



St. Oswald's Parish Hall
St. Oswald's Road
Norbury SW16 3SB Tel: 020
8764/8822/Fax: 020 8764 2002
E-mail: info@disabilitycroydon.org.uk

Have Your Say Survey Report

Independent Living January 2008

Available in alternative formats on request

DisabilityCroydon/HYS Report: Independent Living/01.08/MV.1

Table of Contents

	<i>Page Number</i>
<i>1. Executive Summary</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>2. Background to Research</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>3. Method</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>4. The Panel</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>5. The Findings</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>6. Summary and Conclusions</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>7. Recommendations</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>8. Acknowledgements</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>9. Appendix</i>	<i>19</i>

1. Executive Summary

The November Have Your Say Project survey asked questions about Independent Living. 73 surveys were sent out in preferred formats and 42 people completed the survey, 33 in writing (including e-mail) and 9 on the telephone (58%).

Question 1 asked what the term ‘independent living’ means to respondents.

51% said it was living, doing things and making decisions **without the need for support**. 49% said it was having control and management of their own life and affairs **with support**, and with the right to decide when and from whom to receive help. 15% of respondents mentioned living in their own home or financial independence.

Question 2 asked if respondents felt they were living independently according to their own definition and, if not, why not.

36% answered ‘yes’, 31% answered ‘no’ and 33% answered ‘partly’. 10% of respondents indicated they need substantial day-to-day help and 45% said they need occasional help. 14% indicated lack of money reduces their independence

Question 3 asked about barriers to independence at home and outside.

Home barriers mentioned were personal ones, like fatigue (24%); lack of adaptations, like space for wheelchair access (33%); lack of money for adaptations (12%); insufficient support (36%); and limited choice (9%).

Community and outside barriers mentioned were poor environmental design, such as blocked supermarket aisles (33%); problems with transport design, such as the need to cross tram lines to access trams (58%); inadequate support, including personal assistants to facilitate travel (30%); attitudes of others, such as reactions to disability (21%); and personal factors, including fatigue (36%).

Question 4 asked what would make it easier for respondents to live independently and how the barriers identified could be removed.

19% mentioned transport improvements, 21% asked for more support, 59% spoke about access and environmental design improvements, 41% mentioned education and public attitude change, while 6% spoke of information and 16% of finances.

Questions 5 (a, b and c) asked about the Aztec Centre, the Independent Living Bill and SARA

43% of respondents had heard of the Aztec Centre, 13% of the Bill and 19% of SARA. 64%, 74% and 57% of respondents requested information.

Questions 6 (a and b) asked about the proposed independent living centre in Croydon

58% felt the centre should provide information and 29% education and training. While 38% of respondents felt the centre should be integrated with the community, 21% felt it should be solely for people with disabilities and 41% had no preference.

Question 7 asked about the comments of Stephen Ladyman MP

51% strongly agreed with the comments and 38% mostly agreed

Question 8 concerned the proposed DisabilityCroydon seminar on independent living

57% indicated they would like to attend the seminar, with a further 24% requesting the post-seminar report.

Overwhelmingly, the responses to the survey pointed to the importance of freedom and choice to facilitate independent living, though a little over one third of respondents only felt they have these and the attitudes of professionals and the public alike.

Significantly, too, the biggest barriers to independence noted were concerned with transport, which was seen as often inaccessible and inadequate, not suited to the needs of those with disabilities and inappropriate attitudes of professionals and the public alike.

Respondents suggested ways to reduce or remove barriers, including improved access and more appropriate design at home and in the environment as well as sensitivity training and raised awareness of the needs of those with disabilities.

Recommendations were made regarding

- *survey results*
- *further investigation*
- *advice line*
- *attitudes*
- *the panel*
- *survey design*

2. Background to Research

Independent Living is a topical issue for central Government.

