

Evidence submitted to London Assembly Transport Committee investigation into door-to-door transport

Contents page

D2D02	Mr John Per	1
D2D03	Redbridge Disability Association	4
D2D04	Hackney Disability Forum	18
D2D05	Enfield Disability Action	19
D2D06	London TravelWatch	24
D2D07	EVBCA residents	51
D2D08	London Councils	54
D2D09	Hounslow Crossroads Care	56
D2D10	Wandsworth Community Transport	57
D2D11	Croydon Over 60's Club	59
D2D12	Dagenham DIAL	60
D2D13	Wandsworth Access Association	61
D2D14	Harrow Association for Disabled People	81
D2D15	Southwark Disability Forum	82
D2D16	Mr Allen Bergson	101
D2D17	Mr Michael Lloyd	105
D2D18	Haringey Phoenix Group	106
D2D19	Greenwich Association for Disabled People	108
D2D20	Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals	112
D2D21	Transport for All	114
D2D22	Ms Patricia Moss	118
D2D23	London Ambulance Service	119
D2D24	London Visual Impairment Forum	120
D2D25	Age Concern London	127
D2D26	Ms Kay Chilvers	130
D2D27	Mr Michael Pantlin	136
D2D28	SCILL	138
D2D29	eo consulting	146
D2D30	Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames	150
D2D31	LB Havering	159
D2D32	Bexley and Bromley Advocacy	160
D2D34	Mrs Myra Godsmark	164
D2D35	Cllr Pam Light, LB Havering	165
D2D37	Age Concern Redbridge	190
D2D38	Hazel	195
D2D39	Ms Hazel Taylor	196
D2D40	Age Concern Havering	198
D2D41	Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee	202
D2D42	Mrs MacDonald	203
D2D43	Docklands Drop-In Group	204
D2D44	Barbican Tuesday Club	207

One of the most important facts about door-to-door transport is the fact that it is actually door-to-door. This enables people to get from place to place and back again with the minimum of fuss and anxiety. People travel for a reason and transport enables people with disabilities to live normal fulfilled lives. For people to be confident to use any form of transport they must consider it to be both reliable and comfortable.

There are two possibilities for door-to-door transport that are available to qualifying people, these are Dial-a-Ride and Taxicard.

There is one comment that one ought to make about anecdotal evidence. Whichever form of transport one uses it is always the ones that go wrong that stick in the mind, and the ones that work as they should, fade from the memory because there was nothing remarkable about them except the fact that they worked.

Taxicard

The Taxicard is important because it is the only "on demand" service available. It is the one service which is available without pre-booking. In my view it is under threat. Let me explain, when it first started approximately 30 years ago it was known as the GLC 88 account and you paid £8 for £1 and the reason that this was chosen was because at that time once you were in a cab you could require the taxi driver to take you 6 miles. Each year, taxi drivers get, quite rightly, a cost of living rise and over the years for various reasons the subsidy is not kept pace so that the position is now that if you give your destination when booking your cab they will remind you that your journey is more than 3 miles. Taxicard users have also suffered another effective cut because originally there was no limit on the number of Taxicard trips you could use, now we have limited a number of rides and a double swipe, which in effect is a cut. If something is not done in the future to redress the balance the scheme will die because the subsidy will hardly give you time to get into the cab.

There have been some problems with taxi coverage in some areas, but these are problems which are endemic within the system.

Of late there have been a number of difficulties in actually getting through to the call centre which causes problems when you are on your mobile phone and limited credit. But I understand the company are in the process of taking steps to rectify this problem.

Dial a ride

This is an important service which differs from the Taxicard in the fact that it needs to be pre-booked, usually a day or more in advance. I understand that sometimes you can get a trip on the same day but I've never actually tried it and would be interested to know, given that the drivers are presented with a computer-generated worksheet at the beginning of their shift, how often it happens and how effective it is.

Where Dial a ride is particularly good is the regular journey where people do the same thing each week at the same time. This may be because it comes from a mass transit background. I am not

Having attended the meeting on 2 March I realise that the committee had looked at 'Integrated transport' in a completely different way to me in my earlier submission. I should like to take this opportunity to make some comments may seem more to the point. As I now understand it "integrated transport" in this context putting together the local authority transport, hospital transport, dial a ride and perhaps Taxicard giving them all one number to contact the system.

This is a purely personal view, but I am not convinced that it is likely to work because unless it is fully integrated the different elements will be in competition with each other and first meeting the needs of their original client group. I know when we tried using local authority transport for one of our activities days we had problems getting people home again because, as our meeting started late because of difficulties in getting people to the meeting, it overran and the local authority transport was not available to take people home because it had a previous responsibility to get its children and young people home from school. Fortunately we were able to get people home by other means.

Given the problems that one has in getting through to the present system the idea that you would have one massive call centre is frankly a little frightening. I am also concerned as to who would make the decisions as to who is eligible for services. I heard the gentleman from London councils suggest that the different areas had been making moves towards common criteria for eligibility. One would need to see and understand those before moving towards an integrated service. The one thing all these trips have in common is that they are pre-planned and are in that sense programmable.

There are two things that make travelling easier in this context and they are, knowing that the transport will arrive on time and knowing who is going to be taking or collecting you. Would a truly integrated improve on these things and things?

I think there's a lot more work, the Devil being in the detail before one could make an informed choice as to the true value and success of an integrated system.

With regard to Taxicard, in my view it should not be included in any integrated transport scheme because it is the only element which is available on demand with any great degree of certainty and that allows for spontaneity and flexibility which is not available with any other form of transport and it is also the only form of door-to-door transport that will take you on longer journeys.

At the present time I would not opt for an integrated service but in the future if the difficulties could be overcome then who knows.

Having attended the meeting on 2 March I realise that the committee had looked at 'Integrated transport' in a completely different way to me in my earlier submission. I should like to take this opportunity to make some comments that may seem more to the point. As I now understand it "integrated transport" in this context putting together the local authority transport, hospital transport, dial a ride and perhaps Taxicard giving them all one number to contact the system.

This is a purely personal view, but I am not convinced that it is likely to work because unless it is fully integrated the different elements will be in competition with each other and first meeting the needs of their original client group. I know when we tried using local authority transport for one of our activities days we had problems getting people home again because, as our meeting started late because of difficulties in getting people to the meeting, it overran and the local authority transport was not available to take people home because it had a previous responsibility to get its children and young people home from school. Fortunately we were able to get people home by other means.

Given the problems that one has in getting through to the present system the idea that you would have one massive call centre is frankly a little frightening. I am also concerned as to who would make the decisions as to who is eligible for services. I heard the gentleman from London councils suggest that the different areas had been making moves towards common criteria for eligibility. One would need to see and understand those before moving towards an integrated service. The one thing all these trips have in common is that they are pre-planned and are in that sense programmable.

There are two things that make travelling easier in this context and they are, knowing that the transport will arrive on time and knowing who is going to be taking or collecting you. Would a truly integrated improve on these things and things?

I think there's a lot more work, the Devil being in the detail before one could make an informed choice as to the true value and success of an integrated system.

With regard to Taxicard, in my view it should not be included in any integrated transport scheme because it is the only element which is available on demand with any great degree of certainty and that allows for spontaneity and flexibility which is not available with any other form of transport and it is also the only form of door-to-door transport that will take you on longer journeys.

At the present time I would not opt for an integrated service but in the future if the difficulties could be overcome then who knows.

D2D03

Redbridge Disability Association

98 - 100 Ilford Lane
Ilford Essex IG1 2LD

Charity no 1050348

Company Limited by Guarantee 2888472

Together we solve

Transforming the access experience of disabled people

A discussion document to David Morris

Senior Policy Advisor to the Mayor of London (Disability)

Clive Durdle MSc BA (Econ) FCIH

Director

29 November 2007

Redbridge Disability Association aims to:

- Encourage and support disabled people to play an active role in the community
- Help bring about change
- Seek improvements to services and facilities for disabled people and carers

- Work closely and effectively with all those involved in the lives of disabled people

Mobility?

Able July 2007 p51 has an article about powered wheelchairs that notes:

“most still resemble traditional manual wheelchairs to some extent; hardly surprising since all have their origin in American wheelchair manufacturer Everest and Jennings’ idea – round 50 years ago to add a drive mechanism to an existing manual wheelchair.”

Advertisements for mobility scooters and wheelchairs commonly use terms like “invacare”. Is a medical model still prevalent? Is thinking incremental instead of – as has happened with the Dyson Vacuum Cleaner - stopping and thinking matters through from first principles?

Freight transport over the last few decades has undergone a revolution, from the old individual movement of small packets in nets and pallets in ports to containers.

Is the world of “mobility” in a pre containerisation state?

Design for life

Everyone has problems about getting themselves or moving something from A to B, or things changing with time. The last mile problem is a classic issue in transport studies.

Some problems are easily solved, others complex. For probably historical and social reasons disability issues may not have been tackled as general design or engineering or technical issues, but an interesting perspective is that any invention is a prosthetic to enable.

The tasks we all face are reasonably well defined – getting up, getting dressed, toileting and bathing, self care, relationships, eating, getting out of our homes, working, getting around, finding things we need, exercise.

Some of these issues become more problematic and complex with disabilities but they are not difficult problems.

Disability focussed solutions tend to be wheel or stick or ramp based, with some hoisting. For example, someone may have a hoist to get out of bed, some form of wheel chair or Zimmer frame or crutch to get to a shower, a lightweight wheelchair to get to a car that then has to be put in the car. There may be internal and external wheelchairs. There may have been

“disabled adaptations” to homes. Please find attached a paper about this.

There are many very small very specialist firms in the disability world, with strong links to health care organisations. It is an interesting business sector with elements of early industrial revolution Birmingham type models and very large health based – and therefore possibly institutionalised – organisations. Prices are acknowledged to be very high in comparison to other sectors. The business model is about adapting, not design from first principles.

But Britain is a world leader in design and invention – Conran, Dyson, Royal College of Arts, Architecture, Concorde, Hovercraft, Sinclair, Commission on Architecture and the Built Environment.

Getting Around

There are several modes of transport – walking, cycling, cars, vans, buses, trains, ships and planes. These have reasonably clear functions with overlaps – towards freight or people, a few people or many people, short or medium or long range, needing various levels of infrastructure, roads, railway tracks, all terrain, air traffic control, transport logistics.

Sustainability, climate change, and ecological orientation are now core issues in transport strategy.

Disability focussed solutions may be understood as adaptive – for example adding wheels to a chair and then a motor, or designing buses with ramps. I am unaware of the sedan being used much, but the ancient way of carrying kings and important people did have all terrain advantages! The stretcher trolley is still used in some social situations like hospitals.

Purchasing of goods on the internet seems to have reached a plateau – we seem to have a very strong preference for multimedia experiences whilst shopping, touching and feeling and looking at and smelling what we are after, discussing, negotiating, having human interactions. We love to complete a ritual of exchange in person in a busy place like a market.

What do we do to get to a market or shopping centre or place of work or leisure? A few walk, some cycle, many use a car, some a bus or train. We have invented park and ride as a solution to the issues caused.

Redbridge Disability Association manages a Shopmobility service at the Mall Ilford. A typical journey for a disabled member involves getting themselves together to get out of the house, ordering and waiting for Community Transport, being taken to the

shopping centre, transferring to a mobility scooter, having an interesting experience using it in town, waiting in various queues, interacting with various staff and individuals when transacting business, struggling with shopping and struggling home afterwards.

I understand this type of experience as being a touchstone of are we seriously working towards integrated transport solutions with easy transfers between transport modes? The agenda is wider than “door to door” – it should encompass all aspects of a person’s life and take account of the specific issues people face. Are we truly working towards human pro – active systems?

There may be a significant gap in the suite of transport solutions because the habit of adaptation has diverted attention from thinking things through from a person centred perspective.

The Solo

Wheelchairs and mobility scooters may be seen as a prototype single person vehicle (SPV), but the disability focus has prevented it as being seen as a logical transport niche. Jeanette Winterson in Stone Gods uses a similar idea to what this paper proposes that she calls the Solo.

The concept is of a short to medium range multi purpose vehicle, able to carry a person, shopping, possibly a baby, possibly two people, with reasonable all terrain capabilities and weather protection, ability to go down shopping aisles and similar small spaces, that looks good like a Smart Car and becomes as fashionable as a Lambretta.

It is between cycling and cars and may be best developed first in cycle friendly environments like the new towns or large pedestrianised areas. With this paper is a paper about Dutch cycling strategy, which outlines the infrastructure needs of this proposal.

The car is not a good design solution when it has a single occupant – American High Occupancy Vehicle lanes are a tacit admission of that. The concept is of a range of small personal transport solutions that may be tailored to individual preferences. There have been some prototypes like Toyota's I – unit

<http://gizmodo.com/gadgets/robots/toyoto-ifoot-and-iunit-026866.php>

There are other design possibilities – these may sound like science fiction and James Bond but many of these have evolved in the planetary eco-systems and available technologies in robotics and similar fields have found appropriate solutions.

Spiders with eight legs and abilities to create webs are of note. Darwin found spiders on the Beagle far out at sea – they had flown there on their webs.

James Bond type technologies for climbing walls or even jet packs may be considered.

Why are not rock climbing and abseiling technologies widely used in the disability world?

What about sailing and water based technologies?

Are we too concerned about ramps and steps and lifts when all terrain equipment that can safely climb vertical walls is probably already available? The fields of Potholing, kayaking, space exploration, fighter pilots, robotics, artificial intelligence, and space exploration may already have appropriate solutions to cross fertilise.

This paper envisages a series of personalised solutions to whatever issues someone faces – we do not change the weather when it is bad, we dress up appropriately.

Standardisation

The other main vector is around standardisation of design solutions. There are common issues like fixing equipment safely that may be resolved by both designing the thing to be fixed and the receiving mechanism together – as has happened with containerisation. Because we are transporting humans, the situation someone is fixed in should be comfortable, well designed, and relaxing and not institutionalised. The needs of people with autistic spectrum disorders is currently under researched.

The idea is that the “solo” may be used on medium scale – cars, minivans, buses coaches and trams – and large scale – trains ships aircraft – easily and appropriately. The pieces should all fit together and come apart easily. Why not put four solos together to create a road car? A single person electrically powered version of something using design concepts from the Citroen C3 Pluriel is a further example of the possibilities I am envisaging.

<http://images.google.co.uk/images?q=Citroen+C3+pluriel&hl=en&client=firefox-a&channel=s&rls=org.mozilla:en-GB:official&hs=AQM&um=1&ie=UTF-8&sa=X&oi=images&ct=title>

There is no reason that standardisation should not apply to the whole system – including homes, all of the built environment, offices, shops, and transport.

We manage Redbridge Shopmobility and are involved in various fora like Independent Disability Advisory Group of TfL, The GLA Disabled Person's Organisations meetings, Dial a Ride and the recently founded pan London transport and mobility forum.

I am the chair of Redbridge Sustainability Forum and have a master's degree in urban policy. I have recently had considerable experience of patient transport as a carer, including air ambulance from Geneva.

Following is from my comments to the London Health care review.

“Another area not mentioned in this consultation but critical to its success is patient transport. This is also a bureaucratic nightmare - small health trusts setting up small contracts when it needs a London wide and probably national and international response. Which bits of transport issues are really health responsibilities? Is health taking too much responsibility because of history and institutional structural issues? To conclude - very important improvements in health, but health is only one part - a critical part - in the jigsaw of someone's life. Are the institutions really supportive or are they elephants fighting and trampling on the people?”

I recommend that Transport for London and London Ambulance Service set up a working group to review this whole area from first principles, and to ensure a properly joined up service covering for example, Shopmobility, dial a ride, taxis, local community transport services and non emergency

services. Currently a disabled person may have half a dozen different passes and a myriad of contact points.

There are serious issues at nodes like getting to an airport.

My personal experience exposed weaknesses in capabilities of moving walking stretcher issues, and weaknesses in design of patient lounges (if they exist!), that assume everyone is able to sit. There were issues about communication.

These types of issues I understand to be symptomatic of not having planned this from a strategic level and too small units of operation, without standard quality control.

It is time to move away from the current disjointed incrementalism to properly designed and managed person centred systems. There may in fact be significant cost savings by taking a London / South East approach to start and then building up a common service structure. This is a classic transport issue – moving a very fragile object appropriately from one place to another.

Last March I attended a conference on accessible tourism in Barcelona, (eca@eca.lu) and I am a member of geogable and Rolling Rains.

Excellent transport is key to an accessible and prosperous London. Organisations like Accessible Portugal and Design for All Austria are taking forward the whole system approach. There is a wealth of experience in Europe to use - I have a paper on Dutch cycling strategy that is superb for

example. They are using clear principles of equality, ecology and economy to enable superb design solutions. Durability.

I would really love to see a revolution in the design of mobility scooters. Redbridge Disability Association manages Redbridge Shopmobility and I want to see a competition for the Olympics to design and produce mobility vehicles for Games Mobility.

Porsche already has a concept - the Porsche Pegasus wheelchair, and Toyota has various "i" vehicles. Other manufacturers I am sure would love to see similar vehicles getting international exposure at the Olympics and there would be two legacies from this - a properly managed and sustainable series of Shopmobility services across London and properly designed integral vehicles as part of the set of logistical transport solutions for London, that are designed to be used in people's homes, on buses, trains and planes, around shops, up mountains!

The David Morris paper discusses this - let us move disability transport into the 21st century please!

I want the full integration of all patient and community transport and seriously meaning door to door.

I would want to see standardised design solutions that work as a joined up process from someone getting up in the morning moving around their home, crossing the liminal point at the front door, going down the path, transferring to the next transport node and getting to an accessible destination.

Clive Durdle

Director

Redbridge Disability Association

98 -100 Ilford Lane

Ilford Essex IG1 2LD

"

"

"

|

Company Limited by Guarantee 2888472

Registered Charity 1050348

Nothing about us without us.

Together we solve

D2D04 Disability Backup, Hackney's Disability Forum

Please see below comments regarding Door to Door services compiled by members of Disability Backup, Hackney's Disability Forum.

- now the service uses mini cabs as well it can be a bit more reliable
- the system is very inflexible and doesn't seem suited for the type of service- if you ask to be collected at 9am it will only show that exact time
- never practical, it always arrives within ½ hr early or late, totally impractical if having a meeting or at training
- often one big van collects only 1 person
- wont take you to other boroughs
- allows no flexibility or independence
- will not take you to hospital, constant battle to get hospital transport.



DISABILITY INFORMATION & ADVICE PROJECT

Enfield Disability Action, Community House,
311 Fore Street, Edmonton, London N9 0PZ

Advice Line : 020 8373 6239

Benefits Line: 020 8373 6234

Fax: 020 8373 6255

Chief Executive : Barbara Litchfield

DIAP Manager: Dennis Spitz

Textphone: 020 8373 6270

E mail: diap@e-d-a.org.uk

Mr. Paul Cater,
Travel Advice and Membership Manager
London Dial-a-Ride
Progress House
5 Mandela Way
London SE1 5SS

Date: 3 March 2010

Dear Mr. Cater,

Transport to St. Michaels Site, Gator Drive, Enfield EN2 8JL

Thank you for your letter of 12 February 2010.

1. The basic guideline is that Dial-a-Ride (DaR) do *not* take customers to hospital appointments. This arises from a "full policy" which prohibits the provision of transport if a statutory provision exists. It is not clear from the letter if exceptions are made to the guideline. It is also not clear if the prohibition applies to *all* locations where NHS services are provided e.g. GP surgeries. I would be grateful if you would send me a copy of the full policy so that EDA's membership can be advised. I understand that St. Michael's is a community site not a hospital site.

The provision of the patient transport service (PTS) is statutory but discretionary and is dependent upon an individual's medical condition. An individual whose mobility needs are met by a wheelchair does not automatically meet the criteria for PTS. The consequences for individuals who are without the PTS criteria were noted in White Paper, "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say."

2(i) The comments on statutory transport and central funding contrast with the governmental policy explained in "Our Health Our Care, Our Say." It noted:

Transport can be a barrier to accessing care. The Social Exclusion Unit estimates that 1.4 million people miss, turn down or simply choose not to seek health care because of transport problems

It also states that:

In future local authorities and PCTs will need to work together to influence providers of local transport in planning transport networks.

Furthermore, the Department of Health's Eligibility Criteria for Patient Transport Services state:



EDA is a Registered Charity No1082063 & Company Limited by Guarantee (England and Wales) No. 3937507. Registered Office : As above. EDA has an access to records policy. All information received and recorded is subject to the Access to Personal Files Act 1987 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

09/03/10 J:\Transport-Committee\Project-



Quality Mark

General Help including Casework

Disability Casework Category

A range of different providers may provide PTS – for example the local NHS ambulance trust, independent sector providers or a combination of providers

So I do not see why DaR adopted a policy that prohibits transport for hospital appointments. Government policy is the opposite. The adopted policy would therefore appear to be internal not governmental.

(ii) TfL's Surface Transport Panel considered DaR and Door to Door Services on 10 November 2009, agenda Item 8. The Panel noted at 2.4 that:

Several reports about the discretionary door to door services, that TfL either provides directly or fund have all broadly highlighted the same key issues: that generally services are supply led rather than demand led; there is a lack of real clarity as to what the services really are and who they are for and; there is a lack of co-ordination between services and regions leading to increased costs and differing standards and supply levels between boroughs

At 4.3 London Councils' Transport and Environment Committee proposals of 15 October 2009 were reported. In particular that Committee was recommended to:

note the work that has taken place with TfL and the NHS on a potential integrated door to door service pilot project and agree that this work continue in the meanwhile

The Panel's conclusion at 5.1 was:

TfL will work with London Councils to establish the viability of their proposals. A paper will also be prepared for the Mayor to outline the current status of door to door services in London

The Mayor's Transport Strategy for London highlighted that there was an unconsolidated demand for the DaR service but recommended the following:

The Mayor through TfL will support Dial-a-Ride for people with mobility problems who require this form of transport

In summary government policy emphasises the integration of services, TfL are actively working with London Councils on the viability of an integrated service, and the Mayor's transport strategy is unequivocal in supporting the provision of DaR for people with mobility problems.

Consequently it is concerning that the existing custom and practice of providing transport to St Michael's has been withdrawn. I do not know if there was consultation with users or with the commissioners of PTS. I would respectfully suggest that the provision of transport to St Michael's is reviewed as a matter of urgency.

3. TfL is the controlling authority of DaR and is a public authority for the purposes of section 49A(1) of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. TfL is therefore under an ongoing duty to have a proper regard to the goals set down in that section and, in particular, to take steps to take account of disabled person's disabilities even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably i.e. in these circumstances providing transport for hospital appointments if PTS is not provided.

The approach required by the statute is set down in the Barnet and Chavda cases. However, I do not think it is evident in your letter. Individuals with mobility (or other impairments)



impairments will not be provided with transport by DaR to hospital. In fact attempts to book such transport are regarded as "incidents" and DaR is:

...working hard to improve our filtering system whereby these incidents should not happen in the future.

I would again suggest that the provision of transport to St. Michael's is reviewed in the light of these cases.

The Travel Mentoring Service may well benefit some individuals. However, feedback from EDA's members indicates the problem is not lack of confidence but in the inadequacy of the public transport provision despite the improvements that have been made.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Litchfield

cc. Ms. Cathy St. John, Transport Committee for London, Mr. Boris Johnson, Mayor for London



EDA is a Registered Charity No1082063 & Company Limited by Guarantee (England and Wales) No. 3937507. Registered Office : As above. EDA has an access to records policy. All information received and recorded is subject to the Access to Personal Files Act 1987 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

09/03/10 J:\Transport-Committee\Project-



Quality Mark

General Help including Casework

Disability Casework Category

49A General duty

(1) Every public authority shall in carrying out its functions have due regard to—

- (a) the need to eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under this Act;
- (b) the need to eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities;
- (c) the need to promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons;
- (d) the need to take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons;
- (e) the need to promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons; and
- (f) the need to encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.

(2) Subsection (1) is without prejudice to any obligation of a public authority to comply with any other provision of this Act.



EDA is a Registered Charity No1082063 & Company Limited by Guarantee (England and Wales) No. 3937507. Registered Office : As above. EDA has an access to records policy. All information received and recorded is subject to the Access to Personal Files Act 1987 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

09/03/10 J:\Transport-Committee\Project-



Quality Mark

General Help including Casework

Disability Casework Category

Community House,
311 Fore Street, Edmonton,
London N9 0PZ

Tel : 020 8373 6228
Fax: 020 8373 6223
Textphone: 020 8373 6270

Chief Executive : Barbara Litchfield
Office Manager : Patricia Mecinska

E mail: eda@e-d-a.org.uk

London Dial-a-Ride
Passenger Services
Progress House
5 Mandela Way
London
SE1 5SS

Date: 8 February 2010

Dear Sir/Madam,

Transport to St. Michael's Site, Gater Drive, Enfield EN2 8JL

The Dial-a-Ride organisation has provided the valuable service of transport to and from the above Site for individuals having appointments at Enfield Wheelchair Services for many years. I understand the rationale was that the services provided were community based services. Indeed this rationale is in tune with government policy of moving toward the personalisation and integration of services to improve individual and community outcomes.

However, I have now been told that bookings for such appointments will no longer be accepted by Dial-a-Ride. I would be grateful for your comments as soon as possible so that EDA's membership can be advised. I would add there appear to be anomalies if there has been a change in policy as I have also been advised that bookings to attend for podiatry appointments are accepted.

Yours faithfully

Barbara Litchfield

cc. Cathy St. John, Enfield Wheelchair Services, London Assembly Transport Committee



EDA is a Registered Charity No1082063 & Company Limited by Guarantee (England and Wales) No. 3937507. Registered Office : As above. EDA has an access to records policy. All information received and recorded is subject to the Access to Personal Files Act 1987 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

11/03/10 J:\Transport-Committee\Project-working\Projects
2009-10\Door to door transport\Written views and information\Responses\Logged\RTF\D2D33



Quality Mark

General Help including Casework

Disability Casework Category

London TravelWatch's response to the London Assembly Transport Committee investigation into door-to-door transport services in London

February 2010



London TravelWatch is the official body set up by Parliament to provide a voice for London's travelling public.

Our role is to:

- Speak up for transport users in discussions with policy-makers and the media;
- Consult with the transport industry, its regulators and funders on matters affecting users;
- Investigate complaints users have been unable to resolve with service providers, and;
- Monitor trends in service quality.

Our aim is to press in all that we do for a better travel experience all those living, working or visiting London and its surrounding region.

Published by:

London TravelWatch
6 Middle Street
London EC1A 7JA

Phone: 020 7505 9000
Fax: 020 7505 9003

Contents

Executive Summary 1
1 Transport Committee investigation into door-to-door transport services in London 2
2 Dial-a-Ride 3
3 Taxicard 6

Executive Summary

Dial-a-Ride members use the service for a wide variety of journeys and generally value it, though over many years there have been continuing frustrations. Some have been operational, some simply because supply is inevitably limited by budget constraints. And of course both these matters are related: improved operational service will lead to more outputs, but, in turn, more demand.

TfL embarked on an ambitious strategy to restructure the service in 2008 to address many of the concerns of its users and others and provide a single, London wide service. It has invested a great deal in the service and plans to continue this investment.

The changes, for an extended period, caused difficulties for members. IT systems failed to live up to expectations. However, there is some hope now that these issues are being addressed by TfL and an improved service being delivered.

London TravelWatch continues to monitor and comment on the Dial-a-Ride service.

1 Transport Committee investigation into door-to-door transport services in London

- 1.1 London TravelWatch is the statutory watchdog representing transport users in London. Our remit reflects those services delivered or funded by TfL and so covers Dial-a-Ride and Taxicard.
- 1.2 Door to door services provided by the London boroughs and the NHS, as part of their statutory functions to provide transport services (social services, education and health), are outside the remit of London TravelWatch. Similarly, voluntary and community transport services are outside of our remit.
- 1.3 That said, for many years London TravelWatch members have expressed concerns regarding the lack of co-ordination between the services you are considering. We believe that this may well mean that services are not as good as they might be or are being operated at a greater cost to the public purse than might otherwise be the case. We therefore very much welcome your investigation and look forward to hearing the outcome.
- 1.4 This response is primarily focused on Dial-a-Ride and is based on research London TravelWatch undertook some years ago with users of this service and Taxicard ¹ and, subsequent to the reorganisation of Dial-a-Ride in London, monitoring of performance at London TravelWatch Board and Committee meetings.
- 1.5 The letter from the London Assembly requesting this submission also asked for information regarding complaints / casework relating to Dial-a-Ride which will be forwarded separately. However, it should be noted that as an appeals body our casework is only a small sub-set of the complaints the operator will have received. Our appellants are those complainants that remain dissatisfied with the response of the operator.

¹ 'Transport for all, Dial-a-Ride and Taxicard users speaking'. Published in 2003, the report is available at <http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/837/get>

2 Dial-a-Ride

2.1 People use Dial-a-Ride for a wide range of journeys that include shopping, doctors' appointments and social trips. It is used because of the advantages it has over mainstream public transport, which members find to be too stressful. The key attributes at the time of the research we conducted were considered to be:

- it is operated door-to-door and is thus more convenient;
- its drivers are empathetic, understand the needs of disabled people, and provide assistance such as carrying shopping and escorting passengers to their doorsteps;
- it is appropriate for “awkward” local journeys and for regular trips to clubs, and
- the cost is reasonable².

2.2 But all users experienced some problems with the scheme. For example in research we published in 2003 – but which is still relevant today:

- most people found it very difficult to get through on the phone to make a booking;
- there was an apparent contradiction between the frequency with which users were told rides were fully booked and the fact that the vehicles were often seen half empty;
- same-day and next-day bookings were rarely available;
- there was a lack of flexibility in the system and individual users (unlike groups) were unable to make a series of fixed and regular bookings, e.g. to attend adult education classes;
- the ban on travel “out of area” imposed serious limitations;
- complaints were not always effectively dealt with and some did not get any response;
- some participants felt that the scheme was abused by people who did not really need to use its services, which added to the pressure of demand, and
- a few people thought that the vehicles used at the time of the research could be made more accessible, e.g. by using more conspicuously contrasting colours on grip rails. But this view was not universal, and there seemed to be some variation in such features across the fleet.

² At the time the research was undertaken there was a charge for the service. In January 2008 it became free.

