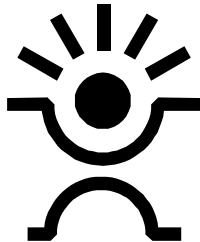
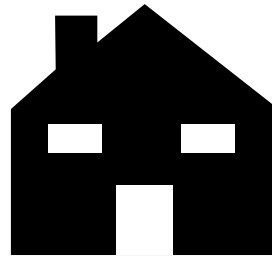
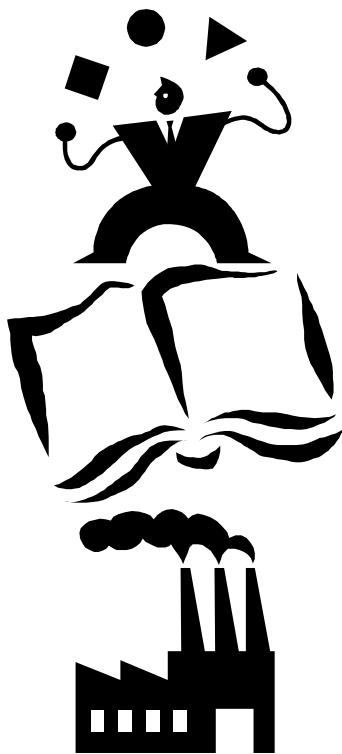


# Physical and Sensory Impairment Services Questionnaire 2009

## The Response



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## Introduction

As part of the development of **Lambeth's commissioning strategy for adults aged 18 – 64 with physical and / or sensory impairments 2010 – 2015** Disability Advice Service Lambeth carried out a brief survey of its members and users. DASL wanted to find out what services are most important to its members and service users and what they would like to see being done to meet their needs. The survey was distributed in a special issue of The Mole, DASL's Newsletter, which was sent to all members and service users believed to have physical and sensory impairments aged 18 – 65 in June 2009. A prepaid envelope was enclosed. In addition copies were made available at some GP surgeries, and at Lambeth Country Show. To encourage participation a prize draw was organised from all those who return forms with one winner getting a £50 of Marks and Spencer vouchers and two runners up each received £25 in vouchers.

These responses will be fed back to the Lambeth Physical and Sensory Impairment Partnership Board as part of the deliberative stage of consultation on the draft strategy.

The survey was structured in terms of seven questions. Three concerned issues that, in DASL's experience, were often raised by disabled people, namely:

- Transport/Access
- Housing
- Community Safety

Two were issues that DASL knew were of particular interest to service providers in Lambeth:

- Employment
- Keeping healthy

Question 6 was an open question that gave contributors the opportunity to raise other issues that were not already covered, and the final question asked them to prioritise the issues of most importance to themselves.

