green areas in Dalston Kingsland. Creating places where people could seat and see the world passed.
- Why are companion badges limited to my resident's parking zone only, why can't I be allowed to park for maximum of 3 hours in other parking zones?
- During the day, residents' zones are 70% empty, yet, even though I hold a companion badge, I have to go and park on a double yellow line just because I don't live in that parking zone? This means that I can't shop in hackney, I have to go to Islington where any blue badge holder can park in any residents' bay.
- the streets are not furnished for the needs of people who are disabled. They are definitely not taken into consideration when

road works are planned We need better enforcement by council officers

- Taxicard is good most of the time, but when it is bad it is very bad.
- Cyclists on pavements are the most dangerous hazard. I like the streets without the railings, much safer. Glad most have gone. There are still some left.
- Bicycles are often tied to a lamp post on the pavement side, especially in Broadway market on a Saturday.
- Town Hall railings by entrance poor and one side only; please improve drainage when improving pavement schemes: joined up thinking; stop placing litter bins at road junctions
- Dial a Ride requires long waits Taxicard is a good service – but sometimes they don't come and that is awful
- Why doesn't LBH employ the services of disabled residents when planning changes to pavements and street furniture? It concerns me that, leading to the Olympics, there will be many changes and accessibility for disabled people will be even harder. they need to reported to get removed right away
- I am a new boy on this block... lifetime in loc govt and engineering planning ; decided about 25 years ago that the key to planning is the pavement; about 15 years ago that we all need help/education to make a reality of PPPP peoples public participation in planning; and about 2 years ago I came out of denial
- i'm 92 ; to join DBU and identify disabled people as core surveyors for planning and aides/carers as the main support; we disabled do the walking; carers to be crucial helpers for the talking campaigning. also; ps my experience is new and limited to one journey out with a walker ; noted some dropped kerb places are filled with rough sensory paving; bad when the walker steers rather less well than a model t ford
- The main problem is the poor condition of roads and pavements in some areas of Hackney e.g. the road across Broadway Market which is becoming as wavy as the sea.
- shop keepers put stuff out on the pavement blocking my way,



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**Using Hackney's Overground and mainline stations ... and nearly the end of the survey!**

**Question 22\***

**The new East London Line is supposed to be "fully" accessible for disabled people. Do you agree or disagree?**

Strongly Disagree	8	10.53%
Disagree	1	1.32%
Neutral	11	14.47%
Agree	12	15.79%
Strongly Agree	2	2.63%
I don't know	34	44.74%
If you think the new line has inaccessibility issues please say why in this text box (below)	8	10.53%

**If you think the new line has inaccessibility issues, please say why in this text box (below).**

- Curious that the admirable open environmental campaign was founded by 2 activists on Dalston Lane; hairdresser and lawyer.....the pavement and bus stop facilities between them are probably the worst in the borough; street scene nor they have done nothing and so far there are no indications that either or both have any plans at all to take advantage of a planning area. Dalston, which following excavations 2 centuries ago made it one of the most enviable planning opportunities in the UK; if I told you the arguments put forward by TfL you would fall about laughing !!!
- Never used.
- No large print maps
- Insufficient knowledge to comment, but can only travel to Stratford from Hackney Central. Can't do up and over to Richmond.
- The ticket areas need to be larger for access to buying tickets for British rail. There are long walks between changes ie Kings cross, Jubilee Line. This is difficult for people with disabilities.
- the signs and map located in the station are not designed for people with impairments floors are slippery and A boards are everywhere Poor signage, slippery surfaces, no indication when lift

is not working at your final destination, no deliniation between cycling and pedestrian areas. No warning that most other stations are inaccessible e.g. Highbury & Islington, where you can't get off.

