

Full access for all

Our December Forum Meeting will take place on Thursday December 19th Lord Low of Dalston CBE will be our speaker. Lord Low has been invited to talk to members about accessibility in and around Hackney.

Disabled people often encounter problems with transport when they travel around in Hackney. Lord Low, who is blind, understands the problems that disabled people experience. We sent Lord Low a copy of our Transport Report '**Getting There**' and asked him to give his views. Lord Low will give his views and perhaps make a few suggestions at the forum meeting.

The 'Getting There' report is a Hackney Disability BackUp Forum report which discusses the experiences of disabled people in Hackney and their experiences with transport. This report makes an important contribution to the on-going debate about how we can make our transport network accessible for all travellers.

Copies of the Transport Report '**Getting There**' are available by email from us or on the DBU website:

www.disabilitybackup.org.uk. If you do not have internet access you can call 020 7241 5908 and request that a copy be sent to you in the post.



December Forum Meeting

Thursday 19th December 2013
1.00pm—4.00pm

Speakers

Lord Low of Dalston

Cllr Vincent Stops—Chair of
Planning Committee

Venue

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

Buses: 30, 38, 56, 277

Please bring a little food and drink!

**Help with transport on request
for people with mobility
difficulties.**

Equalities in Hackney Homes

Andrea Rawlings leads for DBU on housing issues and has been taking part in a review of the recently introduced new tenancy agreement to ensure that it complies with the provisions of the 2010 Equalities Act.

In November she met with senior Hackney Homes officers from all areas of the organisation's work and other representatives of tenants drawn from the Residents Liaison Group to review the tenancy agreement.

An Equalities Impact Assessment is being drawn up to ensure that there is no area of Hackney Homes activities which discriminates against people because they are disabled (or belong to eight other groups of people with what are called 'protected characteristics,' such as age, gender, race or sexual orientation). Details of this approach can be found at: <http://www.hackneyhomes.org.uk/hhs-equalities-eia.htm>.

Andrea argued that it was unreasonable to expect older or disabled people living alone to meet the requirements of the tenancy agreement to maintain paint work and gardens to a reasonable standard without some support and signposting to agencies that could help them do this and of course these are not the only areas where support is needed.

She has also been pressing for the voluntary training on disability equality available to Hackney homes staff on a voluntary basis to be made universal and to keep the Residents' Disability Forum.

If you have an area that particularly interests you, why not let us know ? DBU currently has lead members on transport, housing and adult social care, but there are a lot of other areas where we need to speak up to ensure equal treatment for disabled people.

Disability Review

Hackney Council is currently carrying out a review aimed at identifying any gaps in its equalities policies, looking at the whole organisation rather than individual services. Isabel de la Cour joined the Nov 22nd DBU Planning Team meeting to discuss the review and consult us.

We underlined the importance of the social model of disability and raised issues of appropriate language, urging that all council staff should be made aware of the DBU Language Code and offering to take part in forthcoming workshops for council staff training them in disability equality.

We also raised our concerns about the insensitivity of the 'Ways to Work' programme to disabled people and the lack of employment opportunities for us. We argued that schemes which mix cyclists

and pedestrians (like the Narrow Way) should not be described as 'pedestrianised' – they are free of motor vehicles, which is different. We also argued there should be effective enforcement of accessible building standards and that the Hackney Service Centre is not accessible – the Changing Places toilet is used as a store room!

If there are issues you would like us to feed into the review, please let us know.

Help and support for you this winter

With winter just around the corner many of us will be worrying about how to heat our homes.

Hackney Council can offer some free help and advice. This ranges from advice on energy bills and keeping warm and dry in your home; details of a local handyman service that offers low cost repairs, and information on the Telecare and Community Alarm Service that can help you stay independent and safe in your home.

All you need to do is contact Hackney SHINE (Seasonal Health Interventions Network) and to find out more about what they could help you with.

There is no need for you to contact lots of different organisations' services, just make one call to SHINE and they will do the rest. shine@hackney.gov.uk 0800 281 768 A full list and application form is available here www.hackney.gov.uk/shine

PIP timetable

The slow and shambolic process of replacing Disability Living Allowance (DLA) with Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is causing justified anxiety to disabled people all over the country.

Although personal independence payment has now replaced DLA for new working-age claims, under-16s still have to claim DLA, and over-65s must claim Attendance Allowance to cover their care needs.

And due to delays in the PIP rollout process, existing DLA claimants across London and the south of England, the north of England, and Scotland, are still being assessed for DLA rather than PIP if they report a change in their care or mobility needs, if their fixed-term award is about to expire, or if they reach the age of 16.

We don't yet know when people will be reassessed in the London area. From October 2015 everyone still getting DLA will be invited to claim PIP. Claimants will be selected randomly rather than by area or age, although the DWP say that they will *"invite claims as early as possible from recipients who have turned 65 after 8 April 2013, when PIP was first introduced."* By October 2017 all existing DLA claimants (aged 16 to 64 on 8 April 2013) will have been invited to claim PIP

Options for Healthy Exercise

Firstly, the Copper Box Arena is in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and boasts a gym, sports hall and a cafe. Blue badge holders can park in the bays outside.

To work out in the gym you can be referred by your GP, OT or physiotherapist and have a tour of the facilities from one of the gym instructors; the gym is fully accessible for all disabled people, including wheelchair users. For details visit: www.better.org.uk/leisure/copper-box-arena or call 020 8221 4900.

Another option is the Exercise Referral Scheme, or 'Healthwise', a partnership between the NHS, Hackney Council and Greenwich Leisure. The scheme provides supervised exercise sessions to people with the following conditions: risk of developing CHD, existing CHD, hypertension, diabetes type 1 or 2, mild to moderate depression, back pain, obesity, people who have fallen or are at risk of falling.

For details call 020 7749 7645 or visit www.gll.org - a referral is needed from a health professional.

Disability BackUp

c/o Age UK East London
22 Dalston Lane, E8 3AZ
carol.davis@ageukeastlondon.org.uk

Tel: 020 7241 5908
Mob: 07779 505178
Text: 07779 505178



DBU office hours

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



ATOS throws in the towel

Disability benefit decision-makers have been left without expert medical advice to call on for most of their cases, after the outsourcing giant Atos Healthcare withdrew from large parts of a key contract.

Doctors employed by Atos used to advise Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) decision-makers on the more difficult claims for disability living allowance (DLA) and attendance allowance (AA).

Atos has also been providing doctors to visit claimants in their own homes to carry out full medical reports, again under a medical services contract.

But according to Disability News Service <http://disabilitynewsservice.com> the long-term contract to carry out this work ran out three months ago, and since then Atos has been providing the service on a month-by-month basis.

Now the company has pulled out altogether from most of the work, leaving decision-makers – the civil servants who decide whether or not a disabled person will receive the benefit – without any expert medical advice to call on.

DWP guidance is being rewritten, with Atos doctors only available for claims from people with terminal illness, and for those claims from disabled children being dealt with at just one regional benefits centre.

Updates are available from:
www.benefitsandwork.co.uk