Research carried out by SQW on behalf of The Office for Disability Issues, Department of Work and Pensions was published in 2007 as *The Cost and Benefits of Independent Living*, Jennifer Hurstfield et al. This included

a policy concept about supporting disabled people to live their lives as full citizens, to have choice and control over the way in which their care is delivered

The report used definitions of independent living given by Jane Campbell in 2004, chair of the Independent Living Expert Panel as meaning

that disabled people have access to the same life opportunities and the same choices in every day life that their non-disabled brothers and sisters, neighbours and friends take for granted

This concept of Independent Living is based upon a social, rather than medical, model of disability.

Independent Living is defined in the report (by the Disability Rights Commission) as

all disabled people having the same choice, control and freedom as any other citizen – at home, at work and as members of the community. This does not necessarily mean people doing ‘everything for themselves’ but it does mean that any practical assistance people need should be based on their own choices and aspirations

Priorities for improvement agreed between Local Authorities and Government include measures to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities. This includes independent living, with support where appropriate.

3. Method

In November 2007, the DisabilityCroydon Have Your Say Project designed and distributed a survey on Independent Living to voluntary members of the Have Your Say Panel.

The survey consisted of four sections and questions concerning independent living, with supplementary sections about

- The Aztec Centre, a proposed independent living centre
- The Independent Living Bill
- SARA
- Independent living centre, Croydon
- Stephen Ladyman's comments in November 2004 prior to the launch of the Green Paper *Independence, Well-being and Choice*
- the DisabilityCroydon 2008 seminar on self-assessment and independence.

In addition, the survey contained information in sections 5, 6 and 7.

Questions were as follows:

Question 1: What does the term 'independent living' mean to you?

Question 2: Taking into account your definition of 'independent living', do you feel you are currently able to live independently with your disability? If not, please could you explain why not?

Question 3: Taking into account your personal lifestyle, what do you think are the main barriers which restrict your independence

a. inside the home?

b. outside the home, in the community?

Question 4: What would make it easier for you to live independently? If you have mentioned one or more barriers above, how could these be reduced or removed?

Question 5:

a. Have you heard about the Aztec Centre? If not, would you like us to send you some information about it?

b. Have you heard of or do you know anything about the Independent Living Bill currently going through Parliament? If not, would you like us to send you some information about it?

c. Have you heard of or used SARA, the on-line self-assessment questionnaire? If not, would you like us to send you some information about it?

Question 6:

- a. What you think an independent living centre in Croydon should aim to provide?*
- b. Do you think it should be part of an integrated community centre, or a separate centre solely for people with disabilities?*

Question 7: Do you agree with the comments made by Stephen Ladyman MP in November 2004 prior to the launch of the Green Paper 'Independence, Well-being and Choice'?

Question 8: Would you be interested in attending a seminar early in 2008 on self-assessment and independence organised by DisabilityCroydon?

The full survey is shown in Appendix 1.

73 surveys in appropriate, preferred formats were distributed to the 73 members of the DisabilityCroydon Have Your Say project panel.

Panel members were reminded by telephone to return their surveys and, in some instances, offered the opportunity to complete the survey on the telephone. 42 completed surveys were received by the cut-off date of 17th December 2007. Of these, 33 were received in writing or via e-mail and 9 were conducted by the researcher by telephone.

4. The Panel

While all surveys are anonymous, where disclosed or known, details of respondents are as follows*:

- *Gender:* 19 (51%) of respondents are male, 18 (49%) are female
- *Ethnicity:* 29 (85%) of respondents are White, 3 (9%) are Black, 2 (6%) are Asian
- *Age:* 16 (53%) respondents are aged 50/64, 6 (20%) are 35/49, 5 (17%) are 65⁺, 2 (7%) are up to and including 25, 1 (3%) is 26/34 (i.e. 90% of respondents are aged 50⁺, 10% respondents are aged under 50)
- *Disability**:* 21 (62%) of respondents use a wheelchair or have mobility difficulties, 6 (18%) are blind or visually impaired, 4 (12%) are hearing impaired and 9 (26%) have other disabilities

* Percentages are based on the number of respondent details known

** Nature of disability is unknown for some respondents. Some respondents disclosed more than one disability

5. *The Findings*

In some instances, percentages may total more than 100% as some respondents ticked more than one box in a category or made more than one point in reply to a question. Some respondents did not reply to all questions. All percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number. All percentages are based on the number of respondents who actually replied to the question.