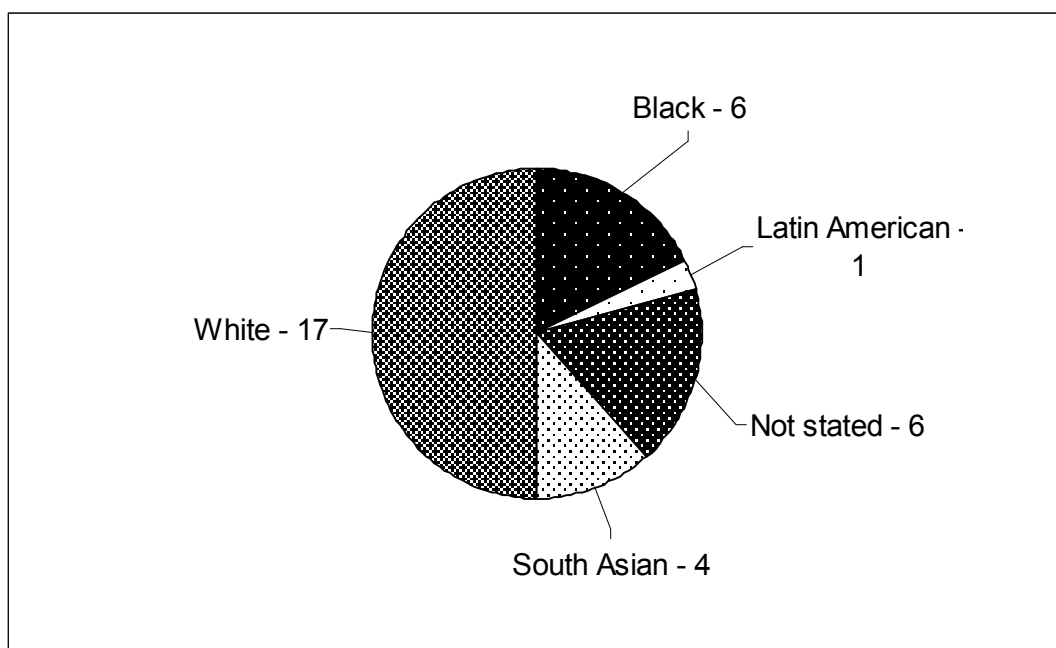


## Monitoring

In total DASL receive 32 replies. In a limited sample size of this sort, no statistical significance can be drawn from the number of contributors, the monitoring will be shown in whole numbers rather than percentages.

### Ethnicity

Contributors defined their ethnicity as follows:



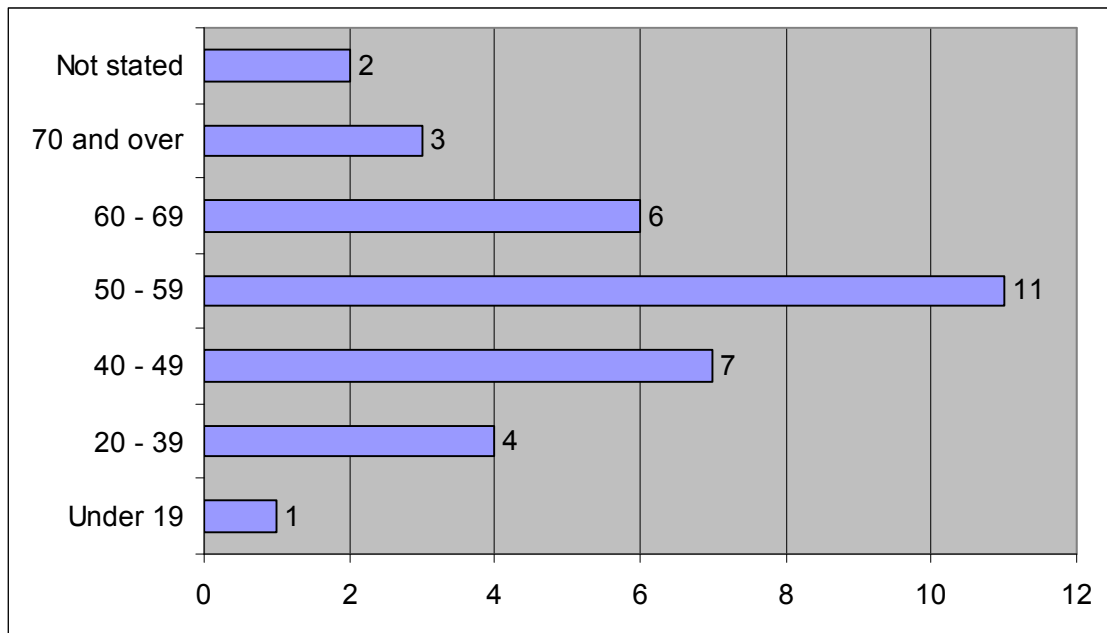
This would suggest a fair representation of South Asian and Latin American Communities, an under-representation of Black communities and an over-representation of white communities.

### Gender

17 of the contributors were female and 15 were male, a fair balance of representation.