- 2.3 Overall, the users believed the scheme made a significant contribution to their travelling, when it worked properly. With the exception of a couple of negative telephone experiences, group members felt that the staff tried to do their best, but that the scheme is overstretched and therefore unable to deliver what were then recently introduced improvements, such as same-day bookings. The scheme appeared to work best for regular group journeys, e.g., template bookings for groups attending social club functions.
- 2.4 Dial-a-Ride users then felt that the following measures would improve the scheme:
- revising the procedures to minimise the problems encountered when making telephone bookings;
 - extending the permitted journey distances beyond the current operational areas;
 - adding cars to the vehicle fleet to provide more flexibility and reduce costs;
 - increasing the flexibility of bookings to facilitate individuals' attendance at regular events, e.g. adult education classes, and
 - establishing an effective complaints procedure.
- 2.5 At the time of the research a significant number of participants said they would be prepared to pay a little more for the service if this improved its reliability (even though, if they are able to use mainstream public transport services, the Freedom Pass allowed them to do so free of charge).
- 2.6 Since the research was conducted there have been significant changes as to how Dial-a-Ride is delivered. London TravelWatch was briefed by TfL, in a confidential session held in April 2007 (Appendix 1), on their emerging door to door strategy which proposed several changes to how Dial-a-Ride was to be operated.
- 2.7 The Dial-a-Ride service is now free and TfL have invested in centralising the booking services and reorganising how services are delivered. New vehicles have been brought and although the latest business plan shows a reduction in the number of new vehicles that are to be purchased (compared to the previous plan) there is still a programme of new vehicle purchase.
- 2.8 However, we have been aware, through our appealed complaints and our monitoring of TfL's customer surveys, that issues remain for Dial-a-Ride members.
- 2.9 London TravelWatch has continued to monitor progress by TfL through sessions at Committee meetings. At its Board meeting in January 2008 (Appendix 2) we heard from TfL's Paul Blackwell about the roll out of the new computer system which was clearly in great difficulties.

- 2.10 In June 2008 we again heard from Paul Blackwell (Appendices 4 and 5). By then there was progress, but the IT systems remained a problem and the system had not yet been implemented at Woodford. A new computer software system, 'Trapeze', was about to be introduced. At that same meeting members also considered a report (Appendix 3) detailing the Dial-a-Ride casework London TravelWatch had received between January and May 2008.
- 2.11 In January 2010 We again heard from Paul Blackwell who presented us a much improved picture of the performance and customer satisfaction for Dial-a-Ride (Available at: <http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/4025/get>).
- 2.12 In summary Dial-a-Ride contributes significantly to those that use it. TfL's door to door strategy sought to create a single London wide service that dealt with users concerns, some of which we identified in our research.
- 2.13 Of the issues that Dial-a-Ride members thought could be improved (paragraph 2.4 above) prior to TfL restructuring its door to door service most have been addressed with varying degrees of success.
- 2.14 During the sessions London TravelWatch members have held with TfL to discuss these matters (minutes appended) it has been clear that, there have been some persistent problems, however, following our latest update from TfL there is now reason to hope that further improvement will be made as the new systems bed in.
- 2.15 However, we know from our appeals that some members expectations of the service are very high and it may well be that some of those expectations may well remain unmet as the Dial-a-Ride service operates within a limited budget and improved operation may well lead to more demand.

3 Taxicard

3.1 In addition to the type of journeys made by Dial-a-Ride (see above), Taxicard is used to access other (mainstream) forms of transport, e.g. at railway stations. Our research showed that members use the scheme because:

- it was accessible and convenient;
- it was relatively inexpensive for journeys up to about £10;
- it was often the only flexible alternative available for some groups of people, (e.g. wheelchair users, who find buses difficult and the Underground virtually impossible to use without constant assistance),
- they felt safe, and
- it allowed journeys to be planned with a greater degree of predictability than Dial-a-Ride (although this is not consistent – see below).

3.2 Our research in 2003 showed that while Taxicard users felt that the scheme was an excellent idea, the general opinion was that it did not always work as it should. The key reasons for this were that:

- it can be unreliable and difficult to book, with taxis arriving late or not at all, which is a real source of stress;
- because the call centre was in Scotland at the time, its operators had limited knowledge of localities in London;
- the reliability of pick-up appears to depend on location and time of day, with people in outer London boroughs having the most difficulty in booking cabs;
- while the majority of taxi drivers want to be helpful, they don't always know how to do so and don't necessarily use the taxis' special features, such as ramps;
- the design of new taxis is not suitable for all disabled travellers, e.g. people with mobility difficulties find getting in and out of them difficult and some find the seating arrangements problematic (a swivel seat would be helpful);
- anecdotal evidence suggests that the complexity of the scheme, particularly with regard to charging, may impact on the willingness of taxi drivers to respond to calls or take users who try to hail a cab on the street (there are wide variations between participating boroughs in the rates charged and the number of rides permitted, which causes confusion to drivers);
- a significant number of participants reported incidents where cab drivers had refused to take them when flagged down on the street, even though they were members of the scheme;

- several users reported that taxis had arrived with £6 to £7 already on the meter, arousing suspicions that some drivers could be abusing the subsidy, and
- when complaints about aspects of the service were made, they did not seem to be followed up.

3.3 Users felt that the following measures would improve the scheme :

- making the rules of the scheme's operation consistent across all London boroughs, to encourage more taxi drivers to participate fully,
- training taxi drivers in disability awareness,
- increasing flexibility by allowing users to use more than one credit at a time for those longer journeys for which Taxicard is not currently economical (such journeys are often cheaper by minicab at present), and
- handing over the control of subsidy to the individual members for them to use as they choose.

3.4 Following our research we were pleased to receive a comprehensive report from the company Computer Cab who carefully considered our research and responded to all the points raised. The report is available in our Library.

3.5 We have no appeal casework regarding Taxicard. We do receive general complaints regarding Taxis, some of which do relate to the problems wheelchair users have in hailing a Taxi. We are presently in dialogue with TfL regarding improvements to the notices in Taxis that describe how Taxi users can complain directly to the PCO and to ourselves should TfL fail to resolve the complaint adequately.

Appendix 2

Board meeting 11.3.08



Board minutes

Agenda item 3
Drafted 22.2.08

Minutes of the London TravelWatch Board meeting
held on 29 January 2008 at 6 Middle Street, London EC1

Contents

164	Chairman's Introduction, activities and media report
165	Declarations of interest
166	Minutes
167	Matters arising
168	Action taken
169	Transport for London: surface transport performance trends and monitoring
170	Network Rail delay
171	Dial-a-Ride
172	Draft interim report of the Access to Hospitals Task Force
173	Subsidiary body membership 2008-9
174	Information items
175	Any other business
176	Resolution to move into confidential session

171 Dial-a-Ride (paper LTW 141a)

The Chairman welcomed Paul Blackwell, General Manager, Dial-a-Ride. Mr Blackwell began by summarising the background : towards the end of 2007, the Dial-a-Ride booking system had changed, and instead of speaking to their local depot customers had to ring a call centre to make reservations and bookings. The new system had been developed in response to customer comments and market research, and had removed the uncertainty of the old system, under which passengers had to wait for a call-back to confirm their booking.

The new system depended on having a very good computer system; this was not the case at present and it was very slow. Whereas it had been anticipated that each call should take between 3 and 3.5 minutes, in reality calls could take 5 minutes or more. People also encountered delays and problems in getting through. Matters had got worse when the system was extended to the Orpington depot, exacerbated by staff sickness and absences over Christmas. Dial-a-Ride had switched to employing part-time staff, with more working in the morning when calls peaked, but this had increased the sickness-absence problem and it did not have the option of asking others to work overtime. Call durations were now reducing but were still not good enough.. Less than 50% of calls were answered within 45 seconds; the industry standard was 60% and it was aiming for that. Answer times deteriorated when a new depot came on line, while staff got used to the new system. There was a rumour (unfounded) that people got charged after 15 rings, so people tended to hang up which meant they went to the back of the queue if they redialled. Dial-a-Ride did not know how many people rang the call centre but found the lines engaged. It was still debugging the computer system and getting it to do everything it was supposed to do. A new version of the program had gone live in December; it was testing it and had

confirmed that it was fully functional. However the hardware was very slow, and it took up to 2.5 minutes for the call centre screens to refresh so that staff could make the next booking (especially during the busy morning peak). TfL had been unable to resolve the problem but a solution had been promised by 15 February. Dial-a-Ride would then be able to install the software fully. When Orpington went live, it had expected 9,000 additional bookings; in fact it got 16,000. Other problems had included the staff sickness referred to earlier, system and cable outages, and the decision to take Christmas bookings for the first time.

Concluding, Mr Blackwell said that he was much more confident now than he had been in December. He was looking at moving to 7-day bookings, which would eliminate the Thursday and Friday peaks. More staff were joining, and extra management support had been added; call centre teams had also been reorganised to make use of local knowledge and increase efficiency.

The Chairman thanked Mr Blackwell and invited questions and comments, as follows:

The Casework Committee never used to get complaints about Dial-a-Ride, but the new system had clearly been a disaster. Why did it change a system that worked well without testing its replacement?

The old system suited known users and those who had got to know their local depot staff, but many people could not get through or found their bookings could not be accommodated. Bookings could not be confirmed immediately, so people had to wait for a call-back, and Dial-a-Ride wanted to replace this with a real-time one-stop system. The computer system had also been on its last legs. Consultants had advised on implementation in 2006, and lessons learned had been applied. The problem now was the IT system itself; Dial-a-Ride had had no reason to suppose that it would be so beset with problems. Woodford would not go live until it was satisfied that the system was robust.

The target date of 31 March seemed very tight in the circumstances.

It had been testing the system since the start of December, and the development Manager was confident. TfL had given an assurance that the hardware would perform.

Given Dial-a-Ride's client base, it should expect some people to take longer than others over their calls. Many also hated using automated call systems.

This had been taken into account when estimating the optimum call length of 3 to 3.5 minutes.

The system seemed to have no safety net.

The roll-out to Paddington depot had gone well. The extension to Wimbledon and Southall was a shambles because insufficient time or resourcing was allowed. The roll-out to Orpington would have worked well if the system had performed. Quarterly bilateral meetings with London TravelWatch would be held to monitor future performance.

The system seemed to have no targets. 45 seconds was a long time to wait for the telephone to be answered. London TravelWatch casework feedback indicated that many

people had to make repeat calls. Did the system recognise people's numbers once they were on the system, which might shorten call times and increase the personal touch?

Dial-a-Ride was aiming to answer a minimum of 60% of calls within 45 seconds. There was a massive peak in the morning; in the afternoon most calls were answered within 15 seconds. Once all the technology was up and running, it would be able to utilise automatic answering or number recognition, but that would not happen yet. The only way to address the morning peak problem would be through home-working technology. The maximum waiting time in the peak was three minutes. (The Chairman suggested opening the lines before 09 00. Mr Blackwell was not sure that this would help).

What advance booking facilities were offered?

This facility could be offered for regular trips, and for trips up to two weeks ahead. The remainder were next-day. This situation was being addressed by the Dial-a-Ride review. It was trying to persuade people not to ring off if they did not get through quickly. The system could not recognise callers' numbers at present. Data protection legislation required operators to ask every caller three questions to confirm their identity, even if they were known regulars. However it was determined to resolve the problems.

Performance figures for December had improved despite the sickness problem.

There were many possible combinations of working. Most staff could work in the morning, but if people went sick there was no cover. Many were not able to switch their shift times or work extra hours, because of care commitments, etc.

Was it true that people got charged for their calls after 15 rings? Dial-a-Ride needed a better complaints procedure to obviate the need to involve London TravelWatch.

The "15 rings" myth was just that, and it was trying to dispel it via drivers. It had plans to move to an 0300 number which would bring wider benefits. The complaints procedure issue was being addressed. Some people fired off complaints to a number of people simultaneously rather than following the proper procedures.

Concluding the item, the Chairman commented that he was amazed that TfL had managed to get into this situation with Dial-a-Ride.

Appendix 3

Board meeting 3.6.08

Secretariat memorandum

Author : Christine Evans

Agenda item 6
LTW 209
Drafted 18.5.08

Dial-a-ride : Casework overview January–May 2008**1 Purpose of report**

- 1.1 To provide an overview of Dial-a-Ride (DaR) issues dealt with by the Casework Team in the period January to May 2008.

2 Information

- 2.1 In the course of its presentation to the Board on 29.1.08, Dial-a-Ride undertook to improve performance at its call centres and return to update the Board on progress in due course.
- 2.2 The Casework Team continues to receive a number of phone calls from DaR clients who have difficulty getting through to make bookings, or to get through on the phone at all. One of the most common issues is the inability to book regular journeys, as was permitted in the past.
- 2.3 In addition, DaR does not seem to be adhering to its Charter with regard to trying to accommodate journeys over five miles. But we have noted a marked decrease in the overall number of complaints being received about Dial-a-Ride in general when compared with 2007.
- 2.3 A table of written Dial-A-Ride complaints received in January-May 2008 is appended at annex A.

3 Equalities and inclusion implications

- 3.1 Dial-a-Ride services are provided for people who have difficulty in using mainstream public transport. The performance of the DaR system is therefore critically important in helping to ensure that they do not become immobile and isolated, and that they are able to participate in a range of activities outside their homes.

4 Financial implications

- 4.1 This report has no specific financial implications for London TravelWatch.

Annex A to LTW 209

Written Dial-a-Ride complaints received January - May 2008			
Reference	Date received	Summary	Status
Appeals			
26213	23.1.08	Client unhappy that DaR no longer can do her booking despite doing so for last 7 years.	Closed
26245	28.1.08	Client unable to book trip with DaR despite previous trips - request for investigation but no action.	Closed
26392	05.2.08	DaR unable to accommodate her booking since the change over.	Closed
26679	11.3.08	Dial a Ride - promised that it would sort out a regular booking but not done.	Closed
26806	27.3.08	Says that DaR has 'banned her' because she is involved in a High Court action against it	Suspended pfa
27042	15.4.08	Org unhappy with DAR service - believe the poor nature of the service is affecting their organisation.	Open
27173	12.5.08	Wants driver to take shopping bags into the kitchen.	Closed
Initials converted to appeals			
25846	7.1.08	Has only been able to get one Dial-a-Ride in the last 8 months	Closed
27117	12.5.08	Reliability of service - on behalf of Age Concern's client	Re-opened
Initials			
26015	2.1.08	Problems getting through to call centre to make a booking	Closed
26021	3.1.08	Can't get through to booking line	Closed
26210	24.1.08	DaR	Closed
26482	19.2.08	Unable to get regular bookings	Closed
26500	21.2.08	DaR	Closed
26666	10.3.08	DaR	Closed
26668	10.3.08	DaR	Closed
26688	13.3.08	DaR	Closed
26701	6.3.08	Not picked up although a booking was made in advance - had to pay for a taxi	Closed
26846	31.3.08	Reliability of service	Closed
26969	15.4.08	DaR	Closed
27147	1.5.08	Difficulty in obtaining a regular booking	Closed
27188	29.4.08	DaR	Closed

Appendix 4

Board meeting 15.7.08



Board minutes

Agenda item 3
Drafted 7.7.08

Minutes of London TravelWatch Board meeting
held on 3 June 2008 at 6 Middle Street, London EC1

Contents

261	Chair's Introduction
262	Declarations of interest
263	Minutes
264	Matters arising
265	Action taken
266	Dial-a-Ride call centre performance update
267	Bus network performance
268	Local bus service support – options for reform
269	National Rail: performance report for quarter 3 2007/
270	Information items
271	Any other business
272	Resolution to move into confidential session

266 Dial-a-Ride call centre performance update (LTW 209)

The Deputy Chair welcomed Paul Blackwell, Managing Director, Dial-a-Ride. Mr Blackwell began by saying that the service was not yet where he wanted it to be, but that progress was being made. When users rang the call centre, the reservationist could now confirm the reservation immediately if a ride was available, or offer the option of going on the "wait list". As the day went on, calls on this could be fitted in as rides became available. Pan-London deployment of drivers and vehicles meant it could respond better to fluctuations in demand on a real-time basis. The service was dependent on having a reliable and efficient computer system, and the software had previously been bedevilled with bugs and missing functionality, requiring staff to work round it manually. The hardware had suffered many failures, and the introduction of enhancements had merely crashed the system and made things even slower. The system was much better and faster now. Staff availability had been a problem too, particularly before Christmas 2007

Page 4 of 16

(exacerbated by a flu outbreak). Another problem was the service's reliance on part-time staff whose flexibility was limited by other commitments.

Mr Blackwell went on to outline what Dial-a-Ride had been doing to address the problems. The main actions were as follows:

- TfL's Chief Information Officer was personally leading the project to resolve information management (IM) problems
- Hardware upgrades suspended until the existing system had been stabilised and failures were minimal
- Intensive systematic monitoring of hardware and software at multiple points, with detailed analysis of all system performance elements and implementation of "quick win" solutions.
- New "Trapeze" software completed and due to go live in mid-June
- Increased staff availability – now virtually fully staffed with reduced levels of sickness

The following tables showed the improvements that had resulted:

Results - Booking Process (MCC)				
	January 2008	February 2008	March 2008	April 2008
Average Call Answer Time Next Day/ Advance Bookings (mins:seconds)	3:47	3:22	2:59	1:24
Average call answer time Same Day & Cancellations (mins:seconds)	0:21	0:22	0:22	0:14
% calls answered within 60 secs.	45%	47%	54%	66%

Results – Customer Satisfaction				
GFK - NOP CSS Survey Quarter 4 2007/8 (Score out of 100)				
MCC Booking Process Overall:		72		
MCC Reservationists (Helpfulness & Attitude):		84		
Customer Complaints				
	January 2008	February 2008	March 2008	April 2008
Customer complaints re MCC Booking Process	222	191	111	41

Results: Trips Completed 2008 (MCC)				<i>TfL operates on 4 weekly reporting periods; however, the two periods either side of the fiscal year vary both in exact length and by the variability of Easter dates; generally the periods cover January – April 2008 inclusive</i>
Period	Completed (000's)	Yearly Increase Completed Trips %	Service Cancellations %	
Period 11	66.1	+4%	0.5%	
Period 12	68.1	+8%	0.4%	
Period 13	69.0	N/C	0.3%	
Period 1	63.4	+8%	0.3%	

The booking process was now faster, with call waiting time reduced from an average of 3.47 minutes in January to 1.24 minutes in April. The proportion of calls answered within 60 seconds had risen from 45% (January) to 66% (April). Waiting times might be slightly longer during peak periods but were still less than before. The service could not yet record how many people got an engaged tone and hung up, but it was pressing for this system enhancement to be made. In the meantime it was trying to pick this information up through mystery shopper exercises. It was trying to educate people not to hang up if their call took some time to answer, but to stay on the line – they would go to the back of the queue if they hung up and tried again. It was also trying to get users not to call during the 09.00-11.00 peak. It had introduced dedicated staff to deal with same-day bookings and cancellations, as these could be dealt with quickly resulting in a very short response time.

Cancelled trips were down to the target level of 0.3%; if there were major problems Dial-a-Ride tried to get taxi firms to step in. If somebody had to make a time-critical journey (e.g. to a hospital appointment) staff would try and find someone with a less time-critical booking who might be able to swop or change their time. Follow-up call-backs were made in the afternoon, to offer trips which might not have been available in the morning.

All depots were now performing better except Orpington, which had been the last one to go live on the new system (thus far) and which should go fully live in July. The computer system allowed redeployment of drivers and vehicles to deal with peaks, and more drivers were now available.

The next steps were :

- Implementation of new Trapeze computer system in mid-June, followed by intensive load testing
- Review in mid July for plans for Woodford depot to go live. If this was judged feasible, it would go live in August – otherwise it would be deferred until after Christmas.
- Ongoing IM developments throughout the year
- Completion of management control centre (MCC) restructuring at the start of July including performance management, with schedulers linked to particular depots to reap the benefit of their local knowledge

The Deputy Chair thanked Mr Blackwell and invited questions and comments, as follows :

Would Woodford be the last depot to go live?

Yes; it accounted for 33% of all Dial-a-Ride uptake, so it was a crucial and high-risk addition.

The London TravelWatch Casework Committee welcomed the improvements that had been made. However, it was receiving complaints that some people could not book regular trips in advance, and it appeared that Dial-a-Ride was not adhering to its commitment regarding taking bookings for journeys over five miles.

Mr Blackwell would take the second question away for reply. On the first, it used to deploy 50% of its resources on bookings for regular trips. These accounted for 73% of Southall depot's trips and 68% at Palmers Green, but not all were templated and thus

might not be recognised as regular under the new system. It could not address the Palmers Green issue until Woodford went live, but it had moved a lot of its west London resources to Paddington, including vehicles. It had written to all of its regular travellers to explain the problem and the fact that it could not accommodate everyone. It would come back on this point in three months time.

Action : Dial-a-Ride

The last reply implied that new customers wishing to book regular trips could not be accommodated. Did Dial-a-Ride ask existing regulars if they could change their requirements so that new people could be catered for?

It would get the templated-journey schedulers to analyse the regular bookings and see if this exercise freed up resources. Woodford had a lot of regulars. In South London it was trying to get people to book their regular trips in advance.

People who used to be regulars were now complaining that they could not book as regulars now.

This was probably because, under the old system, staff recognised them and asked if they wanted to book their usual journey, but this informal system meant they were not templated as regulars.

Did Dial-a-Ride still call people back?

Yes – it called back people on the “wait list” in the afternoon.

What were its dates for meeting its targets?

It should have met these by now, but would not make any predictions until the IM system was performing fully.

How often did it conduct customer surveys?

Quarterly.

Was Dial-a-Ride organised by sector?

The original MCC was pan-London. It was now organised into three broad sectors : North/East, Central/West/Southwest, South/Southeast.

What future plans did it have for dealing with the 09.00–11.00 peak? Had it considered enabling staff to work from home? What lessons had it learned from the flu crisis?

The system did not allow for home working, but TfL was looking at this for future systems. It was promoting e-mail booking and the next stage would be internet booking. The flu outbreak had coincided with a run of system failures which made the situation even worse. It could cope with such a level of sick absence if the system was running properly, and it was looking ahead to this winter.

When Trapeze went live, would it run the existing system in parallel until it was sure it was working properly?

The new system was complete and had been extensively tested. The switch-over would take place at the weekend. It was not expecting problems, but could revert to the old system in two hours if necessary. It could not run both systems in parallel.

Concluding this item, the Deputy Chair said that the Board welcomed the improvements that had been made, but Dial-a-Ride was clearly not there yet. Paul Blackwell undertook to supply details of the revised targets.

Action : Paul Blackwell

Appendix 5

D2D06

-----Original Message-----

From: Vincent Stops

Sent: Tue 2/23/2010 1:00 PM

To: Laura Warren

Subject: Dial-a-Ride appeals

Dear Laura

You requested information regarding our complaints (appeals) relating to the Dial-a-Ride service since March 2009.

Firstly the health warning that goes with our casework. Our appeals are those cases that the operator has not been able to resolve to the satisfaction of the complainant. As such they are a small subset of the overall complaints postbag that TfL receive.

We have a small number of simple cases that we receive and either try and resolve directly or we pass on for the operator (Dial-a-Ride) to resolve in the first instance. We have a larger number of inquiries about D-a-R that we are able to answer ourselves.

Discussing this with our casework team I can report that our appeals caseload has decreased considerably recently which could indicate either the service has improved or the complaints handling has improved, or both.

Since March 2009 we have dealt with four appeals:

i) The appellant had been refused a booking due to lack of resources. Following our intervention D-a-R met the member and gave her some good advice. We believe the case is resolved (31017)

ii) There was a misunderstanding of a pick-up timing. This was compounded by D-a-R's subsequent mishandling and poor complaints handling. Following our intervention an apology and substantial gesture of good will issued (31856)

iii) Our appellant would not answer withheld calls from D-a-R. Following our intervention and investigation by D-a-R there was a technical change to the telephone system and this issue was resolved. D-a-R calls are no longer withheld. (32197)

iv) Appellant was unable to get a regular booking. This was resolved following our intervention. (201199)

There are two further interesting cases that did not reach appeal stage, but we dealt with:

i) A member had become lapsed following an extended hospital treatment and would have had to wait some months to become a member again and get a booking. We understood that this was resolved.

ii) A member wanted a booking before buying theatre tickets, but the rules mean the theatre ticket is booked first. This is clearly circular. In the individual's case this was resolved, but we are unsure whether this is a general problem.

Please let me know if you have any further enquiries.

Vincent Stops

Streets and Surface Transport Policy Officer

Direct dial 020 7726 9956

London TravelWatch

6 Middle Street, London EC1A 7JA

Tel 020 7505 9000

Fax 020 7726 9999

www.londontravelwatch.org.uk <<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/>>

London TravelWatch is the operating name for the London Transport Users Committee.

The information transmitted is intended only for the person or entity to which it is addressed and may contain confidential and/or privileged material. Any review, retransmission, dissemination or other use of, or taking of any action in reliance upon, this information by persons or entities other than the intended recipient is prohibited. If you received this in error, please contact the sender and delete the material from any computer. You are also warned that messages and any associated files sent from or received by London TravelWatch may be monitored or stored and may be subject to public disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.

This message has been scanned for viruses.

Click

<https://www.mailcontrol.com/sr/19B2gTervlzTndxI!oX7Uq23VvDsoYOLAbFCrX8rQEN1YAI9xw8L15tlsfOfrGVlq5+8Hg3l7duELIeSJhirLg==> to report this email as spam.

D2D07 EVBCA Residents Association

Only last night we had a Residents committee meeting, and yet again the London taxicard came up with further examples of failures. Tom Brake has written to Merrick Cockell the Chairman of London Councils to seek his views on this matter.

It is believed that many passengers may have complained. Apparently, ComCabs who run the service recently lost a big contract and they responded by initiating massive cutbacks in the London Taxicard service, making it seemingly unviable. They now have a Scottish call centre which seems strange for a London service and may explain why drivers have been sent to wrong addresses. No-one seems to have investigated Comcab's ability to provide the service, or otherwise scrutinise what they are doing.

I understand that both Michael Pantlin and Margaret Whiting have continued to experience poor service, as have a number of their friends in similar circumstances. They think that Comcabs should be replaced by another provider.

We understand unless you ring at 7am it is impossible to book a cab, as the phone continues to ring and you cannot get through. You are also paying for the phone call if you are kept waiting and cannot get through. Michael has now been let down on a number of occasions.

There is a particular issue about the use of the service for hospital visits. It is understood that the link officer at Sutton has said the service cannot be used for hospital visits – so Mrs Whiting tells us. However, I understand Sutton Hospital says that patients such as Michael cannot use the ambulance because this is for emergencies only. Mrs Whiting told us that Michael had been discharged from hospital and had to get several buses home as there was no access to either the Taxicard service or an ambulance. Perhaps, Michael, you would confirm this is the case? Michael has a number of health problems and it is risky for him to travel by bus in such a vulnerable situation.

I suspect that neither Margaret nor Michael will be happy with some of London Council's answers. It would be useful if they could let us know where they agree and where they disagree with the response you have received. Note; we discussed the service last night without benefit of having seen your email which was probably sent during our meeting.

I think this one will probably run and run, and it is clear there is much continuing dissatisfaction with the service which may only be assuaged by re-letting the contract.

With best wishes

Jill Whitehead, for EVBCA residents

I see that, as in my own experience, you have been referred to the London Councils Office. I have had lengthy telephone conversations and emails with that office which purports to be a vigilant watchdog over Comcab but gave me the impression of being on Comcabs side rather than the service users. London has in the past just passed my complaints on to Comcab Customer Services who reply after several prompts with a stock answer that the phones go unanswered due to the level of demand and that I should book online instead which is not possible when out and about and booking to be

taken home. I have even received conflicting explanations. On one occasion I was told by a call taker that the system had gone down which was contradicted a few minutes later by his supervisor saying that it was due to exceptional demand.

Just lately they have added that I should see an improvement as they are increasing the number of staff working in their call centre but this in itself will do nothing to address the frequent breakdowns of their computer which causes much dissatisfaction among the excellent Sutton cabbies who have to pay Comcab £60 per week to get the Taxicard business and are left without work during these system breakdowns. The cabbies say there is a back up procedure possible using the cabbies mobile phones but that Comcab do not implement it when the main system is not working.

Despite my repeated requests I have been unable to access a copy of any formal complaints procedure for the benefit of Taxicard Service users. Personally I would like to see an independent market research company conduct a satisfaction survey of the users to get at the truth. I am very appreciative of Jill Whitehead taking up the problems that arise in trying to use Comcab and of yourself for looking into the matter.

With kind regards,
Michael Pantlin

I wrote to you just before Xmas indicating a number of problems experienced by members of the Erskine Village and Benhill Community Association in LB Sutton who need to use the TfL London Taxi card service. Both Michael Pantlin (who lives in Carshalton Central Ward) and Margaret Whiting (who lives in The Wrythe Ward) have been experiencing problems with this service, which seem to be getting worse.

I wondered if you had yet had the opportunity to find out why this service is seen to be failing its users in the Sutton area?

I had a telephone call from Margaret Whiting today who has had another bad experience – only yesterday. She no longer feels this service is safe for members of the public in view of mistakes and errors being made and lapses in promised services. She ordered a taxi to take her from her home in 26 Paget Avenue, Sutton to her luncheon club at St Patrick's church, Park Hill Rd, Carshalton. She was picked up safely but had problems with the return journey to her home. The driver turned up about half an hour late but he realised he had been sent by the service to the wrong address. Luckily for Margaret, the driver recognised her name and knew what the correct address should be as he had driven her before. If he had not been a familiar driver and was not able to return to the correct address, Margaret might have been left stranded at the church hall in poor weather conditions, far from home.

Margaret says that the drivers have been complaining about not getting work from the London Taxi Card service despite paying £60 per week for the privilege of being a member of it. She believes the service may be pocketing the money but not passing leads onto drivers – this could be a serious allegation if true. The service has been blaming a faulty computer system for six months now, and then it blamed other lapses on the time of year. Margaret believes the service has cut out admin staff and so there is no-one to pass on messages to drivers. The fault is an admin one.

There is also no clear person to make complaints to – Margaret has tried the Civic Centre link person but no avail. Michael Pantlin has made several complaints but these

have all been passed onto different people at TfL or the Travel Card Service with never the same person replying or accepting responsibility for dealing with the problem.

I should be grateful if an investigation could be arranged into these problems as it seems that Michael and Margaret are not the only ones suffering because of failures in the TfL/Taxi card service system. They both depend on taxis to get around and any lapses in service could potentially have serious consequences. If they were not collected by a taxi at some point in the future, and something happened to them as a result, who would be responsible for the outcome? That is what Margaret has been asking.

Please let me know how this problem may be sorted out so that customers can feel safe that when a taxi is called, it will arrive as arranged for the pick up.