Question 1: What does the term ‘independent living’ mean to you?

41 (98%) of respondents replied to *question 1* and several made more than one comment. In summary, 21 (51%) regarded independent living as living and doing things **on their own**, having a full and meaningful life, having freedom and choice **without the need for support**. Respondent 49 defined this as ‘Living a full and meaningful life, without the need for others to “look after you”. To be able to shop, cook, travel, work, etc. on one’s own ability.’

By contrast, 20 (49%) of respondents defined independent living as having control and management of their life and affairs, making their own decisions, having freedom and choice **with support**, and with the right to decide when and from whom to receive that help and support. Respondent 37 wrote of the importance of ‘Having choice and control over the way I live my life. Choosing how, when and from whom I receive help and/or support. Where I go and with whom I go there.’

A further four respondents (10%) defined independent living as being in their **own** home, whether with or without support.

Two (5%) respondents defined independence as being financially self-sufficient and one (2%) respondent felt the absence of Government department interference led to independence.

The meaning of independent living was summed up by Respondent 29 who wrote ‘I’ll fight till I die. I love to be independent. It’s all I have left’, and by Respondent 27 who simply replied ‘Everything.’ Respondent 9 spoke for many, saying ‘Independent living means being able to do all the things that able bodied people do normally with or without help’ and Respondent 18 added ‘Living in the same environment as everyone else.’

Question 2: Taking into account your definition of ‘independent living’, do you feel you are currently able to live independently with your disability? If not, please could you explain why not?

41 (98%) respondents replied to *question 2*. 15 (37%) respondents indicated ‘Yes’, 13 (32%) indicated ‘No’ and 14 (34%) indicated ‘Partly’. One respondent replied in two categories and 22 (52%) added a comment.

10 (45%) of those who commented indicated they need substantial help with day-to-day living, including personal care, which many felt reduced independent living. Respondent 11 told how environment factors reduced independence as ‘In my present accommodation I have difficulty accessing washing facilities in my bathroom. I cannot use my mobility scooter and am unable to get in or out of the building in a manual wheelchair unaided. These things are severely affecting my quality of life.’

A further 10 (45%) of respondents indicated they need occasional help with day-to-day living, including cooking, shopping, housework, correspondence and travel. Respondent 37 indicated ‘I could be a lot more independent (with) an escort to go to places.’

Two (9%) respondents indicated their disability is the barrier which restricts their independence. ‘My main problem is very poor hearing. When I remove my hearing aid, before going to sleep, I am almost ‘stone-deaf’, so would not hear the phone, or smoke alarm, etc.’ (Respondent 26)

Three (14%) cited lack of money as a factor in reducing their independence, including the lack of funds to make home adaptations.

Question 3: Taking into account your personal lifestyle, what do you think are the main barriers which restrict your independence

a. inside the home?

37 (88%) respondents replied to *question 3*. 33 (79%) respondents identified barriers in the home which restrict their independence.

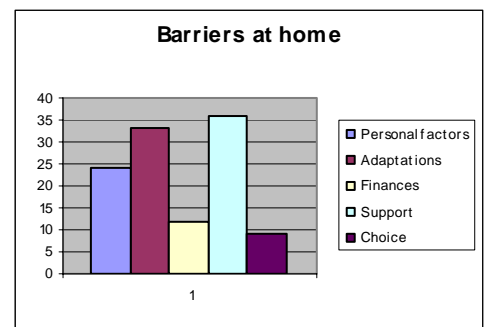
The most often cited barrier mentioned by 12 respondents (36%) was insufficient support, which ranged from ‘I need more help ...’ (Respondent 10), to ‘If anything happens and you need to get advice, you don’t know who to turn to’ (Respondent 1), and ‘Unwillingness on the part of authorities concerned ...(to make adaptations)’ (Respondent 11).