## Age

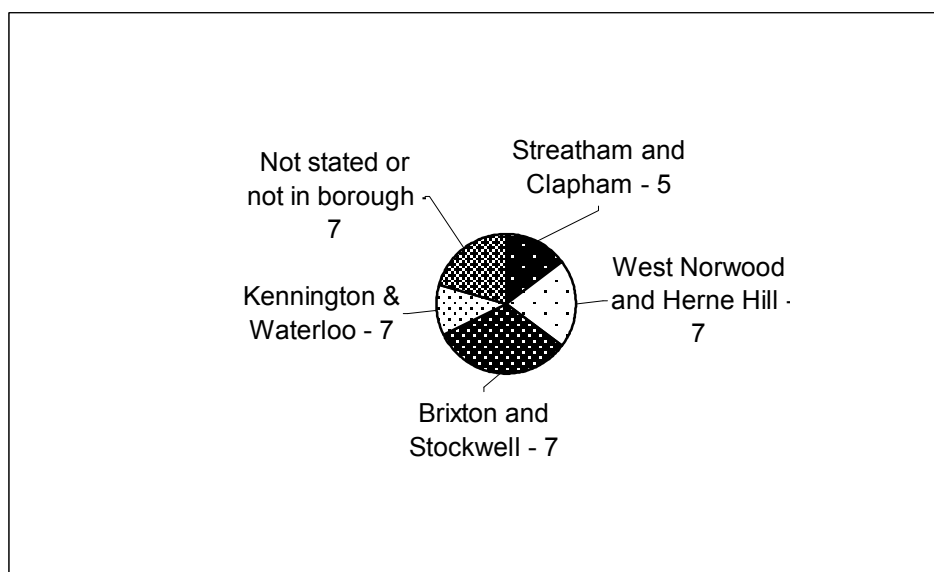
The contributors fell into the following age groups



This may indicate an underrepresentation of younger disabled people – particularly in their '20s and '30s. However it should be taken into account that a significant number of people do not become disabled until middle age or older.

## Location

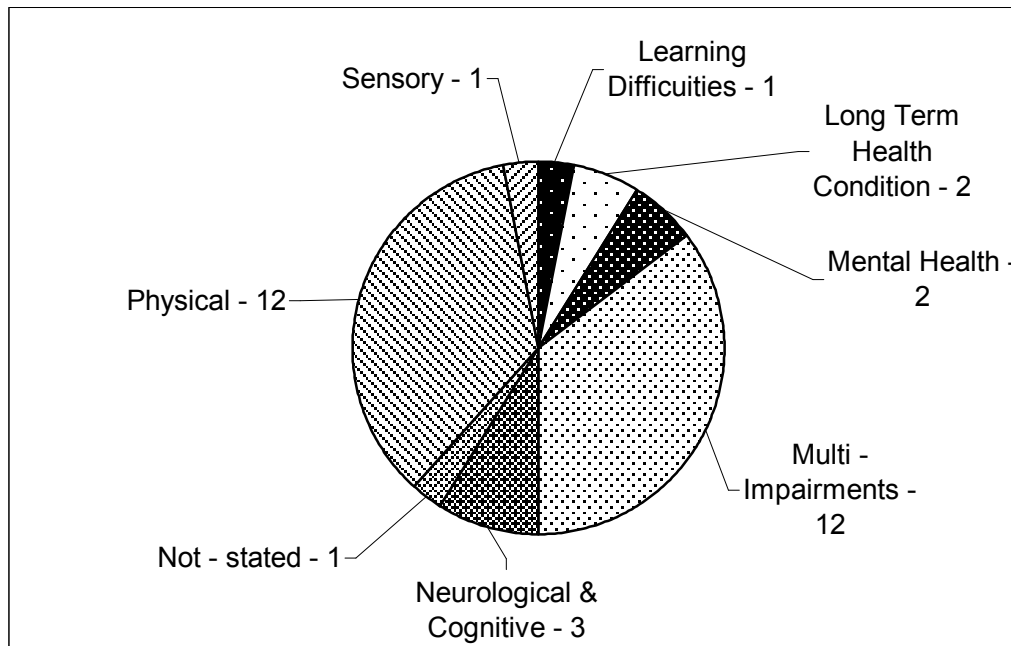
The contributors lived in the following areas:



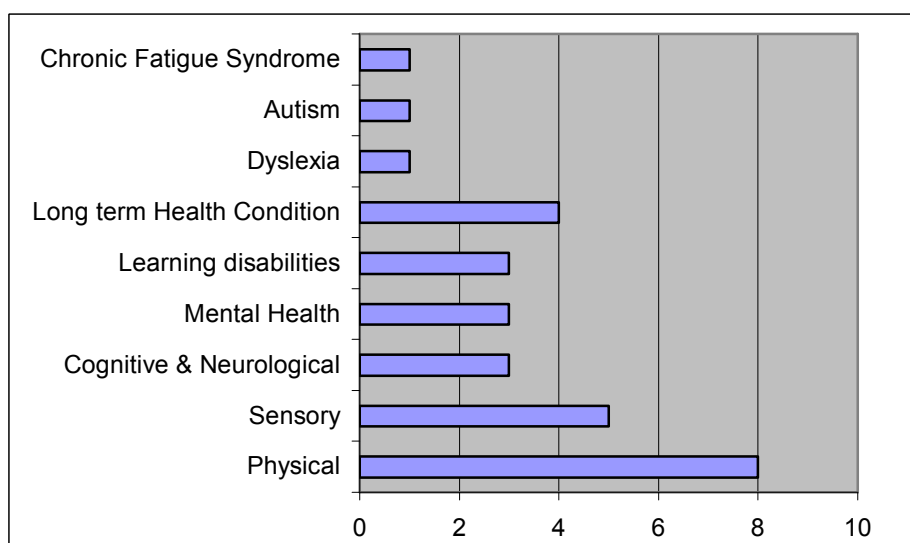
This tends to suggest an under representation of residents from Streatham and Clapham areas. To an extent, although DASL is a Lambeth-wide organisation, this reflects the high proportion of our service users who live in the postcodes closest to our office.

## Disability

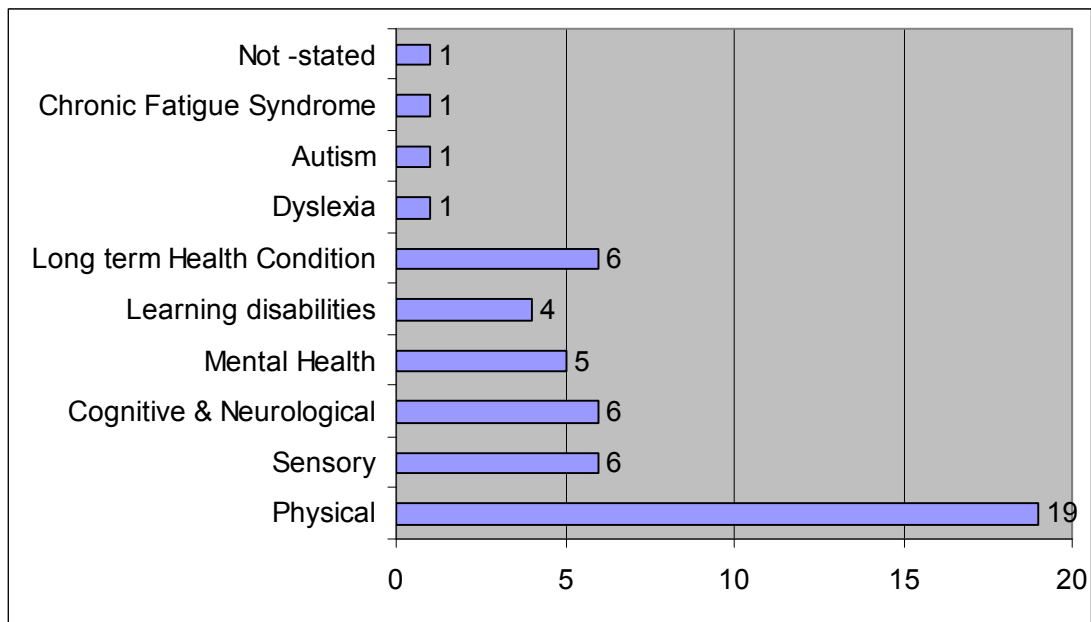
Of the 32 contributors, 29 defined themselves as disabled, and three did not state. Contributors were asked about their impairments, which we grouped into the following categories:



Of the 11 who had more than one impairment, 6 had two impairments or conditions and 5 had three or more. The type of impairments they had broke down as follows:



In total the number of contributors who had following types of impairments were:



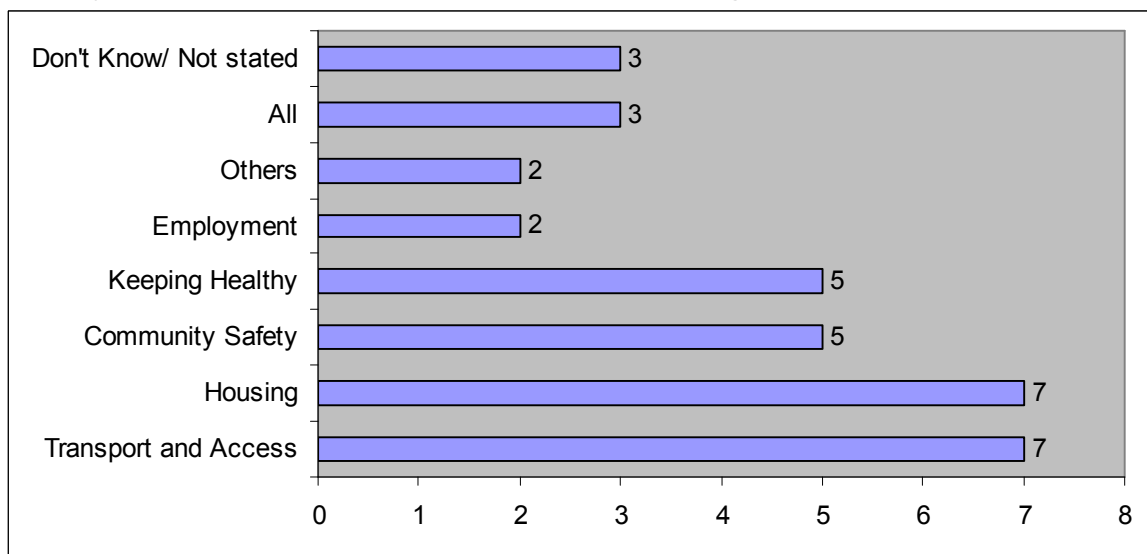
(Note: some people declare more than one type of impairment so the total is greater than 32.)

This is a fairly widespread although perhaps not comprehensive representation of disabled people.



## Priorities

At the end the questionnaire contributors were asked, “From the answers you have given, which do you think should be the top priority?” Contributors prioritised the following issues:





## Transport and Access

Contributors were asked ***“What could be done in Lambeth to help disabled people get around the borough?”***

### **General Public Transport**

The desire for access to the general public transport system was the most widely mentioned. *“The problem is the lack of inclusion”* said one contributor who went on to suggest that if the general public appreciated the difficulties disabled face *“We wouldn’t be regarded as a nuisance when we try to get on a bus; on the contrary everyone would help.”*

Others were less optimistic *“I feel the London transport system isn’t that accessible for disabled people to obtain. Neither through the DDA and Equality legislation, I don’t feel anything has improved regarding transport services for the disabled people generally.”*

Improving bus services was the main focus of people’s concerns. One contributor neatly summarised the list of issues:

- 1) *Not all bus drivers will lower the door to enable semi-ambulant people to get on.*
- 2) *Not all buses drivers will stop to enable wheelchairs onto the bus.*
- 3) *The wheelchair space on the bus on the bus is frequently taken up by pushchairs owners who will not move and drivers obviously are not allowed to leave their cabs.*
- 4) *Two friends in wheelchairs cannot go out together as there is only one space on the bus and the other has to wait alone hoping that they can get on the next bus.*

One contributor went further in suggesting that not only did bus services need improving but also that *“the present generation of buses are dangerous.”* However one contributor, contrary to the majority view, suggested *“The roads [are] now congested with too many buses.”*