Best wishes

Jill Whitehead
Chair of Erskine Village and Benhill Community Association



Cllr Caroline Pidgeon AM
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London
SE1 2AA

Contact: London Councils Taxicard
59½ Southwark Street
London
SE1 0AL

Direct line:
Fax:
Email:
Your Ref:
Date: 22 January 2010

Dear Cllr Pidgeon

Re: Problems with London Taxicard service

Thank you for your e-mail of 12th January 2010 regarding Mrs Whiting's Taxicard trip and also concerns expressed by Mr Michael Pantlin. Apologies for the slight delay in responding, but I have been waiting for Computer Cab to investigate some of the issues raised. These are addressed below:

- Upon investigation of Mrs Whiting's booking of 5th January, Computer Cab listened to the recording of the booking, and can confirm that the operator did, in fact, enter the address as it was given and proceeded to complete the booking exactly as requested. However, the driver who completed the return journey recognised the name on the booking and knew where to go for the pickup. A message was then sent from the driver that the actual pickup number is 86 Park Hill Road. It may be useful for Mrs Whiting to be aware of this for future bookings.
- With regards to Mrs Whiting's comments about drivers not receiving jobs, all drivers on Computer Cab's circuit have been made aware that there have not been any problems with the booking system distributing jobs to drivers. All Taxicard bookings in LB Sutton are offered to taxi drivers, and private hire vehicles are not used in this borough because the taxi supply is plentiful. It would not make sense for Computer Cab to not pass on bookings to drivers as they are only paid a management charge for completed trips and they would fail performance targets and lose income. In addition it would be detrimental to driver retention.
- In terms of Computer Cab's complaints procedure, members should firstly contact their call centre on 020 7763 5001. They should tell the operator that they wish to log a complaint and give as much information as possible as this will help with the investigations. Once the complaint has been logged the operator will give a 5 digit reference which is linked to the complaint. Members should make a note of the number in case they want to check on the progress of the complaint. Once the complaint is logged it is then passed on to their Customer Services (020 7908 0271) for investigation. The complaint will be responded to with a phone call or a letter which they will receive within 5 - 7 working days. If members are not satisfied with the response they can contact London Councils in writing, on 020 7934 9791 or e-mail taxicard@londoncouncils.gov.uk and the Taxicard manager will

respond to the query, going back to the contractor for further information if necessary.

- There have been some complaints recently regarding waiting times when calling the call centre to make a booking. London Councils has raised this issue with the contractor and they are in the process of recruiting more operators to reduce the waiting time. Computer Cab is also currently recruiting for additional agents for their London office to assist with Taxicard calls. We have been advised that the situation will improve over the coming weeks. In the meantime if cardholders are able to avoid the busiest time in the mornings when phoning the call centre they are likely to get through more quickly. The call centre is quieter in the late afternoon and evenings. London Councils will be monitoring call taking response times in the coming months to ensure that there is a significant improvement.

London Councils regrets any instances where Taxicard members are not satisfied with the service. Generally the service in LB Sutton is good. Taxicard members make over 3,600 trips in LB Sutton each month and almost 99% of trips meet the contractual performance targets of 95% of vehicles arriving within 30 minutes for as soon as possible bookings and within 15 minutes of the booked time for advance bookings. However, we are keen to improve the service further and to learn from any mistakes. I have asked Computer Cab to monitor both Mrs Whiting's and Mr. Pantlin's future bookings to improve customer satisfaction. I trust that they will not be deterred from using their Taxicards again in the future.

I hope that this covers the issues raised satisfactorily, and I would like to thank you for bringing these matters to our attention. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Faith Ezugwu
Permits Team Manager

D2D09 Hounslow Crossroads Care

My experience of this “service” from the people I support in the Hounslow Borough has been very poor.

I no longer give out details of Dial a Ride as a service for people to use.

It is very unreliable. I know of times when a vehicle has been booked and a number of people have been waiting to go to an event and awaiting collection but at the last minute Dial a Ride have rung to cancel.

When I have made enquires they have been short of staff

Transport in Hounslow is terrible and Carers and the people they Care for could really do with a reliable service that supports the needs of the people of Hounslow.

I hope the work you do will improve things Thank you

Kind Regards

Lyn Hammond
Carer's Rights Advisor

Crossroads Care Hounslow
82 New Heston Road, Heston, TW5 0LJ
F: 020 3118 7130
E: info@hounslowcrossroadscare.org
W: www.hounslowcrossroadscare.org

Crossroads Care is Britain's leading provider

D2D10 Wandsworth Community Transport

I am the Managing Director of Wandsworth Community Transport with 25 years experience in door-to-door transport. We used to run Dial-a-Ride in Wandsworth before regionalisation, my son is a wheelchair user and a user of Taxi Card and Dial-a-Ride, and I feel I can comment with knowledge and experience.

Some serious changes are long overdue and some of my thoughts about how the system could work better are set out below.

1. Dial-a-Ride and Taxicard are fantastic for some people.
2. Unfortunately, for many others, they are totally unusable. These people have withdrawn from the system and don't even try any more.
3. No matter how much you tinker with the existing framework, it will never work for everyone.
4. The Dial-a-Ride and Taxicard monopoly has to be broken. You can't have a 'two size fits all' solution. People need freedom of choice.
5. Other carriers need to be brought in, including Community Transports, specialist wheelchair cab companies and minicabs. These would be TfL approved or approved by local Councils based on their existing suppliers for similar work. Capital call already shows this can be done.
6. Passengers should be given control over their budgets (as with direct payments in social care) or an allowance based on trips and/or miles covered and/or level of disability.
7. This allowance could be used directly on the carrier of their choice who would then seek re-imbursement from TfL.
8. Bookings would be made directly with the carrier of choice, not with a call centre that would subcontract to an appropriate carrier. In this way poor service would be easily dealt with – you just wouldn't use that company ever again.
9. When a booking was made with the approved carrier, it would be logged onto TfL computer system, which would confirm eligibility and number of credits on the person's account. Once completed and confirmed, payment would be generated automatically.
10. Dial-a-Ride and Taxicard would continue as the core providers and would be the safety net for those who didn't have the confidence to organise their own transport. However, they would only be paid depending on what they delivered so would need to improve to avoid passengers going elsewhere.
11. Regular group transport requests would more efficiently be met by Community Transports. Half the passengers might pay with their Dial-a-Ride credits and the organising group could pay for non-Dial-a-Ride additional passengers direct to the CT. Regular trips could be guaranteed without blocking existing schedules.
12. Similarly Community Transports could run Shopping shuttles funded by their passenger's Dial-a-Ride credits. Shopping requests form a large part of Dial-a-Ride requests, and this would be a much more efficient and cost effective way of meeting demand.
13. People who wanted long distance trips could use their annual allowance on one single trip to Eastbourne for a holiday or to visit relatives on the other side of town if they so desired.
14. Others could go twice every week to play bingo.
15. Others could use a minicab to go to a hospital appointment.
16. Who are we to judge what is more necessary or valuable? Let the passengers decide for themselves.
17. Work would probably drift away from Dial-a-Ride and Taxicard to new carriers. The money saved as they grew smaller, would pay for the other carriers.
18. Many more people would get the service they needed to meet their needs.

Please contact me if you wish to discuss further

Manuel Button

Managing Director

Wandsworth Community Transport

D2D11 Croydon Over 60's Club

Theses are comments received from members of our over 60's club in Croydon.

Excellent Service

Taxicard reliable, difficult to phone

Both services are good, but booking not easy

I have recently joined dial a ride and i'm delighted, drivers are especially helpful

Regards

Fiona

Assistant Manager

D2D12 DIAL

Since March 2009, the service has deteriorated. In particular the booking services for DIAL A RIDE is inflexible and seems to do what the computer says, which is not always suitable for the user. The booking times are also altered without telling the user so the vehicle can arrive either earlier or later than the booking originally made.

Once the booking is made for taxis, the service is reliable. The problem with taxi cards is the time you have to wait online before the booking is made.

Hospital transport picking up times are often hours away from the appointment times. The return journey from the hospital can be hours after the appointment meaning long tiring waits in the hospital before going home.

Phyllis
Vice Chair DIAL

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

D2D13

TECHNICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

**Minutes of the Wandsworth Mobility Forum
2pm, Thursday 27th November 2008
The Town Hall Council Chamber, Wandsworth**

Present:

Joseph Healy (Chair)	Transport for All
Alison Buick	WAA Member
Angela Gayton	WAA Member
Angela Mollo	SW trains
Barbara Madeloff	WAA Member
Belinda Danino	Stakeholder Engagement, TfL
Betty Price	WAA Member
Cara Stimson	Network Rail
Clare Kakembo	
Colleen Bowen	WAA Member
David Hare	Senior Customer Services officer Wandsworth Council
Edward Kantar	
Emily D'Silva	WAA Member
Fitzroy Beckford	
Ian Seabrook	TfL Public Carriage Office
Jim South	WAA Member
John Chalmers	Adult Social Services, Wandsworth Council
John Slaughter	Transport Planning, Wandsworth Council
Joyce Mamode	Dial-a-ride, TfL
Laurence Gayton	WAA Member
Manuel Button	Wandsworth Community Transport
Margaret Snell	WAA Member
Martyn Ellacott	Chair of WAA
Mary E Crawford	WAA Member
MaryAnn Jackson	Stakeholder Engagement, TfL

Paula Haustead	Network Rail
Susie Romeo	Palantypist
Valerie John	Carer's Association
Vanessa Green	Transport Planning, Wandsworth Council
Vera Aikins	Account Manager (Taxicard), Computer Cab
Wendy Moreton	Social Services, Wandsworth Council

Apologies:

Bridie Tobin	WAA Member
Diedre Ratwayake	WAA Member
Dr Peter Pandey	WAA Member
Gill Wheeler	WAA Member
John Wheeler	WAA Member
Odette Baltarel	Balham Resource Centre
Alastair Fraser	Action for Blind People
Cllr Bowes	Councillor, Wandsworth Council
Cllr Mrs Jane Cooper	Councillor, Wandsworth Council
Cllr Randall	Councillor, Wandsworth Council
Cllr Senior	Councillor, Wandsworth Council
Kerry Lee	London Buses, TfL
Louise Shellard	WAA member
Nina Webster	Walking & Accessibility, TfL
Paul Bentley	South West Trains
Suzanne Pennington	Leisure and Amenities, Wandsworth Council
Tony O'Connor	Project manager, mobility, London Councils

ITEM	<u>DETAILS</u>
1.0	Introductions and Apologies
1.0.1	Attendance and apologies listed above.
2.0	Matters arising from last Meeting on 22nd May 2008
2.0.1	No amendments raised.
2.0.2	Separate bays for taxicabs bearing the target symbol (the Taxicard Roundel) Ian Seabrook reported that unfortunately this is not possible as there is no legislation to permit separate ranks for taxicard and

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>DETAILS</u>
	ordinary taxis.
2.0.3	Multi-trip Taxicard booking:- return trip failed to turn up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This was investigated and apparently the cab did return, and they couldn't contact the customer.
2.0.4	Complaint re procedures following accident in Dial-a-Ride vehicle (passenger not secured) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unresolved. The DaR health and safety officer advised complainant to contact the claims people, but there has been no resolution. <p style="text-align: right;"><u>ACTION</u> Joyce Mamode</p>
2.0.5	Use of Consolidators to sub-contract jobs that Dial-a-Ride cannot do <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not going ahead due to lack of funding. Currently focusing on improving existing DaR services and efficiency.
2.0.6	Dial-a- Ride return Journey cancelled night before trip <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Betty provided DaR with the information but is still awaiting a response. <p style="text-align: right;"><u>ACTION</u>:- Joyce Mamode</p>
2.0.7	“Stagecoaching” with Taxicard not allowed in Wandsworth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dave Hare reported that despite inviting people to provide their views on Wandsworth Council’s policy, he had received only two complaints. TfL are considering capping the contributions that they give to the taxicard scheme, which may affect the Council if there is a short fall in the budget for 2009/10. Individuals can send their views to the Council’s Customer Service team, at the following email address: Concessionarytravel@wandsworth.gov.uk or by ringing the Customer Services Helpline on 0208 871 8871. TfL commissioned Transport for All to carry out a study on “stagecoaching” in 7 boroughs. Over two hundred taxicard users were interviewed – half who did stagecoaching and the other half who didn't. The result indicated that there was no overall benefit to either taxicard users, to the boroughs or to TfL. The majority of users felt it wasn't an overall benefit which would encourage other boroughs to adopt the policy.

ITEM	DETAILS
2.0.8	<p>Information on Taxicard Accounts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martyn Ellacott has displayed on the WAA website how Taxicard members can access information about their account, including number of remaining trips. <p>http://www.wandsworthaccess.org.uk/resources/Taxicard+Internet+User+Guide.pdf</p>
2.0.9	<p>Wheelchair users not being securely strapped into taxis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ComCab have yet to supply Martyn Ellacott with a copy of their Complaints procedure. <u>ACTION:- Comcab/JSI</u> • ComCab have supplied a copy of the pamphlet to all people interested - available on WAA website: http://www.wandsworthaccess.org.uk/resources/Disability+card.pdf • ComCab have advised drivers on correct procedure to strap in wheelchair users, and how powered wheelchair users are to be correctly secured. BM asked whether this included advice on ramps. <u>ACTION: JSI</u>
2.0.10	<p>St George's Hospital Upgrade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A request for buses to stop anywhere on the perimeter road cannot be met due to Health and Safety issues. There are now 5 stops on the perimeter road which should be sufficient to access most parts of the building.
2.0.11	<p>Information for Visually Impaired people at bus stops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TfL have no plans to develop talking bus stops in the near future, but hope that with the improvement of information at bus stops, on buses, and improved driver communications with passengers that it will become easier for people to find out where buses are going. • TfL would need to consider whether there is an electricity supply available at each stop for audio announcements, and impact on local residents etc.

ITEM	DETAILS
<p>2.0. 12</p>	<p>Healthy living seminars for older people in Wandsworth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wendy Moreton distributed the Older People's Strategy. She highlighted the active days programme, which is provided through Age Concern. She asked the PCT whether they can do some healthy living seminars but hasn't had a response.
<p>2.0. 13</p>	<p>Improvements to bus stops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Buckhold Road</u> - Vanessa explained that there is a westbound bus stop on Wandsworth High St that serves the north end of Buckhold Road. The distance to the next bus stop is 503m. There may be scope to put in an additional bus stop outside St George's Park, slightly north of the existing northbound bus stop near Broomhill Road. This would reduce the bus stop distances down to about 250m. <u>ACTION: VG to investigate</u> <u>Wandsworth Bridge bus shelter</u> – Shelter has been installed at the southbound bus stop near Wandsworth Bridge. <u>Request for shelter or seat near Earlsfield Station (southbound)</u> – Due to the narrow width of the footway, the presence of the café's awnings/tables on footpath and utility covers, there is insufficient space to put in a shelter or seat. <u>Width of seats in bus shelters</u> – The seats are designed to discourage loiterers late at night, to stop people sleeping on them, and to shed water. Some shelters have full width seats such as at the Green Man bus stand – these may become more widespread when the new "Landmark London" shelter is released this spring. <u>Countdown in Clapham Junction</u> – of the 14 stops at CJ, 9 have shelters. Of these, 5 have Countdown displays. When the installation of the new i-bus system is completed, new countdown displays based on a digital GPS system will be rolled out.

ITEM	DETAILS
3.0	Bus service developments Belinda Danino and MaryAnn Jackson, Transport for London
3.0.1	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> London's bus network is one of the biggest in the world. There are currently 7,000 buses in the fleet; 6m passenger journeys every weekday, around 700 routes and around 17,000 bus stops. Freedom pass holders (including disabled travellers) receive free travel. TfL recognise that transport services, and especially bus services, need to be made as accessible and easy to use as possible. Recent initiatives to improve safety and security include CCTV and transport police on bus services. All London's buses have been low floor and wheelchair accessible since December 2005.
3.0.2	Accessibility Features on Buses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater than standard wheelchair bay area Higher percentage of seats in low-floor area of bus Maximised number of forward-facing seats in lower saloon with vertical hand poles by each row Outward-opening doors that provide more room to alighting passengers Additional hand poles on stair case Horizontal hand rails from door entrance to seating area More generous seat spacing Removal of some tip-up seats because people with mobility problems are finding it difficult to use them
3.0.3	BTEC driver training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previously the individual bus companies trained their drivers but the training wasn't regulated. Now TfL regulate the training through the BTEC qualification which provides a high and consistent standard across London. All London bus drivers must achieve a bespoke BTEC vocational qualification in their first year of driving BTEC explores day to day service delivery with emphasis on

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>DETAILS</u>
	<p>driving standards, customer care and disability equality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of BTEC, bus drivers must pass a driving assessment, independently accredited by the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) • Since the BTEC was introduced, there has been a steady improvement in driving standards, as measured by the DSA • Around 20,000 bus drivers with one or more years' service have a BTEC at any one time (the remaining 2,500 drivers are working towards it)
3.0.4	<p>Ramp Availability & maintenance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An annual audit of 2053 buses from 89 garages over a three-week period revealed only 17 buses had faulty ramps (0.8%). • A separate check of 2073 buses over 12-months up to March this year revealed only 8 ramps were not working. • Vehicles are monitored monthly to ensure that ramps are working properly.
3.0.5	<p>i-bus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All buses to be fitted with iBus by end of spring 2009. • Provides more accessible information for those with vision and hearing impairments, with the next bus stop announced via the bus's PA system, and by a visual display of the next stop and the final destination on screens in the bus. • Easier to understand for people with learning difficulties, passengers on unfamiliar routes and those for whom English is not a first language. • iBus is based on Satellite GPS tracking, so the exact location of the bus can be relayed to countdown displays at bus stops and provide real journey time information. This information is also relayed to bus operators so they can regulate the buses to provide a better service.

ITEM	DETAILS
3.0.6	<p>Bus Stop Accessibility Improvement programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All bus stops in London were audited by mid-September 2007. Any bus stops needing further work to make them accessible were identified and a large number have since been improved. • There is an ongoing programme to bring the remaining bus stops up to standard, by raising kerb heights, removing impediments to boarding and alighting, and extending bus stop clearways to allow buses to pull in close to the kerb.
3.0.7	<p>Changes to stopping arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus drivers are now required to stop at all bus stops where someone is waiting, regardless of whether the person waiting flags down the bus.
3.1	Question and Answer Session
3.1.1	<p>Hearing Loops on Buses</p> <p>Barbara asked whether TfL Buses had hearing detection loops.</p> <p><u>ACTION:</u> TfL to check</p>
3.1.2	<p>Bus drivers not knowing the routes</p> <p>Barbara complained that many drivers don't know the route very well so can't provide information on where to get off, particularly on routes 219 and 319.</p> <p><u>ACTION:</u> TfL</p>
3.1.3	<p>Request for better flooring in wheelchair area of bus</p> <p>Mary explained that when she rides on buses, her wheelchair moves around, which makes for an uncomfortable ride. She suggests some form of restraint is installed with rubber flooring to improve adhesion.</p> <p><u>ACTION:</u> TfL</p>
3.1.4	<p>Problems with P5 bus accessing bus stops</p> <p>Mary highlighted a bus stop in Thessaly Road near the school and a doctor's surgery that often has cars parked nearby so the bus can't access the bus stop.</p> <p><u>ACTION:</u> JSI/VG</p>
3.1.5	<p>Problems with Route 44 bus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clare K alleged that the service on Route 44 is infrequent and overcrowded. Sometimes it's impossible to get on several buses in a row at the Anchor Centre, Garratt Lane. • Belinda responded that the 44 has recently been improved and

ITEM	DETAILS
	<p>extended, with increased frequency. She believed that traffic delays had affected the service.</p> <p><u>ACTION:</u> TfL to review service</p>
4.0	<p>Access to local railway stations Cara Stimson & Paula Haustead, Network Rail</p>
4.0.1	<p>Clapham Junction Station</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The works are underway to provide lift access to all the platforms at Clapham Junction. Platforms 1 - 6 are progressing very well, with the lift shafts to be installed over Christmas, and lifts to be opened by summer 09. Lift pits for platform 7 - 10 and 13 and 14 are scheduled to be installed over the Christmas period. Proposals for platforms 15, 16 and 17 are currently being reviewed with the train operating companies. Works are scheduled for completion by September 09.
4.0.2	<p>Putney Station</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access is to be improved in conjunction with South West Trains, with lifts to the station platforms from the ticket office, improved retail provision, and a ramp into the ticket office from the street. The work will be difficult to undertake due to limited access and working areas. They are hoping to undertake detailed design over the next year, and to combine the works with the platform extensions planned over the next 5 years.
4.0.3	<p>Balham Station</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An accessible lift has been commissioned in the last few weeks.
4.0.4	<p>Earlsfield Station</p>
	<p>Accessible lifts are proposed, but the site is very complex, with restricted access and working area. Network Rail are working closely with the Council and SW Trains to find the best solution.</p>
4.1	<p>Question and Answer Session</p>
4.1.1	<p>Timetable for lifts at Earlsfield station</p>
	<p>Network Rail are hoping to install lifts by the end of 2010.</p>

ITEM	DETAILS
4.1.2	<p>Disabled Toilets at Earlsfield</p> <p>In response to a question from Martyn, Cara explained that there are no plans to install a disabled toilet as part of the works.</p>
5.0	<p>Proposed Travel Support Service for Older People – Wendy Moreton, Wandsworth Council Adult Services</p>
5.0.1	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has funded a number of schemes as part of the preventive strategy for older people in Wandsworth. One of those is a pilot scheme to find out if older people need support to use existing transport services (including buses, trains, taxis, using taxicard or other mobility services). • The Council is working with Wandsworth Community Transport (WCT) and Wandsworth Age Concern. • Older people may encounter barriers to the use of public transport. The Council proposes to provide support to older people who may have lost their confidence in using public transport, by providing more information, a buddy to support them in using the services; and to escort them on a number of services to build up their confidence.
5.0.2	<p>Feedback on Older People's Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manuel Button explained how WCT carried out travel training for people with learning disabilities in conjunction with "Generate". Something similar could be developed for older people. Communal trips on buses to places of interest would encourage people to travel and enjoy using buses. • Alternatively Dial-a-Ride, taxicard, and WCT services could be offered to suit individual's needs. • Barbara M suggested talking to the occupational therapy service about people recovering from a stroke, who need encouragement and confidence to go out again. • Martyn asked whether door-to-door services could be improved using community transport vehicles, as some people find it difficult to get to bus stops or taxi ranks. <p><u>ACTION:</u> Wendy to consider.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TfL already provide a mentoring scheme to give disabled people

ITEM	DETAILS
	assistance with travel, showing them how the services operate, where to go if things go wrong, with the aim to build confidence and to introduce people to public transport.
6.0	Taxi Issues – Wheelchair Carriage – Ian Seabrook, PCO
6.0.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the previous Forum several people claimed that they weren't aware they had to be secured while travelling in a taxi, and drivers often don't offer to secure wheelchairs. There was also confusion over the correct position for wheelchairs in taxis. • An information leaflet has been provided by ComCab for taxi drivers and wheelchair users, which illustrates the correct position for wheelchairs in taxis, and how to secure them. • The leaflet says "the safest way to travel in a taxi is with your wheelchair properly secured and facing backwards. For your own safety, we advise you to travel in the position shown. Please ask the driver for assistance". • Most drivers are now being instructed that when they do take on board a wheelchair user, they should offer to secure the wheelchair in position. • TfL is developing an information sticker to go inside taxis to inform drivers and passengers of the correct position for wheelchairs. <p style="text-align: right;"><u>ACTION:</u> TfL/PCO</p>
6.1	Question and Answer Session
6.1.1	Is the meter running while passengers are strapping in? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meter is running from the time the cab reaches the pick-up point, including time taken to be strapped in. This is the same for any passenger. Unsecured passengers are unlikely to be covered by the driver's insurance, and travel at their own risk.
7.0	Dial-a-Ride up-date - Joyce Mamode
7.0.1	Update on recent changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few initial issues with the new computerised booking system have been resolved. It went live at the beginning of September

ITEM	DETAILS
	<p>08, and improvements are already starting to show.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the last 4 week period, completed trips London-wide were 4% up on the same period last year. • In Wandsworth requests are up 2% compared to this time last year, completed trips are up 4% and refusals down 1%. • DaR have reorganized the call centre, to have 3 local teams to deal with South London, North London and West London. This enables staff to develop local knowledge of the area. There are new procedures for dealing with issues that arise, particularly when there are problems en route, and the reorganization into local teams should benefit this. • Priority is given to passengers waiting for more than 15 minutes, and also to completing return journeys over starting new outward journeys, to ensure people don't get stranded without a return trip. Wheelchair passengers are prioritised.
7.0.2	<p>New DaR bus</p> <p>DaR has introduced a new bus to its fleet (on show at the Town Hall on the day of the meeting). It has air conditioning, and a flexible seating arrangement whereby seats can be tipped up to accommodate a wide variety of users (including wheelchair users) which provides DaR more flexibility throughout the day. The bus has equipment to secure wheelchairs. 11% of booked journeys are subsequently cancelled, so with the new bus these cancelled journeys can be more easily reallocated to other people.</p>
7.0.3	<p>Door to door review</p> <p>Discussions are taking place with London Councils on the integration of door-to-door services.</p>
7.0.4	<p>How to make a complaint</p> <p>Joyce circulated a Customer Charter with 3 phone numbers.</p>
7.1	<p>Question and Answer Session</p>
7.1.1	<p>Provision for luggage on new DaR bus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martyn commended the new design for the DaR bus, but wondered if more provision could be made for luggage. • Joyce responded that DaR limits luggage to 2 bags because of

ITEM	DETAILS
<p>7.1.2</p>	<p>space considerations.</p> <p>Confidence in DaR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manuel believes that now DaR have made significant improvements to their operation, everyone should try it. The more people use it, the higher the chance of DaR getting additional buses, leading to more opportunities to travel and less refusals. • A marketing drive in South London is planned because of a drop off in demand. • Colleen had lost confidence with DaR through a few bad experiences. She has on occasions had to wait all day to find out whether a trip can be made or not. • Joyce explained they try to schedule as many trips as possible as they come in but it is not always possible. Booking is more likely to be successful at quiet times of day; and if passengers are flexible about the time of travel.
<p>8.0</p>	<p>Developments at Transport for All - Joseph Healy</p>
<p>8.0.1</p>	<p>Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joseph is no longer working for Transport for All (TfA). • TfA have had funding cut. Have recently won a major 4-year contract with London Councils to provide advice and training across London, to providers of community transport service and users of accessible transport. They are working with community transport associations, providing training for their trustees and some of their drivers. TfA are also organizing a series of information sessions for disabled people across London about accessing transport. <p>TfA have revamped their website: www.transportforAll.com</p>

ITEM	DETAILS
9.0	Wandsworth Community Transport – what would you like to see over the next 4 years? – Manuel Button
9.0.1	Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WCT have just won a 5 year contract with Wandsworth Council to provide community transport services in Wandsworth. WCT will be asking for views about any additional services that people need. The main contract is for mini-buses for community groups, shopmobility services and transport for regular outings. WCT also bid unsuccessfully for funding for a door-to-door service, as they believe there is a gap in the provision of transport for things like holidays, airports, long distance journeys that cannot be made with Dial-a-Ride and taxicard.
9.1	Question and Answer Session
9.1.1	Transport to Airports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transport to airports can be offered, but at present WCT do not have funding for such trips, so they charge the cost of hiring a minibus, ie £40-£50 for the trip.
9.1.2	Hospital appointments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WCT often get requests for hospital trips but do not have the capacity to meet the demand. They will consider such trips in an emergency, but would have to charge for a whole minibus. Fitzroy wondered if WCT would consider a subcontract with the PCT to deliver a hospital service. Manuel explained that WCT contracts are very large, but he might consider bidding for the next one.
10.0	Any Other Business
10.0.1	Stagecoaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A motion proposed by Manuel, was supported by a majority of attendees, requesting the Council to consider allowing double-swiping of taxicards. <p style="text-align: right;"><u>ACTION:</u> DH</p>

ITEM	DETAILS
10.0.2	<p>Tactile Paving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A complaint alleged excessive use of tactile paving in the borough, and requested a reduction to assist those with ambulatory problems and using wheelchairs. • John explained that this issue is being investigated in relation to the new scheme at Clapham Junction. <u>ACTION:</u> John SI
10.0.3	<p>Speed Humps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council was asked if it will remove speed humps from Wandsworth, to assist ambulances on emergency calls. • John responded that if humps are removed, the Council would have to find other ways of restricting vehicle speeds – signage alone is ineffective.
10.0.4	<p>Prioritising Transport Provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claire asked if transport could be allocated by need rather than by demand. Joyce responded that DaR is not in a position to make judgements about need.
10.0.5	<p>Dropped Kerbs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleen complained that over 2 years ago she had requested dropped kerbs in Thessally Road from an engineer from Wandsworth Council at a site meeting. She had reminded the Council a year later, and they still have not been installed. <p><u>ACTION:</u> John SI to follow up</p>
11.0	Date of Next meeting
	Provisionally set for Friday 5th June, 1.30 for 2 pm

JSI 22/05/09

Review of Wandsworth Access Association Transport Manifesto

The Transport Manifesto was commissioned in 2005 with a grant from the Wandsworth Community Empowerment Network because of the difficulties Wandsworth Access Association (WAA) members had in accessing suitable transport. It was hoped that, with its investigation and publication, the situation would improve.

However this has not happened and complaints re Dial-a-Ride etc. continue to be made.

The management committee of WAA, decided in May 2008 to include in their work plan for 2008-9, a review of the above with particular emphasis on Dial-a-Ride and taxi-card.

As a result, a Door-to-Door Transport Survey was conducted the results of which are attached along with the following report and conclusions. To supplement the findings of the survey, an in-depth personal trial of Dial-a-Ride services was undertaken over several weeks by WAA's Campaign Officer, the results of which appear in Appendix 1.

DOOR-TO-DOOR TRANSPORT SURVEY

As a follow up to their Transport Manifesto, Wandsworth ACCESS, with the help of Wandsworth Community Transport, have undertaken a survey to try and quantify people's experience and attitudes to Door-to-Door transport in Wandsworth, including Dial-a-Ride, Community Transport, Taxi-card and Minicabs.

The survey was sent out to Wandsworth Age Concern's membership (approx 3,500 people) with their regular newsletter and an additional 400 were sent to Wandsworth Community Transport members who were not Age Concern members.

283 replies were received, which though only 7.2%, is about the industry average for a posted survey of this nature and not a bad return.

Because of the wide ranging nature of Age Concern's membership, it is hoped that a fair representation of the different service users were included in the mailout, though there was a bias towards Community Transport users, who all received a survey.

This is not a scientifically designed analysis, but an indication of attitudes.

Some significant and interesting conclusions can be drawn as follows.

1. Most of the respondents had a genuine need for door-to-door transport with an average age 77, so quite elderly, with a high percentage using wheelchairs and/or receiving Disabled living allowance.
2. As with most of these services, men were a very small percentage
3. Getting to the shops was by far the greatest need expressed
4. There seemed to be a reasonable take up of the services in question, though one might have expected Dial-a-Ride to feature much more strongly as the principal funded organisation providing door-to-door transport.
5. Regarding the reasons why people didn't use or were dissatisfied with the services on offer, Dial-a-Ride and Taxi-Card came off worse with non guaranteed returns, inability to get through on the phone, not going far enough and lack of availability of trips featuring strongly.
6. Dial-a-Ride, surprisingly, was the service that suited least people the best. It has the most funding and is designed specifically for this client group.
7. 76% of respondents would support a system where they could manage their own budgets and choose the transport that suited them best (like Direct Payments for home care).

