

Streetscene in Hackney

The safety and accessibility of Hackney's streets for disabled people is a real concern for Disability Backup members. DBU's October Forum meeting will be looking at Streetscene, in relation to the accessibility problems that disabled people encounter, such as lack of dropped kerbs and accessible crossings, street furniture obstructing the footway, traffic speeds, lack of public seating, cyclists riding on the pavement, etc...

Cllr Feryal Demirci will be attending our October Forum. Cllr Feryal Demirci is the Hackney Cabinet member responsible for Streetscene and therefore street furniture, design and layout. Cllr Demirci has met with DBU members and a cycle of meetings with officers has taken place over the past year. Feryal will update the forum on recent developments and respond to queries.



Cllr Feryal Demirci

DBU believes that priority should be given to vulnerable pedestrians and has raised concerns about cycle racks that are thoughtlessly placed, obstructing footways and the lack of textured paving at crossings. We also want more involvement in the planning and designing of our streets as we feel that problems could be avoided with a little thought..

Brenda Peuch from Hackney Living Streets will also be attending the Forum. Brenda will tell us about Living Streets the work that it does and its efforts to make our streets safer.

Street furniture, such as A boards, can be a real nuisance to disabled people. Also, some of our members have reported problems getting in and out of their vehicle as a result of obstructive furniture. This forum is the ideal opportunity to talk to Cllr Demirci about your concerns.

October Forum Meeting

October 24th 2012
2.00pm—4.00pm

Speakers:

Cllr Feryal Demirci—Hackney Council
Brenda Peuch — Hackney Living Streets

Venue

Our Lady and St Joseph Kingsland Hall
100a Balls Pond Road,
London
N1 4AG

Buses: 30, 38, 56, 277

Help with transport on request for people with mobility difficulties.

Going to the Games

In the first of a two-part article, DBU member John Thornton describes some of the experiences he and other disabled people had at the London Games venues this summer.

Many years ago my sports were swimming and fencing (I was lucky enough to receive coaching in both sports by Olympians) so I looked forward to watching them both at the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Unfortunately I couldn't get tickets for any of those events. So I was disappointed to see - when I saw them on TV instead - rows and rows of empty seats in the stadiums.

However I did get the chance to visit the Park and Excel and watch several other Paralympic Games events there. The sport was great and the atmosphere in the crowd was fantastic too. But I was disappointed by the lack of preparation by LOCOG to accommodate disabled people.

On my first visit to the Park none of the Games Makers (GMs) we first met knew where (or even what) the "Mobility Unit" was. We were herded through security like cattle and there was no signage to the mobility unit, just to a golf buggy which had no access for a wheelchair. (I later learned that only 1 in 3 of the Park golf buggies had wheelchair access.)

It was a very long walk from Stratford station, through the entrance into the Park. On our first visit it was pouring with rain and the only shelter was a projection from the Aquatic centre over the walk way. But a GM stood there - himself sheltering from the torrential rain - and, with a loud megaphone he screamed at us that this was not a shelter and to keep moving forward.

At security we'd been told to dispense with large umbrellas and the water from our bottles and that the bottles could be replenished from fountains inside the Park. My colleague needs a ready supply of water so we looked but there was no signage to the fountains. Eventually we found the long queue to a fountain, which was hidden away behind a large, prominently signed 'proud to be Visa' ATM.

We wanted to get our bearings and looked for a guide map. If you didn't mind getting neck strain, had photographic memory and could work your way through the crowds to get to it, there were a few large maps placed high up in odd locations in the Park.

But if, like us, you actually wanted an accessible map in your hand ... forget it! The only map available was in small print (a mixture of 9pt and 11pt text), low contrast, inaccurate and very poorly designed.

The GMs we met were most willing to be helpful but woefully ignorant. When we asked for a larger print map they suggested we visit a mobility "Hub" and tried to show my friend where it was on the small print map (which was amusing but not a lot of good). Then, at an Information tent, they said they'd ring through to the Mobility Hub and ask for someone to pop down with a large print map (or let us know if they don't print one). We waited over half an hour after which someone from the Hub allegedly phoned and said to the GMs "sort it out yourselves". Obviously miffed at this poor treatment one of the GMs kindly set off with us and we walked and wheeled around, asking at least 6-7 other GMs and security guards where the Mobility Hub was. Each would either shake their head or vaguely point in one direction,

only to be told sometime later by another GM to go back the way we came.