## **Taxicard**

Door-to-door services were almost as equally often mentioned as general public transport. The Taxc-card scheme in particular was popular: *“This is an excellent scheme. Lambeth are one of the best boroughs as one can swipe the card twice on each trip. They also belong to Capital Call.”*

There was however some concerns about the reliability of the service: *“I tried using Taxi-card and computer cabs, but they did not seem to like coming south of the river or to Brixton”* wrote one contributor, and another wrote: *“At present it is a nightmare to book any of these cabs and people get fed-up waiting.”*

One solution that was suggested was to allow Taxicard users to pre-book regular trip in advance. This would form a list of regular trips, which could be made available to the cab drivers. If the drivers lived near the beginning or end of any of the trips *“they could then decide if they wanted to do the job making it their first or last call of the day.”*

There were a number of calls to increase the number of trips available under the Taxicard system.

One older woman felt *“it would be nice to see more female taxi drivers for the vulnerable young and elderly women of Lambeth borough.”*

## **Freedom Passes**

Like the Taxicard the Freedom Pass was well regarded. The only desire expressed was for *“Freedom Pass for those on DLA lower rate mobility ... also... for those with mental health needs.”*

It was also felt there should be more information about how to apply for a Freedom Pass: *“I heard that disabled people get a free travel bus and tube pass (a Freedom Pass) nobody told me how to get it or where from. Thanks to DASL, I found help to complete my DLA form.”*

## **Parking**

The need for more parking spaces for disabled drivers was a widespread demand: *“More disabled parking places, especially by Doctors, clinics and places of entertainment.”* There was also some concern about the possible ignorance of Civil Enforcement Officers of the rules concerning Blue Badges: *“Disabled people*

*are being victimised by councils and Blue Badge holders are paying the price!*

### **Integrated Transport Unit**

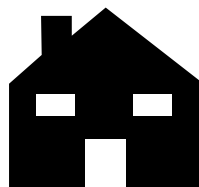
One constructive suggestion was for the establishment of an Integrated Transport Unit “that would bring together transport functions and services of the Health Trusts, PCT, and Council.”

### **Building Access and Streets**

A few people raised the question of access to buildings, particularly local shops: *“restaurants, pubs, chemists, Doctors, health clinics doorways.”*

Likewise improving the quality of pavements was widely raised: *“Pavements are always in need of repair. On more occasions than I can remember when pushing the manual chair we have tripped over broken pavements”*. It was suggested to *“put double yellow lines around corners of roads with dropped kerbs to prevent cars from parking over the drop kerb.”* And to prevent the problem of illegal parking on pavements: *“perhaps it would be more sensible and cost effective to have bollards along all kerbs.”*

However there was one suggestion from a person with a physical impairment that called for “clear pavement of all obstacles... [such as] shop wares and advertising boards.”



## Housing

Contributors were asked, ***“What could be done in Lambeth to improve the housing situation for disabled people?”***

### **More Social Housing**

The need for more accessible and adapted social housing for disabled people was by far the most common suggestion. There was a range of suggestions of how numbers of accessible properties could be maximised including: “build new properties;” “ring fence accessible property;” and “installing lifts in blocks of flats.”

## **Adaptations**

The second most common matter raised was the problem in getting adaptations in the home: “occupational therapists have a six month waiting list and then don’t give you what you actually need as they want to maintain a budget.”

## **Awareness**

There was also considerable concern about the awareness of social housing providers and the Homeless Person Unit of the needs of disabled people and their rights: “I’ve been homeless for a period and refused by Lambeth housing. Only after I went to a lawyer and help from others, like the Gaia Centre, the housing reviewed my case and I was found in priority need!” Another contributor wrote: “Housing Associations should have a greater understanding of the diverse needs of their disabled tenants, especially concerning health and safety issues in the home.”

## **Transfers**

The length of time to get a transfer and the problems with Choice Based Letting were raised: “cut the waiting list; priority for the disabled.”