CONCLUSIONS

1. There is significant dissatisfaction with the services on offer with many people finding it difficult to access the services they need.
2. A wider range of options is needed to cater for a range of transport requirements like book-ahead long distance trips as opposed to last minute regular local trips.
3. People want to be able to choose for themselves.
4. With shopping being the most important need for transport, it makes sense to run a cost effective dedicated shopping shuttle (as with Community Transport) which frees up space for more ad-hoc trips
5. Dial-a-ride and Taxicard, which receive the bulk of the funding for door-to-door transport should be doing much better. It seems that many people have given up even trying to use them.
6. All the services suit some of the people very well, which again highlights the need for a wider range of options so that **everybody** can find a service that suits them.

APPENDIX 1 – PERSONAL DIAL-A-RIDE TRIAL MADE BY WAA.CAMPAIGN OFFICER, BETTY PRICE

I had 12 rides with Dial-a Ride through April-June.

Only one was successful but it took me over an hour to book it. I called advance bookings on May 7th and asked for transport to Wandsworth Town Hall for a WAA management meeting 10-12 the operator refused to take my call as I only had SW18 for the address. I telephoned our Chair to ask for full postal code.

I then called advance bookings again (after waiting 15 mins for my call to be answered.) Operator said there was no need for my first call to have been refused as the full postal code comes up on the screen. She said she would report the incident.

Deposited at Town Hall 9.50 collected 12.15. Very good timing.

June 6th made advance booking for June 10th Wandsworth Town Hall (Disability Go meeting 2-3pm) deposited at 1.10 waited 45 minutes for meeting to begin. Return journey I had to wait outside in the street for 40 minutes.

Other trips I made were to meetings in church halls where I arrived at least 25 minutes early and had to wait for doors to be opened, on one occasion doors were closed at 3.30 and bus arrived at 4.25. another time doors closed at 11.30 and bus arrived 12.25. I got very wet waiting in the rain but at least I was sitting in a wheelchair, I would feel very sorry for anyone who had to stand and wait.

It is not satisfactory to request trips where there is a definite time scale as Dial-a-Ride cannot cope. Drivers were always apologetic for delay but blamed the system.

Shopping trips

Kingston is my nearest shopping area I realised that I could not book a time convenient to me but needed to fit in with their schedule. I had three trips of 2-3 hour duration I was surprised that on the six journeys made I was the only passenger.

Taxi-card

I have no problems to report, meetings I go to are daytime. Putney and Roehampton Development Group. Wheelchair User group & PCT Essence of Care Committee, they are all local. I book a return journey in advance and if there is a delay they contact me.

Taxi- card is quite useless if one wants to travel at night (I have no experience) but Mobility Forum minutes and Disability magazines give details of stranded wheelchair users and Taxi card themselves say they cannot guarantee a return journey.

So what is the solution?

Hopefully the council's Action Plan: Getting out and about' will come up with something, meanwhile I have purchased a vehicle which accommodates my w/c No more Dial-a-Ride for me!

Betty Price

November 2008

Additional Information to Betty Price's Report

After this report was submitted Betty Price attended a Dial-a-Ride Panel meeting.

The findings of this meeting were reported as follows:-

It was announced there would now be a new format to meetings .Instead of listening mainly to complaints the agenda will consist of;

1. What has been done since the last meeting
2. Current priority area
3. Discussion and feedback
4. Future priorities
5. Round up.

There will be fewer meetings to enable staff to concentrate on service delivery, provide feedback to us on what is happening, spending more time on gathering specific views.

Other information and plans include;

Improving computer performance, improving schedules, and improving regular booking service and clear the backlog.

All depots now book with same booking and scheduling arrangements, beginning to deliver benefits of centralisation. Dial-a-Ride are no longer running two different systems at once, staff now concentrating on making centralised arrangements work. There are now three regional managers for Dial-a-Ride operation.

Betty reports she is very impressed with the improvements planned and would recommend that members who are entitled to use Dial-a-Ride (because they have a permanent, long-term disability, health problem that means they are unable to use conventional public transport.) should give them another chance.

There is now an alternative telephone number to call and make a booking (in addition to **0845 999 1 999**) it is **020 7394 5800** and remember there is **no fare to pay** and you can usually take a friend with you.)

Additional Information.

A Membership Application is required to use this service.

More types of Entitlement to Dial-a-Ride Membership.

- Those who are aged 85 or over.
- In receipt of:-
 - Attendance Allowance -High rate Mobility Component.
 - Disability Living Allowance -High rate Mobility Component.
- Holder of a Taxi-Card or Blue Badge.

Telephone Dial-a-Ride on: - 020 7394 5800 (option 1) for a membership application form.

Notes.

Dial-a-Ride will not do journeys to hospital for hospital appointments.

All journeys are within a 5 mile radius, unless through prior arrangement.

D2D14 Harrow Association of Disabled People

Our advocacy service takes on many transport issues but has never been asked to do a case against dial a Ride in the 4 years I've been here. However, we do hear anecdotal comments that it's not a reliable service and has become less reliable since the small payment has been suspended and the service has become free. I think maybe we don't get complaints because people have pretty much given up using it. Harrow community Transport, and the Taxicard card service are also used in Harrow for door to door transport. My impression is that taxi cards are useful and cheap for local journeys, with the cost rising dramatically for longer journeys, but not very easy to book and not always reliable, Harrow community Transport is seen as a more expensive option, but I have only heard good comments about its' reliability. We would be very keen to be involved in any consultation or new plans being considered for new arrangements for transport services for disabled people. Thanks, Angela Dias (Harrow Association of Disabled people).

D2D15

Southwark Council

Accessible Transport for Disabled Community

Objectives

- Agree on a set of actions for monitoring improvements in disabled transport in Southwark
- Agree on a mechanism through which the actions can be monitored and evaluated

Ground Rules

- This is a conversation
- We are all equal partners
- Focus on solutions
- Respect people's experience as legitimate
- Listen to each other
- Everyone Counts!

Background

- Southwark Council embarked on a project to improve participation in Physical Activity and Sport by BME and disadvantaged groups
- This was in support of Physical Activity and Health Inequality strategies

Background Cont'd

- Carried out community-based assessments in partnership with Southwark NHS using the 'community scorecard' process
- 13 focus groups held across the borough using the community scorecard process

Background cont'd

Transport was the
number one issue
identified by the active
disabled group

Disabled Transport Scorecard

Focus Group: Older Active Disabled Mixed 45-75 from Brandon Baptist Church
Indicator: Level of Mobility and Access to Transport
Scoring Scale: 1-10 where 1=poor and 10= excellent

Local Factors Impacting on Access to Transport	Score (Out of 10)			Comment			
	Dial a Ride	Community Transport	Taxi Card	TFL (trains)	Private Hire	Hospital Transport	Buses
Reliability of Return Journeys	3	10	Insufficient usage to score	9	10	8	10
Equal Access-Availability of Adaptations such as ramps	Insufficient usage to score	10	Insufficient usage to score	7 No lifts at Peckham Rye and Nunhead	10 wheel chair based 8 non-wheel chair	10	8 wheel chair based 1 Non- wheel chair based
Cost	10	10	Insufficient usage to score	10	3	10	10
Information/Awareness of Services	9	10	Insufficient usage to score	10	10	No control over service	8
On Time	1	10	Insufficient usage to score	9	10	1	6
Ease of Access to Services	1	10	Insufficient usage to score	10	10	4	10
Overall Score	2						88

Mystery Shopping

- Covered 12 Journeys over a one month period
- Monitored by random disabled persons across the borough
- Key services assessed: Dial-A-Ride, Taxi Card and Capital Call

Key service variables tracked

- Access-

- no of telephone rings
- telephone response: picked up, voicemail etc
- bookings: whether a booking was secured

- Reliability

- punctuality: whether car arrived on time including return journeys

- General Service Assessment

- In-transit experience etc

Mystery Shopping Results

- Ring length

45% of calls were answered between 4-6 rings while 27% was between 1-3 rings and 28% took 7+ rings

- Nature of Answer

75% of all calls were answered by someone, there were no calls that were unanswered and 25% went to voicemail. Most clients were generally able to make bookings with voicemail

Mystery Shopping Results Cont'd

- Bookings

80% of mystery shoppers were able to confirm a booking while 20% were not

- Punctuality

82% of pick ups arrived on time while 18% were reported late

64% of return pick ups were on time while 36% were not

Mystery Shopping Results Cont'd

- General Service Assessment
- Assessments were graded from excellent to very poor
- 50% were judged good and 16% was poor

Summary table %

Service	No. of rings			Tel resp			Confirms		Punct		Return punct	
	1-3	4-6	7+	Ans	No n	VM	+ve	-ve	+ ve	-ve	+ve	-ve
Dial-A-Ride	25 %	25 %	50 %	75 %	25 %	%0	80 %	20 %	75 %	25 %	60 %	40 %
Taxi Card	50 %	25 %	25 %	50 %	0 %	50 %	100 %	0 %	75 %	25 %	50 %	50 %
Capital Call	0 %	100 %	0%	100 %	0 %	0 %	100 %	0	100 %		67 %	33

Qualitative Comments

- General Comments
- These are important services that people who use them value highly
- If it goes wrong there is a high level of anxiety
- Some people have used it in the past and lost confidence
- Issues are 50:50; sometimes clients get it wrong
- Some people not aware of services, or clear on the criteria . Sometimes this is because of because of anecdotal misinformation or general lack of awareness.

Service comments

- **Dail a ride** drivers offer a very disability friendly service, but it can sometimes take a long time to make a booking
- **Taxi card / com card** works very well for many people for city journeys, but can be difficult to get a reliable pick up for certain areas or/and at certain times. There are mixed reports on driver awareness of access issues
- **Capital Call** There seems to be comparatively less use and of this service, and less awareness, by people we spoke to, but the tracked journeys show high customer satisfaction. Some issues were disability awareness of drivers and voice mails not always being returned.

Assorted comments

- **Dial A Ride**

**“When it works well it very well indeed.
Can take an hour to secure a booking.”**

- **ComCab/TaxiCard**

“Great for city journeys (not so good for outlying areas), taxi drivers wonderful and helpful. Delighted with service ; just wish I had more credit.”

- **Capital Call**

**“Drivers go too fast.
Some times you phone leave message and
sometimes returned sometimes not.
Can’t give price unless you book.”**

Comments

Taxi card/Comcab. “I went to Waterloo to ring for a comcab and the taxi appeared in one minute. I have found that if I call from home the taxi takes ages to arrive , so you can’t arrange to meet someone or catch a train. “

Comments

Dial a Ride “Reasonable service but sometimes too early or too late .One off journeys much harder to book e.g. getting to a London railway station. Service has deteriorated since becoming free.”

Dial a Ride “I started to call at 9.01 am, 33 dials and 20mins later I spoke to someone; there were no pick ups left in the morning
Booking a ride is a pain. The service itself is very good, drivers are lovely .”

suggested actions

SDF to facilitate engagement between accessible transport service providers,
Transport for All and disabled peoples groups

More local ownership by Council in promoting services and local strategic
planning

Travel mentoring service promoted to support greater use of mainstream
services and assist with confidence and explore greater use of public transport

‘Transport for All’ to share information on transport for disabled and elderly
people in Southwark

Continue Mystery shopping for nine months to a year- redesign form in
consultation with service providers and share results on a periodic basis

Disability awareness training especially for minicab service

D2D16 Allen Bergson

It is 51 weeks since the last meeting and I would like to bring to your attention things that worry me, and items of concern reported by the community:

Dial-A-Ride:

In the last 51 weeks I have personally found that I have been able to be accommodated on a lot more trips, and the pick up times have all been on time, but the collection times have been bad, on three occasions over 45 mins late. The controllers do not tell us that they have rescheduled the pick up time, so when you phone them they say the vehicle is not late yet. When you phone again and tell them that the new pick up time is over 15 mins late they say they will phone you back, but they still don't so we end up phoning again (at prime mobile phone rates) which is unfair.

The time it takes to book a trip on the phone is very much improved, taking only a few mins.

The driver's attitude as always is fantastic towards the passengers, and they go the extra mile in all their service to us, this should be noted.

On their behalf I would like you to look into their working conditions, as I think their union Unite is a waste of space and does nothing for them.

I brought to the committee's attention last year the unsuitable condition of the new buses in regard to walking passengers and the drivers, but I have seen no improvement or a reply on who and why this vehicle was purchased, see below.

March 10th meeting 2009

The drivers and the public would like to know who was the person responsible for ordering the new vehicles for the following reasons: Also the journey times are increased by all these issues and in some cases the drivers and passengers safety is at risk.

- 1. It is too wide to get through some width restrictions bollards?*
- 2. Fixed wing mirror on near side makes it harder to manoeuvre with cars parked both sides of road, can be danger to pedestrians when trying to get close to kerb.*
- 3. Drivers Wing mirror hard to adjust, so both wing mirrors should be electric.*
- 4. When driving it is very hard to see side of vehicle because of drivers seat angle and height.*
- 5. Very unsuitable turning circle, bad turning lock.*
- 6. Very hard to judge whether to lower the bus because the doors get stuck on kerbs and then need to be taken out of service, and why was there no sensors fitted to warn the driver if the doors are going to hit the ground.*
- 7. Ramp too steep for some wheelchairs when no pavement present, (parked cars)*
- 8. Ramp cannot be used by walking passengers as too steep and no handrails.*
- 9. Stepping down without lowering the bus is very difficult for most walking passengers much too high and no handrails.*

10. Plenty of room to turn around a wheelchair in the bus but dangerous for walking passengers as no hand rails to grab on to.

11. Why did Ealing Community Transport Drivers who tried out the vehicle reject it stating it was unsuitable and over priced even with the big discount offered (WHY?), bearing in mind that the cost of adaptations outweighed the discount.

Since then I was told Westminster council rejected the use of this type of vehicle, and I have also seen how bad it performs in the snow. One driver just got out of the way after putting down the ramp when the bus slid towards her just missing her feet, I was also told that there have been accidents when the bus slid into objects after it stopping.

The fact is that every driver but one that I have questioned on the new buses over the past 51 weeks have stated that they do not like this bus, but my constant e-mails to Unite have resulted in not one reply, as I assume they are not interested in their Dial-a-Ride drivers. WHY?

Capital Call:

Is now like the Taxi card system, which again I cannot find anybody who knows why this has been changed to a worst system, and some Councils are now not using Capital Call, was this why it was changed?

Black Cabs:

On the Taxi Card are mainly useless as the cabbies are reluctant to take on the jobs when they can pick up cash payers on route, also all the ones I have used have not restrain myself or the wheelchair on the journey. Only last week I was refused a trip when I approached a stationary cab, when he informed me that he had left his ramp at home. This has happened to me three times (maybe because it was raining on all those occasions and the poor driver would have to get out of the warm cab to get me in).

It is funny that the only good experience I have had in a Black Cab was in Jan when Dial-A-Ride sent me a black Cab for a meeting because they had no other vehicle for me, this time I was strapped in and the wheelchair was clamped (how much does this cost DAR?) It is also ridiculous that if I phone for a Taxi under the Council scheme I pay the pickup and the excess but on DAR black cab nothing.

You now have Capital Call nearly the same as the Taxi Card and DAR using Black Cabs for journeys also, so would it not make sense to combine all three under one management or is that common sense which politicians never use?

As stated before we would like a public enquiry into the purchase of the new buses and the competence of the management of DAR and not the internal enquiry that was agreed to by your committee last year, which I have still not seen the results.

Please note that because of the extra time the drivers have to spend on the new buses, on their journey times because of width restrictions and not being able to see the side of the bus plus not being able to get access to the kerbs because of parked cars etc, they are being constantly pressured by management and it has to stop! If you can do

one thing at today's meeting let it be to speak up for the drivers before they all leave DAR.

Allen Bergson: D-A-R user (ex- transport manager) _____

.

From: allen bergson [mailto:]
Sent: 04 March 2010 17:01
To: Caroline Pidgeon
Subject: cabs

Dear Caroline,

It was nice to see you on Wed.

Recently I have declined two trips on voluntary work as the organisers either could not or did not want to provide accessible **Coaches** for the group of us (I was the only one in a wheelchair)

I have had many difficulties over the years with **Dial-A-Ride** when I want to attending meetings as they would take me but be unable to bring me back as it was after eight pm.

Do you realise that if you have to travel in an electric wheelchair that does not fold for storage or you cannot transfer out of a wheelchair; your fare price will be higher than the airfare to Europe?

The latest trips by **Black Cabs** I have taken were for drug trials for the National Hospital Holborn, and the Doctors were given an estimate for picking me up of £35.00, when I phoned it was an estimate of £53.00. On the day it came to £71.20 but when the credit card statement came it was **£80.11 one way**, they explained that the extra was for booking fees and credit card charges (they will only guarantee to pick up wheelchair users if they use booking and credit card charges, not surprising). Able body would not have to book **Black Cab**, so without the extras I think it would be £50.00 to £60.00 for cash. **Black Cabs** will not take cash bookings they want booking fees etc.

A trip in a **Mini cab** 5 miles costs £42.00 each way, without the extras waiting time, this happen two weeks ago and last year it was £21.00 each way by the same company. This trip I did coming home by flagging down three **Black Cab's** (the first two said they did not have ramps) the charge for the trip was £16.00 by **Mini Cab** it would have been even cheaper.

A trip to Euston and return in a **Black cab** last year, about 28 mile round trip was £165.00. **My Estimate for able body users is about £120.00**

A trip by **Black cab** to Brent (one way, under 10 miles) with time added on for finding my bungalow was, £48.00. (There was £24.00 on the clock when he picked me up).

A trip from Kensington high street in adapted **Mini cab** to Pinner was quoted as £28.00 for a wheelchair but when they new that it could not be folded, they charged £42.00. **It would have been £28.00 as that is their own quote**

I waited 2 hours for the last **Mini cab** to pick me up from my destination, and the last **Black cab** I waited 1 hour, sometimes the black cabs will just not pick you up.

D2D17 Michael Lloyd

I would like to bring to your attention some of the problems Dial-a-Ride members in the London Borough of Havering are experiencing and that in some respects members in Havering get an inferior service to those of our neighbouring borough, the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham, which has a similar numbers of members to Havering.

1. A significant number of trips made by members in Havering are single journeys so people often have to use their Taxi Cards which means their rides are sometimes used up too soon or members have to remain indoors more than they would wish.
2. Members in Barking & Dagenham are guaranteed regular bookings whereas members in Havering do not enjoy this guarantee.
3. If members in Havering are offered only a one way journey the operators class this as a passenger cancellation when the member only wants a return journey and does not take up the booking.
4. Members in Havering can experience considerable mproblems being able to make regular bookings for rides.
5. People in Havering can experience considerable delays for their calls to be answered - it can sometimes be as much as 7 minutes.
6. Trips for members living in Havering are restricted to Havering whereas people in the neighbouring Barking & Dagenham can often book journeys outside their borough boundary, such as going shopping in Romford, which is in Havering. The Audit Commission Report of May 2002, page 7, states that there is "considerable user dissatisfaction with geographical restrictions on travelling."
7. Using figures from the Freedom of Information Act and the Mayors Question Time, the figures for 1 April 2009 to 8 January 2010, show the differences in the service provided to members in the adjoining boroughs of Havering and Barking & Dagenham:
Trips: Havering 47,202 - Barking & Dagenham 72,555
Requests: Havering 57,433 - Barking & Dagenham 87,835
Refusals: Havering 4,293 - Barking & Dagenham 4,946 This shows that despite the two boroughs having similar number of members, Havering had 25,353 fewer trips between 1 April 2009 and 8 January 2010 and the refusal rate in Barking & Dagenham was 5.6% whereas in Havering it was 7.5%.
8. Figures from the Audit Commission Report 2002, page 13 show the following:
Year 2000/2001 - Trips made 1,222,000 with a budget of about £13 million and 84,500 members
Year 2008/2009 - Trips made 1,178,322 with a budget of about £30 million and with 50,000 members (i.e. with 34,500 fewer members there were 4% fewer trips)
9. Members in Havering with like Dial-a-Ride drivers to operate just in Havering to ensure continuity of drivers and service.
10. Many members now feel that the management of Dial-a-Ride seem to have a reduced duty of care towards members, whereas the Dial-a-Ride drivers are still well regarded by users of the service.

Michael Lloyd

D2D18 Haringey Phoenix Group
Dial-a-Ride Investigation

Haringey Phoenix Group is a local voluntary organisation for blind and partially sighted adults resident in Haringey and the surrounding area. During the week members attend a programme of classes here, many using Dial-a-Ride (DaR) to make the journey to and from the Winkfield Resource Centre where we are based. For the most part they organise their own transport but in some instances we act directly with DaR on their behalf. The following response to the investigation is based upon feedback from our members as well as our own experiences.

The Booking System

Despite improvements to the system some members still find the booking process unacceptably lengthy. Notification on how long a caller can expect to wait is welcome, but does not address the time it can take to get through in the first place. A few members felt that the system was better when calls were taken locally i.e. before centralisation of the office.

There continue to be instances when members cannot book rides to suit their timings.

The promotion of regular rides has helped reduce the need to make phone bookings and should be extended further, especially if the time it takes to implement a regular booking can be reduced to a few weeks. This is a major issue for our members who attend weekly classes. After DaR brought the time to arrange regular bookings down to a minimum in the middle of 2009, it would appear that the process has now reverted to a long wait over a period of months.

Co-ordinating rides has continued to be a problem. Several members have regular weekly bookings to attend classes yet, despite living on the same side of the borough, are brought in on separate buses.

A few members have felt that DaR staff do not listen to them or call back when they promise to.

The Rides

During the last year our members have experienced several examples of drivers arriving early to collect them i.e. outside the 15-minute leeway.

There has also been an example when a collection time given by the office has differed to that quoted by the driver. Another member preferred the old system when a set time with no leeway was given and, should a problem arise, the driver would call the member direct to notify them. Regrettably there have been a few instances when transport has not turned up at all.

For the most part the journeys themselves have been unproblematic. There have been isolated cases where drivers do not appear familiar with the area and the route they should be taking; this may be because the drivers have been brought in from a different borough.

The drivers have generally earned praise for their manner dealing with our members although, again, some of our people have had problems; drivers have on rare occasions shown a general lack of courtesy and common sense when dealing with vulnerable and old people. There is a consensus that the subcontracted companies provide an inferior service to DaR, mainly due to the drivers' less sensitive dealings with vulnerable members but also the awkward nature of getting on people carriers. These issues, together with the

need to achieve higher standards of administration as above, warn against integration of London's door-to-door transport services.

Summary

Over the past year DaR services have generally been reasonable. The promotion of regular bookings has assisted with getting transport booked but needs to be significantly enhanced.

Continued investment in improving contact with the booking centre and upgrading its systems (to allow more co-ordinated travel, for example) is required, as well as in the training of all staff to ensure they treat the old, vulnerable and disabled with consideration.

Until Dial-a-Ride is able to reach a consistently high standard across the whole service integration is not wanted.

In short, and to quote one of our members, the service is good when available.

TOP ISSUES

Long waiting times to connect with booking office.

Early pick-ups outside 15 minute leeway.

Length of time to implement regular bookings.

Lack of co-ordination when transport collects members to make their journeys, especially when the trips are regular.

Door to Door Transport Services Survey

Comments from 11 disabled GAD members and volunteers

Are you registered for Dial-A-Ride? If not, why?

No (4)

No, I have a Freedom Pass. Although it would be great to use the service for long of difficult journeys I don't know if I am eligible. (1)

Yes (3)

Not now (2)

Not anymore – Used them once and was put off. (1)

Do you use Dial – A- Ride? How often? If not, why?

I didn't like traveling on the bus with the big Dial – A – Ride logo on the side – I am a young person and was teased for using the service by my peers.

No – it's unreliable and a load of rubbish.

No because most times I couldn't get through on the phone, and when I did they always said they couldn't go where I wanted i.e. Greenwich as they don't go there on Mondays usually.

I don't know a lot about dial a ride.

Dial a ride now uses cab drivers, I do not feel safe with the strange men.

Dial a ride was passed on to me by a colleague, who uses them and she said, "If you use them their taxis are very reasonable"

Dial a ride has not been useful, not turning up on time or leaving you to pick you up on the time stated.

What kinds of trips do you use Dial-A-Ride for?

To go to Bromley, Westminster and hospital.

How easy it is to book? Why?

Terrible – they don't come they take you there and don't come to get you again.

I come across lots of people who try to use the service but are told there are regular bookings indefinitely at the time they want to travel every week, no matter how early they book.

What problems are there with Dial-A-Ride? What would you like to change?

Everything. Unreliable, you phone and book and they don't come, or they can take you but not bring you back.

I would never use them again.

Do you have a Taxicard?

Yes (9)

No (2)

Do you use your Taxicard? If not, why?

No – Unreliable. (1)

Yes (7)

I have in the past. I am not sure if I have to renew it. I have chosen not to use the service because I find it unreliable ie. Waiting for hours for the taxi or being told it was never booked or no taxis available in my area.

What kinds of trips do you use your Taxicard for?

Waterloo Road – used it once.

I did use it for shopping once.

Shopping, visiting friends, going to medical appointments going to leisure centre.

How easy is it to book a taxi?

Hard – phoned 5 or 6 times to see where cab was.

Easy to book.

Hard – it is not accessible for people with learning difficulties – you have to give a postcode and be able to read numbers.

Very easy.

Not easy, I have always had problems. My account doesn't seem to be registered. I spoke to the head office several times but no joy.

How easy is it to hail a taxi?

Didn't know I could.

I would normally book. I have never hailed a taxi.

Really difficult – I am a wheelchair user and the drivers often pretend not to see me.

Easy if you see a com-cab – not all black cabs do Taxicard.

How long on average do you have to wait for your taxi?

1 hour to a half.

10 mins.

Anything from 2 minutes to 3 hours

Sometimes exceeding 2 hours

Are drivers friendly and helpful?

No – didn't speak to me.

Very

Some are. They get friendlier when they realise I can step onto the taxi and don't need a ramp.

Very helpful and friendly. Never encountered any problems.

Do you think there are problems with Taxicard? What are they?

- 1) Accessibility – how can disabled people get in?
- 2) Attitude – booking and drivers, the way they speak – not polite – when asked to repeat information they become aggressive.

Yes, now they use local minicabs as well as black cabs and these cannot accommodate all wheelchairs. Also mini cab drivers will not always help with shopping – they have told me as they are only on £3.30 local rate for up

to 3 miles – they are not happy doing the jobs, but are made to do them to keep their jobs. I am lucky enough to have my PA with me to deal with the shopping etc, but if I was on my own I would have problems. As the Taxicard is for people with disabilities this is not satisfactory.

Taxi drivers are not safe, now when are we getting safe travel?

Limited amount of taxis are available

Having to make phone calls to the service repeatedly

My account doesn't seem permanently registered

Waiting several hours because the booking wasn't logged, on several occasions.

Being let down or made to wait.

Inconsistencies between boroughs mean that cabs are unclear on limits, double swipes etc and leave it to the card holder to make decisions on how much the fare is etc.

How do you think a service which integrated Taxicard, Dial-a-Ride, Patient Transport, Social Services Transport and Children's Transport would work?

Going to be a nightmare. Day services buses – children's services they have to have priority – what would happen to social trips?

Not well at all. Patient transport is only for people on certain benefits, whereas Taxicard is only for people on high rate mobility.

It would be great. The more services available, the less dependent service users would be on one particular service.

If there was enough provision it could be fantastic. I doubt that would happen and a situation would happen where one group gets priority over another. Eg Children's hospital, then adult hospital, then school, then day centres.... Adult service users who want to go out socially would be left to the bottom of the pile.

Any Other Comments?

London Transport – Busses, drivers need to be more patient to put ramp down. Normal cabs should be cheaper.

Trust Headquarters
Queen's Hospital
Rom Valley Way
ROMFORD
Essex
RM7 0AG

18 February 2010

Ms Laura Warren
Scrutiny Team
GLA, City Hall
The Queen's Walk
LONDON
SE1 2AA

Dear Ms Warren,

Re: Transport Committee investigation into door-to-door transport services in London

Thank you for the invitation to comment on your investigation into door-to-door transport services in London. Please see below Barking, Havering & Redbridge University Hospitals Trust's (BHRUT) views, these have been broken down into two sections; operational performance and integrated services.

Operational Performance

The Trust is unable to comment on the operational performance of door-to-door services including TFL's Dial-a-Ride, Taxicard (Computer Cabs), Capital Call, London Borough's Adult Social Services and Children Services as BHRUT do not commission these services.

With regard to NHS Patient Transport Services, BHRUT has a contracted Non-Emergency Patient Transport (NEPT) service. The contract was awarded following an OJEU tender exercise through the NHS London Procurement Programme. The Trust does have occasion to use the London Ambulance Services (LAS) when an Emergency Paramedic trained crew is required to transport a seriously ill patient, however where possible the Trust avoids using LAS for two reasons; a) Emergency ambulance availability for front line services is reduced, b) the LAS NEPT costs are on average a minimum of four times greater than the Trust's contracted service or other non-contracted services.

Cont/.....



Chair: Sir David Varney
Chief Executive: Mr John Goulston



The Trust's contracted NEPT service provides transport for patients that have a medical need for transport, whilst other door-to door services transport persons that have disability/mobility conditions they do not necessarily have a medical need for ambulance transport with trained ambulance personnel.

The core activity is patients attending out-patient appointments with the balance being patient transfers and discharges. The contracted NEPT service is the same as the NHS patient transport services, in that it provides a dedicated service employing medically trained staff.

The Trust recognises the valuable service other door-to-door services provide and works with them to ensure that they have appropriate access to the hospital sites, the Trust also recognises that if the other door-to-door services were not available then this would impact on the NEPT service.

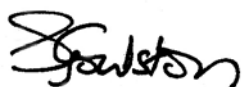
Integrated Service

The Trust's view is that patient transport services should not be integrated into a single transport service; patient transport services provide transport to dedicated locations and with the exception of emergencies is predominately a proactive managed service. This differs greatly from other door-to door services as they transport persons to a greater range of locations up to any requested location, whilst the services do operate advanced bookings they are essentially a reactive services.

The demand on the NHS statutory ambulance services (LAS) and NEPT services is increasing; statutory ambulance services resources should be prioritised to the provision of Emergency Paramedic services and not to patient transport services. NEPT provision should either be operated separately from NHS emergency ambulance services or outsourced to external NEPT services.

The minimum specification of NEPT services needs to be raised to ensure patients receive a quality standard, operationally efficient, cost effective service. Currently only statutory ambulance services are able to provide Paramedic services, this needs to be changed to allow NEPT services to provide Paramedic services. NEPT services would not provide emergency 999 services but they would be able to transport seriously ill patients, this would alleviate pressure on the statutory services, ensure quality of patient care is not compromised and would be operationally and financially efficient.

