

# Disability Backup

Welcome to Disability Backup's Newsletter

*Empowering, consulting and informing disabled people*

## Hidden in plain sight

### Inquiry into disability-related harassment

The Equality and Human Rights Commission report, Hidden in Plain Sight, says that many disabled people have come to accept harassment – including verbal and physical abuse, theft and fraud, sexual harassment and bullying – as inevitable. Evidence from an inquiry by the EHRC shows that disabled people regularly experience harassment or abuse to the level defined by police as a hate crime. A culture of disbelief is preventing public authorities from tackling it effectively. The inquiry outlines systemic failings in the way that public authorities have dealt with disability harassment including a detailed examination of ten cases of severe abuse, nine of which resulted in the death of

the victim. The real concern is that while the victim continues to live in fear, many perpetrators escape the consequences of their actions.

Disabled people in the UK face harassment, insult and attack almost as a matter of routine, while a "collective denial" among police, government and other public bodies means little is done to challenge the situation.

In order to stop such heinous crimes we need to educate the public about hate crime. The wider community needs to take responsibility. If you witness an incident, report it, and encourage the victim to do likewise, as the more these crimes are reported the more awareness is raised. Recognition of the scale of the problem is a start but much more needs to be done.

**Next forum meeting:**

**Speaker from Equality & Human Rights Commission on Hidden in Plain Sight Report.**

Thursday  
24th November 2011  
3pm-5pm  
St Luke's Church  
Homerton Terrace  
E9 6RT  
Buses: 30,236,276, W15  
Limited parking available

Help with transport on request for people with mobility difficulties - but please use Taxicard or other if you can!



## **Sports Disability Forum**

A meeting of the Sports Disability Forum was attended by DBU member Anthony and support worker, Carol, to discuss a sport and physical activity strategy for disabled people in London 2010-2015 (Inclusive and Active 2).

Hosted by Hackney Council, the Forum intends to build on previous work, by bringing together stakeholders in the Borough to ensure that significant and sustainable change is achieved to include local disabled people.

Inclusive and Active 2 sets key themes and identifies specific opportunities to increase the number of disabled people participating in sport and physical activity at the level of their choice. The success of the strategy relies on a range of organisations across the sport, health and disability sectors supporting the

strategy.

It aims to identify 'best practice' and implement it, which Hackney is already seeking to do in partnership with Greenwich Leisure.

The organisations present at the Forum discussed the key actions and five themes under headings such as changing the culture; inclusive activity; more people more active; diversifying the sector and skilling the sector. An action plan was created and a steering group set up to give this project continuity.

A communal planner is to be introduced which would ensure that everyone is aware of what other groups are doing and so create a more cohesive borough partnership. On behalf of DBU, Anthony pointed out that facilities and access to them must be safe and consistent.

## **Commissioning For Personalisation**

Eve Oldham, Joint Commissioner for the Primary Care Trust and Hackney Council, has attended the last two DBU Forums to report on progress towards introducing individual budgets for 'personalisation' of services and to seek our views.

Phase 1 of Commissioning for Personalisation (C4P) for Carer and Advocacy services is now progressing to the procurement stage and initial invitations to bid have now been advertised.

The formal consultation stage for Phase 2 for Health and Wellbeing services finished at the end of October. Initial proposals will now be circulated and discussed at network and other meetings. An invite-only network workshop is planned

for 10th November (Disability Backup leads are invited) to discuss priority options in a focused and detailed way. The review of our Meals on Wheels service continues as does that of the Community Resource Team and the Happy & Healthy in Hackney project – this mainly involves consulting with users and volunteers.

The views of Disability Backup on health and wellbeing services for disabled people are important and if members wish to feedback to Eve directly, please contact her on:  
eve.oldham@chpct.nhs.uk

## **London Transport Accessibility**

DBU has made a submission to the Mayor of London's consultation on his plan to implement greater accessibility on London's transport systems. Some initial notes were circulated to DBU members in October. John Thornton led on the submission. It argued that it is futile to improve the infrastructure of London's bus, tube and train network if it is made

impossible to reach those facilities, due to the inaccessibility of London's streets and footways.

It went on to point out that minimum footway widths of 1 metre are inadequate for a blind person accompanied by an assistant, a person using a modern wheelchair with camber wheels - or even a parent using a double buggy and that cycle racks on the footway should be avoided wherever possible and, in those rare cases where they prove necessary, should be placed parallel to the kerb and not perpendicular.

It also expressed concern about the introduction of Shared Streets and shared spaces in London. The unpredictable behaviour of cyclists and motorists in such shared spaces denies many disabled people the right to use these spaces.

The introduction of the Countdown visual display system throughout the London

bus network was welcomed, but press button audio info at bus stops to help visually impaired people were also called for – not just expensive mobile phone systems. Similarly the 3-button Help points on the London Transport system are welcome, but need to be supplemented by screens for D/deaf travellers.

A-board signs were criticised and even more forceful signage on buses, advising of the space for wheelchair users proposed. Bus drivers' training manuals should encourage them to be firmer with passengers to ensure the space for wheelchair users is made clear, when required.

Staff cuts at London's railway stations are a matter of great concern, both for passengers who require assistance on a daily basis, and in the event of an accident or terrorist attack.

Many more points are made in the submission, the full text of which is available from DBU on request.

## Disability Capital conference 2011

A number of DBU members attended this year's Disability Capital Conference, hosted by the Mayor of London. Returning after a two year absence, the Conference offers disabled people a chance to engage with senior policy makers and ran in conjunction with the Naidex South show for equipment and services for disabled people.

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson and Maria Miller MP, Minister for Disabled People, led the line-up of policy makers and Paralympic athletes who attended. The Conference explored a range of disability issues from availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles in public transport to housing, debt management and volunteering.

Accessible Transport prompted a lively discussion, with contributors making clear that more needs to be done to make to ensure equality of access for disabled people on London's transport networks, including air, rail, bus and taxi services.

Both the Minister and the Mayor faced angry heckling from disabled people. They were angry about government cuts to disability benefits and services and many were indignant when Maria Miller suggested there was widespread abuse of the Disability Living Allowance.

The conference was an opportunity to raise issues and to put questions to the Mayor and Maria Miller and they endeavoured to answer at least some of them.

## Hackney transport survey

DBU is conducting a survey on transport facilities in Hackney. To take part, email [hackneydisabilitybackup@yahoo.com](mailto:hackneydisabilitybackup@yahoo.com) with the word 'survey' for a form. Or text the number below giving postal address. £25 shopping voucher to a lucky respondent, picked at random



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c/o Age UK Hackney Text: 07810 771692  
22 Dalston Lane  
E8 3AZ

[caroldavis@ageukhackney.org.uk](mailto:caroldavis@ageukhackney.org.uk)

## Pharmacy Survey closing date 30th November

Help is still needed with the Pharmacy Accessibility Survey! We cannot bring about change without your contribution. Questionnaires available from DBU or Hackney LINK.

## SCAPEGOAT: with KATHERINE QUARMBY 26th November 2011

10:30 am - 13:30pm  
TUC Congress House,  
Great Russell Street,  
London, WC1B 3LS  
'Scapegoat: how we are failing disabled people in Britain', was published by Portobello Press on 6 June. It's the first British analysis of anti-disabled violence. Katharine Quarmby is a writer, journalist & film-maker specialising in social affairs, education, foreign affairs and politics. The programme for the day is free & includes morning tea and coffee & a buffet lunch/reception. There will be an introduction by the Chair followed by Katherine Quarmby, Panel discussion and questions from the audience.