

## Today ... Hackney's toilets. Tomorrow? The World!

Have you ever noticed that sometimes you can't get into a public building because the door is too heavy? Or can't use a hospital toilet because it is being used for storage? Would you like to help solve these problems by joining a group of people trained in access auditing?

Could you devote a few hours to learn practical skills on how to assess and audit hospital buildings here in Hackney? After training, you'd go in as a team, armed with some knowledge of the law and check for access issues with entrances and toilets.

We are looking for 4-6 volunteers for initial training (kindly funded by Hackney Healthwatch). We have secured the services of Brenda Puech, Director of Consultancy at the Centre for Accessible Environments, who has provided training on access to a number of groups across the UK.

This is a great opportunity to learn new skills, make some new friends and have a real impact on people's lives. If this smallish task is successful, we hope to set up a larger and more formal access group, with a bigger remit.

If you'd like to know more or express an interest in the training, please contact Disability BackUp's new coordinator, Helen, on:  
0207 241 5902 or  
[helen.w@disabilitybackup.org.uk](mailto:helen.w@disabilitybackup.org.uk)

## Next DBU Forum meeting

The next Forum Meeting will take place on Monday 30 June from 1-3pm.

**Cynthia Davis**, Head of Commissioning at Hackney Council will attend to discuss the outcome of the future of home care in Hackney consultation. We've also invited a speaker from the council's cycling team to discuss cycling in parks / other shared spaces.

This will be the first Forum meeting for Disability BackUp's new coordinator, Helen Wildbore. Helen looks forward to meeting members there.

**The next Forum meeting will be:  
Monday 30th June  
1.00pm-3.00pm  
Large Hall,  
Our Lady & St Joseph's Church,  
100A Balls Pond Road,  
London N1 4AG**

Please bring a little food and drink! Dalston Junction station is 5 minutes walk away. Dalston Kingsland station is 10 minutes walk away. Buses 30,38, 56 and 277 stop nearby. Disabled parking available.

If you have a Freedom pass, Taxicard, use Dial-a-Ride, or you can make your own travel arrangements, that will be greatly appreciated.

Otherwise, help with transport is available on request. Contact Helen on 0207 241 5902 or

[helen.w@disabilitybackup.org.uk](mailto:helen.w@disabilitybackup.org.uk)

## A-boards update

*Planning Team member Anthony Larvin reports on A-boards and pavement accessibility.*

In our survey, Getting There, 78% of disabled people in Hackney found “A” board signs hazardous. We called on London Borough of Hackney (LBH) to take strict enforcement measures to remove marketing clutter from footways.

We were happy when LBH responded with a commitment to uphold a new Local Environmental Quality Enforcement Strategy. LBH has been writing to businesses obstructing public highways without a license, informing them about prosecution or penalties. This should mean Hackney becomes a much less inaccessible borough.

Since the initiative began LBH Environmental Enforcement officers have been distributing leaflets and advising local businesses. I have noticed an improvement in my area around Finsbury Park recently, including the main shopping area on Blackstock Road.

“A” boards, parked cycles and not being able to get into a shop are all potential barriers that can unwittingly exclude you from exploring your local amenities.

Has your locality recently improved for you too? Or maybe you have barriers that you could inform the council about to see if it can be resolved? We would like to hear about your experiences: [helen.w@disabilitybackup.org.uk](mailto:helen.w@disabilitybackup.org.uk)



More information and guidance: [www.hackney.gov.uk/highway-obstructions.htm#.U3P0CPIdUXE](http://www.hackney.gov.uk/highway-obstructions.htm#.U3P0CPIdUXE)

Or you can phone LBH's Environmental Enforcement on 020 8356 4810 or write to them at PO Box 60476, London E8 9EJ

John Thornton, DBU's lead on transport, adds:

Although we are seeing some improvements, LBH is refusing to issue warnings and fines for “A” boards on footways running alongside Red Routes managed by Transport for London (TfL), including Kingsland High Street (A10). LBH are granting licences to businesses along the A10 with “A” board signs, without paying adequate regard to them causing obstructions to disabled pedestrians. If LBH Planning & Licensing refuse to take your complaint about obstructions on the A10 seriously, please complain directly to TfL on 0343 222 1234. Please copy DBU in to any complaints, either to LBH or TfL.