The second most often cited barrier was lack of adaptations to suit personal needs by 11 (33%) respondents. Respondent 6 cited ‘Not being able to ... too high up for me in my wheelchair’, Respondent 13 ‘Not being able to set ... devices inside the home (as dials not in Braille)’ and Respondent 18 mentioned ‘Width of doors for wheelchairs (and) access to appliances.’ Four (12%) respondents indicated lack of finances prevent them from making adaptations to their home and several more implied lack of adaptations in personal factors, as below.

Eight (24%) respondents mentioned personal factors, such as fatigue and their disability as barriers to independent living at home, many of which could have been overcome with adaptations. For instance, Respondent 26 identified a hearing impairment as a barrier with ‘Just not hearing the phone’, Respondent 16 with ‘can’t do ‘small jobs which may require climbing ladders’ and Respondent 28 feels restricted because ‘I can’t see ...’

A further four (12%) cited lack of finances, personal or through benefits, with which to purchase or make appropriate adaptations, such as a stair lift.

Three (9%) respondents mentioned limited choice as a barrier to independent living at home, which for some was linked to lack of finances.



b. outside the home, in the community?

37 (88%) respondents identified barriers outside the home, in the community. Many cited more than one barrier outside the home and many were particularly fluent with describing these.

The most frequently cited barrier was transport and poor transport design, including access for mobility scooters and wheelchairs and those with mobility difficulties, 22 (58%) respondents; restricted times; infrequency; and lack of security. 8 (22%) respondents mentioned lack of independent transport as a barrier outside the home. Respondent 15 noted ‘Transport is my biggest barrier to independence.’

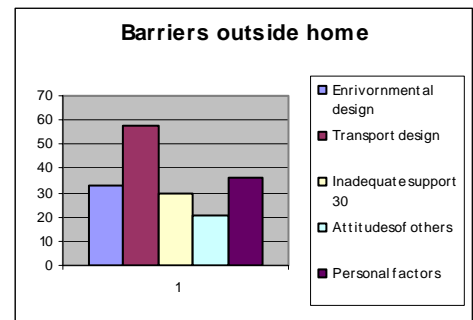
Poor environmental design was cited by 12 (33%) respondents. Blocked pavements and supermarket aisles were a particular obstacle to independence, and poor wheelchair access generally was often cited, along with abuse of supermarket disabled parking bays, lack of wheelchairs for use in shops, shopping malls which prevent shoppers from parking close to the shops and car parks with humps which caused pain to those with arthritis and other severe joint conditions. Respondent 6

wrote ‘Where does one start! Steps, footways blocked ... “A” boards and displays across the pavement. Shops and supermarkets who block their aisles ...’

11 (30%) respondents identified inadequate support as a barrier in the community, including no assistant to push the wheelchair, assist with crossing roads and shopping or escort to leisure activities. Respondents 22 and 37 summed up the barrier for many by writing ‘I do not go out much unless I have company’ and ‘(I) always have to wait for help in anything! I could get a degree in waiting!!!’

Eight (21%) respondents identified attitudes of others as a barrier which reduced their independence and restricted them outside the home. Respondent 8 found ‘attitudes of others, including specialists, is a barrier.’ Respondents cited ignorance and resentment of others and lack of awareness of needs, especially when disabilities are hidden or vary in effect on abilities from day to day.

A further 13 (36%) respondents identified their own health or disability as a barrier outside the home. For many of these, the removal of community barriers mentioned above would have helped overcome the personal barrier. Respondent 8 said ‘Mayday! (You) have to be fit to be ill. There are so many corridors I can’t manage alone. I can only walk a little.’ Respondent 8 went on to explain how the spouse uses all annual leave to facilitate regular hospital appointments, jeopardising family holidays and personal health.