## **Sheltered/Residential Accommodation**

Only three people raised Sheltered and residential care, all were supportive: “sheltered accommodation – I live in one under Lambeth. Extremely beneficial.”

## **Service In the Home**

One person raised the need for support services in the home: “more free services, like decorating, gardening, alarm systems, smoke alarms, lines to the police.”

## **Advocacy**

One person suggested that there should be “*more advocates to help people with housing issues. In particular foreign people.*” Another suggested that there should be a “*Disabled Tenants Union*”



## **Community Safety**

Contributors were asked “***What could be done in Lambeth to improve the housing situation for disabled people?***”

## **Home Security**

The largest number of suggestions was to give assistance to disabled people to secure their homes: "Once a disabled person is assessed [their] property should be inspected and made secure by alarms, adequate fencing, external lighting, etc." Indeed this level of concern could suggest that many disabled people feel insecure in their homes. One contributor suggested moving to sheltered accommodation was the solution.

## **More Police**

The desire for more police "on the beat" was a close second: "More police on the streets as you never see one unless somebody important comes to a neighbourhood. When you can see 20 CCTV cameras does not give anyone confidence as it does not prevent the crime."

## **The Physical Environment**

There were many suggestions that improving the physical environment would help make disabled people more secure: "improve pavement, many are in very poor repair. Give people more time to cross at lights;" "Good lighting, better pavements;" "Every kerb should have wheelchair slopes."

## **Personal Alarms**

A number of people suggested that disabled people should be issued with personal alarms: "so they can carry them with them at all times and have instant response from police, ambulance and fire in cases of emergency."

## **Other Police Service issues**

On the whole there seemed to be a great trust in the Police and desire to expand their services. One person suggested that "confidential phone number link with the police for disabled people." However a couple of people suggested that the "Police should be more aware of disabled people's needs and try to enforce their rights". Another wrote, "more people should be employed by the police."

## **Adult Protection**

One client raised very serious concerns about adult protection in a residential home setting: "My daughter feels unsafe in her residential home." Indeed the contributor and her daughter had been assaulted by another service user who came from a different borough: "after the adult protection meeting Lambeth are

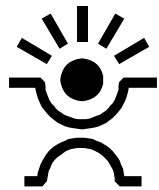
powerless until the other Borough informs Lambeth of their intentions.” She also felt that there was not enough monitoring of residents: “other clients roam around and frequently go into my daughter’s bedroom.” She felt that the providers had “an attitude of ‘we will take anybody and bring in outside professional help as long as we get paid!’” In her view “it should be that only people with similar conditions are placed together.”

### **Key Holding Service**

One person suggested that there needs to be a key holding service, where the keys to people property were held in a secure environment and could be retrieved by the householder: “in case of theft or lost keys.”

### **Media**

In order to prevent hate crime, one person suggested that there needs to be more about disabled people in the media: “so everyone can know more about disabled people.”



## **Keeping Healthy**

Contributors were asked “***What could be done in Lambeth to help disabled people remain healthy?***”

### **Community Health**

Ready access to good quality community health services and advice narrowly pipped sport and social activities as the most commonly mentioned requirement: “Easier access to GPs”; “District nurse to make home visit regularly, also the chiropodist and dieticians to be involved;” “Better information on health matters;” and “set up a health promotion unit, drop in facilities;” we all typical comments. Access to physiotherapy was a particular concern with a number of contributors with one pointing out that “there is always a dispute between social care and the NHS as to who pays for physiotherapy.” This has led to problems in getting it: “If my daughter does not receive regular physio she will regress and lose her ability to walk... it would be costs effective for Lambeth to buy in physio.” There was some concern with the turnover of staff: “the constant changing of staff make disabled people feel more vulnerable.”

## **Sport & Social activities**

Sport and social activities were the second most commonly mentioned. Most wanted “more inclusive activities;” with recreational facilities made more friendly and accessible: “Make the buildings physically accessible and train staff in sports centres so that they can understand the access issues which effect a wide range of disabled people and not just those disabled people who use wheelchairs.” Some felt that that this included financial assistance: “Access to discounted Gym members in the Borough. The [Brixton] Rec Centre does offer “Off Peak” discounts, but this doesn’t allow for disabled people in work or who study full time, or do voluntary work.”