## Floating bus stops: Part II

*In the second part of this article, Planning Team member Karl Farrell looks at the recent introduction of Floating Bus Stops in Newham.*

In November 2013 I met members of the Newham Access Group to visit recently installed floating bus stops. At the first floating stop I found the cycle lane crossing point, marked with tactile paving. I raised my guide cane to indicate my wish to cross and moved quickly over the crossing.

On the pavement I walked left, turned around and walked back toward the bus stop. I walked in the middle of the pavement, hoping to be alerted to the cycle lane crossing point by tactile tail but there was none. I was forced to find the kerb bounding the cycle lane and trace it along until I found the point where the lane sloped up to the level crossing point. There was tactile paving here but it didn't extend far enough to be of use.

At the next stop we found an interesting variation. From the bus door I moved carefully forward to locate the kerb bounding the cycle lane. I turned left to trace along the lane edge to hunt for the crossing, a few metres and almost walked into a metal pole. Just as well I was checking for obstacles or I might have incurred yet another shiner on my forehead.

The reason? This floating bus stop is located just past a traffic crossing so there had to be provision for pedestrians to get over the cycle lane.

The positioning of a crossing point may not matter much to some people. A blind person alighting from their bus would have to search for it in a methodical way. As things stand, blind people who travel on buses often find themselves deposited away from the actual stop because of a stack of two or three buses using the stop. It's not too uncommon for them to find themselves hugging a light pole or other street furniture outside the exit.



The last of the floating bus stops was on a pavement of more modest width, so there wasn't a lot of pavement space. If nothing but a bus stop is to occupy these elongated islands, they represent yet more loss of space to pedestrians.

Floating bus stops cannot be installed on narrow pavements but will Transport for London want to take back some of our newly widened pavements that have recently been decluttered? Could this lead to completely separate cycle lanes which, like the floating bus stops, are being installed to the detriment of pedestrian safety? We clearly have to speak up for our walking space!

## Upcoming events

### 'Ignored No More: Our Life, Our Choice', 5 June, 10am-3pm

This event is organised by Choice In Hackney, in partnership with DBU, Hackney People First and People's Network (funded by Hackney Healthwatch). It will include sessions on your rights to a social care assessment and information about computer technology and support for disabled people. For more information and to book: 020 7613 8135 / 07934 818 355 or [http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/rss/user\\_list\\_events/77456171229](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/rss/user_list_events/77456171229)

### deafPLUS training course, July

'Living with a Hearing Loss' is a new training course for people living in Hackney who have recently lost their hearing, or are losing their hearing to some degree. The 7 week course (10:30am-12:30pm on Tuesdays) will start on 1st July. It will provide tips and support from learning lip reading, simple finger spelling, developing strategies to cope with a hearing loss, advice about equipment etc. For more information and to book contact Geraldine O'Halloran at deafPLUS on: 0207 001 1793 / 07805 723 310 [Geraldine.O'Halloran@deafplus.org](mailto:Geraldine.O'Halloran@deafplus.org) [www.deafplus.org](http://www.deafplus.org)

### Disability BackUp

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## And finally...

### Olympic Park Mobility Service

Park Mobility is a new service for visitors to the Olympic Park with mobility and/or visual impairment. The service includes:

- mobility scooters, £5 a day
- manual wheelchairs, £3 a day
- volunteer guides for visitors with a visual impairment, free of charge
- wheelchair accessible mobility 'golf' buggy, free of charge, driven by a volunteer Park Champion



More information, including how to get involved as a volunteer, available at: <http://queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk/the-park/plan-your-visit/park-mobility-service>

### Home care checkers

A pilot project is being developed in Hackney to create User Care Quality Checkers. It aims to monitor the quality of home care by training service users to visit people receiving care. The trainee Checkers for Hackney recently visited the Enfield Checkers Forum to see how they set up and manage their scheme. Andrea Rawlings, DBU planning team member, attended and reported:

*"The meeting was very informative. We met a wide range of users that had become Checkers and it gave us an excellent picture of how to proceed with our pilot scheme."*

If you are interested in getting involved, please contact DBU and we'll inform you of opportunities as the scheme develops.