Question 4: What would make it easier for you to live independently? If you have mentioned one or more barriers above, how could these be reduced or removed?

32 (76%) respondents replied to question 4. Of these, 19 (59%) mentioned improved access and better design of the environment as a way to reduce or remove barriers to independent living. Particularly important was improved access to and in shops, to public transport, on pavements and roads, as well as adaptations in people’s homes. Respondent 3 asked for ‘More level streets, bus ramps, level access, pot holes filled in (and) ramps’, while Respondent 13 asked for more Braille ‘in information, notices and signs.’

13 (41%) cited education and the changing of attitudes of others, including carers and care managers, as a way to reduce or remove barriers, with more awareness of the needs of those with disabilities – ‘Public education would help – some form of sensitivity training ... (and) flexibility to enable adjustments for individual needs to

be met' (Respondent 38). Respondent 11 asked that 'Disabled people should be much more visible in the media ... this would help to educate people.'

Six (19%) respondents mentioned improvements in transport, with many comments on the deterioration in the Dial-a-Ride service since computerisation that it has become infrequent, inefficient and ineffective (Also see final Supplementary Question). Respondent 28 said 'Dial-a-Ride has got worse since they have started using the new computer programme.' Respondent 18 said 'It is not available often enough.' Respondent 15 asked for 'proper training in how to use their access ramps ... (for) bus drivers.'

Seven (21%) respondents mentioned the need for more support, with cooking, hospital visits, and travel in particular.

Five (16%) respondents indicated an increase in disability allowances to pay for services, equipment and adaptations would improve their ability to live independently. Respondent 35 simply needed a 'stair lift or downstairs toilet' to make a difference and Respondent 10 asked for 'a fair allocation of care hours each week.'

Respondent 24 summed up the attitude of many respondents by requesting 'Make me equal with my disability'.

Supplementary Question: If you have any other comments, either positive or negative about independent living – please say

23 (55%) respondents responded to this invitation. Many of the comments were a repetition of points covered above, but there were some additional comments.

Four (17%) respondents indicated they feel there should be respect for people's choices if they wish to live independently and Respondents 40 and 24 reminded us that 'There are levels of independent living' and asked 'Why we are discriminated against, when we are residents in the community and taxes, rates, rent are paid?' Respondents 9 and 25 both raised the topic of needing adequate finances to facilitate independent living.

Four (17%) respondents wrote of the need for guidance and advice for independent living. All mentioned the need for someone to turn to for advice and support, such as 'a service available to phone ... guidance and direction' (Respondent 19), and 'a public office to communicate with – just in case' (Respondent 39).

Three (13%) respondents felt their barriers to independent living cannot be removed as they are caused by their disability.

Respondent 16 reminded us that ‘Everyone should have the opportunity to live independent lives – if that is their choice – however, it should be remembered that many non-disabled people do not choose the option’, while Respondent 2 summed up the mood of many by stating ‘Independent living gives you power over your own life.’

Question 5:

a. Have you heard about the Aztec Centre? If not, would you like us to send you some information about it?

18 (43%) members indicated they have heard of the Aztec Centre and 27 (64%) requested information

b. Have you heard of or do you know anything about the Independent Living Bill currently going through Parliament? If not, would you like us to send you some information about it?

13(31%) members indicated they have heard of the Independent Living Bill and 31 (74%) requested information

c. Have you heard of or used SARA, the on-line self-assessment questionnaire? If not, would you like us to send you some information about it?

Eight (19%) members indicated they have heard of SARA (most through DisabilityCroydon) and 24 (57%) requested information. Two respondents mentioned they would be unable to use SARA as they have no access to a computer.

Question 6:

a. What you think an independent living centre in Croydon should aim to provide?

31 (74%) respondents replied to *question 6a*. Respondents thought an independent living centre in Croydon should serve a variety of functions.

