

DBU? What we do!

Whether you've just joined, or are a long standing member, DBU is *your* forum. It's user-led and provides a space for you to have your say about key issues in Hackney. It is for all disabled people living or working in Hackney.

DBU is organised by the Planning Team, with assistance from Helen and David at Age UK East London (which 'hosts' DBU). We are funded by the council but we are an objective and independent voice on local services and issues such as Leisure, Transport, Healthcare and Housing.

The forum meetings are a chance to hear directly from Councillors, council officers and service providers. You can discuss concerns/issues and help inform the direction and design of policies, campaigns and services.

DBU has been running since 2008 and we now have over 300 members. We are currently improving our website and Facebook page, which keep you informed in between forum meetings. You can also follow us on Twitter: @dbuhackney

The Planning Team meet every couple of months. We discuss issues members have raised with us and plan DBU activities, including the forum meetings and the content of these newsletters. That's why your feedback and involvement is essential and we look forward to hearing from you!

Please send us your thoughts or suggest an issue DBU could work on by contacting Helen on 0207 241 5902 or helen.w@disabilitybackup.org.uk

Next DBU Forum meeting

The next Forum Meeting will be on Tuesday 23 September at 5pm.

We have invited **Councillor Philip Glanville** to discuss housing issues for disabled people in Hackney.

Streetscene will attend to talk about the council's new transport strategy.

Anna Sexton will tell us about Re:present, a new programme to develop access at **Hackney Museum** for disabled people.

We've also invited the council's **cycling team** to discuss their proposed considerate cycling campaign.

**Next Forum meeting:
Tuesday 23 September
5pm (ending at 7pm)
Large Hall,
Our Lady & St Joseph's Church,
100A Balls Pond Road,
London N1 4AG**

Dalston Junction station is 5 minutes walk away. Dalston Kingsland station is 10 minutes walk away. Buses 30,38, 56 and 277 stop nearby. Blue Badge parking available.

If you have a Freedom pass, Taxi-card, 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.

Voting: your voice matters

DBU coordinator, Helen Wildbore, reports on important changes about how we register to vote, and on accessibility of polling stations.

Did you know the way we register to vote is changing? You will have received a letter through the post this summer telling you about changes to voter registration. Instead of the old 'head of household registration', each person will now have to register to vote individually.

Most people already registered to vote will transfer automatically to the new system but some people will need to provide extra information (such as your date of birth or National Insurance number).

Look out for your letter in the post, which will contain instructions about what to do. If you haven't received your letter, you can speak to the Electoral Registrations and Elections Office at the Hackney Council on 020 8356 3232.

More information is available at www.gov.uk/yourvotematters You can also register to vote on-line at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote



Are polling stations in Hackney accessible? In the 2010 general election only a third of polling stations were accessible (according to a report by Scope called 'Polls Apart 2010'). 67% had one or more significant access barriers to disabled voters.

DBU would like to hear from you about voting in Hackney. Did you have any problems voting at the last election? Were polling stations fully accessible

with tactile voting devices, large print ballot papers, low level polling booths, level access into the polling



station? Give us your feedback so that we can raise any issues or problems before the general election next Spring.

Hackney Council is also conducting a review of locations of polling stations and asking for any suggestions for new premises. The deadline for submissions is 15 September, so let us know if you have any concerns you'd like us to raise. You can send in your views to Tim Shields, Electoral Registration Officer, Town Hall, Mare Street, London E8 1EA. Please also send a copy to DBU, so that we can keep track of views/ideas submitted (DBU contact details are overleaf).

Disability and Poverty

Planning Team member Anthony Larvin reports on the APPDG meeting he attended.

I attended the All-Party Parliamentary Disability Group (APPDG) in the House of Lords in July. The APPDG works on an all-party basis within parliament “for the interests of all disabled people, their families and friends”. This meeting was about Disability, Long Term Conditions and Poverty. It discussed a new report on ‘Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion 2013’ by the New Policy Institute, commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

The report found that most previous studies tend to underestimate levels of poverty among disabled people. Two of the authors of the report discussed the size of these underestimates, explored the difficulty in escaping poverty through paid work and how policy-makers might tackle this.

The research found that families with a disabled member are more likely to be in poverty than other families, although the proportion in poverty has declined over the last decade. But the inclusion of particular disability benefits as income artificially lowers this poverty rate. When Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance are not counted as ‘income’, the effect is to double the number of people counted as living in poverty who receive these benefits.

The report also found that disabled people also face disadvantages in the labour market, with higher rates of worklessness and lower rates of pay than non-disabled people with the same level of qualifications (although the gap has been getting smaller).

At the meeting there was consent to explore the inadequate sick pay support system as it has been blurred with general employment in the past and it is unclear whether it is a disability or illness when analysed. To move forward the Department of Work and Pensions now has good data to support future discussions. The next APPGD will be in October.

Council tax discount

Did you know there is a discount on council tax for disabled people? The scheme makes sure you don't pay more Council Tax if you need a bigger property or to adapt your home.



If your property has an extra bathroom, kitchen or other room for a disabled person or extra space inside for using a wheelchair, then you can apply for your Council Tax Band to be reduced. Guidance and the application form are available on Hackney Council's Revenues and Benefits website, or by calling 0208 356 3154.

Upcoming events

Sick of Waiting campaign assembly 7 Oct, 1pm, Friends Meeting House, Euston Road (opposite Euston station)

An opportunity to press NHS Trusts to work for a patient transport system that works for patients, and to celebrate what the Sick of Waiting campaign has



achieved so far. They need your help to make it a full house, to show patient transport providers how much this matters. Register online or by calling 020 737 2339.

Human Rights Tour

Shoreditch, 16 October, 10am

Want to know more about your human rights here in the UK? Join the British Institute of Human Rights' pop-up event, in partnership with LVSC and the HEAR Network. Book your free place at www.bih.org.uk/Tour2014 or call Woody on 0207 882 5850.

Age UK's Vision for Social Care

Are you over 65? Would you like to take part in a focus group in late September over 2 days to feed in your views on social care? £40 reward and recognition payment available! Call David on 020 7241 5906.

Disability BackUp

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Your views needed...

Telecare

Telecare is a service which can help disabled people to live independently at home. Also known as assistive technology, the service includes sensors and alarms which can be used to call for help and assistance in your own home. DBU members have joined a Telecare

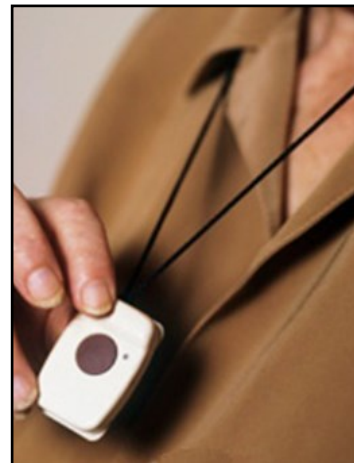
Focus Group and we would like to hear your views on Telecare services. Do you use Telecare services, or have you in the past? What did you think of the service?

What was your experience like?

Please give us your views by calling

Helen on 0207 241 5902 or to

helen.w@disabilitybackup.org.uk



Accessible car club

Hackney Community Transport aims to start an accessible car club for disabled residents of Hackney and surrounding boroughs. An accessible car club provides a car in your local area that can be borrowed and driven by family and friends to help disabled people to get out and about. If successful, the club could expand to include automatic, low floor cars that can be driven by disabled people themselves.

If you are

interested in using this type of scheme, either driven by family and friends or self drive, please contact Ben Curry to let him know and which area you would most like a car to be based: 0207 275 2404 or bencurry@hctgroup.org