### **Question 23**

**Hackney's old Silverlink stations (Dalston Kingsland through to Hackney Wick) and mainline railway stations generally have very poor access for disabled people. Some of Hackney's railway stations also now face the threat of being left unstaffed in the future. Please suggest any improvements at these stations which would make life easier and give you greater independence.**

#### **Text Answers (15)**

- lift directly to the trains a ramp whenever there are steps/stairs  
no big gaps between pavement and trains
- Better lighting, improved floor surface, better signing, more shelters and seats
- Non-slip surfaces, chair lifts where it is impracticable to install lifts, better round-the-clock staffing, raised platforms to assist level access.
- I don't use Hackney railway stations, but think that no station should be unmanned. It makes the area too unsafe for its users, especially those who are disabled. Keep them manned.
- They should provide lift to take disabled people to the train
- Unstaffed stations would be impossible and potentially dangerous for disabled people.
- More lifts and escalators
- Hackney Downs station has no lift and so many stairs that I cannot now use it. It's badly lit on entering.
- Hackney central station has a steep stair bridge. No lift has been installed there.
- Many of the disability doors are hard to open and I need help to get through. I walk slowly ... if stations not manned I cannot get through
- A lift: the stairs very hard. You blow short of breath. Some people may help you when you have a bag.
- There should always be staff at stations to make it safe for us. I tend not to travel by train after 8.00pm because of this - I take the bus instead, even though the train would be more

comfortable and faster I have not yet used the line. I hope to do so sometime

- They should give existing staff disability awareness training and send mystery shoppers to assess whether staff are helpful to disabled passengers.
- Never used the service.

### **Question 24\***

#### **What do you use to get around in Hackney?**

##### **(Please tick all that apply)**

On foot	43	13.27%
Wheelchair	16	4.94%
Other mobility aid (cane etc)	26	8.02%
Motorised mobility scooter	5	1.54%
Cycle	2	0.62%
Motorbike	0	0.00%
Bus	58	17.90%
Train	24	7.41%
Taxi	37	11.42%
Private Car	29	8.95%
Hackney Community Transport	9	2.78%
Dial-a-Ride	22	6.79%
Taxicard	35	10.80%
Hospital transport	18	5.56%
Other (state below)	0	0.00%

### **Question 25**

#### **What other improvements you would like - in Hackney – to make transport more accessible for disabled people?**

##### **Text Answers (15)**

- A reliable in turning up dial a ride. Easier to book and find a slot on dial a ride helpful drivers that help people to get on and off taxis - dial a ride. there are very rude drivers.
- More bus stops. having only 1 stop servicing many different routes means that you often miss buses as you are too slow getting to your bus at the end of a long queue of buses. More up to date bus and train maps needed. I am still not aware of all the routes.
- I would like to see, parking bays made available for people who who need them. I am concerned that the street furniture is not adequately placed so as to enable people who use wheelchairs

can move around freely. Bustops are still not adequately suited for the public to mount and dismount the buses.

- 20 mph throughout all roads, better enforcement of pavement cycling, withdrawing all shared spaces.
- The Council should create more disabled bays and kerbs to help the disabled people. Hackney should provide transport for the disabled people.
- More poster on the bus for everyone to see so elderly and disabled could be able to sit on public bus
- Would like to use trains - especially for long journeys. Can't get Dial-a-Ride to take me or is too expensive by taxi but the stairs are a challenge and sometimes put me off,
- Enough time to leave a bus if not on one, especially on 236 bus as doors aren't next to driver for exit.
- More disabled seats on the bus or train
- The Taxicard service is not reliable, so I do not use it. Dial a Ride is OK when you can get it. Buses are usually packed or have pushchairs which the driver will not insist the parent folds, so waiting for a bus can be up to an hour.
- Transport officials to recruit a disabled person in their decision making Bus drivers should be trained to wait for passengers to sit down before setting off. Able bodied passengers should not sit in the disabled seats at the front of the bus. The single decker buses are especially turbulent for the elderly due to them being more nifty than double deckers
- The transport we use is rarely on time. It is very hard to miss/wait long for appointments and other things just because we have not the option
- Do not close stations or allow them to be unstaffed. Buying tickets at local stations is important as there are long queues at Waterloo. The hours at Haggerston Station are very short for buying tickets.