18 (58%) respondents felt the centre should provide information and advice. This included services and access to them, particularly transport and benefits; equipment, including demonstrations; information on accessible venues for leisure and education; and advice on health and finances.

Nine (29%) respondents felt the centre should offer education and training, including help with employment and work experience; training in managing lifestyle, particularly from others with disabilities; education and leisure classes.

Two (6%) respondents would welcome the centre as a place for those with disabilities to discuss disability issues together.

In addition, respondents felt people with disabilities should help run the centre and that it should cover the entire range of disabilities, not just give information on mobility issues. They felt staff should be competent to give advice and understand issues.

Respondent 38 asked that the centre 'should actively ensure that individual's needs can be met by being able to lobby service providers, ... (rather than being) a day centre' and respondent 16 summed up the general welcome for such a centre with 'This can only be a good thing and something the borough urgently needs.'

b. Do you think it should be part of an integrated community centre, or a separate centre solely for people with disabilities?

39 (93%) respondents replied to *question 6b*. 15 (38%) respondents felt the centre should be integrated with the community, eight (21%) felt it should be solely for people with disabilities, and 16 (41%) expressed they had no preference. Some respondents who expressed no preference would prefer some special times or activities reserved at the centre for disabled people only, such as 'courses in independent living skills' (Respondent 12).

Question 7: Do you agree with the comments made by Stephen Ladyman MP in November 2004 prior to the launch of the Green Paper 'Independence, Well-being and Choice'?

37 respondents replied to *question 7*. 19 (51%) strongly agreed with Stephen Ladyman's comments, 14 (38%) mostly agreed and four (11%) did not agree.

a. Further Comments

20 further comments were added, many of which agreed with the presented information. The general agreement seemed to be that 'those who are capable of making their own decisions should be given the choice to do so' (Respondent 28) as 'only the person themselves can understand their needs.' (Respondent 8). However, Respondent 24 did warn that 'The pressures of continual assessments does put undue pressure on oneself.'

The general mood of the comments was summed up by Respondent 6 with 'Independent living is **the** most important issue for disabled people today. As an organisation looking after their interests, together with like-minded organisations, we (DisabilityCroydon) have to ensure that in all aspects of modern living, they (public bodies and service providers) are aware of disability legislation designed to stop discrimination against us (those with disabilities) and make sure it is adhered to by everyone.'

Question 8: Would you be interested in attending a seminar early in 2008 on self-assessment and independence organised by DisabilityCroydon?

24 (57%) respondents requested details of the conference and expressed interest in attendance, 10 (24%) indicated they would not attend but would like to receive the seminar report and eight (19%) expressed no interest or did not reply to this question.

Supplementary Question: space for further comments about this survey or the topic of independent living

Seven further comments relevant to the survey were received. Three of these criticized the survey itself. Respondent 36 indicated 'The survey is too complicated' and 'not easily understandable' and suggested future surveys 'do not attempt to provide information'. Respondent 2 requested forms be designed 'so you can use the tick boxes properly', while Respondent 3 asked 'Please simplify the questions.'

Two respondents (15 and 19) used the further opportunity to complain about the 'poor service records of Dial-a-Ride' and the need for further investigation to ensure 'Dial-a-Ride can fulfil their obligations.'

Respondent 1 requested a 'dedicated support line' for advice and Respondent 6 put in a plea that 'those in authority, i.e. Croydon Council (and other public bodies), are made aware of the results of this survey to let them know our views as electors.'

6. Summary and Conclusions

The volume of responses to the Independent Living Survey, and the quality and passion of many of the replies indicate the importance of independent living to people with disabilities.

The importance of freedom and choice, with control and management of one's own life and affairs and lack of restrictions when making personal decisions were evident in many of the responses to all questions, whether with chosen support or without support. What really matters to respondents is having the right to decide when and whether to use support. Sadly, a little over one third of respondents only felt they experience the freedom and choice which facilitates independent living.

Respondents were most eloquent when describing the barriers which restrict their independence. About one third cited lack of support as a main barrier both inside and outside their home.