Yours sincerely,



John Goulston
Chief Executive

D2D21

GLA Transport Committee Investigation into London Dial –A- Ride

A response from Transport for All

Feb 2010.

Transport for All was invited to participate in the Scrutiny of Dial-A-ride (DAR) services held by the GLA Transport Committee last year. TfA welcomed this spotlight on one of London's major Door to Door services – and we believe that the investigation has resulted in DAR management finally acknowledging at least some of the issues and concerns that have been raised for a number of years in regards to the service.

We therefore look forward to this further investigation into DAR services in March 2010.

1. Wider General Political Context – The Mayor's Transport Strategy

TfA continues to be concerned that Dial-A-Ride is seen as the poor family relation in the TfL 'family' of services.

With the severity of the funding crisis that has hit TfL – with cuts made across the board – it seems that the strategy being employed is of better organising current resources to improve the service – rather than the hope of additional increased funding.

Nevertheless, whilst TfA acknowledges the economic situation TfL is in – we strongly feel that if the service is going to improve and reach more disabled and older people – then additional resources to fund that growth will be needed in the next few years.

Indeed if the improvements do carry through then demand for the service may well increase – as more people book trips and indeed formally disgruntled users return.

If no additional funding is available to cover this, then service standards could slip further.

TfA would also like to see more co-ordination between DAR and London's Community Transport sector. We firmly believe the local expertise and knowledge of London's many CT schemes could play an important role in improving and extending the DAR services currently provided.

TfA is disappointed however that DAR management has decided not to pursue any meaningful co-ordination of services with the CT sector.

Below is an extract of from TfA's response to the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy (Jan 2010)

Door to Door transport

TfA is concerned that this section of the MTS lacks detail, content and any real direction. It could be understood from this that Door to Door transport is not a priority for the Mayor – which we believe is very worrying.

TfA would like to re-iterate our belief in an integrated door to door network that efficiently joins up existing Dial-A-Ride, Taxicard and Capital call services with links to local Community transport providers.

*We believe having **one** eligibility assessment and **one** booking number would streamline the current system and be much more user-friendly, accessible and efficient.*

Dial-A-Ride

For those users who can get through to the call centre, book a trip and get to where they want to be D-A-R is a god-send.

For those who cannot get a trip for the time or destination they want – or worse still those who are only offered a one way trip, out rightly refused or left stranded D-A-R is a problem.

TfA is therefore very concerned that the TfL business plan does

not account for any growth in D-A-R's budget over the next few years. The Mayor has also stated that free rides are not sustainable. These two factors make for very alarming reading.

TfA believes that the Dial-A-Ride service should not be regarded as the poor relation in the TfL family. While millions of pounds are being pumped into the 'mainstream' public transport – there will always be a sizeable (and ever growing) population of Londoners who cannot make it to their nearest bus, tube or Crossrail stop to experience these changes. For them Door to door services like Dial-A-Ride are a vital life line.

We would like to see more money for Dial-A-ride services to expand its call centre and vehicle capacity. This would mean shorter telephone waiting times and the opportunity to travel further from home.

2. Outstanding issues

As mentioned above, that whilst TfA is aware of DAR management plans to improve aspects the service – a number of key issues still remain.

<The Call Centre

Waiting times to get through to the Call Centre can still be unreasonable high during the peak times. We are concerned that 'Abandoned Call' rates are at times high – as people hang after not being able to get through.

Although a new telephony set up is due to be installed – additional capacity within the Call Centre is needed to handle the volume calls generated in the peek hours.

<Distance

A common complaint raised regarding DAR is the issue of the distance a service user can travel. The 'no more than five mile radius' rule is applied – but it often seems longer trips are difficult to get.

A number of service users have also stated that they would like to be able to travel further than 5 miles.

<Guaranteed Trips

In our response to the MTS, TfA says:

Guaranteed Trips

Tube and Bus passengers may have to wait to get on their desired form of transport – but at least they know its coming. For Dial-A Ride and Taxicard card users we are told there are no 'guaranteed trips'. That means that appointments and tickets for the theatre or cinema can often be missed.

TfA challenges the Mayor to provide all Door to Door service users with a guaranteed return trip – so that we can enjoy the assurance that others take for granted.

<Refusal rates

The current refusal rate of 9% is and this still needs to be brought down. We are also concerned about the number of users who are just offered one way trips – with their refusal of that offer going down as a passenger cancellation. Obviously for many people just being offered a one way trip means they have no way of returning and so they cannot make the journey.

TfA has started meeting Paul Blackwell (Managing Director of DAR, and Joyce Mamode, Head of passenger services DAR) on a quarterly basis. We have been informed of a number of key service improvements that are due to be introduced – and we will be liaising with service users to see whether these improvements have made a difference.

D2D22

3rd Feb 2010

I joined Dial a ride many years ago and had no complaints, and when my husband was diagnosed with dementia almost 8 years ago, they were a great help, getting me to dementia meetings run by age concern. When dial a ride went computerised, the service seemed to me to lose its way and became most confusing and unreliable. Last year my husband had to go into a nursing home and I needed transport to visit him. We have been married for over 50 years and have never been apart, only when I was in hospital, he has been my carer all our married life, and we miss each other, he was always there for me, and I have a great need to be there for him now. When I asked dial a ride to give me three regular rides a week, they gave me one, and I was great full, but from then on, it became much more difficult to contact them and in the end I gave up. Next in desperation I contacted the local paper the Recorder to see if they could help and they did. The day before the article was to be in the paper Dial a Ride contacted me to tell me I could have two more rides a week, and they also told me I should have kept trying to get through. I explained about the difficulty I had trying to do just that and to that there was no reply. I don't thank Dial a Ride, I thank the recorder. The old dial a ride was brilliant, the new one is as I said confusing, and unreliable. Meetings with them seem only to give empty promises and things just got worse, after a while many old people just give up.

I personally would have some respect for dial a ride if they would come clean and give us the real reasons and facts, so we could all start afresh and agree to be patient, while all the mistakes were being put right.

My generation with the motto that honesty was brought up is always the best policy, but sadly the world has changed and older people have to try to adapt.

Thank you

Patricia Moss



Non-emergency Patient Transport Services (PTS) are provided to patients who have a need to attend non-emergency, scheduled healthcare appointments. In London it is estimated that there are about 2.5 million patient journeys per year at a cost of £57 million to the NHS.

1. Who is eligible to receive PTS?

Transport is provided where patients have a medical need. This is either due to lack of mobility, care is required by PTS staff or where travel by other means would be detrimental to the patients condition or recovery.

2. How is PTS commissioned?

Within London, NHS Trusts tender PTS contracts. This process aims to ensure that value for money is achieved whilst ensuring that standards and quality of service is met. Trusts do this by scoring providers against a specification for services, which in general will look at cost, policies/procedures, experience, environmental factors and general capacity to deliver.

3. Who provides PTS in London?

There are approximately 15-20 different companies providing PTS services, including London Ambulance Service.

Last year we provided approximately 350,000 patient journeys, which represent about 14% of all PTS journeys in London.

4. How is quality monitored?

Quality is monitored by individual purchasing NHS Trusts, against those standards which they stipulated in their tender specification. Consequently these may differ from Trust to Trust, however, there tends to be four main quality indicators:

- Arrival Time – number of patients are delivered within a specified time window in relation to appointment time;
- Departure Time – number of patients picked up within a specified time window in relation to notification of when patient is ready to depart;
- Time on Vehicle – time limit set for length of time local patients spend on a vehicle; and
- Complaints – number of official complaints made to the complaints department.

The London Ambulance Service monitors these figures on an ongoing basis. Our performance, against these measures this year are:

- Arrival Time: 92% of patients arrived in specified window
- Departure Time: 93% of patients left in specified window
- Time on Vehicle: 95% of patients on vehicle less than specified window
- Complaints: less than 1 in 10,000 patient journeys.



LVIF

London Visual Impairment Forum

'working together across London for people with a visual impairment'

D2D24

LVIF's Views and Information Regarding the London Assembly's Transport Committee's Investigation of Door-to-door transport Services in London

Introduction:

London Visual Impairment Forum (LVIF) comprises voluntary (not for profit) organisations working with, and on behalf of, blind and partially sighted people in Greater London. Members include national organisations as well as London wide and local borough organisations, including user lead groups, (please see membership list attached). There are approximately thirty eight local and national organisations actively involved.

There are 39,315 people registered as blind or partially sighted in London, many more people have low vision but are not registered. On a national scale, one in twelve of us will become blind or partially sighted by the time we are 60. This rises to one in six by the time we reach 75. (Ref. 1 & 2.)

The majority of blind and partially sighted people lose their vision when over the age of sixty, at a time when they may also be facing additional disabilities, such as hearing impairment, or conditions which add to their mobility difficulties. With growing percentage of older people as well as an increase in the London's population as whole, transport planning needs to take into account that the number of disabled people is likely to increase. (Ref. 1- 4)

Disabled people including visually impaired people want to be equal members of society and enjoy full access to all the facilities that the capital has to offer. However, many older visually impaired will not travel alone because the pedestrian environment and public transport are too frightening to tackle alone. Without a reliable and efficient door-to-door transport many older disabled people are likely to become housebound, isolated, depressed and more susceptible to falls. Therefore it is crucial that an efficient and reliable door-to-door transport system is provided in each London borough that facilitates travel across the capital. As 90% of older blind and partially sighted people live on less than half the national average - a widely

accepted definition of poverty, free DaR is crucial to provide accessibility to the opportunities and events available in the London. (Ref.2)

London VI Forum welcomes the London Assembly's Transport Committee investigation of door-to-door transport services in London and is pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the consultation.

The response is organised under the headings of the different types of door-to-door transport used by visually impaired adults. The advantages and disadvantages of each scheme is looked at. We will consider possible implications of the integration of all forms of door-to-door transport at the end of the response.

The experience of blind and partially sighted people varies from borough to borough. In one borough Dial-a-ride is the prime form of transport while other boroughs with plenty of black cabs available, Taxicard is preferred. Below we have drawn different experiences together to provide an overview.

The response:

Dial a Ride

Dial-a-Ride (DaR) provides a very valuable service that helps prevent social isolation and exclusion, which can lead to depression and other related health concerns. LVIF is concerned that the Mayor's transport strategy paragraph 430, states that 'there has been significant unconstrained increase in demand, which is not sustainable in the long-term'. LVIF would be extremely concerned if DaR was not well funded and supported as it provides the only means of travel outside the home for many of the most vulnerable in London. There are particular advantages and disadvantages to this service which are listed below:

Advantages:

- It is free and therefore gives equality with those that are able to use a freedom pass on public transport.
- Once booked Dial-a-ride (DaR) is on the whole reliable and is reasonably on time.
- The drivers are generally considerate and well trained, "The drivers have generally earned praise for their manner dealing with our members", to quote feedback from one north London borough. The regular local drivers become well known to service users and developed a friendly working relationship, which service users find supportive.
- The promotion of regular bookings has been an advantage but it takes a long a time to implement them. "The promotion of regular bookings has assisted with getting transport booked but needs to be significantly enhanced" to quote one borough.

- DaR recently moved to unified booking service. We welcome the recent changes to the booking system, which now allow journeys to be booked online.

Disadvantages

- Rides across borough boundaries are difficult or impossible to book in some boroughs. This consigns disabled people including visually impaired people to travel within their own borough only, so equal access to all that London offers is an aspiration, not a reality. This is very frustrating and unfair as disabled people are not getting an equal service. RNIB has a regional resource centre with the possibly the largest display of equipment south of England. However, it not accessible by DaR even from some north London boroughs.
- In spite of the new centralised booking service, rides do not seem to co-ordinated, so 2 minibuses will do a pick up from adjacent roads going to the same destination. This could be remedied on regular journeys.
- The booking service is frustrating as it takes a long time to get through and the correct telephone buttons need to be pushed, which can be difficult for people with a visual impairment. With patience most are able to cope with this. However, there is a group of the most vulnerable and disabled that need assistance, which takes away independence.
- Some believe the new centralised system has made booking worse not better because local knowledge has been lost.
- Rides are not always possible due to other bookings, which is disappointing and disadvantages disabled people. No one wants to be forced to remain at home, especially if there is an event which we would like to attend.
- Subcontracted drivers are not as considerate or well trained, “..subcontracted companies provide an inferior service to DaR, mainly due to the drivers’ less sensitive dealings with vulnerable members but also the awkward nature of getting on people carriers”.
- Early pick-ups outside 15 minute leeway are frustrating.
- Only outward journeys being offered, so the journey becomes impossible.

Summary

In summary in many boroughs DaR it is one of the most commonly used form of door-to-door transport and provides an extremely valuable service that prevents social isolation. On the whole it is reliable and the drivers are usually considerate. However, in practical terms rides are only provided within the borough you live in and it takes time and patience to book a ride, which is very frustrating.

ComputerCab/Taxicard

The service varies hugely from borough to borough due to the availability of black cabs, (hence the provision of Capital Call), in some boroughs it is rarely used and in other the preferred means of transport. Here are some general points:

Advantages

- In some boroughs the outward and homeward rides are easily bookable and provides a good service.
- The ability to stagecoach or swipe the taxicard, more than once provides longer cross borough journeys.

Disadvantages

- Cabs can arrive with several pounds on the clock before the service user enters the cab.
- The cost of ride is unknown in advance and although this is applicable to all black cab users, it impacts on visually impaired and disabled people because many are on welfare benefits and cannot risk a large fare and therefore many will not use the service at all.
- Swiping the taxicard for a second time is not permitted in all boroughs and therefore the cost of a long journey will make it prohibitive.
- The homeward journey is not guaranteed and for many older blind and partially sighted people this prevents them using this service, because being left in an unfamiliar street environment is too frightening to risk.

Capital Call

There are crucial advantages to Capital Call (see below), however, it is not available in all boroughs because of the prevalence of black cabs and it is not as well known and therefore not well used.

Advantages:

- Both outward and homeward journeys can be booked in advance.
- The service user can be informed of the cost before the journey begins.
- The journey can go beyond borough boundaries.

Disadvantages

- The cab drivers are not trained well in disability awareness. For instance, due to their sight loss some visually impaired older people need to be met and collected from the door of their home or the venue they are travelling from, yet some cab drivers will not do this.
- Some cab drivers will not allow guide dogs into their cabs, not realising this is against the DDA and causing distress to the service user.

- The cabs are not accessible for those with mobility difficulties and for those with wheelchairs.

Summary

A good system. However, not all can access the vehicles because of disabilities, many are not aware of it and the drivers need visual awareness training or basic consideration for a vulnerable group of clients.

Homeward Journey on all Door-to-Door transport

A reliable form of door-to-door transport for the homeward journey is extremely important to blind and partially sighted people. The majority of older people blind people will not be able to travel safely alone when in a strange environment, so if the door-to-door transport does not turn up they are stranded. To be left in an unfamiliar environment, especially if it is a street environment is very frightening. Because journeys can be hazardous visually impaired people undertake specialised training to learn safe routes on journeys they will take regularly. The training can take weeks before a blind person is safe and confident and able to undertake it alone, so to be stranded in an unfamiliar environment is a dangerous situation for visually impaired people and unacceptable.

Hospital Transport

Advantages

- Free

Disadvantages

- Can be late in picking up
- A long wait before taking patients home.

Many patients use their door-to-door transport to make hospital trips, because of the disadvantages listed. However, this comes out of social services budgets and the NHS do not reimburse Social Services, so there is little incentive to improve.

Integration of Door-to-door transport

The details of what is involved in the integration need to be known before a full response is given. However, if the intention is to improve the service and is not just a cost cutting exercise, LVIF would welcome the initiative. Below are some initial reactions:

Advantages

- It is possible that integration will raise the standard of disability awareness and visual awareness training throughout the whole system

- All guidelines and improvements will be uniform throughout the system.
- Visually impaired people will have one 'door-to-door transport' number to ring, rather than having to memorise several different numbers.

Disadvantages

- DaR has yet to form an efficient booking system. Some members believe the centralised system has made booking worse not better. Higher standards of administration are needed and there is concern that integration across an even bigger system will cause worsening of standards rather than improvements.

Conclusion

Whether the system is integrated or not visually impaired people need an efficient, reliable door-to-door transport system that is:

- Easily bookable in advance and on the day
- The outward and return journey are guaranteed once booked.
- Journeys across borough boundaries are possible.
- The DaR services are free to be equitable with the freedom pass.
- If there is a cost it is known in advance, if at all possible (exception would be for Taxicard journeys)
- The drivers are considerate and aware of the needs of vulnerable visually impaired people, such as the need for escorting to and from the door.
- The vehicles are accessible.
- Guide dogs are accepted in all vehicles.

That concludes LVIF's response to the London Assembly's Transport Committee's Investigation of Door-to-door transport Services in London.

References

Ref. 1: Registered Blind and Partially Sighted People Year ending 31st March 2008 England. Health and Social Care information Centre
<http://www.ic.nhs.uk/statistics-and-data-collections/social-care/adult-social-care-information/people-registered-as-blind-and-partially-sighted-2008-england>

Ref 2: <http://www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk/news/media-centre/facts-and-figures,893,SA.html>

Ref.3: DMAG Briefing 2009-02, March 2009, GLA 2008 Round Demographic Projections
<http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/publications/facts-figures/population.jsp>



D2D25

Age Concern London's Response to the London Assembly Transport Committee's Consultation on Door to Door Services, February 2010

Age Concern London (ACL) is the regional body of all Age Concerns within London. ACL works with borough Age Concerns to promote the interests of older people and campaign on strategic issues of ageing and demographic change within the capital. Locally, Age Concerns provide services for older people and work in partnership with colleagues in all sectors to promote issues important to older people. We also work to support the organisational development of local Age Concerns and partners.

We very much appreciate the chance to feed into the Assembly's consideration of door to door services, which are of key importance to many older Londoners with mobility needs. We also look forward to being able to see and comment on the proposals for door to door transport being worked on by London Councils, and which the Chair refers to in her letter.

Dial-a-Ride, TaxiCard and Capital Call have broken travel barriers for many older and disabled people a good deal of the time.

Assisted transport services are a vital lifeline for those people who cannot use public transport. The provision of assistance when boarding or alighting the vehicle is the crucial factor that ensures older people can use the service and get to where they want to be.

Dial-a-Ride, Taxicard, Capital Call and Community Transport services all play a crucial role in ensuring that older people can live independent lives. Community transport provides local, community responsive solutions to transport inequality that often complement the wider public and statutory transport network, as well as empowering those who are unable to access transport solutions.

It follows that these services should not be seen as an 'add-on' to our public transport system – but as a properly funded and resourced integral part of it.

However to date the experience of many older people and disabled people has been that the different services do not fit together coherently or consistently and there is a postcode lottery of service provision and entitlement.

Recent experiences

Members of the Transport Committee will be well aware that there have been over a long period, complaints by many older people about the quality and reliability of services including Dial-a- Ride and patient transport services commissioned by the NHS. Some impressions which have come through to ACL about the effects of recent changes are as follows:

Dial-a-Ride does seem to have improved recently from a passenger point of view (but one wonders how it appears from the driver's point of view).

Dial-a-Ride's contract with Comcabs for emergencies or to take up the overenthusiastic scheduling seems to be of valuable assistance. In one recent incident a broken-down DAR vehicle was successfully replaced by a black cab.

Longer term questions

There appear to have been some recent improvements in DAR in particular. However a number of longer term questions remain unresolved and some new ones are arising:

- how will the review being undertaken by London Councils address the longstanding problem of price differentials between the different services?
- How will door to door transport be affected by and respond to the personalisation of adult social care? Will users of, for example, a day centre have to pay for transport as well as the service itself out of their individual budget?
- Use of DAR to take people to day centres is causing some concern. For example, in one borough the local authority raised questions because some people who had been brought to a day centre using DAR were later seen using an ordinary bus in the high street.
- Changes to Com Cab have led to some concerns. It appears that some of the new Large Size Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs) may not have sufficient power to load a large heavy wheelchair and a (larger) person using the wheelchair. Also some poor experiences have been reported with drivers of these new vehicles, leading to questions about possible subcontracting.

While this consultation concerns Door to Door services, we would like to point out that continuing improvements in the experience of older people and disabled people on mainstream public transport, particularly buses, would encourage more people to feel that they can use mainstream services and therefore free up capacity on Door to Door services.

One measure which may help some older people to be more confident in using either Door to Door transport or mainstream services, is the introduction of “transport mentoring” services to work with individuals who have mobility needs. The possible benefit of this type of service is discussed in a research report “Understanding older people’s transport barriers and their impact” commissioned jointly by Transport for London and Age Concern London in 2009:

<http://www.aclondon.org.uk/documents/older%20people%27s%20transport%20experiences%20report%20FINAL%20131009.pdf>

Age Concern London, February 2010

D2D26

Dear Mr. Jardine,

As requested in the letter dated 25th January here is my written view.

I have copied below a couple of emails I recently sent to Dial a Ride. We have no complaints about punctuality, and we are finding it easier now to get through on the phone. We are also finding it easier to book now, whereas it always used to be 'no sorry we cant do that', it seems now they are managing to book, in my experience, 99% of requests.. However my problem is with the waste of resourses as detailed below and that, if what I am told is true, that the computer changes bookings made by humans. To date I have not received an answer to the last email but I dont think its 10 days yet. The only other problem which Dial a ride tell me that cant do anything about is that, although my Mother lives in Dagenham, and the 2 clubs she goes to are also in Dagenham, the furthest being 10 minutes away by car, is that for some reason they will pick her up from Dagenham, then pick people up from Barking, or Rush Green, Romford, to then return to Dagenham to deliver these people at the clubs. Not only does this mean that she has to be ready earlier, which is not too much of a problem, but that she has to travel these distances, and has to be on the bus for a much longer period than is necessary, and some of the buses are quite uncomfortable for someone with painful arthritis and obviously she has to put up with the extra road humps and potholes involved. Also this happens on the way home so they leave the club at 10.30pm, she lives 10-15mins away at most but does not get home til 11.30pm and one time 11.45pm due to taking people to other areas. Surely people who live further away from these clubs would expect to have to leave earlier and get home later due to the distance. It does not make sense to me to pick my Mother up first when she could easily be picked up on the way back, and dropped off first on the way home. Again Im told this is down to the computers schedule.

It does seem that the computer does not know any of the areas apparently, and does not seem to book in any logical way.

Hope these emails make sense, you would probably be better reading from bottom to top, as I said there is improvement, but when it comes to routes and trying to book a couple of people going to the same place, it appears the computer decides they need a bus each.

Apart from these problems so far it is better, but still a little room for improvement.

Kay Chilvers

(Mrs. Eversons daughter)

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: DAR <DAR@tfl.gov.uk>

To: Kay Chilvers

Sent: Wed, 27 January, 2010 8:59:13

Subject: RE: complaint. Mrs. Ivy Everson

Ref no. WOO 11 1407

Dear Ms Chilvers

Thank you for your email which Dial-a-Ride received today and have given the reference number above.

We aim to respond to feedback within 10 working days, at which point we will provide you with a full written response or an update of our progress to date.

From: Kay Chilvers [mailto:

Sent: 26 January 2010 20:56

To: DAR

Subject: Fw: complaint. Mrs. Ivy Everson

Further to the email below and as I said in that email, if there were to be any further block bookings, I would book them myself to make sure that my Mother and her friends could travel together. I phoned yesterday Monday 25th January to book for my Mother Mrs. Ivy Everson, 805005 and Mrs. Flo Dabbs 806695 to travel to Barking Theatre today Tuesday 26th. The operator I spoke to booked this for me, for them to be picked up apx. 12.35pm from their respective addresses and to return at 4pm.

He made sure they were both booked on the same bus as they live within a couple of minutes of each other. Today you sent a bus for my mother and another bus for Mrs. Dabbs, both buses arrived at the same time. My Mother and Mrs. Dabbs were actually on the phone to each other at the time so they know both turned up within seconds of each other.. Neither bus had any other passengers. Can you explain the logic of this please. There is a reason they travel together, neither of them want to be waiting around for the other in the middle of Barking on their own. Do I have to book it as if one of them is the others carer in future?

If I do this, will you still pick up from separate addresses? I can pretty much guarantee that some poor soul was told that you had no buses available when they rang because you had 2 of them to take 2 people to exactly the same place. I don't know if this is human error, or a glitch with the computer, your manager when I spoke to him last time, said it was the computer. If this is so perhaps you should have the program

looked at as its wasting time and money both of which with an organisation such as yours will be in short supply anyway. The return journey from Barking was made in one bus, again just them, no other passengers.

Please advise me how I can make sure that when I book for them to travel together, it actually happens, without any interference from computer or human.

Thanks

Kay Chilvers

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Kay Chilvers <
To: Dial A Ride Cust Serv <DAR@tfl.gov.uk>
Sent: Sun, 17 January, 2010 15:31:13
Subject: Fw: complaint. Mrs. Ivy Everson

Sorry, just one more thing. The driver of the bus that picked up my mum and Pat Elliot from Barking, said that he did not know the area and that he had just been called in to get them. He didnt seem to have a sat nav. either so had to ask directions. This also took up more time. So this didnt seem to be booked from last week. The driver was fine, we dont have any complaints about either but it seems that something went wrong somewhere for him to be brought in at short notice.

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Kay Chilvers **To:** Dial A Ride Cust Serv <DAR@tfl.gov..uk>
Sent: Sat, 16 January, 2010 17:36:24
Subject: Fw: complaint. Mrs. Ivy Everson

Further to the email below, I have now spoken to my mother now she is home. Also I apologise for the mistake in the original email, there was only one other person on the bus when it picked up Mrs. Dabbs, one of the 4 people she actually booked for. I apologise in advance if I sound angry, but its because I am, my mother has been ill recently and has not been able to get out, this is the first outing she has had for quite some time and it was ruined for her.

Firstly, although I was told that this block booking had to be split (by the computer) because there were other people who needed to go to Ilford at the same time in the Dagenham area, all I can say is that the computer must be imagining things, the original bus that picked up Mrs. Dabbs (806695) ,Neasham Road, also collected a lady called Hilda who I think lives in Rusper Road, off Gale Street, sorry I dont know her number. That was it, the whole bus for just 2 of them, yet my mother who lives in

Ilchester Road, closest to Neasham Road and Mrs. Dabbs, than any of the others was not allowed to go on this bus. She had to go on another bus because there were 'others' who wanted to go to Ilford, strange thing is that the 'others' turned out to be the 4th friend Pat who lives in Waldegrave Court, Barking (808097). This bus also had just the two of them! So please explain to me why your 'computer' decided that it was more efficient to split this block booking of 4, into 2 buses, which is bad enough, but then to decide that the two people who actually live closest to each other should be on separate buses? Your depot is at Barking, what normally happens is that Pat Elliot is collected first then the other 3 as they live so close. I thought this computer system was supposed to make things more efficient, what a total waste of resources! Perhaps it might be an idea to let people decide as the computer is obviously making a total hash of it. Their day was ruined because of the worry that my mother was not booked at all. Had the 2nd driver not phoned to say that he might be late as he hadn't left Barking yet, we wouldn't have known she was booked at all without phoning you. As it was she only just got there in time, as I suspected she had to find her way to her seat and her friends in the dark as the house lights had already been turned down.

My mother did not enjoy the pantomime as she would have done as she was then worrying that she would have the same sort of problems on the way home and was worried that she would be left on her own, as you could have sent them a bus each if in fact it was booked. Thankfully your computer decided it was ok for them to share the bus on the way back. I cannot understand why this has happened nor can I understand why your manager seemed to need to defend the computer in this situation. I was told there was a reason it was done this way, please enlighten me, seeing as the only people who wanted to go to Ilford to this theatre were the 4 people the block booking was for in the first place. Perhaps I might have just understood had there even been even 1 other person who wanted to go to Ilford but if they were there they were invisible. Of course I understand that others need the dial a ride service too, but in fact no one did at this point did they?

Do you have so many resources that you can waste the manpower not to mention the petrol in this manner? Perhaps you would like to take a look on a map and see in fact how close three of these people live to each other!

In future, that is if they trust you enough to book anything like this again, I will try to do it by email which seems to work perfectly well.

I look forward to hearing the reason or should I say excuse for this.

Kay Chilvers

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Kay Chilvers < **To:** Dial A Ride Cust Serv <DAR@tfl.gov.uk>

Sent: Sat, 16 January, 2010 13:08:13

Subject: complaint. Mrs. Ivy Everson

Last week a friend of my mothers (mrs Flo Dabbs 806695) phoned and booked for herself and I think 3-4 friends for transport to a theatre in Ilford to see a pantomime today Saturday 16th. She books it this way for safety's sake so that they can all travel together as all but one live within 2 minutes of each other. They do this fairly regularly and have not had any problems. They were told they would be picked up at 12.30pm.

When the bus turned up for Mrs. Dabbs, in Neasham Road, it already had 2 other friends on it, but the driver said that my mothers name was not on his list. So Mrs.. Dabbs phoned my mother thinking that somehow she had been left of the booking. Obviously my mother then phoned me.

I phoned your offices and spoke to a lady there who then told me that my mother had been booked on a different bus with others from the Dagenham area who were going to Ilford.. Whilst I was on the phone to you my mother phoned my mobile to say that this other driver had called her to say he would be picking her up but hadn't even left Barking yet.

I asked why, when the booking was made specifically by one person for all the others so that it was booked together and so that they would travel together, that my mother was the only one put on a different bus with people she didn't know when Mrs. Dabbs lives literally 2 minutes away as do the others. The lady just kept saying that she would be collected and she didn't know why they were not on the same bus, so I asked for a Manager.

At first it seemed like the manager didn't want to speak to me as the lady came back and tried to explain again what she had already explained. I told her that I wanted to speak to the manager anyway.

All he could say was that it was no one's fault, that there is no guarantee that they can travel together, and basically that the computer decides who goes on what bus even though these 4 people were booked on from the same area going to the same place at the same time as a block booking. He said that my mother had been put on another bus with others from the Dagenham area. Sorry but Dagenham is a big place. The bus that Mrs. Dabbs was on was empty apart from those she

booked for and my mother as I said is literally 2 minutes round the corner, yet your efficient computer decided to put her on a second bus that may not have had to come to this part of Dagenham otherwise.

Blaming the computer every time for splitting a block booking is really not on. These people are in their 80s and 90s and would not normally go out alone, the only reason they feel safe enough going to places like Ilford is because they travel together. If they didnt mind travelling separately they would all make their own arrangements with you, thats the whole point of one person booking for the rest.

I can only hope that the 2nd driver who phoned to say he hadnt left Barking yet, managed to get her there on time before the house lights go down as she would not have been able to get to her seat in the dark.

I also hope that on the return journey she will not be left alone waiting for a 2nd bus when her friends are all together on theirs. If I find out that she is left on her own in Ilford when it will be dark by the time the pantomime ends, you will be hearing from me again.

She doesnt get out very much and as far as she is concerned the day is ruined because of the worry that she would not even get there.

