



Disability Backup September 2012

Welcome to Disability Backup's Newsletter
Empowering, consulting and informing disabled people

Disability Backup Forum reconvenes

DBU has a rather diverse forum this month as we have representatives from the First Response Provider Team (FRPT), Hackney Community Transport and London TravelWatch.

The First Response Provider Team (FRPT) is the first point of contact for accessing Hackney social services. Supporting people to regain and maintain their independence is one of its key objectives. The FRPT will talk to members about the service that they provide for adults who live in the community or are waiting to be discharged from hospital.

Chris Beckwith from Hackney Community Transport (HCT) will talk to members about local accessible transport. The service provided by HCT is extremely valuable, but not without problems. Members of DBU want HCT to be aware of the difficulties they encounter on a day to day basis in using the service. We want more flexibility and better understanding of access issues.

London Travel Watch provides a voice for London transport users in and around London. Cllr Vincent Stops will talk to members about the service that they provide for transport users who are unhappy with the way a transport provider has dealt with a problem.

September Forum Meetings

Direct Payments Forum

September 26th 2012
11.30am to 1.30pm

Speakers:

Caroline Nelson
Disabled People's User Led
Organisation

&

Representative from Charging
Team
Hackney Council

Disability Backup Forum

2.00pm—4.00pm

Speakers:

Mohammad Mohit
Adult Safeguarding
Chris Beckwith
Hackney Community Transport
&

Cllr Vincent Stops
London Travel Watch

Venue

St Joseph's Hospice
Mare Street
E8 4SA

Help with transport on request for
people with mobility difficulties.

Coming Soon - Young People For Inclusion (YPFI)

Young People for Inclusion (YPFI), is a campaigning and advocacy group for disabled people based in Camden. In July DBU members John Thornton and Scott Dyce, together with Carol Davis, met with Rob Danson the YPFI Project Coordinator.

Rob told us that YPFI worked with young people aged 13 to 25 and its mission is to improve the lives of young disabled people in London. It empowers disabled young people to articulate their views and bring about change by training young disabled people to be more aware of the issues affecting them and help improve their confidence. It wants to help disabled people to maximise their potential!

YPFI is funded for five years by the Big Lottery. Now in its second year, its funding allows it to foster the growth of other groups like itself across London - and that is exactly what we hope to do in Hackney. We are very excited about the opportunity as we believe that this is a stepping stone to reach young people living in Hackney and DBU can benefit from learning more about YPFI's activities such as the Physical Access, Attitude, Communication And Training scheme and Speak Up 4 Positive Action programme.

We are therefore enlisting the help of the Children & Young People's Providers Forum and of Mustafa Korel, a local Hackney resident and staff member of the Sheila McKechnie Foundation (which informs and supports campaigners, helping them set their own agenda, for example in the Shout Out! campaign for young people).

Mustafa has considerable experience working on the empowerment of young people and is enthusiastic about the chance to establish a YPFI in Hackney.

Next month we hope to launch a Hackney YPFI which will be supported by the Camden YPFI volunteers who have over two years experience in hand. We hope to run an effective version of this already up and running service which we feel has made a significant change to the live of young people living in Camden.

"If you would like to know more about the work that YPFI is doing you can visit their website: www.ypfi.org.uk. YPFI can also be followed on Facebook

The Olympics and Paralympics: My experience and the way it has inspired Me

The performance by Olympic and Paralympic athletes has left a profound effect on my life. The experience has made me look at myself. I have thought about the many complaints that I have made about my arthritis, but when I reflect about the past couple of weeks and the effort that athletes have made I am proud.

The Paralympians in particular have inspired me and given me a new lease of life. I am very proud of all of them and the contribution that they have made to the 2012 Olympics.

I realise that I can do a little more and say to myself, just walk briskly.

Henrietta Onipede (DBU member)

Free Swimming in Hackney

Disabled people and their carers can swim for free at pools across the borough, all year round. There is also an opportunity for disabled people and their carers to learn to swim or gain more confidence in the water for free.

Street Furniture Appeal

The safety and accessibility of Hackney's streets for disabled people is a real concern for Disability Backup.

We are appealing to members to contact us if you see signs, tables and chairs, bike racks, rubbish, trolleys, etc which block the pavement on a regular basis and let us know where they are, when they were spotted, who is creating the obstruction and why it is a nuisance.