Approximately one third also cited lack of adaptations (or the finances to purchase these) and poor environmental design as barriers to independent living, both at home and in the community.

About one third of respondents identified personal factors concerning their own health or disability as a barrier to independence, both at home and outside the home and about one fifth found the attitudes of others a barrier, as well, particularly in the community.

By far the biggest barrier, however, noted by approximately two thirds of respondents, was concerned with transport, including poor transport design, inadequate and inaccessible services and lack of personal transport, which hampered attempts at independence, with or without support. Respondents were particularly disillusioned with the poor efficiency of Dial-a-Ride since computerisation, which thwarted attempts at independence.

Respondents suggested ways to reduce or remove these barriers to independence, the vast majority of which involved improved access and better design of the home and community environment and transport services.

Nearly half of respondents considered changed attitudes of carers, managers, supporters and the public generally would go a long way to removing barriers, with

suggestions for education and training to increase awareness of the varying needs of those with disabilities.

Respondents generally welcomed the proposed independent living centre in Croydon as an aid to independence through information, advice and training. They also welcomed the comments of Stephen Ladyman MP to increase freedom and choice in decision-making through self-assessment for service users with disabilities.

7. Recommendations

a. Survey results

It is recognised that the Independent Living survey results contain valuable information, both for people with disabilities, professionals and service providers, and those who campaign on behalf of those with disabilities. It is recommended that

- the survey be distributed to professionals and service providers to inform their decision making and planning processes
- professionals and service providers are invited to a seminar for dissemination and discussion of the implications of survey results
- survey results be used to lobby, where appropriate

b. Further investigation

Respondents raised some serious issues about inappropriate environmental design (particularly that which restricts access), and transport (particularly a perceived deterioration in the Dial-a-Ride service post computerisation). It is recommended that

- access issues be raised with Croydon Council, particularly with regard to ‘sleeping policemen’ or road humps when used in locations where no other access is available, such as entrance to car parks
- issues of environment design be raised with Croydon Council, particularly where this hinders access for people with mobility difficulties and wheelchair users, such as lack of dropped kerbs in some locations and distance of some disabled parking bays from shop fronts
- issues of environment design and signage be raised with Croydon Council, particularly where this hinders access for people with sensory disabilities, such as scarcity of signs in Braille
- a panel list of people with disabilities who would be willing to assist Croydon Council as ‘mystery shoppers’ be kept to assist with gathering information re access and appropriate signage

- future investigations be made into the efficiency and effectiveness of the Dial-a-Ride service

c. Advice line

Several respondents mentioned the need for access to guidance and advice to facilitate independent living. It is recommended that

- DisabilityCroydon compile a list of support services, helplines, self-assessment tools, independent living aids, etc. for distribution at the January 2008 Independent Living seminar and as requested
- DisabilityCroydon identify gaps in support services as a first step to addressing these

d. Attitudes

A significant number of respondents identified attitudes of others as a barrier to independence, inside, but more particularly, outside the home by professionals and members of the public. It is recommended that

- DisabilityCroydon conduct a desk/internet search to ascertain what steps have been taken in neighbouring and other Local Authorities to address professional and public inappropriate behaviour and lack of awareness of needs
- DisabilityCroydon follow up the Have Your Say survey on impact of Disability Discrimination Act, particularly to assess the effects of lack of awareness of needs on those with disabilities

e. The Panel

It is recommended that as the current Have Your Say panel members are predominantly aged 50 and over, ethnically white and with mobility difficulties or wheelchair users, attempts be made to widen representation to ensure future surveys obtain the views of as wide a range of people with disabilities as possible.

f. Survey design

It is recommended that future surveys

- have a simplified layout
- are shorter
- are used to gain the views of respondents only, with alternative methods used to provide information
- conduct more telephone interviewing to maximise responses

8. Acknowledgements

DisabilityCroydon would like to thank all Have Your Say Project Panel Members for the support and contribution they have made to this research by completing the Independent Living survey.

