

Disability Forum reconvenes

Our Autumn Forum will take place Wednesday, September 25th 2013 in the evening.

Our speakers include Liz Hughes from Healthwatch Hackney, Cllr Guy Nicholson cabinet member for Regeneration and co-chair of Team Hackney's Economic Development Partnership and a representative from Hackney Council's Home Care and Meals at Home review team.

Liz Hughes will talk to members about Healthwatch Hackney which is the new consumer champion for health and social care. Liz is keen to promote Healthwatch Hackney and invite members to register and get involved with it. Healthwatch is also looking for volunteers to help it collect comments, become mystery shoppers, and to help with admin and events. If you would like to take part in this - please get in touch!

You can email comments to liz@healthwatchhackney.co.uk, phone on 020 7923 8351, or send them through the website www.healthwatchhackney.co.uk

Cllr Guy Nicholson has lead responsibility for promoting investment into Hackney and bringing about a viable regeneration of Hackney's neighbourhoods and town centres. He is also responsible for the socio economic and cultural development of the borough, which includes increasing employment opportunities for Hackney residents and making the most of the legacy of the 2012 London Games.

Members of DBU want to talk to Guy about employment opportunities for disabled people living in Hackney.

We also have a speaker coming from the Home Care & Meals at Home review team to talk to members about major changes to the service which they hope to undertake



Cabinet Member, Cllr Guy Nicholson

September Forum Meeting

Wed 25th September 2013
6.00pm—8.00pm

Speakers

Representative from Home Care & Meals at Home Team

Liz Hughes—Healthwatch Hackney

Cllr Guy Nicholson—Cabinet member for Regeneration

Venue

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

Buses: 30, 38, 56, 277

Help with transport on request for people with mobility difficulties.

One Day: Two Meetings

by Karl Farrell

I am a member of both Hackney Living Streets and our own Hackney Disability BackUp. I recently attended two quite different meetings in one day. The first was a workshop in Hackney and the second was an evening open meeting called by the Transport and Salaried Staffs' Association (TSSA) which represents managers on the London and national railways.

Hackney Council has drafted a three year Road Safety Plan. They brought together various interested local parties in a morning workshop to review this draft, which they have a statutory duty to produce. Along with the police, the fire service and council officers, there were representatives from cycling interests, Living Streets Hackney (me) and Disability BackUp (John).

The draft policy document made great mention of the needs of cyclists, mentioned pedestrians rarely and implied that pedestrians of all ages should keep out of the way of traffic. John and I felt we had to try to redress this obvious imbalance against pedestrians. Imagine this statement as an expression of a road safety priority:

"Ensure all new road infrastructure contributes to improved safety for cyclists, including speed reduction measures, junction improvements and awareness of cyclists' needs". If you simply added "and pedestrians" after every mention of cyclists in the draft, the document would still read as if cyclists' safety had higher priority. Pedestrians need adequate

pavements and pedestrian crossings should be safer for all.

However, John and I came away from this meeting feeling that we had a useful encounter with decision makers who might rarely or never meet a disabled people in this context. The impact of our input, we hope, might be long lasting.

The TSSA meeting was about a campaign called Better London Transport aimed at promoting accessible transport. London Underground is angling to cut staff in Underground ticket offices and they are rumoured to want to reduce staff wherever they can. The Underground is becoming more usable by various groups of disabled people but accessibility is often dependent on staff assistance. The fear is that, with lower staff levels, disabled passengers will find themselves lost or trapped on the network, particularly where they have to change trains. The TSSA meeting was called to discuss these predicted developments and alert disabled passengers to them.

There was no shortage of blind contributors and contributors with other impairments who testified to the importance of staff in enabling them to access the Underground. TSSA members and ex-members spoke of tactics and a few spoke of changing the nature of the job to enhance its economic value.

Even when we learn to make our regular journeys more independently (and I think we should try to do so), there will often be times when human assistance is required so we need to campaign for the retention of adequate Underground staff levels. In support of this stance, we need also to join the search for ways to make this arrangement economically viable.