If you split a block booking you should say so, they should be informed. They dont have this problem with I book via email, it seems to be a problem with the phone booking, obviously Mrs. Dabbs does not have internet access and trusted that her block booking would be honoured.

Kay Chilvers

D2D27

Hello Jill,

I was too poorly to attend church lunch club at St Patrick's Wallington today but received feedback about the lady called Elsie who is 85 and has cancer and heart problems and walks with a stick.

A friend there Mrs. Marion Paris phoned to say that Elsie looked very unwell today. Marion said Elsie followed my advice and phoned Civic Office Taxicard Office again this time just asking for the form. I'm told that Elsie lives in Fellowes Road, off Wrythe Lane, Carshalton.

Elsie now has the form I'm told but Marion thinks that Elsie is not well enough to complete it and needs help. Normally I expect one might ask Taxicard Office to help because they send out an assessor when they are not satisfied with the information on the form to grant one outright. However it was Taxicard Office that blocked her first attempt at applying by asking Elsie what she wanted it for and then refusing it on the spot when she mentioned her need to get to St George's Hospital which costs her £30 per return trip.

I am of course mindful of my Joan Quested and her friend Beth experience when getting involved for others but I don't know if there is any independent help with filling in the Taxicard form rather than what

might seem like the fox applying to the huntsman for help. She is obviously not mobile enough to visit a place like CAB though I think Taxicard Office should help ideally.

As you kindly asked me to keep you posted re Taxicard I thought I would let you know this little Taxicard conundrum. I looked on the LB Sutton website under help with completing application forms and the only thing to come up was help for teachers in completing a particular form that they need to.

Regards,

Michael

D2D28

London Dial Ride Information Session 21st August 2009 Presented by Joyce Mamode

This service can be used for personal activities that are not under the responsibility of another body i.e. shopping and going to the theatre. It does not provide transport for hospital or any medical appointments provided by the NHS or day centres provided by Local Authorities.

Dial a Ride has a fixed number of buses and drivers.

It is not a taxi service therefore it may not meet a fixed time.

It can be fully booked at the most popular times and experiences high demand on Wed, Thurs and Fri.

It can offer regular bookings, where it has the resources to provide this.

It provides a travel mentoring service.

Questions

Q: Is SCILL classed as a day centre?

A: SCILL would not be categorised as a local authority day centre, therefore participants can use Dial a Ride.

Q: I live in a block of flats, would it be possible for the driver to buzz the number of the flat or come up and fetch me as I do not know the exact time they are coming?

A: Dial a Ride provides a door to door service therefore the driver could come to the door. Drivers can provide assistance over the threshold into your home to make sure you are safe.

Q: Can Dial a Ride do collective bookings for SCILL participants, as we often see a number of buses coming to pick up 3 participants?

A: Bookings are taken on a first come first served basis and the system will look for a suitable space on a bus and allocate

accordingly. Therefore participants are likely to be on different bus. It would be possible for one participant to book on behalf of others, therefore it is more likely that one bus will come SCILL to pick up.

Q: Can you book by email?

A: Yes you can, Dar.generalenquiries@tfl.gov.uk

Q: What time can you book journeys?

A: The service operates between 6.00 a.m. to midnight.

Q: Why do the booking times given by Dial a Ride operate within a half an hour window?

A: Dial a ride is not a taxi service and needs to allow for variations in time, for example journey times and traffic problems. If your booking is at 10.00, the bus can be expected to arrive anytime between 9.45 and 10.15. If your bus does not arrive you need to ring 0845 300 4717 (or 0207 394 5990 if your telephone provider charges extra for 0845 numbers).

Q: What if someone cannot telephone?

A: If this is an issue, this needs to be discussed with Dial a Ride.

Q: Why cannot I not make advanced booking?

A: You can but only two weeks ahead, however you can request to make a regular booking. This is done on a first come first served basis and takes a month to set up by phone, email or letter as Dial a Ride will look into whether it is possible to do this. If the booking is time specific this may be more difficult.

Q: The single cars provided do not provide enough height to accommodate my wheelchair?

A: Dial a ride do try and make sure that people's requirements are recorded so that vehicle exclusions are recorded.

Q: Dial a ride is booked up by older people shopping therefore disabled people cannot get access.

A: Everybody who uses the service has to meet the criteria set by Transport for London.

Q: Following the changes to SCILL's transport will it be harder to get into Sutton by Dial a Ride because of extra demand.

A: Dial a Ride will not be receiving any additional funding to meet extra demand. Dial a Ride agreed to find out what the likely availability for participants would be. SCILL to provide a list of who comes to the Centre with the times of travel with membership numbers, where possible.

If you have complaints about the Dial a Ride service, please contact:

Post: London Dial-a-Ride, Customer Liaison Unit, Progress House, 5 Mandela Way, London SE1 5SS
Email: DAR@tfl.gov.uk
Tel: 020 7 027 5823
Fax: 020 7027 5919

Public Transport Questions

Q: If a person requires an escort, do they have to pay?

A: Yes they do, however this issue is being raised.

Q: How do we go about getting a bus stop located outside SCILL?

A: You can write to London Buses and they will carry out a feasibility study.

Q: Do Transport for London work with disabled people on the design of buses?

A: Yes they do, however a number of issues have been raised because of the pole that people have to manoeuvre around. Travel mentoring can help people with the positioning of your wheelchair.

Q: If a person in a wheelchair is waiting to get on a bus and there is already a number of buggies. What happens?

A: Bus drivers are only able to offer reasonable assistance and ask for the buggies to be folded down.



SUTTON CENTRE FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING AND LEARNING

An independent charity, serving the community

Taxicard Project Summary

The SCILL Access group in conjunction with Pam Norton, Taxicard Co-ordinator, Sutton, undertook a survey of 100 Taxicard users in the borough in order to ascertain whether Taxicard users run out of journeys before renewal of their Taxicard at the beginning of April, what alternative modes of transport are used in the event of this happening and which month they ran out of journeys. 57 Taxicard users responded.

In the London Borough of Sutton eligible residents are allocated 104 Taxicard journeys per year. The scheme allows people who have a mobility impairment which prevents them from using buses or trains to travel in certain black cabs at subsidised rates, and is jointly funded by the London Borough of Sutton and the Mayor of London.

- The service is available to anyone over the age of three who meets the criteria.
- The user pays the first £1.50 standard charge for each journey
- London Borough of Sutton pays £10.30
- The user pays any excess over £11.80

You automatically qualify for this service if you are in receipt of the following benefits:

- Higher Rate Mobility Allowance (DLA)
- War Pension Mobility Allowance
- Or if you are registered Blind

There is no procedure put in place by The London Borough of Sutton if a Taxicard user runs out of their allotted journey before renewal at the beginning of April. The funding for this service is limited so the criterion has to be strictly applied in order for all who are in need to access the service.

Findings

- Of the 57 people polled, 49 Taxicard users ran out of their allotted journeys before the end of March.
- March was also the month where the highest number of people ran out of Taxicard journeys.
- A large proportion of respondents could not remember when they ran out of Taxicard Journeys.
- Less people ran out during the summer months than at any other time of the year. This could be because they use the service less frequently when the weather is warmer.
- A fairly high proportion of respondents ran out of their allotted journeys in January and February.
- 47 people used their Taxicard for social visits.
- 40 people used their Taxicard for Hospital visits.

Other uses for the Taxicard include:

- GP visits
- Shops
- Practitioner's clinics such as the dentist
- Clubs
- Education and religion

Complementary transport services are used by respondents when their Taxicard journeys expire, although Dial-a-ride is fairly low on the list of alternatives as people feel that it is an unreliable service.

- Most respondents use a minicab when their Taxicard journeys run out, but find it very expensive.
- Family and friends provide transport in the next instance.
- 10 people use public transport.
- There are a small proportion of respondents that are housebound when their journeys run out.
- One person used Ambulances to travel to the hospital.

Comments made by respondents include:

- Minicabs would be used more but the cost is prohibitive.
- Public transport is difficult to access.
- Dial-a-ride is free but unreliable.
- Hospital Transport is also free but does not arrive at the appropriate time.

The Taxicard Service is integral to the lives and independence of mobility impaired people. Although a relatively small number of Taxicard users were surveyed, the data gathered offers an invaluable insight into the use of the Taxicard Service.

For a full breakdown of responses please see Appendix 1

Edwina
Access

McCarthy
Officer.

Taxicard Survey Results

100 users of the Taxicard service were surveyed regarding their experiences. 57 people responded. The below summarises the findings.

Do you run out of Taxicard journeys?	Number of people
Yes	49
No	8

When did you run out of journeys?	Number of people
Aug 08	2
Sept 08	2
Oct 08	3
Nov 08	5
Dec 08	3
Jan 09	6
Feb 09	6
March 09	10
unsure	16

What do you use your Taxicard for?	Number of people
Social Visits	47
Hospital	40
GP	12
Shops	12
Health (chiropractic, osteopathy etc)	9
Social Inclusion	7
Other	7
College	5
Religion	2

What transport do you use when your Taxicard runs out?	Number of people
Mini-cab	26
Family/friends	11
Bus/transport	10
Dial-a-ride	6
House bound	4
Ambulance	1

Additional comments

Below is a summary of comments given:

- Would use mini cabs, but less frequently due to cost
- Use public transport with difficulty
- Been advised not to use Taxicard for hospital visits, but have to as bus stop is half an hour walk away
- Mini-cabs are too expensive
- I would have to stay at home
- Would be house bound
- Dial-a-ride is unreliable



eo consulting (uk) ltd
t: 0118 933 2067
e: info@eoconsulting.co.uk
w: www.eoconsulting.co.uk

Laura Warren
Scrutiny Team
GLA
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London
SE1 2AA

19 February 2010

Dear Laura

Transport Committee investigation into door-to-door transport services in London

I refer to the letter from Caroline Pidgeon AM, Chair of the Transport Committee inviting views on the Transport Committee's investigation into door-to-door transport services.

As author of the report '*A Future Door to Door Strategy for London*' prepared on behalf of London Councils, my views on current services and on the principles of a way forward are detailed in that report. Whilst not wishing to repeat the detailed strategy put forward in that report, I would like to highlight what I see as some of the key issues that the Committee may wish to consider and make recommendations on. This letter is not therefore a commentary on the recent performance of Dial-a-ride but on a way forward for the broad range of door-to-door and assisted transport services that includes NHS PTS, Freedom Pass and Taxicard schemes, Travel Training schemes etc.

It is vital that door-to-door transport is considered from two perspectives. Firstly, from the point of view of the user or potential user; secondly, a consideration of the form of governance, funding and operational management that would be best placed to deliver value-for-money services that meet user needs.

Service Users

Service users want high quality, effective, reliable and adaptable services. They want independence, choice, a single assessment process and clarity of information through a single source. The diversity of the present arrangements for door-to-door services does not meet these requirements.

Door-to-door transport should be integrated and simplified, based on properly resourced teams that can deliver services in partnership. A holistic approach that includes transport within a social care context should be developed. This can only realistically take place at Borough level, where there is access to confidential care data and the needs of the individual can be properly considered as part of the broader Personalisation agenda.

Consistent eligibility standards and assessment processes are critical to delivering services transparently, fairly and equitably to those who need them most. Whilst some moves have been made to standardise eligibility criteria in London, there are different stances built up over a period of years, developed to suit local demographics. There is a confusion of application forms, from the most simplistic to the extremely detailed. Claims of a 'postcode lottery' do have some validity.

It should be possible to define a core set of criteria pan-London to which all adhere, and which Boroughs can then enhance to suit local circumstances, recognising the implications this will have on service budgets.

There is also the potential to move towards holistic multi-service eligibility assessments that encompass both transport services and social care. Not only would this have significant benefits for clients, it would deliver financial savings. As recommended by central government, the assessment process can be outsourced.

Users currently access the range of services through a number of different call centres, each with their own booking, scheduling and back office support systems. A restructuring of door-to-door services opens up the potential to rationalise call centre operations and realise efficiency savings, whilst delivering important user benefits.

Any restructuring needs to recognise that mainstream public transport is now more accessible, and that alternative approaches such as travel training and travel buddies can be appropriate solutions for some clients rather than traditional door-to-door services.

Governance and Management

London's door-to-door services are diverse, delivered through different governance and different budget holders, with varying levels of resource. There are variations both within, and between, services in terms of eligibility, entitlement and in trip costs. This makes door-to-door services confusing to the user and integration complex.

There is currently no overarching 'vision' or strategy that brings together all of London's door-to-door services in a holistic manner and which would allow the long-term development of a value-for-money service centred on user needs.

Rationalisation and simplification could deliver substantial efficiency savings, able to be re-invested in improved services.

The question, therefore, is who is best placed to meet those aims, whether a centralised pan-London organisation, a sub-regional partnership, the local Borough level, or a combination of these. There is no 'one size fits all' structure that can be imposed on London's door-to-door transport services. The significant variations in demographics mean a strategy must be flexible enough to allow for decision-making that reflects local user need.

The principle of subsidiarity, where matters are handled by the least centralised competent authority, is relevant and puts service management and operation closest to the user. A strategic organisation should only be responsible for those matters that have commonality pan-London and cannot otherwise be delivered in an integrated manner. TfL should therefore consider whether it is the most appropriate organisation to be delivering local door-to-door services.

The statutory provision of transport services must be the starting point in determining the most appropriate governance and management framework. TfL has a general duty to meet transport need across London but not for statutory transport; nor does TfL have a holistic care responsibility and it cannot therefore integrate transport into a care package.

Some elements will be easier to integrate than others. Given current complexities, any integration must be delivered in a phased approach that can demonstrate that users will be no worse off, either during the change process, or in the restructured delivery mechanism. Any change therefore needs to be proactively managed and communicated –the devil will often be in the detail and time should be taken to get the processes right.

The capping of TfL funding support for Dial-a-ride and Taxicard, the pressures to identify Borough savings, together with predicted demographics mean that the available budget has to be managed more efficiently, fairly and equitably; maintaining the status quo is not an option.

Despite recent improvements, Dial-a-ride trip costs are considerably higher than other door-to-door transport, as the table below illustrates: -

	Gross cost per trip
Dial-a-ride	£21.60
Taxicard	£12.45
Capital Call	£13.51
Newham d2d (Taxicard element only)	£15.03
NHS PTS	£13.22

There are operational supply-side synergies between Dial-a-ride, Borough Plusbus schemes and Community Transport at a local level. TfL could consider whether, as a strategic authority, it is best placed to manage and operate Dial-a-ride, or whether the assets and funding could be integrated into Borough bus-based provision, both statutory and non-statutory. Fleet utilisation could be improved, systems simplified and duplication of back office administration systems and support removed.

There is the potential to better match the peaks and troughs in demand, resulting in a general 'uplift' in provision of door-to-door transport. It would allow the development of additional bus-based services to meet local need, for example to shopping centres, markets and hospitals.

TfL could continue to provide strategic funding support set within a service level agreement that defines service quality, customer satisfaction, charging policy etc. TfL funding could be allocated to support a broader range of door-to-door services, rather than just Dial-a-ride, Taxicard and Capital Call, opening up potential for the Boroughs to develop local user-focused programmes and services.

Better value for money could be obtained by moving away from independent sourcing to a more strategic joint procurement approach, perhaps on a sub-regional basis. This could include sourcing the vehicle fleet, its leasing and maintenance, independent mobility assessments, common systems and communications such as scheduling and database software.

Efficiency savings from the restructuring of door-to-door services and from joint procurement could then be used to fund travel training, travel buddy and scooter programmes, setting up mobility forum etc, aspects of assisted transport that, whilst important, are proving difficult to fund at present.

I trust that the Transport Committee will find the views expressed above of interest and that they will assist in considering this important topic. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely

Mr R D Coe
Director, eo consulting ltd

OVERVIEW COMMISSION

2 MARCH 2010

REVIEW OF ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT FOR INDEPENDENCE AND WELLBEING

REPORT BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND PARTNERSHIP

SUMMARY

The Working Group to review accessible transport for independence and well-being has been looking at current accessible transport provided by both the public and voluntary sector and ways in which it can be better coordinated or improved in conjunction with the publication of the Independence and Well-Being Strategy.

Accessible transport is a complex topic on which many reviews are currently taking place across London. This review has and will help feed into other reviews and, it is hoped, that the recommendations of the Group can go some way to helping those residents in Kingston who do not received statutory care but who need help accessing transport.

The Group has made the following recommendations:

1. a shopping and excursion bus be set up to replace that of the defunct Kingston Enterprise;
2. voluntary groups be given the opportunity to utilise Richmond and Kingston Accessible Transport's (RaKAT) extensive knowledge to procure vehicles on the group's behalf and use these in their fleet as part of a 'lease' system and a co-ordinator role be invested in to run this;
3. care/car schemes in the Borough receive advice and support from the Council and Kingston Voluntary Action (KVA) to help increase their ability to support residents;
4. the Council look at its current procurement contract with Fraikin and assess the ability to sell on vehicles at the end of their life and to contract out transport to RaKAT;
5. Members and Officers continue to lobby Transport for London for better accessible transport including circular bus routes in Kingston;
6. the subject of patient transport in the Borough be investigated further by engaging with NHS Kingston and patient groups;
7. a dedicated phone line with trained staff be set up and a leaflet be written to include all transport information to improve information dissemination to residents;
8. the LIP2 process make accessible transport a high priority and Officers look to bid for funding for projects outline above should it become available.

ACTION REQUIRED

The Commission is asked to consider the report and recommendations of the Working Group and agree any comments to be submitted to the Executive for consideration with the final report.

BACKGROUND

1. The Independence and Wellbeing Strategy was presented to the Executive in July 2008. Access to transport was identified as one of the major issues affecting older people and those with disabilities trying to remain independent. The Overview Commission was therefore asked to look into accessible transport in the Borough.
2. The Working Group was established in January 2009 and made up of the following Councillors: David Cunningham, Sheila Griffin, Bart Ricketts, David Ryder-Mills and Ken Smith. Ken Smith was appointed Lead Member. Officer support was provided by Simon Pearce, Head of Community Care Services, and Chris Atkins, Strategy and Performance Officer. Nigel Newby, CEO of Richmond and Kingston Accessible Transport (RaKAT), was brought on as an advisory member.

PROCESS

3. The group identified the best way to proceed would be to speak to service providers, service users, visit community transport organisations and conduct a survey of available accessible vehicles in the Borough. It was agreed that the review would only look at transport for adults.
4. Over the course of the review, the group has met with the following individuals, organisations or groups:
 - a. Shane Brennan, Age Concern
 - b. Nigel Newby, RaKAT
 - c. Roy Stonehill, MS Society
 - d. Sue Todd, Principal Manager – Home Care
 - e. Transport for London Dial-A-Ride
 - f. Merton Community Transport
 - g. Computer Cab (providers of Taxi Card services)
 - h. Brian Gaff, Talking Newspaper
 - i. Councillor David Fraser, Champion for Blind People
 - j. Wandsworth Community Transport
 - k. RBK Sensory Impairment Team
 - l. Kingston Centre for Independent Living

FINDINGS

RBK Vehicles

5. RBK has five day centres for adults with learning disabilities or older people. They are Amy Woodgate House, Newent House, Devon Way Chessington, Crescent Resource Centre and the Causeway Centre. Day centre clients are picked up from their homes, or Resource Centres, in the morning, taken to the appropriate Day Centre and the return journey is made in the afternoon. Some of the vehicles used are owned by the Council and others leased to the Council by Fraikin.
6. The vehicles used within Community Care Services are procured and maintained through Fraikin. Day Centre managers request the type of vehicle that they require and are responsible for the scheduling and use of the vehicle. Each vehicle has its own budget and fuel card. The total fuel cost for the fleet is around £5,000-6,000 per month. The rental cost for each minibus is around £1,200 per month. The vehicles are kept for around five to seven years before being replaced.

7. There are around 20 minibuses and half a dozen smaller vehicles which are wheelchair-accessible. The minibuses are used primarily for the day centre shuttles and they can have seats removed to accommodate large wheelchairs. The smaller vehicles are used for trips such as visits to the doctor or hospital and trips for Resource Centre clients.
8. Since the beginning of this review services have changed and will continue to do so. Where originally vehicles took clients to the day centres for activities, they are now being taken to the day centre and then elsewhere. In the next year it may be that the preferred vehicle will shift from the minibus to the smaller vehicle to accommodate individual clients and to provide a more flexible service.

Hospital transport

9. The Group is aware of complaints that transport provided by NHS Kingston Primary Care Trust (PCT) is not always adequate. Some people have reported that often NHS Kingston is reluctant to provide patient transport to and from hospital appointments and when it is offered, the waiting times can be very long. Additionally, patients are not always informed that transport is available. The Group had wanted to investigate this issue in more detail but time did not allow. It would be helpful to ask local NHS partners to do some work with the Borough to establish what experiences people have had with the service. It is hoped that the Health Overview Panel may be able to pick up this piece of work.

Care Schemes in the Borough

10. Early on in the review it was identified that there were four care schemes in the Borough providing local help and transport to elderly and disabled residents. There was one for each section of the Borough: New Malden, Chessington, Surbiton and Tolworth and Kingston. The Kingston group has become the Kingston Enterprise, discussed below; and the Group was informed in February 2010 that the Surbiton and Tolworth scheme has now disbanded.
11. Each care scheme was contacted to inquire how many volunteers they had, how they advertised and what services they offered. While all three care schemes had volunteers, they all indicated a problem with dwindling numbers and also low client take-up. All recruit volunteers primarily through word of mouth but a couple have tried leafleting and advertising in local church newsletters.

Voluntary Sector Vehicles and Views

12. It was suggested that several voluntary organisations and churches in the Borough might have vehicles and/or drivers that are used to shuttle people to and from activities of that group or church. It was decided to send a survey to these groups to identify those that have vehicles. The survey is attached at **Annex 1** and the summary of responses is at **Annex 2**.
13. Through the survey six vehicles have been identified, all of which are wheelchair accessible.
14. Around 40 drivers were identified, some are CRB-checked and others are not. It is important that drivers of vulnerable people such as the disabled and elderly undergo CRB checks.
15. The survey asked groups that owned vehicles whether or not they would be willing to share vehicles with other groups should there be a coordinated way of doing so. Six groups indicated they would be willing to share vehicles but most indicated they would require their own driver or similar restriction.

16. The group met with Age Concern and the MS Society to discuss their views on accessible transport.
17. Age Concern was identified as owning a vehicle in the survey and in our subsequent meeting with their CEO, Shane Brennan. Their two vehicles are used to shuttle elderly residents to Age Concern-run day centres. They also encourage members to use Dial-A-Ride and Taxicard.
18. The MS Society also has two buses and two dedicated volunteer drivers. They share services with other branches. For example, one branch provides yoga classes for members and the Kingston branch will transport people to this.

Taxicard/Com Cab and Capital Call

19. The London-wide Taxicard Scheme permits eligible service users 104 subsidised trips a year. The service user contributes £1.50 towards each journey and is responsible for any travel costs in excess of £10.50. Service users are permitted to combine two trips to fund one journey. The scheme is funded in part from contributions from the London Boroughs and in part from the Mayor's Office. The London-wide budget is held centrally by London Councils.
20. Persons who are eligible for Taxicard are those that:
 - a. receive the higher rate mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance or the higher rate Attendance Allowance;
 - b. are registered blind; or
 - c. receive the War Pension Mobility Component
21. If persons do not fall into these categories they can still apply for a Taxicard with the following requirements:
 - a. if your GP endorses your application or
 - b. you may have to have a mobility assessment.
22. In Kingston the Taxicard system is working well. Performance-wise Com Cab indicated a 99% or above pass rate on advance bookings and ASAP bookings.
23. Capital Call was set up in Kingston in 2002 to allow users of Taxicard to use private hire vehicles (mini-cabs) as there was an identified shortage of black cabs in the Borough. The number of black cabs has increased since then and Capital Call was rescinded in September 2009.

Dial-A-Ride

24. Dial-A-Ride is a Transport for London (TfL) service that provides trips to those with permanent or long-term disability that makes travel by public transport difficult. It is a shuttle-type service whereby passengers will be picked from their home and may ride with other passengers going in the same direction before being dropped off at their destination. Travel times may be affected by these other journeys. TfL recommends the service for local trips but longer trips can be arranged on request. User numbers have gone up in the Borough since the Kingston Enterprise bus stopped running. The service is free to users.
25. The feedback from users is very negative. Dial-A-Ride operates a very complex booking system with the booking office in the centre of London rather than locally in Kingston as was the case previously. Users say that their journeys are often refused initially and if they are accepted the waiting times are very lengthy and also the journey itself can take up to two hours because of picking up and dropping off other passengers.

Richmond and Kingston Accessible Transport (RaKAT) and Kingston Enterprise

26. The group visited RaKAT as one of its first priorities. RaKAT is a community transport provider serving Kingston and Richmond. They have a fleet of minibuses, many of which are wheelchair accessible, which can be hired out by community groups or other organisations.
27. Most of RaKAT's funding comes from the hire charges for the minibuses. They also receive core funding from Kingston and Richmond Councils and other trust funding.
28. Most groups supply their own driver but RaKAT do have around 300 volunteer drivers. All drivers are MiDAS-trained. Normally, an escort that is CRB-checked is provided by groups made up of vulnerable people such as the elderly or disabled.
29. Kingston Enterprise (KE) was a care scheme housed within RaKAT that provided a regular shopping bus for elderly people in Kingston. It served many local residents in the Borough. Kingston Council provided grant-aid for this project for four years with the remainder coming from the Bridge House Trust. The funding for this project ceased in May 2009.
30. The group looked into the demise of the KE bus and the matter was also taken up by Councillor Bob Steed, the Executive Member for Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change. After further investigation it was finally decided that no further funding from the Council would be provided.

Merton Community Transport (MCT)

31. MCT is similar to our own RaKAT in that they hire out minibuses to groups or organisations. They also provide services to Merton Council and most of their income is generated from these contracts.
32. One aspect of MCT that we found interesting was their community grant scheme. Many community groups wish to purchase an accessible vehicle but do not know exactly what they want. The group will grant the money for the vehicle to MCT and MCT handles the procurement to ensure it is appropriately equipped. The group will then, in effect, 'lease' the vehicle back to MCT. It is taken up as part of the vehicle fleet where the owning group has first priority but the vehicle provides a community use as well. Any hiring fee income generated by the vehicle covers its maintenance costs and is split between the owning group and MCT. The 'profit' not only provides extra income for the owning group but also MCT to continue to provide transport.
33. MCT runs an Excursion Club that provides trips once a month. It is a self-funded group where all members pay towards the trip and this covers the costs.
34. MCT are able to provide individual transport to the shops in conjunction with Scootability, which provides mobility scooters in town centres. This is part-funded by Merton Council. They also provide shopping trips to Bluewater.
35. Drivers are paid for work done; none are full time. Drivers are shared between Sutton, Wandsworth and RaKAT when necessary.

Wandsworth Community Transport (WCT)

36. Just like MCT and RaKAT WCT hire out minibuses to groups or organisations. The majority of their funding comes from Wandsworth Council in the form of core funding and contracts for work. The rest comes from the hire charges.
37. WCT have a location in a shopping centre in the Garrison Lane Sainsbury's providing Shopmobility. This location and the Shopmobility function were secured through a S106 agreement when the shopping centre was built. Volunteer escorts help those with mobility issues to do their weekly shopping.

38. WCT is able to provide regular shopping buses to the Sainsbury's in Garrison Lane. There are set schedules and pickup points and costs £2 per person per trip.
39. WCT also provides day trips for those with mobility issues as part of a contract with Wandsworth Council and Active Day Trips for the over-60s without mobility issues.

Service Users

40. Rather than try to identify a large selection of services users, the group felt it was beneficial to speak to volunteer groups such as the aforementioned Age Concern and the MS Society. However, to try to gain a wide perspective the group did meet with a representative of the Talking Newspaper who is registered blind and staff from the Council's Sensory Impairment Team.
41. The Sensory Impairment Team identified the good and bad parts of public transport for those with visual impairments. They also indicated that there can be a problem with lack of communication to the visually impaired due to the Talking Newspaper only reaching a quarter of those on the visually impaired register.
 - a. Buses: the new stop announcements were welcomed but often they are not working or turned off. Bus drivers also often do not kneel the bus or pull in close enough to the kerb causing some difficulties for visually impaired people.
 - b. Trains: the auto announcements are good and conductors are good at identifying where they are located on the train but often a visually impaired person may not know which section of the train they are in. It is very helpful when conductors pass through the train and identify any visually impaired people to offer help. Many visually impaired people learn train station platforms and know where to go. The Sensory Impairment Team will train clients on train platforms.
 - c. Tube: this can prove much more difficult as, for example, Wimbledon does not announce platforms. If staff are able to help this is easier but it is not always available.
42. The Talking Newspaper representative voiced similar concerns over lack of communication by the Council on services available.

Kingston Centre for Independent Living (KCIL) and other reviews

43. It was identified in December 2009 that KCIL was also undertaking a review of accessible transport. KCIL represents many service users in Kingston. A meeting was held with the CEO of KCIL, Theo Harris, to discuss sharing information. This report will be passed to KCIL for inclusion in their research and Members and Project Support are happy to continue to provide support to this review.
44. The Group is aware of other pan-London reviews. London Councils wishes to prepare a strategy for door-to-door services, particularly those funded by the Boroughs, including Taxicard. The aim is for London Boroughs to take the lead, supported by Transport for London and other partners. A first-step report was published in September 2009. Work is ongoing with this review and officers and Members will continue to monitor and provide input where able.
45. The Greater London Authority Assembly Transport Committee is also undertaking a review of door-to-door transport services, specifically Dial-A-Ride as they too have had many complaints regarding its service. They are seeking views from across London and the findings of the Group have been passed on to the Committee to inform their review. The final report will be published in mid-May. Members and officers will be keen to read this when it is available.

Shopmobility

46. Kingston town centre has a Shopmobility scheme located on the top floor of the Eden Walk shopping centre. They provide mobility scooters and wheelchairs to shoppers who are registered with the scheme to help them access shops in the town centre.
47. The Group has been made aware of issues with Kingston Shopmobility including modernisation of the office in which it is housed. The Executive Member for Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change has informed the Group that the Shopmobility scheme is under review and funding has been allocated to help modernise it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A shopping bus needs to be set up

With the demise of the Kingston Enterprise (KE) shopping bus, many residents are in need of help to get their weekly shopping. Not only did this service provide them the means to shop for food it also provided a social function for residents who are normally house-bound. Furthermore, trips and excursions such as to the seaside or other destinations provided a much-needed day out for elderly residents.

The Group recommends that RaKAT explore the possibility of restoring the shopping bus service and providing social outings in the form of day trips. Funding for this service can be sought from a range of charitable trusts and/or local and regional businesses including the supermarkets where shoppers may be taken. Users of the bus should be asked to pay for its use, possibly no more than £2 or £3.