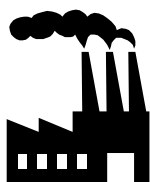
Others felt that there was a need for groups or sessions specifically for disabled people : “have disabled only days in leisure centres or provide a hall for daily exercise for disabled people;” Wheels for Wellbeing was singled out for praise: “My daughter enjoys her weekly sessions at Wheels for Wellbeing at Brockwell Park each Friday. This also builds up her thigh muscles to enable her to stand.” The same contributor also suggested that a hydrotherapy pool should be “incorporated in the new Streatham leisure centre.”

## **Fruit and Vegetables**

“These days we are always advised by the health organisation to eat healthily,” wrote one contributor, “but regrettably the health foods are very expensive...” Others suggested, “discount vouchers for fresh vegetables, fruit and water.” Or “a delivery service, to deliver good quality fruit and vegetables at a reasonable price.”

## **Air Quality**

One contributor suggested that Lambeth should “monitor and improve air quality” to improve disabled people’s health.



## **Employment**

Contributors were asked “***What do you think are the main barriers preventing disabled people finding work? What could be done in Lambeth to help to overcome these barriers?***”

## **Attitude of Employers**

The greatest number of comments suggested that the “main barrier preventing disabled people finding work is the employer’s attitudes.” Some thought this was due to “prejudice” while others felt that “Employers are wary because of any possible accidents.” For some the media also had a role “it’s the way the media and others see us and they look at our disability and not our ability.” In all cases people felt the “only way forward I think to overcome these barriers is by agencies such as DASL, RNIB, Action for Blind People to give presentations / talks on Disability awareness training.

## **Inaccessible workplaces**

The second most common barrier was the feeling that “most work places are not accessible.” One person pointed out that Access to Work money was not available for “voluntary work or short courses.”

## **Training**

A number of contributors felt there was a need for training to help disabled people gain or up date their skills: *“it’s the lack of training with people of any disability. They need lots of rehabilitation, support and no discrimination.”*

## **Disabled Workplaces**

Three contributors felt that there should be special workplaces for disabled people: *“Have our own disabled factory and shops where only disabled people work and run by disabled people.”*

## **Disabled Employment Agency**

A couple of people suggested that there was a need to *“provide [an] employment agent specially for disabled people... The Department of Work and Pension’s Disabled Employment Advisors are a complete waste of Government money as they cannot provide you with employment searches or understand disabled persons needs.”*



## Other Suggestions

Contributors were asked *What else could be done in Lambeth to improve disabled people's lives?*

### **Social Clubs**

A significant amount of contributors felt there was a need for "more daily social clubs for example 'Just Like Us' is available on a Tuesday only." These clubs should be "more social based activities to support people who live alone or in isolation. They should be age and interest appropriate and be accessible to a wide range of disabled and non-disabled people."

### **Advocacy**

A number of people felt there was a need for more advocacy and information and advice services in Lambeth: "Better information on all the questions in this questionnaire... More door to door leaflets, to be open about subjects as the DLA, and where to get advice when you are looking for help with housing, health matters etc."

### **Disability Awareness/ Equality Training**

"All managers should spend a week in a wheelchair or on a mobility scooter and see what problems one faces."

### **Festival**

"Hold a festival to celebrate the things which disabled people can do. This could include art exhibitions, musical concerts, and film festival could help to explain disability to people by showing films which include issues about disability e.g. "It's all gone Pete Tong."

### **Financial Support**

"Be more generous with rent and council tax rebates on all social housing. Endless financial worries can be life threatening."

### **User Involvement**

"Get them involved in the borough programmes."

### **Respite Care**

"People are ending up in residential care due to the fact that respite care has to be booked in advance – sometimes 6 months in advance. What is needed is a system by which the carer could ring up to have a placement with a few days of the call. They wouldn't ring if they weren't at breaking point."