Eventually, giving it up as a bad job, we set off for an entirely different section of the Park where our heroic GM definitely knew there was a Mobility Unit. Guiding us through a dense commercial section, we found the toilets section and, yes, you guessed it, tucked away beside the toilets, was a Mobility Unit tent. There was no directional signage to the Unit and only tiny signage on the tent itself.

To be continued....

Living in Hackney

Hello everyone!

We have our Leisure Report to produce, so mystery shopping is essential – please keep the reports coming or get a form from David or Carol.

From doing mine, I had the idea it would be great to produce a report of our experiences of life as it is for us on a daily basis, from doing every day things to our leisure, or visits to family or even holidays.

Could you find the time to put pen to paper and describe either a day or longer in your life ? Its ups, its downs and all its problems and its effects on you both before and after ?

For example include the planning that has to be undertaken and the after effects on your health and your time. Many people have to rest for a day or two after making an effort to do something.

Please get in touch with Andrea on 07780678279
rawlingsandrea@googlemail.com

Public Education on Road Safety

Streetscene officers and consultants 'Serious Comedy' asked local residents at the beginning of October what they thought was important to get across in a new public education project. 'Serious Comedy' were involved to design entertaining and immediate messages that would get across to people and not turn them off.

DBU members joined others in a chorus asking for a public education campaign (and enforcement) to put a stop to cycling on pavements. Encouraging people to respect one another was another theme. There were also concerns about bus drivers not drawing up close enough to kerbs and the removal of street railings – even when large dents in them from collisions show that it is dangerous to pedestrians to remove them.

We also called for people who use services to be directly involved in training and that 'mixed groups,' such as 'bus drivers together with disabled or older people and younger people together with older people could help people understand and respect one another.

YPFI Hackney update

The YPFI Hackney Launch will take place on October 29th. The Launch will involve YPFI Camden joining with YPFI Hackney at The Huddleston Centre in the afternoon with young disabled teenagers aged 13 years plus.

This is all very exciting as it will be our first opportunity to meet with young disabled people to inform them about our plans for YPFI Hackney, but most of all an opportunity to give young disabled people in Hackney a voice.

Direct Payments support service

There can be problems with Direct Payments, so Hackney Council provides a Direct Payments Support Service available to people who receive them and to anyone who is interested and wants to find out more.

The Support Services provide information and guidance on all aspects of receiving and managing Direct Payments.

If you have any questions or would like to know more about Direct Payments please call: 0208 356 2354

Care Provision/Self Directed Support workshop

Speaker
Odette Messiah
Age UK Hackney

Weds, Oct 31st 2012
11.00am—12.30pm

**Do you get care from social services?
Are you happy with the service?
Do you want to talk about it?**

Woodberry Down Elders Room,
Newnton Close Sheltered Housing Block
456-484 Seven Sisters Road,
Hackney N4 2RF

BUSES 254 , 253, 279, 259

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

Text: 07779 501178



DBU days

Mon: 1.30pm—5.30pm

Wed: 9.30am—5.30pm

Thurs: 9.30am—5.30pm



12th OPRG Annual Event

Ending Loneliness and Isolation Amongst Older People

Tuesday, October 30th 2012

1.30pm—5.00pm

The Urswick School, (formerly Hackney
Free & Parochial School) Paragon Road
Hackney Road, E9 6NR

Speakers

Jo Moriarty, Research Fellow
Kings College

Eve Oldham, Joint Commissioner Older
People's Services

For more information please call

David Holland on 020 7241 5906

Website: www.speakuphackney.org



Health Talk

Epilepsy and Tuberculosis (TB)

30th November 2012

10.30am till 12.30pm

Mare Street Hostel, 146 Mare Street
Hackney London E8 3SG

Contact Leo Mansell to book your
place now! 0780 572 3310 (SMS only)

Events in BSL @ Geffrye Museum of the Home

Georgian versus Victorian Christmas

Tues 4 December 2012

6.15pm Talk and 7.15pm craft workshop
Geffrye Museum, Kingsland Road, E2
8EA

Tel: 02077399893