2. There needs to be better coordination of available accessible transport

One major area of concern that the group has noticed repeatedly is that people do not know what transport is available. For example, Age Concern provides transport to and from its day centre but not all elderly residents may be aware. Additionally, the survey indicated that many groups that own and operate a bus are willing to share it out to other groups.

The Group makes two recommendations:

- a. RaKAT look into operating a similar 'lease' system for privately-owned vehicles as that operated by Merton Community Transport. Age Concern already procure vehicles for volunteer groups in a similar manner. Those that are not currently participating in this programme and are willing can have RaKAT procure, house, maintain and use their vehicles as part of the rental fleet. Groups will have first priority use of the vehicles and will split any 'profit' from the hire charges on the vehicles; and
- b. if such a scheme were established, there may be a need for a co-ordinator post, which could potentially be funded through profit from the use of the additional vehicles.

3. Care schemes in the Borough need a boost

The three remaining neighbourhood care schemes in the Borough provide a valuable service. A lack of new volunteers, clients and structure is leading to these schemes dying slowly.

The Group recommends that possibilities for encouraging and improving the care schemes be looked into. It is recommended that Kingston Voluntary Action (KVA)

be approached to help revive the schemes and develop their services. Additionally, the Neighbourhood Committee grant scheme can also be explored as an avenue whereby the schemes can obtain funding. By publicising the care schemes it is hoped that more volunteers and also clients might be identified. The Care Schemes may also be encouraged to seek funding from the Council and other sources in order to develop their services. There is concern about the structure of some of the care schemes, particularly that not all perform CRB checks on drivers. It is hoped, however, that if the schemes start to grow then a more formal structure could be encouraged.

4. Council-owned vehicles need to be put to better use

The Council leases its vehicles from Fraikin and they are replaced every five to seven years depending on the lease. These vehicles are used to carry clients requiring statutory transport.

The Group makes two recommendations:

- a. The potential for vehicles coming to the end of their life being offered for sale or lease to voluntary groups and/or RaKAT at reduced rates should be explored; and
- b. When possible the Council should look to contract out for transport to RaKAT. This would provide RaKAT with further funding to provide services such as the shopping bus.

5. The Council should continue to lobby Transport for London on accessible transport issues

Accessible trains, buses and tube trains have come a long way in the past ten years or more. Buses now have the ability to kneel to take on wheelchairs and have visual and audio stop announcements; Tube stations and trains are being made more wheelchair-accessible and they have visual and audio announcements; and train companies are trying to accommodate passengers with wheelchairs and visual or hearing impairments with help getting on and off of trains and visual and audio announcements; but there is still plenty of work to be done. Finally, Dial-A-Ride seems almost unfit for purpose in some parts of London, including Kingston.

The Group recommends that the Executive Member for Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change, RaKAT and officers in the Planning and Transportation directorate and Community Care Services continue to lobby TfL for more accessible buses, trains and Tube stations and trains. They should also continue to lobby for better Dial-A-Ride services including the possibility of relocating some services locally to provide a better service to Kingston residents and for better take-up of services in Kingston. Finally, it is recognised that a circular bus route serving the four neighbourhoods in Kingston would be beneficial. It should be considered that this option be proposed to TfL when discussing other transport issues.

6. Engagement with NHS Kingston

Transport to and from hospital appointments presents a problem for many residents. While the PCT has the means to provide transport, it does not always inform patients. When transport is provided, waiting times can be very lengthy.

The Group recommends that more is done to engage with NHS Kingston locally to explore how NHS Home to Hospital Transport is used and explore ways to improve the service. There are voluntary organisations in the Borough who may be able to help provide transport on behalf of NHS Kingston if there is cooperation and

financial support. Furthermore, there may be scope for the Council to provide some transport on behalf of NHS Kingston. The option may be that the PCT can provide funding to the Council to provide some transport. All of these options should be explored. A referral to the Health Overview Panel is recommended and any working group set up by the Panel should include survey analysis of hospital transport users as part of its work.

7. Available Information

The Group recognises that a major obstacle to residents accessing transport is a lack of available information or no way of obtaining the information. Information is available but either one must know where to look to get it or it is available on the website but many people, especially the older generations, do not have internet access or are not computer literate. Both of these problems present barriers to residents accessing what good transport is available.

The Group makes two recommendations:

- a. that the Information and Advice work stream of Transforming Social Care will create a community transport directory and information leaflets, possibly by Neighbourhood, as part of the process of developing the service in 2010. This will provide a first contact helpline for residents where information can be passed on that is easily accessible. Groups representing partially-sighted people will be consulted on how best to provide this informational leaflet to partially-sighted people, whether that be Braille, large print or audio formats; and
- b. that a dedicated phone number with trained staff be set up for anyone to ring for advice on accessible transport. The scheme can be housed within the Council or a partner can be contracted to manage it. The feasibility and details on this can be explored by officers in Community Care Services.

8. Second Local Implementation Plan (LIP2)

The Second Local Implementation Plan (LIP2) is the Council's 10-15 year transport investment strategy. The strategy is required to be consistent with the Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS) but should also reflect local priorities and addresses local issues. Potentially, further funding may be available from Transport for London under this new strategy.

The Group recommends that the work of this Group be fed into the consultation on LIP2. Furthermore, the Group recommends that accessible transport be given one of the highest priorities in the development of LIP2. Officers of this Group have met with the LIP2 officer to discuss how to feed into the strategy. They were informed that research is being done into the physical accessibility of public transport in the Borough, specifically accessible bus stops. Officers discussed the potential for funding from TfL for projects. While it is currently unclear if any resources will be available, in the event that they become available, a bid could be put forward to fund the information and advice line scheme in Recommendation 7 and also to provide funding, which would be available for care schemes to bid for as in Recommendation 3.

Background papers held by author of report, Leah O'Donovan, 020 8547 4623, email: leah.odonovan@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

- Agenda and papers Overview Commission
- Notes of Independent Transport Review Working Group meetings

D2D31 London Borough of Havering

"The service received by Havering residents from Dial a Ride continues to be extremely poor. This is exemplified by: the lengthy call answering times, leading to an unacceptable level of abandoned calls; the extremely high and unacceptable level of trip refusals; the high level of return trip refusals (*thus causing the member not to book the outward or return trip*); the poor level of multi-occupancy journeys; and the cost per trip to London as a whole being approximately twice that of a Taxicard trip - a premium service in a black London cab.

Havering Council does **not** want the very poor Dial a Ride service merged with the very effective Taxicard service. Havering Council, is however in favour of ex-DaR funding being devolved to London's boroughs to enable Havering Council to create and fund new transport arrangements for residents with mobility difficulties with local private sector taxis and minicabs. Havering Council is already working in collaboration with its East London and Essex neighbours and it is considered a scheme could be devised which improves the service to Havering residents' needs and provide significant economies to the participating councils from effective procurement."

Dear Ross

I support a self advocacy group for adults with learning difficulties in Bromley. One of my group members had a frightening experience due to a Dial a ride incident - please see the copy of my email below:

Rachel: Rachel From BBAAdvocacy [mailto:

Sent: 04 November 2009 13:31

To: DAR

Cc: Yaninka Salski

Subject: Incident on Thurs 22 Oct

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to inform you about an incident which occurred on Thursday 22nd October, concerning a lady with learning difficulties, called Joanne Jacques.

The Dial a ride driver brought her from her home, 28 Derwent Drive in Petts Wood, to Lloyds bar in Bromley to meet a group of friends, sometime between 6 and 6.30pm. He dropped her off on the opposite side of the road to the bar and left her. This road is extremely busy; it is next to the station and a big supermarket and the street is full of commuters. Joanne cannot cross the road without assistance. She became confused and wandered up the road by herself, in the opposite direction to the bar. She ended up in the Glades Shopping Centre, where, fortunately, the security staff were very kind to her. By this time, she was distressed, but they managed to calm her. I had sent out people to look for her and they found her and brought her back to the bar.

I want to express in the strongest possible terms that Dial a ride needs to have a policy for looking after vulnerable people like Joanne, ie, to escort them into the venue. It is completely unacceptable to abandon someone like her at the side of a busy road.

Apparently, the staff member at her house was a relief staff member, so may not have explained Joanne's needs, but surely the driver could have used a little common sense and taken a bit more care.

The driver then did not show up for the return journey, so I took Joanne home.

Please will you pass this information on to managers and drivers. As I am sure you can appreciate, this incident could have had very serious consequences and I would like to be assured that it will not happen again.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Coates

Dial a ride investigated the incident and have assured me that their drivers have all been informed. Here is a copy of their reply.

Your Ref: 604025

Our Ref: ORP 08 1089

Dear Ms Coates

I write further to your email of the 4th November on behalf of Joanne Jacques regarding the incident that took place on the 22nd October.

The details that you have provided have been passed to your local depot for investigation. The driver has been interviewed and he has advised that he was speaking with Joanne during the journey and he asked if she was going to the Frog and Lettuce which is next to the station and she said yes, therefore the driver was happy to alight her by the station. The driver has stated that he knew nothing of her going to Lloyds bar and that if he did he would have taken her there. The booking was made for the station on station approach. The driver involved would like to apologise profusely for any distress this incident has caused to Joanne.

With regards to her return journey this was allocated to our Service Partners and it is being address with them directly to ensure that the consequences of such an incident are fully understood. Dial-a-Ride expects the highest standards for all its staff and companies working on our behalf.

To avoid an incident of this nature reoccurring may I suggest that when Joanne is making a booking request that she advises the reservationists of the exact place she is going to enable a note to be put on her journey.

Thank you for taking the time to bring this matter to our attention.

Yours sincerely

Joyce Mamode

Head of Passenger Services

I know from speaking with other members of my group that their general experience of Dial a ride is not good. Simply improving communication and clarifying booking details would have helped in our case. Considering the service exists to help vulnerable people, it would be great if the quality of service could be vastly improved!

I hope this is helpful to you.

Kind regards
Rachel Coates

Self Advocacy Supporter
Bexley and Bromley Advocacy

This message has been scanned for viruses.

Click [here](#) to report this email as spam.

D2D34 Mrs Myra Godsmark
Dear Laura,

One of our constituents has been in contact with Joanne regarding the Dial-A-Ride service. Below is an example of the responses that Mrs Godsmark received when making calls to book transport. The examples below are for just one journey and in no particular order:

- Ring back later – having trouble with system
- Nothing yet – we will ring you
- No answer
- No, ring again (twice)
- No (4 times)
- Ring tomorrow after 11.00 am
- You wait on the phone listening to all 'press this, press that' then told "no bookings, goodbye"
- No bookings taken on Saturday or Sunday

On another occasion, the minibus was apparently, freezing cold as the heater was not working and the front doors were not draught-proof. We have already written to TfL about this but thought we'd let you know about this too.

The constituent's details are:
Mrs Myra Godsmark

D2D35

Councillor Pam Light - DAR

From: "Maureen"
To: "Pam Light"
Date: 27/01/2010 12:32
Subject: DAR

Hi Pam

Hope you are well.

We have a lady who attends my stroke group (when Dial-a-Ride permits). On Tuesday she wanted to come and she usually comes in early to use the computers, then 1.30-3 for exercise. DAR could only offer to bring her at 11.00am and take her home at 12.20pm. Anyway she turned up here at 12.00 noon and sat down and then DAR turned up straight away to take her home. She said they picked her up from her house at 11.00am and the driver told her he had just been allocated another 2 drop offs at Romford so she had to go there and consequently got here at 12.00 when the other DAR came and he said, he can turn up 15 minutes early. He went outside and called the office to see if they could arrange a later pickup but was told no and so our lady had to go.

She was upset and the thing is she is going away to a residential college next week and wont be coming for 9 months and wanted to have a chat with us about it.

Maureen Salter
Stroke Project co-ordinator / Administrator
HAD

Councillor Pam Light - Dial a Ride

From: "Maureen" <
To: "Pam Light"
Date: 06/01/2010 10:26
Subject: Dial a Ride

Hello Pam

A Happy New Year to you, hope you are managing in the snow.

Michael Lloyd has asked me to let you know that on Monday 4th January he was on his regular trip to the Lodge in Upminster with a booking of a midnight pickup with Dial-a-Ride. The DAR did not turn up, the temperature was -3 and consequently some friends paid for a black cab to take him home.

I understand, from Michael, there is nobody at DAR after midnight to contact in an emergency. This is the third time this has happened to Michael with this booking.

Best wishes.

Maureen

Maureen Salter
Stroke Project co-ordinator / Administrator
HAD
01708 476554

Dear Pam

A few notes as promised.

Dial-a-Ride.

Difficulty in getting through by phone. Can take all morning.

Often only offered one journey out no return available. Pick up times, mine was 40 minutes early with no explanation given.

Have asked for altered times on my regular weekly trip, this has been refused---told I have to travel with three others in area on allotted time. I explained this request was on health reasons.

Taxicard.

Computer Cab bookings can take 10 – 15 minutes before call is answered. Suggested to use online booking.

I am registered as needing a Fixed Ramp cab as I have to use an electric scooter. Several times the wrong cab has been sent although I always ask for the fixed ramp.

The driver I last used to the 50's meeting said that drivers are always being told of customers delay in obtaining taxi's when there are usually 10 to 15 cabs waiting for customers. He did ask if someone could look into this.

There seems to be a problem with both call centres, considering drivers both Dial-a-Ride and Computer Cab are all very helpful.

Sincerely
Rhoda Fox

Attached "pages from"
Autumn "Getting there" Magazine

COHEN SARGENT



Our ref:800154

London Dial-a-Ride
Management Control Centre

Progress House
5 Mandela Way
London SE1 5SS

RM3 9JP

Phone 0845 999 1 999
Fax 020 7027 5801
www.tfl.gov.uk

29/10/2009

Dear Mr J. Denman

Thank you for your request for a regular booking every Saturday (3rd Sat of each month) travelling to:

Age Concern, Hopwa House, RM11 3UR

Outbound Time 11.00am
and
Return Time 16.30pm

Unfortunately, on this occasion it has not been possible to accommodate your request.

Please do continue to make requests for these journeys using our normal booking service and we will do our best to accommodate each request where resources permit.

We do review our resources periodically and would suggest that you contact us again in 6 months time when we may be able to offer you a regular arrangement.

I am sorry that we have been unable to help you on this occasion.

Yours sincerely

PP
Service Delivery Controller

London Buses Limited
trading as London Dial-a-Ride
whose registered office is
Windsor House, 42-50 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0TL

Registered in England and Wales
Company number 1900906

VAT number 756 2770 08

London Buses Limited is a
company controlled by a local
authority within the meaning of
Part V Local Government and
Housing Act 1989. The controlling
authority is Transport for London.

MRS EILEEN GIBSON

COLE COURT

AGE 93

IN HER WHEELCHAIR
WENT OVER HUMPS
IN ROAD, SHOT OUT
OF HER CHAIR
BRUISED HAD TO
ATTEND HAROLD
HILL WALKIN CLINIC

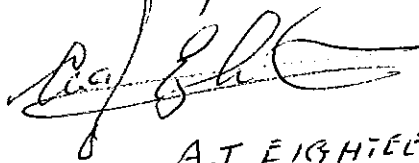
EMPTY DIAKA-RIDE MINI BUS
STANDS OUTSIDE HOUSE IN
COLLIER ROW LANE, SLEDON
MISSING

Dear madam

I thank you for your letter dated 22-1-10.
Many months ago I tried on many occasions to book
journeys on Deal & Rhé, on each occasion I was told
they had no vacancies and would I ring later, I did
ring later with the same result, I have now
accepted the inevitability and have given up,
realising it was impossible to take advantage
of this service.

I hope you can help me, or must I accept
the fact the Deal & Rhé does in effect not exist
for me.

Yours Sincerely



A.J. EIGHTEEN.

Councillor Pam Light - Dial a Ride

From: "Maureen"
To: "Pam Light"
Date: 28/08/2009 14:33
Subject: Dial a Ride

Hi Pam

Michael Lloyd sends you this message:

Membership No. T804742
56 Adelphi Crescent, Hornchurch, RM12 4JZ

Dear Pam

Re: Complaints regarding single trips or total refusal trips to and from Colley Inn, 54-56 Collier Row Road, Collier Row, Romford

The times requested were from 19.00 to 20.30 hours outward trips and from 22.00 until midnight for return trips.

3rd December 2008
11th February 2009
24th March 2009
28th April 2009
26th May 2009
30th June 2009
7th July 2009

25th August 2009

Councillor Pam Light
c/o Town Hall
Main Road
Romford
Essex

Dear Mrs Light,

Re: Dial-a-Ride

I understand that you have requested that any problems encountered with Dial-a-Ride are brought to your attention.

My mother who is 81 years old and totally blind finds it very difficult to arrange transport through DAR. Rather than go into great detail here, I am enclosing copies of some emails that I have sent to them, which, as you can see have yet to be answered.

I would greatly appreciate any input from you.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely,


Julie Muller

Councillor Pam Light
London Borough of Havering
Town Hall
Romford
RM1 3PB

28-7-09

Dear Councillor Light

My name is Winnie Bonsar, I am a Dial-A-Ride user living in The London Borough of Havering. I feel that I have no choice but to write to you directly to complain about our Dial-A-Ride service. I am writing on behalf of myself and two other ladies who travel with me Doris Warren and Dot Nikola.

I have been going to a club in South Hornchurch with Age Concern Havering since its opening four years ago. We were originally on a bus with 9 people that picked us up in time to get to our club at 10:30 am. In 2008 this changed and the 9 people split with 6 of us going in one bus and 3 in another, we were picked up in time to reach the club by 10:30 am. In late 2008 it was all changed again, this time without any notice where the bus was split again with three of us on one bus and the rest on another. Sadly, we are now picked up much later and no longer arrive at our club before 11:30 or 12:00 noon, just in time for lunch rather than at the beginning at 10:30 am.

We have contacted Dial-A-Ride on many occasions to complain and try to get our correct time, but this has not happened. Age Concern Havering has also tried to help and have not had any luck with getting the time changed to arrive by 10:30 am.

We are all in our 80's, one of the ladies that are on the bus is partially sighted and this whole situation is very stressful to all of us. I am starting to feel that Dial-A-Ride is not at all bothered about our wellbeing. Our club on Thursday is very important to us, it is where we get the chance to get out and meet others.

I have sent this letter to Paul Blackwell at Dial-A-Ride and Caroline Pidgeon at the London Assembly.

I hope that you will be able to help resolve this problem for us and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

W.M. Bonsar

Mrs Winne Bonsar

Councillor Pam Light - Fw: Dial a Ride Complaint

From: Susan Spillard
To:
Date: 21/07/2009 16:19
Subject: Fw: Dial a Ride Complaint

Dear Councillor Light

Michael Lloyd has asked me to write and tell you of my parents's problems using Dial a Ride, as I understand you are both trying to improve the service.

Below is an email I sent to Dial a Ride on 22 May, outlining the issues " basically the difficulties I had in booking a ride and then being told that Dial a Ride was unable to take us to our required destination.

I received an acknowledgement on 28 May, six days later, saying they had just received my email and would reply fully within 10 days. (We were given a reference number of WOO 02 440).

Unfortunately I have deleted their full reply, but the gist of it was that it was unsafe to take my parents to their required destination (Jacksons Caf  , 47 High Street, Romford) but that they could go to Market Link instead. This is despite the fact I regularly see Dial a Ride buses visiting the Salvation Army opposite the caf   and black cabs are more than happy to take us there.

Michael is encouraging us to try again with Dial a Ride but I  m afraid I really can  t be bothered with all the extra hassle and I encourage my parents to use their taxicards instead - defeatist I know, but reality.

I hope this account of our experiences helps you in your efforts to improve the service. Good luck!

Yours sincerely

Susan Spillard

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Susan Spillard
To: enquire@tfl.gov.uk
Sent: Friday, 22 May, 2009 15:38:53
Subject: Dial a Ride Complaint

Dear Sir/Madam

Membership numbers: 5026206 and 5026205
Arthur and Lena Spillard

I am writing to complain about the service provided by Dial a Ride.

My parents have recently joined the scheme. I telephoned repeatedly on the morning of Monday 11 May in an attempt to book a ride for the next day, but the line was engaged. I eventually spoke to someone in the afternoon, only to be told that it would not be possible to book a ride within 2 hours of our desired time.

I then rang at 4.30 on Wednesday 13 May in order to book for the following Tuesday but was played a message saying the booking lines close at 4pm.

I rang again on Thursday 14 May and tried to book for the following Tuesday but was told that it is not possible to book so long in advance.

I then rang again on Friday 22 May in an attempt to book a ride for the Tuesday after the Bank Holiday, the 26 May. I got through straight away this time but the lady I spoke to said that our destination (Jacksons Cafe, 47 High Street, Romford, RM1 1JL) was not on their database and she would ring me back to confirm. An hour and a half later, I received a message the ride had been booked "but to Market Link, Romford not High Street, Romford.

I did as the message requested, and phoned back and was then told that not only had the destination been changed, but so had the pick up time "it was now 11.15 and not 11.30 as requested. I cancelled the ride at this point because a) my father will find it difficult to walk the extra distance involved and b) I do not want my parents to have to wait around on the corner of Market Link waiting to be brought home "I note that users are repeatedly asked to be "flexible" regarding timings and it obviously would have been preferable for them to have waited in Jacksons Caf   to be picked up rather than on a street corner.

Having now read all your literature in detail, I am aware that the booking line closes at 4pm and that you only take advance bookings for meetings etc. However, I thought the whole point of Dial a Ride was to make it easier for disabled people to get out and about. My experience is that so many restrictions are placed when you can ring to book, what destination is acceptable and what time you can travel, that the scheme is virtually useless.

My parents will now revert to using the Taxicard scheme, which is easy to use and reliable, even if it does cost a few pounds.

Yours faithfully

Julie Muller

From: "Julie Muller"
To: "DAR" <DAR@tfl.gov.uk>
Sent: 18 August 2009 18:03
Subject: Re: Unable to book

Thank you for your reply. I would like to add that today (18th August) my mum once again tried to book Dial-a-Ride. she got through to the operator at 9:15am to book transport for tomorrow. She was told that there was 'nothing going out' between 9-11am.

This seems to be the norm whenever she tries to book. The woman told her she would phone her back by 4pm if something became available. She didn't receive a reply and I can say from personal experience, when I have tried to book on her behalf, that they always say this but never phone back.

She is now going to have to get a taxi tomorrow to her club and this costs her approximately £8:00 each way. This is a lot of money from her pension.

I am really not satisfied with the service that i have so far received and whilst I am not blaming you personally, I do feel that this is something that needs investigating. This is not a new problem, but has been happening regularly for several years.

I look forward to your reply.

Julie Muller

----- Original Message -----

From: DAR
To: Julie Muller
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2009 9:22 AM
Subject: RE: Unable to book

Dear Ms Muller

Thank you for your email of the 29th July. We are still investigating this matter on your behalf and hope to get back to you within the next 10 working days. Please accept my apologies for any inconvenience caused by this delay.

Yours sincerely

Joyce Mamode
Head of Passenger Services
London Dial-a-Ride

From: Julie Muller |
Sent: 17 August 2009 18:32
To: DAR
Subject: Re: Unable to book

With refence to the above enquiry, I have waited for more than 10 working days for a response but have not heard anything. can you look into this for me please.

many thanks

Julie Muller

----- Original Message -----

From: DAR
To: Julie Muller

25/08/2009

Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2009 9:43 AM
Subject: RE: Unable to book

Ref no. WOO 05 820

Dear Ms Muller

Thank you for your email which Dial-a-Ride received today and have given the reference number above.

We aim to respond to feedback within 10 working days, at which point we will provide you with a full written response or an update of our progress to date.

From: Julie Muller [mailto:
Sent: 29 July 2009 17:39
To: DAR
Subject: Re: Unable to book

My mother's membership number is: T810130

Thank you

----- Original Message -----

From: DAR
To: Julie Muller
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2009 11:30 AM
Subject: RE: Unable to book

Dear Ms Muller

Thank you for your email on behalf of your mother. To enable us to look further into the concerns that you have raised, could you please provide us with your mother's membership details.

Yours sincerely
 Customer Liaison Unit
 London Dial-a-Ride

From: Julie Muller [mailto:
Sent: 28 July 2009 19:45
To: DAR
Subject: Unable to book

Dear Sir/Madam,

My 81 year old mother who is totally blind is one of your customers in the London Borough of Havering area.

Both last week & again this week, she was unable to go to her club as she could only obtain travel for one-way. The first week she could get picked up & taken there and this week she would have only been able to get transport back. Both of these options were absolutely useless for her.

This was despite ringing as near to 9:00am as possible and this problem is not uncommon.

I work in Romford town centre and I frequently see your vehicles with only one or two passengers. The drivers themselves have commented to her that they don't understand the problem in obtaining a journey.

You are preventing her from having a social life and this obviously applies to many other elderly or disabled people.

I know that you have had problems with the changeover to a new way of working, or so I was told about a year ago

25/08/2009

when I complained, but surely by now this must have been sorted out.

I would appreciate a reply to this complaint.

Regards

Julie Muller

The contents of the e-mail and any transmitted files are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. Transport for London hereby exclude any warranty and any liability as to the quality or accuracy of the contents of this email and any attached transmitted files. If you are not the intended recipient be advised that you have received this email in error and that any use, dissemination, forwarding, printing or copying of this email is strictly prohibited., If you have received this email in error please notify postmaster@tfl.gov.uk., This email has been sent from Transport for London, or from one of the companies within its control within the meaning of Part V of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Further details about TfL and its subsidiary companies can be found at <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/ourcompany>, This footnote also confirms that this email message has been swept for the presence of computer viruses.

Councillor Pam Light - DAR

From: "Maureen" <
To: "Pam Light"
Date: 17/09/2009 11:08
Subject: DAR

DAR

Dear Pam

For the last 4 years I have had a regular booking 20.30 hours to The Lodge, Upminster, RM14 2AJ with a midnight return. For the majority of this time Highways Express covered the midnight return on time with no problems.

However, on 14th September I left the Lodge at midnight as the licensing rules have to have everyone out at midnight. I was left in the cold weather in the car park. Fortunately some friends stayed with me. There was no sign of the taxi. I phoned Dial a Ride call centre there was a recorded message as they close at midnight and so I was left without any support whatsoever.

At 00.15 I got a taxi home independently. The Lodge has confirmed the taxi turned up at 00.20 hours which is clearly no good. The taxi must always be on time as the colder weather is coming and this will have a severe impact being left out in the cold and wet weather and it is dangerous for a vulnerable person in a wheelchair.

My great fear is that to get this problem solved they will cancel all my future rides due to their inefficiency.

Best wishes.

Michael Lloyd

Councillor Pam Light - DAR

From: "Maureen"
To: "Pam Light"
Date: 18/09/2009 15:25
Subject: DAR

Hi Pam

Another one for your DAR folder.

A young gentleman wanted a ride to and from Whittaker Hall on 9th September. He was brought here but could not get a ride back and had to use one of his taxi rides. On 16th September He could not get a ride here and used another one of his precious taxi rides but managed to get DAR going back.

This has happened numerous times before but we do not have any dates. He will soon run out of taxi rides if this keeps happening.

Also he had been attending a course at Fairkytes and on the last evening he could not go as they couldnt give him the ride back.

Maureen

Councillor Pam Light - DAR

From: "Maureen" <
To: "Pam Light"
Date: 23/09/2009 11:45
Subject: DAR

Hi Pam

Another one from Michael Lloyd:

I have had a regular booking with DAR for the past 4 years to take me to JJ Moons in Hornchurch every Friday with a pickup of 20.00 and a midnight return.

On Friday 18th September as always I was waiting near the entrance door at five to twelve for my midnight pickup. Unfortunately, comcab (DAR) failed to turn up. At 00.30 hours I left the pub. A friend hailed a black taxi and I had to pay £7.20 fare to get myself home. Also DAR call centre is closed at midnight so I am left without support.

Pam for your information from 2nd September 2009 DAR has implemented a contract with comcab to carry out trips they cannot cover. Consequently when I say comcab it is really DAR

Michael Lloyd

COMPLAINTS RECORD SHEET

Club: Brunswick Court

Date	Name of Complainant	Contact No	Details of Complaint	Reported to & Date
5 th August 09	K. Smart. Kathleen Smart.		Very late return Journey Pickup 3.15. No D.A.R. Available, cab came instead, Hadn't informed them.	Julie AGE Concern
5 th August 09	Gwen Saunders. Gwen Maude.	1805927.	AGE Concern phoned to enquire about return journey and as of 12 th August still awaits the return phone call.	Julie AGE Concern
5 th August 09	Eileen Moynihan Eileen Moynihan	1805829	Our time used to be: Pickup: 9.15 Return: 2pm (2.30 officially) Now without me changing it it's Pickup: 9.45 Return: 1.30 which is	Julie AGE Concern
			too late as the club runs 10.30. till 2.30 which means we are always late and leave too early, before club ends.	

Councillor Pam Light - Dial a Ride

From: "Maureen" <
To: .
Date: 21/08/2009 14:38
Subject: Dial a Ride

Hi Pam

Some feedback on DAR

11th August 2009 - An elderly couple attend HAD weekly on a Tuesday for Stroke exercise class. They have a regular booking with DAR for this because the lady finds it uncomfortable to travel in a black cab as the wheelchair has to go in sideways and it makes her travel sick. On 11th August after the class the regular DAR should turn up at 3.30 but it got to 4pm and they had not arrived. I phoned DAR (which is not easy to get through to quickly) and asked what had happened to their ride. They left me on hold with no music and I wondered if I had been cut off. I phoned again on another line to make sure I had not been cut off and the operator assured me someone would come back. When the operator came back on he said he was going to phone the driver and would call us back here at HAD.

About 4.20pm DAR turned up and when I questioned the driver he said he had been instructed to fit two extra pickups in and these were wheelchair people and that was why he was late. DAR office never called us back at all. Officially our offices close at 4pm. Hopefully this has not turned this couple off of coming here as they really enjoy the exercise class.

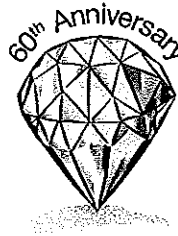
19th August - A young man tried to order DAR to come to our camera club. He was told there was not enough drivers and so consequently he had to use taxicard and this has resulted in him using an extra two of his precious taxi rides.

Hope this information is ok and we will keep on asking people if they have experienced any difficulty.

Hope you are well. Best wishes

Maureen

18/10. Louton



Cllr Pam Light
London Borough of Havering
Town Hall
Main Road
Romford
RM1 3BD

22nd July 2009

Dear Cllr Light

A Dial-A-Ride Complaint

We have had a complaint from Mrs Winnie Bonsar who is a client of Age Concern Havering. To set the scene, she has been a member of our day club at St John's church in South Hornchurch for the past five years, in fact since its conception in 2004. Unfortunately during one of my visits to the club last week I was witness to our client being extremely upset and very stressed by the fact that her Dial-A-Ride arrived at the club at 12:00 noon when in fact the club starts at 10:30 am, thus missing most of the activities and just arriving in time for lunch, in fact she was so upset she hardly touched her meal.