Then we can feed back complaints to the Council and raise the matter when we send a delegation to a full Council meeting. It will also be useful for our October Forum meeting which will be looking at Streetscene Furniture. Your contribution is always appreciated please call Carol on 020 72415908/07779 501178 or email caroldavis@ageukhackney.org.uk

Access to Culture and Leisure

DBU needs your help to complete our Access to Culture & Leisure checklist.

Hard copies are available at forum meetings, you can also get forms on request by calling Carol on 02072415908 or by emailing caroldavis@ageukhackney.org.uk

Meeting with LBH Equalities Officer

Karl Farrell, John Thornton and David Holland met with Andrea Cronin, an officer in Hackney's Equalities team. This was a follow up meeting to one in March

Andrea provided a briefing on progress on the single equality strategy and allied issues. A lot of this is about getting Hackney Equalities Act 2010 compliant with regard to its own workforce and getting improvements in the collection of information. This process will extend to contacts with service users through the use of the 'citizens' index' and the development of 'client management systems' allowing the logging of all contacts and including information where relevant on impairments. This is rather long term, since in order to show trends a time period (like 5 years) is needed.

The DBU delegation was particularly keen on pressing for our involvement in staff training on disability equality awareness. Although training budgets are under pressure, it was agreed that training would be improved if members of DBU were directly involved, either leading or contributing to sessions. Not only can we give a service user viewpoint but also we can speak about the issues involved in disability equality awareness from real personal knowledge.

We also raised the need for procurement procedures to be included in any equalities strategy and the need for equalities monitoring of complaints procedures. Some information on these issues is available at <http://www.hackney.gov.uk/complaints.htm> and <http://www.hackney.gov.uk/equalities-knowing-our-communities.htm>

I Could Not Believe My Ears!

It was Monday evening, the 27th August, the end of the second day of Notting Hill Carnival. I had spent all day jumping behind a float in a costume band and now I was starting on my journey home. It was past 8pm as I walked, still wearing my fancy sailor suit, towards Latimer Road station with a couple of other masqueraders. For a blind person to wear a costume in the carnival parade is a bit like, well, masquerading in someone else's very visual thing; but I've done it for more than twenty years and this year it had been good.

I thought to myself as we walked through a not too familiar area that I would pick out where the station was by the noise of the passing trains; but I heard none and I was starting to worry that the trains had been cancelled for some reason. Then we were at the station, going through the barrier and up to the platform. Our train slipped quite quietly into the station and stopped before us. We got aboard and then I realised that jumping up behind that float with the amplified music had taken its toll on my hearing.

It was not as if I could hear nothing: I could converse with people next to me and hear the train doors opening and closing but it was all a bit softer. I realised that I would have to continue my journey more

carefully and concentrate on what I was doing. At Kings Cross we got off to change trains. I was going north and my colleagues headed south. I knew my way from here but I needed my ears for anything that moved, whether they were vehicles or people.

I had no trouble hearing the noisy new Victoria line trains and the Highbury and Islington interchange was not too busy. Standing on the Overground platform though, I might have missed my train to Dalston Kingsland, but I just managed to catch the high-pitched whine as it came in and the bleep of the opening doors. Just two stops and I was off the train, up the steps and emerging onto Kingsland High Street. I just needed to take a bus and then a short walk home.

Standing by the bus stop I thought, there are four routes, where were those buses? The traffic seemed quite light, or was it just quiet? Then a bus did eventually come along. But, hey, that driver was stopping his bus several metres before the stop and I cursed him as I moved down the road to find the front door. There was a slight swirl of some people around me and I found the entrance. I stepped onto the bus and pushed my Freedom Pass tentatively forward to bleep my card; but a lady who didn't sound too indignant at all said "You've come in the back door". Feeling a bit ashamed but also amused at my error, I walked to the front of the bus and pressed my pass on a real inanimate card reader. ...

Fortunately for me, my hearing was back to normal in a couple of days. But, for all I know, the lady on the bus may still be recovering.

Karl Farrell (DBU member)

Disability Backup

c/o Age UK Hackney

22 Dalston Lane, E8 3AZ

E-mail: caroldavis@ageukhackney.org.uk

Web: www.disabilitybackup.org.uk

Tel: 020 7241 5908

Mob: 07779 501178



DBU days

Mon: 1.30pm—5.30pm

Wed: 9.30am—5.30pm

Thurs: 9.30am—5.30pm