In future, more public transport will be needed and it is my firm belief that, when it is accessible it is also better for all!

The TSSA-led Better London Transport campaign is still in the early stages of development and I hope that DBU will want to lend its support.

Service Users engaged in Adult Social Care

by Maureen Ford

In August Maureen represented DBU at the first meeting of a new User and Carer Involvement group, a sub group of the Commissioning for Personalisation Reference Board.

DBU, along with seven other organisations: People's Network, POhWER, Interlink, Hackney African Forum, Hackney Refugee Forum and the City of Hackney Carers' Centre were invited to send service users and carers to this group, which will aim to ensure that their networks of service users and carers have the opportunity to be meaningfully involved throughout all the stages of planning services.

This interesting development came about following a review of a range of local authorities' approaches to user involvement. DBU encourages this as it is time that LBH involved service users in all the stages of services they provide to us: from the design of the service to its procurement and then monitoring. Hopefully the outcome of this group will be firm steps towards "Nothing about

me without me!"

A well designed, user centred service would lead to more user satisfaction and less waste of money, time and effort.

The meeting was not as well attended as it could have been, because of the timing in mid-August. It was chaired by Sally Wadsworth.

We were consulted, firstly, about the redesign of adult social care. Homecare will be recommissioned Tenders will be going out mid- November for a new service to be implemented in September 2014.

We were also consulted about the Homecare Complaints line. We were asked to think of a new name for this to make it less about complaints, more about feedback. We service users pressed for two things: That the Homecare complaints line be made more accessible to the majority of service users with mobile phones, who find this too costly to call. We also pressed for a whistle blowing procedure to be put in place for care workers to report on worrying issues they may have come across.

If DBU members want me to bring issues for discussion by this group, which next meets on Oct 21st, please let me know!

Safe kerbs and pavements

When out walking, have you noticed a bit of footway or pavement that needs a dropped kerb or is missing tactile/blister paving to alert blind and v/i people that there is a crossing/junction? Let us know so we can alert the Council and chase them up to get one put in!

Do you pay for your social care?

The Government is making changes to how we pay for social care now and in the future. To find out more, come along to the **Caring for our future** event.

Thursday, 26th September 12.30-3.00pm
Ann Tayler Centre,
1 - 13 Triangle Road, E8 3RP

Open 'drop in' session and one to one consultation for users and carers. The changes will affect you if you: currently pay for your care costs, or are likely to pay in the future. To complete the online questionnaire, go to www.hackney.gov.uk/care-reform

Narrow Way Car and Bus Free Trial

We are coming to the end of the six month trial of a bus free Narrow Way. DBU would like to know how disabled people in Hackney found the Narrow Way experiment. Did you go or did you avoid the place? If so, why? Traders have criticised it - what do we think ?

Living Streets are appealing for people to go to a Car Free Day Street Party 11.00am - 4.00pm on Sept 22nd to take part in festivities and have their say on the future of the Narrow Way.

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DBU office hours

Thurs: 9.30am—5.30pm
Fri: 9.30am—12.30pm



Bus days - a safe introduction to independent travel in London

Bus days are primarily aimed at people with learning difficulties but also are open to other disabled and older people who want to become more confident using buses. They provide disabled Londoners with the opportunity to experience independent travel on a London bus in a safe and controlled environment. An out of service bus follows a pre-planned route and participants can board and get off the bus along the route, accompanied by Transport for London (TfL) travel mentors and members of the Safer Transport Teams.



Participants are given a map of the route including names of all the bus stops served. The bus does a trial run without stopping so that everyone can get used to the route and the bus stops, then they can get on and off the bus at different stops, accompanied by support workers. There is also help at bus stops and advice on safe and smart bus travel—with scenarios acted out by plain clothes officers and TfL staff throughout the session.

Bus Days in Hackney take place on the third Thursday of every month and are run by the Travel Mentoring Team. For further information you can contact the team on 020 3054 4361 or travelmentor@tfl.gov.uk