It would appear that Dial-A-Ride have changed the pick up time for Mrs Bonsar and two other ladies – Mrs Doris Warren and Mrs Dot Nikola, one who is partially blind without any notice.

Just to give you a bit of background, they were originally on a bus with nine people that picked were picked up to arrive at club by 10:30 am. In 2008 the nine people were split into two groups with six going in one bus and three on another, again they all reached the club by 10:30 am. In late 2008 without any notice the bus was changed and now the three clients mentioned are collected much later and now arrive at club between 11:30 am and 12:00 noon, just in time for lunch and missing a large part of the group activities.

Mrs Bonsar has contacted Dial-A-Ride together with us to try to resolve the situation but to now avail. I would like to point out that all of these ladies love coming to the club, they are all in their 80's and the club is very much part of their life. However, Mrs Bonsar is considering leaving as she has high blood pressure and cannot deal with the stress and lack of consideration from Dial-A-Ride with regards to her dilemma.

I hope that you will be able to help resolve this problem for our three clients and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deborah Rogers".

Deborah Rogers
Active Living / NDS Manager
Age Concern Havering



Romford
Recorder



Making more of life in Havering

Registered Office: HOPWA House,
Inskip Drive, Hornchurch, Essex RM11 3UR

Registered Charity No. 1079969

Councillor Pam Light - RE: dial a ride

From: "RAMSEY, Marjorie" <
To: "Councillor Pam Light"
Date: 25/07/2009 18:22
Subject: RE: dial a ride

He, like others, has difficulties in arranging dates and collections. Staff have also been rude.

Marjorie

From: Councillor Pam Light [mailto:
Sent: 23 July 2009 19:57
To: RAMSEY, Marjorie
Subject: Re: dial a ride

Have you any details Pam

>>> "RAMSEY, Marjorie" <
Hi Pam

I have one gentleman for your list of complainants re Dial a Ride

Mr. A. Eighteen 8 Swift Close Upminster RM14 1EH

Thanks

Marjorie

This e-mail and any files transmitted with it are the property of the London Borough of Havering, are confidential, may be subject to legal privilege and are intended only for the person(s) or organisation(s) named above. Any unauthorised use, retention, distribution, copying or disclosure is strictly prohibited. If you receive this email in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete this e-mail from your system. WARNING: It is your responsibility to take all necessary steps to ensure this e-mail and any attachments to it are free from viruses.

Councillor Pam Light - DAR

From: "Maureen"
To: "Pam Light"
Date: 30/09/2009 12:58
Subject: DAR

Hi Pam

Two more reports on DAR

Steve could not get DAR at all on 30th September to bring him or take him home from HAD. He was offered no alternative. He has had to use 2 of his black cab rides.

A lady wheelchair user goes to church every other Sunday using DAR. On 19th October DAR said they could take her but could not bring her home. She accepted this and was waiting outside her home to be taken to church. DAR was 20 minutes late when she rang them to ask what was happening. She was told there had been an incident with the driver and they had not had a chance to ring everybody. She said she would get a black cab, they said thank you for being understanding. The comcab driver said DAR should have booked this ride and then she would not have had to use her precious black cab rides.

The lady has tried to book today (30/9/09) for a ride on Sunday (4/10/09) to take her to church and was told they cannot do it.

The lady also said that one Sunday they picked an elderly lady up from Emerson Park to take her to the football club at Dagenham and she said she had a return trip but our lady couldn't get one. The elderly lady also stated that she could use the bus and tube but it was easier to use DAR.

This list gets longer!!

Best wishes

Maureen

Councillor Pam Light - Dial A Ride Issues

From: "Deborah Rogers" <
To: "Councillor Pam Lig
Date: 13/07/2009 08:59
Subject: Dial A Ride Issues

Dear Pam

Please find set out below some of the issues that have occurred in the past three months

- **Inconsistent Timings** – we have six local clubs whereby clients all live in the same area and come on a weekly basis to a local club. Many DAR buses arrive too early to the club often before the organiser (the clubs start at 10:30) and very often they arrive up to an hour late to collect client (the clubs finish at 14:30). We have a client with early dementia – DAR often arrive to collect her at 9:00 am thus getting her to the club way before 10:30 and she has often been wandering about waiting for staff to arrive.
- **Cost Effectiveness of DAR** – As mentioned above all of our six clubs are local, the clients live local to the club and in fact some live in the same street, but are not taken to the club together in one bus. We often have four buses to bring and collect clients (7 clients) when they could all arrive and leave together as they all live close by to each other. This also causes problems as some arrive at 10:30 and others up to an hour later.
- **Difficult to book a new journey** – Clients have to wait for months (3-6 months) to get a guaranteed regular place. This is causing lots of stress and concern for many clients. Our clubs might be their only contact with the outside world every week and to have to try to book a ride on DAR is an added stress. We have sent letters about this but have had no response.
- **Rudeness of DAR Staff** – I have personally been at the end of the phone with very uncooperative staff at DAR and often had to call them when they have been extremely difficult with clients some of which are in their late 80's.
- **Group Events / Change Location** – Many of our clients are reliant on DAR and as mentioned above this club is sometimes their only contact with other people. We often hold group events whereby all the clubs come together. We recently had a St Georges day event. Our clients who come to our Thursday club wanted to change the venue as a one off and contacted DAR to pick them up at their normal locations but take them to the St Georges Day event (still within the same area) instead of their club. To do this was extremely difficult and clients were endangered of losing their existing trip and would then have had to go through the process of calling each week to get a regular spot. It was only when the Manager of the clubs got involved were they willing to compromise
- **Paying for own Taxi** – We have a blind lady who attends one of our clubs and she has on a number of occasions not been able to get a booking with DAR and as this is her only time out of her home and did not want to miss out, she paid £9.50 for a taxi.
- **Letters** – Clients have written to the London Assembly regarding the problems, we have received letters from Caroline Pidgeon – Chair, Transport Committee for Liberal Democrat Assembly, but as yet nothing has changes.

The main complaints about Dial-a-Ride are:

1. The buses turn up late e.g the pick up is supposed to be 10.00am they don't arrive at the centre until just before 12. This means they have missed the morning activities and then they go straight in to lunch. If the Dial-a-Ride then picks them up at 2.30pm it has radically reduced their day. This is a regular occurrence of people coming to the centre.
2. People find it difficult to book Dial-a-Ride and have to wait on the phone for a long long time.
3. Regular bookings take months to get through.
4. People are sitting on the buses for such a long time it is distressing for them especially if it is 1-1½ hours long. You could get to London and back in less time.
5. Service users cannot get Dial-a-Ride on a weekend and if they do manage to get the bus one way there is no ride back home.
6. The people on the end of the phone at Dial-a-Ride are rude, unhelpful and you never know who you are talking to. Each department passes you backwards and forwards.

Elderly people are losing out on socialising, having a good solid meal each day and keeping active. Elderly people rely on this service as it is a lifeline to them, if they cannot get here or it is reduced it is a huge loss to them and they may have to wait another week to get out again.

ACTIVE LIVING - GOVERNMENT ACTION

Smiles - Leon G. Adams -

WHEN I START

1. - PROGRAM 9 - NOT GROUP TRAVEL - ONLY LARGE VEHICLES

Wirkung?

PCT - HOSPITAL TRIES

EXHIBIT

Vietnam - Hoa Binh 188?

DIAL-A-RIDE

A service user called up on Tuesday after getting home at 4.15pm she actually left the centre at 2.50pm and only lives locally. She was brought to the Centre an hour later than expected anyway due to Dial-A-Ride not turning up at the scheduled time. She was tired and fed up when she got home but decided to call Dial-A-Ride to express her concerns. She was on the phone a long time and was passed around from one department to another. When she did finally speak to someone in Customer Services/Complaints she did explain the situation, but didn't feel confident he was listening to what she was saying. When she asked him his name he said Bob, she asked what his surname was and he put the phone down. The lady was left feeling upset as how she was treated the whole day not only by the journeys but on the phone as well.

On Tuesday 16 June a service user called me up after getting home to say that the Dial-A-Ride man (Yaz) had had an accident on the way home and hit another van coming the other way, she felt jolted and shaken. She said the accident was not a bad one but she was really frightened by the whole experience. He did not speak to her at all to ask if she was OK, he just took her home and dropped her off. Luckily her son came around and made her a cup of tea and to help her calm down before she rang me. I spoke with Gamini and he said he would pass it on to the Service Delivery Control. He said there was no policy to ring and check customers were OK after an accident and there had been no accident reported.

It has been reported that there are a few drivers from other areas that are now driving the buses and have actually turned round to the service users and asked them the way to their destination. Drivers are continually talking on the phones through their ear pieces during the journeys and drivers have been reported to smoke when they get off the bus to pick up someone.

These examples are just a few of the many incidents Each incident is different for each person but generally the complaints are around the same areas.

D2D37 Age Concern Redbridge

Customer Care
Dial a Ride
Progress House
5 Mandela Way
London SE1 5SS

Monday, 11 January 2010

Dear Sir or Madam:

Problems experienced by our service users

I am writing to express concern about a series of major problems our service users have been experiencing with their Dial a Ride bookings since early December. At this stage I am not making a formal complaint as I am hoping the issues can be resolved promptly.

You provide service to all the following people, delivering them to & picking them up from our lunch service in Wanstead:

Mrs CM

Mrs BM

Mrs JH

Mrs IS

Mrs RF

Mrs AD

Mrs MC

Mrs DH

Mrs C (names removed for confidentiality from copy letter)

The on off problems we have experienced over the past couple of years of Dial a Ride reorganisation have worsened since 4th December when we moved from our previous location (The Old Fire Station, 33 Wanstead Place, Wanstead) to our new one: **The Allan Burgess Centre (often known as The Corner House), 2 Grove Park, Wanstead E11 2DL.**

When I rang about this just before Christmas, the person I spoke with suggested it was the fault of our service users. I was at a complete loss to know what more we could do to get this information across. **We** have informed you of this move, **our service users** have informed you of it and even **some of your own drivers** have rung you from our premises and informed you and yet we have had considerable problems over the past month with drivers being told to take older people to or collect them from our old address. We even had a case where a driver brought a service user to the correct place but was then told to go to the old place, despite the fact he knew where to pick the service user up from! It wasn't his fault: he was given the wrong address for the second half of the booking!

For each and every one of the above people, whenever they are booking for our lunch service, they are to be delivered to and collected from The Allan Burgess Centre, address above. Most of them have regular bookings and most of them come to us more than one day per week.

I would be extremely grateful if a member of Dial a Ride staff could contact each one, ascertain their regular days, ensure their contract is booked for those days to and from the right address and make sure this is entered on your computer system.

We also have a designated space for Dial a Ride buses at the back of The Allan Burgess Centre and if your drivers will use it I will ensure no car parks there. At present, the drivers are mainly parking in Grove Park, down the side of the building, which leaves service users a long walk up a disability ramp or round the pavement to the front door. If the drivers were to pull into their designated space, at least people would be delivered as near as possible to the ramp.

For Mrs CM there was a specific problem in that she couldn't seem to get her regular bookings reinstated as a contract. Again, the person I spoke to suggested it was because she hadn't asked for this, but I know from talking with Mrs CM that she and her daughter had been trying to get the regular bookings reinstated when she booked. I hope this has been rectified now.

We continue periodically to have the problem where people have been brought to us but then are not on the driver's list for the return journey. Since they always book both outward and return journeys at the same time I cannot understand how this mistake can be made. The result is that we then have to make phone calls to Dial a Ride and another bus has to be sent to pick them up, and our staff then have to stay with the service user until the bus arrives.

There also appears to be too many journeys still where different buses pick up people who live near each other. Not only does this double the cost to Dial a Ride, it deprives our service users of the pleasure of enjoying a shared ride and conversation en route.

Finally, we have had a number of bookings where drivers have come very late. Please note that no booking to collect people from the lunch service should be made after 1.30pm. That leaves some leeway should drivers be delayed, but would prevent our staff having to remain behind with people awaiting their buses.

I do hope these problems can all be ironed out swiftly, saving yourselves, our service users and my staff and volunteers considerable frustration.

Yours sincerely,

James Monger
Senior Manager

D2D37a

Customer Care
Dial a Ride
Progress House
5 Mandela Way
London SE1 5SS

Thursday, 04 March 2010

Dear Sir or Madam:

Formal complaint

I wrote to you on 11th January, raising a number of concerns about repeated errors with bookings that have occurred since the removal of our lunch service to The Allan Burgess Centre, 2 Grove Park, Wanstead E11 2DL (copy enclosed).

I received a response dated 14th January, Ref Woo 11-1368, in which I was informed that you would aim to respond within 10 working days.

I find it quite unacceptable that, in fact, 35 working days have now elapsed, hence my formal complaint.

Furthermore, whilst the service has improved (mainly because the experienced drivers themselves know where to come) there are still instances of newer drivers being sent to The Old Fire Station where we used to be. Had the amendments to your records that I requested in my previous letter been implemented this would not be happening.

There are also still regular problems for Mrs AD (name removed from copy for confidentiality). There is an inconsistency of service and sometimes instances of drivers rushing her (one icy day she came with her coat over her arm, wearing her slippers and without her bag, because of pressure from the driver). This week there was an instance of confusion around her booking which then led to a cab having to be cancelled. Please provide her with a block booking 5 days per week, Monday to Friday. This should alleviate the problem.

I trust that I will receive a prompt response and that all the matters addressed in my first letter can be resolved without further complication for our older service users.

Yours faithfully,

James Monger
Senior Manager

CC Gordon Deuchars, Age Concern London

D2D38 Hazel

Dear Richard

My husband uses Dial a ride and always has trouble. If he wishes to go th the local shops or further, he has to ring in the morning, and, to be completely honest, the people on the telephone usually have a great deal of difficulty, not having total command of the Queen's English. Even if they do, they say they will ring back later that day (at 4) to confirm for the next day or the day after. Very often an entire mini-bus is used for one person.

I have used it a couple of times but frankly, I could do without the hassle so I pay for a car.

We are both blind and have a guide dog and the drivers even try to tell us how to sit in the mini-bus and where to place our dogs, like we don't know!

Horror or what?

Yours sincerely

Hazel

Der Ms Pidgeon,

Thankyou for your letter dated 25/1/10.

I don't think it would be fair to fill in the form you sent to me. I have only asked once to use Dial-a-Ride. I went to the Churchill Theatre in Bromley. It was an afternoon performance and I was collected from home and brought back home with no problems at all. It made all the difference to my enjoyment.

I do have a regular booking on a Friday evening - just to be brought back from the Ackroyd Community Centre. Usually this is no problem - but once the Van didn't turn up until 10.30 and we were all worried. The caretaker was also with us waiting to lock up the Centre. The

2

Dial-a-Ride driver told us he was expected to "fit in" another person. We all complained and I got an acknowledgement slip but no answers to my three suggestions. We have had no trouble since then.

I belong to Taxicard and to Capital Call and have had no problems with them. They send a private car to fill in when they are busy. PLEASE do not integrate any services. I fear Dial-a-Ride would bring any down to their level.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Hazel Taylor



Havering

HOPWA House
Inskip Drive
Hornchurch
Essex RM11 3UR

Tel: 01708 796600

RECEIVED Fax: 01708 796606

20 FEB 2010 www.ageconcernhavering.org.uk

SECRETARIAT

Ms Caroline Pidgeon
Chair, Transport Committee
Liberal Democrat Assembly Member
London Assembly
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA

16th February 2010

Dear Ms Pidgeon

I am writing on behalf of the Age Concern Havering users in the London Borough of Havering. We have around 260 people using the facilities each week and the majority of the users live independent lives.

The London Borough of Havering has an ageing community, in fact one of the largest of all the London Boroughs with a key number of people over 65 years of age living on their own due to divorce or bereavement. This is potentially a more vulnerable group and will continually increase and therefore it will be of utmost importance that travel services within the area are able to grow with the demand.

A 'Whole Person' model encourages independence allowing people to get out and about to meet friends, use amenities and access services in a safe environment thus improving the quality of life.

The key objective for Age Concern Havering is to offer preventative services to older people reducing isolation and loneliness. Our clubs are essential to the welfare of many older people, for many coming to a club once a week is their only time of having adult contact and for many, using Dial-A-Ride is their only means of getting around.

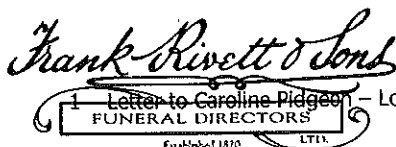
We continually have problems with the Dial-A-Ride services for our client and below are some of the issues that continually occur.

- Regular bookings where clients can be taken but NOT be picked up OR Service users are often told they can take them there and not bring them back or vice versa.
- A number of people live in the same area, and go to the same event, however only one person is taken on a bus.
- Clubs members are collected later than their time slot allocated for a regular booking and often arrive at clubs up to 1.5 hours later thus missing many of the activities.
- Dial-A-Ride change times of regular bookings without letting clients know.
- We have two Saturday clubs each month - We were told that we cannot make block bookings now. Prior to August 08 we used to fax off a list of who needed Dial-a-Ride and they would come back to us with the journey times. This worked well until the block bookings were stopped and now some people cannot get here. This is a great shame as these are the more vulnerable, isolated and frail.

Making more of life in Havering

Registered Office: HOPWA House,
Inskip Drive, Hornchurch, Essex RM11 3UR

Registered Company No. 3912343
Registered Charity No. 1079969



Letter to Caroline Pidgeon - London Assembly

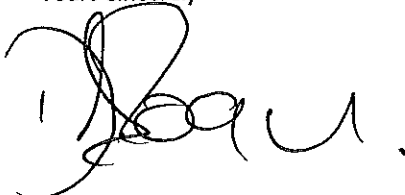
Sainsbury's
Hornchurch

- Clients have been told that they can only book a trip one day in advance and then often told that they cannot get a space.
- Clients are often on the buses for more than an hour which is far too long for many.
- When we have an event and clients want to keep their booking in terms of time, but change the destination – this has not been possible and they have also been told by Dial-A-Ride that their regular spot will be cancelled thus losing their regular spot.
- Clients are often kept on the line before anybody speaks to them, the majority of our clients find talking on the telephone difficult and it does not help when Dial-A-Ride do not answer and not helpful. It has also been known for Dial-A-Ride staff to be rude and this can be somewhat distressing for older people, many of whom are in their eighties.
- Clients have to call for up to 12 weeks, weekly before being allocated a regular slot to go to a club or regular event.
- Old people like continuity, compassion and familiarity so when unknown drivers turn up to collect them from out of the area this can be a problem – 1) the regular drivers know the clients by their first name and their physical abilities 2) drivers from out of the area get lost thus making clients stressed as they become late for an event/club
- Dial-A-Ride are often telling clients that there are not any slots available, yet buses turn up anything up to 30 minutes prior to pick up and sit and wait to collect clients.
- Bookings are difficult to get on a Saturday – We have two clubs every month on a Saturday at our centre, the numbers have continually declined due to clients not being able to come due to lack of getting a booking with Dial-A-Ride. Weekends are the worst time for many of our clients.
- On occasions Dial-A-Ride has failed to turn up and they have had to get a taxi to get to their club or event, costing them a full fare.

Our centre at HOPWA received a visit from Joyce Mamode at Dial-A-Ride. It was agreed that somebody was going to contact the centre manager regarding the issues at HOPWA, in particular regular bookings and to look at the issues that had been brought up at the meeting. This never happened which was disappointing for the service users.

Many elderly people are losing out on socializing, having a solid meal and keeping active. There are many people who rely on our services and it is a lifeline for many of them, if they cannot get to their club or it is reduced it is a huge loss to them and for many it is another week before they get out again. All we are asking is for Dial-A-Ride to offer a service that the older people of Havering can rely on.

Yours sincerely



Deborah Rogers
Active Living Manager



Havering

HOPWA House
Inskip Drive
Hornchurch
Essex RM11 3UR

Tel: 01708 796600

RECEIVED
Fax: 01708 796606

20 FEB 2010
www.ageconcernhavering.org.uk

SECRETARIAT

Ms Caroline Pidgeon
Chair, Transport Committee
Liberal Democrat Assembly Member
London Assembly
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA

16th February 2010

Dear Ms Pidgeon

I am writing on behalf of the Age Concern Havering users in the London Borough of Havering. We have around 260 people using the facilities each week and the majority of the users live independent lives.

The London Borough of Havering has an ageing community, in fact one of the largest of all the London Boroughs with a key number of people over 65 years of age living on their own due to divorce or bereavement. This is potentially a more vulnerable group and will continually increase and therefore it will be of utmost importance that travel services within the area are able to grow with the demand.

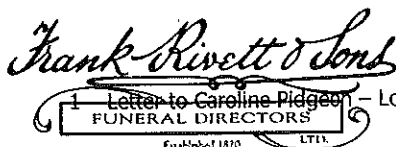
A 'Whole Person' model encourages independence allowing people to get out and about to meet friends, use amenities and access services in a safe environment thus improving the quality of life.

The key objective for Age Concern Havering is to offer preventative services to older people reducing isolation and loneliness. Our clubs are essential to the welfare of many older people, for many coming to a club once a week is their only time of having adult contact and for many, using Dial-A-Ride is their only means of getting around.

We continually have problems with the Dial-A-Ride services for our client and below are some of the issues that continually occur.

- Regular bookings where clients can be taken but NOT be picked up OR Service users are often told they can take them there and not bring them back or vice versa.
- A number of people live in the same area, and go to the same event, however only one person is taken on a bus.
- Clubs members are collected later than their time slot allocated for a regular booking and often arrive at clubs up to 1.5 hours later thus missing many of the activities.
- Dial-A-Ride change times of regular bookings without letting clients know.
- We have two Saturday clubs each month - We were told that we cannot make block bookings now. Prior to August 08 we used to fax off a list of who needed Dial-a-Ride and they would come back to us with the journey times. This worked well until the block bookings were stopped and now some people cannot get here. This is a great shame as these are the more vulnerable, isolated and frail.

Making more of life in Havering



Letter to Caroline Pidgeon

London Assembly

Sainsbury's

Hornchurch

Registered Office: HOPWA House,
Inskip Drive, Hornchurch, Essex RM11 3UR

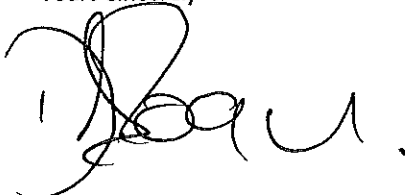
Registered Company No. 3912243
Registered Charity No. 1079969

- Clients have been told that they can only book a trip one day in advance and then often told that they cannot get a space.
- Clients are often on the buses for more than an hour which is far too long for many.
- When we have an event and clients want to keep their booking in terms of time, but change the destination – this has not been possible and they have also been told by Dial-A-Ride that their regular spot will be cancelled thus losing their regular spot.
- Clients are often kept on the line before anybody speaks to them, the majority of our clients find talking on the telephone difficult and it does not help when Dial-A-Ride do not answer and not helpful. It has also been known for Dial-A-Ride staff to be rude and this can be somewhat distressing for older people, many of whom are in their eighties.
- Clients have to call for up to 12 weeks, weekly before being allocated a regular slot to go to a club or regular event.
- Old people like continuity, compassion and familiarity so when unknown drivers turn up to collect them from out of the area this can be a problem – 1) the regular drivers know the clients by their first name and their physical abilities 2) drivers from out of the area get lost thus making clients stressed as they become late for an event/club
- Dial-A-Ride are often telling clients that there are not any slots available, yet buses turn up anything up to 30 minutes prior to pick up and sit and wait to collect clients.
- Bookings are difficult to get on a Saturday – We have two clubs every month on a Saturday at our centre, the numbers have continually declined due to clients not being able to come due to lack of getting a booking with Dial-A-Ride. Weekends are the worst time for many of our clients.
- On occasions Dial-A-Ride has failed to turn up and they have had to get a taxi to get to their club or event, costing them a full fare.

Our centre at HOPWA received a visit from Joyce Mamode at Dial-A-Ride. It was agreed that somebody was going to contact the centre manager regarding the issues at HOPWA, in particular regular bookings and to look at the issues that had been brought up at the meeting. This never happened which was disappointing for the service users.

Many elderly people are losing out on socializing, having a solid meal and keeping active. There are many people who rely on our services and it is a lifeline for many of them, if they cannot get to their club or it is reduced it is a huge loss to them and for many it is another week before they get out again. All we are asking is for Dial-A-Ride to offer a service that the older people of Havering can rely on.

Yours sincerely



Deborah Rogers
Active Living Manager



Laura Warren
Scrutiny Team
GLA
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
LONDON
SE1 2AA

Dai Powell
Chair, Disabled Persons Transport
Advisory Committee
2/23 Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DR
Tel: 020 7944 8011
Fax: 020 7944 6998
E-mail: dptac@dft.gov.uk
Website: www.dptac.gov.uk

10 February 2010

Dear Ms Warren,

**Transport Committee investigation into door-to-door
transport services in London:**

Closing date Friday 19^h February 2010

1. I would like to thank you for seeking the input of the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committees' (DPTAC) into this investigation.
2. The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) is an independent statutory advisory body to Government, on the needs of disabled people with regard to transport. DPTAC provides advice to Government, on various policies, reflecting the requirements and concerns of people with a wide range of disabilities.
3. DPTAC uses a national, pan disability approach, for the advice it provides. As your investigation covers door-to-door transport services across London, we have passed your request for comments, to one of our members who lives in London. DPTAC will not be responding as a committee.
4. Should you require any further information, please contact DPTAC Secretariat at the address above.

Yours sincerely,

Dai Powell
Chair, DPTAC

London Assembly Transport Committee

RECEIVED

SECRETARIAT

Dear Sirs,

I am a frequent user of Dial-a-Ride and ComCab.

Bringing these services together would, in my view, be impossible. They give a completely different service. Dial-a-Ride give a wonderful caring service. They help you to the vehicle, help you in and out. If ComCab send a metered taxi it is most difficult to get in and I find it impossible to sit on the back seat - it is too low so have to perch on the let down seat, back to the driver. If they send a mini cab this is better but the driver usually just sits there and doesn't help you in and out.

It is quite a worry with ComCab fares. The meter starts going round before the pick-up and continues during traffic jams and I find I can pay more than if I had hired a local mini cab. Still it is a good back up for very local journeys when Dial-a-Ride cannot fit me in. This is the main trouble with Dial-a-Ride. I have a regular journey to the Adult Education Centre at ~~Sisup~~ ^{SID} ~~CUR~~ and also to the hairdressers. The latter is awkward as I cannot be flexible with the time. Next week I have only managed to book one single journey - it has been much worse since the service was made free.

Hospital visits are a problem. I find the service very good when I am going to Guys but locally is very inconvenient as the van picks up several patients and I find I am late for my appointments. With ComCab I find it can be very expensive.

Getting through to Dial-a-Ride is a nightmare. Last ~~at~~ telephone bill just for Dial-a-Ride was £20⁴. ComCab is nearly as bad.

I have listed the disadvantages but Dial-a-Ride is a lifeline and when you do get it the service and care are ~~xxxx~~ marvellous.

Yours faithfully

Drene McDonald

(Mrs)

Docklands Drop-in Group

Founded in 1981
A project of Action and Rights of Disabled People in Newham
Funded by the London Borough of Newham

Address for reply:

111 B Windsor Road,
London E7 0RA

10/2/10

Dear Ms Warren,

Please find attached the notes from consultation with Docklands Drop In last week on door to door service. Some of these issues I had forwarded to Transport For All in the past. These older members are hesitant about complaining of their experiences. I hope this reluctance is not being taken advantage of.

Yours sincerely,

Elsa Becket

Elsa Becket
Treasurer

Ms L Warren,
Scrutiny Team, GLA,
City Hall,
The Queen's Walk,
London SE1 2AA.

RECEIVED

11/2/10

SECRETARIAT

Consultation with drop-in members re door to door services, 3/2/10.

Dial a Ride drivers consistently good, courteous and helpful. Comcab drivers variable, 2 out of 5 not so good, some refuse to put down ramp or step or won't park near kerb - in consequence 2 members no longer use Comcab. One member uses them but dreads them. Some drivers insulting, complain they could make more money with airport work and resent driving disabled people.

SUGGESTION - these drivers could be asked to opt out of door to door service if not interested in retraining. Some members would prefer ramps and dislike being tipped far back in their chairs to get into cab. Some drivers won't strap in wchair users - saying 'You've got your brakes on, that'll do.' Training is clearly needed in some cases. Older members are reluctant to complain formally.

The (few) women drivers are excellent, deft at getting out ramps, strapping in etc. More such women would be much appreciated.

BOOKING; members still having trouble making bookings, 10-20 minute waits to get through to a clerk, all the time paying for being on hold.

Bookings themselves seem quixotic. One member had her DAR booking cancelled with no notice; she had got ready to go out and only found that her booking had been arbitrarily cancelled when she phoned to ask where her transport was - no reason given. Some members got a DAR booking for an outing miles away, no problem, but when they wanted to alternate one local pub for another, for weekly lunch outings, were told; 'you've got a block booking for that one pub and you must stick to that.' The pub they wished to alternate with was actually NEARER to where they live and drivers they discussed the matter with were mystified but said they could only go by what the booking clerks told them. More flexibility or congenent explanations would help.

One member reported that her disability group was having to close as though DAR can drive people to bingo in evenings, it will not do evening runs for this disability group - no info on whether this is a blanket ban on other groups or just this one. They cannot afford to use Community Transport so the group has to fold

Docklands Drop-in Group

Founded in 1981

A project of Action and Rights of Disabled People in Newham
Funded by the London Borough of Newham

Address for reply:

RECEIVED

151.1.11

SECRETARIAT

THE BARBICAN TUESDAY CLUB
A MEMBER OF THE LONDON FORUM FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Chairman Audrey Ballard
253 Shakespeare Tower
Barbican, London
EC2Y 8DR

12th February, 2010

Laura Warren,
Scrutiny Team, London Assembly,
GLA, City Hall,
The Queen's Walk,
London SE1 2AA

Re letter from Caroline Pidgeon AM., Chair Transport Committee.

We reply to the request for views on some of the transport needs for London and in particular those affecting the elderly.

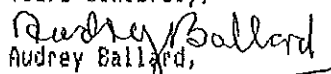
At the meeting of the above Tuesday Club, (members of which vary in age from 65+ to 90) this letter was discussed, mainly concerning Dial a Ride and the Taxicard services.

Some members had used the Dial a ride but found it not easily available and extremely unreliable, although it does enable those people over the age of 85 to make use of the service.

The Taxicard was more favoured but needed a Doctor's certificate and marginal cases looked over. It was suggested that as in the case of the Dial a Ride would it not be favourable to include all those above the age of 85, as if even they were not actually disabled albeit very frail over 85.

At our next meeting I will ask for any member, who is interested to attend the meeting on 2nd March, and will inform you of their names.

Yours sincerely,


Audrey Ballard,
Chairman.