9. Appendices

Appendix 1: Independent Living Survey (attached)

03.01.2008

DisabilityCroydon/HYS Report: Independent Living/01.08/MV.19



St. Oswald's Parish Hall
St. Oswald's Road, Norbury SW16 3SB
Tel: 020 8764 8822 / Fax: 020 8764 2002
Email: haveyoursay@disabilitycroydon.org.uk

Independent Living

Designed & carried out by DisabilityCroydon 'Have Your Say' Project

November 2007

'Have Your Say' Member Number: _____

In this survey we want to find out about your views on independent living and how much of a reality is it for you with your disability.

Question 1

What does the term "independent living" mean to you?

Question 2

Taking into account your definition of 'independent living', do you feel you are currently able to live independently with your disability?

Yes No Partly

If you have answered "no" please could you explain why not?

Question 3

Taking into account your personal lifestyle what do you think are the main barriers which restrict your independence? By barriers we mean anything you feel might restrict your choices about the things you want to do or need to do either;

- A) inside the home or
- B) outside the home, in the community

Barriers inside the home;

Barriers outside the home in the community;

Question 4

What would make it easier for you to live independently? If you have mentioned one or more barriers above, how could these be reduced or removed?

If you have any other comments, either positive or negative about independent living , please say:

Question 5a

The Aztec Centre is run by the Council and situated in the Access Ability Centre, Boulogne Road, Croydon. At the Aztec Centre you can view and see demonstrations of different types of equipment for independent living, equipment for people with sensory impairment, or physical disability or older people. Equipment includes mobility aids, community alarms such as Croydon Careline, telecare and stand alone equipment, as well as adjustable beds, chairs and other furniture. You can also buy equipment and have it delivered at a small cost and staff from the Council and Croydon Disability Forum are on hand to give you advice and information.

Have you heard about the **Aztec Centre**?

Yes No

If not, would you like us to send you some information about it?

Yes No

Question 5b

Have you heard of or do you know anything about the **Independent Living Bill** currently going through Parliament?

Yes No

If you have answered “no” would you like us to send you information about the Independent Living Bill?

Yes No

Question 5c

Have you heard of or used **SARA** the online self-assessment questionnaire? SARA asks you a series of questions about your daily life and the difficulties you are having, and gives you tips and information on equipment and minor adaptations?

Yes No

If “no” would you like us to send you information about using SARA?

Yes No

Question 6

Croydon is planning an independent living centre. This could mean a place where an individual is supported to develop independent living skills and find out about what options are available to help them. A centre might provide access to information and advice about housing, equipment, adaptations, employment, direct payments, advocacy etc. As well as information, it could offer courses and activities during the day or evenings for disabled people.

A) What do **YOU** think an independent living centre in Croydon should aim to provide?

B) Do you think it should be part of an integrated community centre, or a separate centre solely for people with disabilities?

- It should be integrated with the community
- It should be solely for people with disabilities
- I wouldn't mind either

Question 7

Please consider the following short summary of comments made by Stephen Ladyman MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Community, November 2004 prior to the launch of the Green Paper 'Independence, Well-being and Choice':

How do we change things so that every individual has the right to make their own decisions and has choice and control over what they do in life?..... One way of achieving this is by more self-assessment where the person requiring support takes the lead in stating the outcomes they want.

Those outcomes may be paid work, to remain living at home, using local facilities, and bringing up children but they should be outcomes chosen by the person using services.

Do you agree with these comments?

- Yes I strongly agree
- Yes I mostly agree
- No I don't agree

Any further comments;

Question 8

Would you be interested in attending a Seminar early in 2008 on self-assessment and independence organised by DisabilityCroydon? Transport support can be provided.

Yes, please send me details

No, I would not want to attend but please send me the report afterwards

No, I am not interested

Space for any further comments about this survey or the topic of independent living;

Thank you for completing this Have Your Say survey!