

**Notes from the Disability Forum Meeting held on
Wednesday 6th October, 2pm at Blackpool Centre for Independent Living**

In Attendance

10 customers

Jen Ellis – Customer Involvement and Projects Officer, Blackpool Coastal Housing
Yvonne Hammond – Equalities and Communication Officer
Sandy Grundy – Customer Involvement and Projects Officer

Apologies

7 customers

1. Welcome and Introduction

Elaine Christian welcomed attendees to the meeting and explained to new members that she is the Chair of the Forum. Attendees introduced themselves. J Ellis provided an overview of the Forum for the benefit of new members.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting/Matters Arising

The minutes of the last meeting were read through and agreed as a true record. The following points were updated:

- Street Scene Equality Audit has been put on hold, and we will be notified when this will go ahead. Karen Herschell of Disability Services for the Faith, Equality and Diversity Team at Blackpool Council has been notified that the BCH Disability Forum would still like to assist with the audit when it resumes.
- J Ellis stated that she had invited a representative from Blackpool Transport to attend but had received no response. J Ellis advised attendees to contact Blackpool Transport directly if they had any specific individual issues/concerns.

3. Mystery Shopping

Sandy Grundy attended to discuss a disability specific mystery shopping exercise she will be co-ordinating. S Grundy stated that the exercise is due to commence in November with completion by January 2011. S Grundy explained that mystery shopping 'tests' aspects of the services BCH provides and assists in ensuring these are of a high standard. It has been decided that a Mystery Shopping exercise should be completed specifically relating to disability issues thereby helping to ensure BCH services are fully accessible. Mystery Shopping includes assessing different service areas by visiting Housing Offices, making phone calls and emailing Officers and checking the service.

Attendees were asked if they would like to volunteer to take part in this series of Mystery Shopping. 6 attendees agreed to take part – S Grundy is to make individual contact to discuss the exercise in further detail.

A discussion took place into the types of questions/scenarios that could be asked when assessing services, attendees suggested the following areas:

- A partially sighted tenant could visit a Housing Office/ring up and request a booklet/rent statement. An A4 magnifier or large print document should be provided.
- The Housing Office could be assessed to ensure it is wheelchair accessible with wide enough doors, ground level or ramped access, display racks and counter at a suitable height.
- The scenarios featured in the Disability Awareness DVD could be used such as; a meeting with a group of tenants – loop system should be in place, visiting a tenant – giving tenants with mobility problems more time to answer the door, leaving dropped kerbs clear and easily visible.

S Grundy is to develop the scenarios and contact volunteers to discuss further.

4. Tenant Liaison Forum Update

For new members, J Ellis briefly explained that the Tenant Liaison Forum (TLF) is the over-arching consultation body which 2 representatives from this group attend along with representatives from Tenants and Residents Associations and the Sheltered Housing Forum. TLF meetings are an informal meeting to encourage discussion and a chance for any staff to present proposals for change or pass on information to tenants.

E Christian reported there were no issues raised from the last TLF meeting.

5. Update on Blackpool Disability Partnership (BDP)

Yvonne Hammond provided an update on the BDP. At this time, funding has only been granted until March 2011. Alan Reid (co-ordinator of the group) had said they will find out in the next few months if the funding has been extended, and the BDP meetings can continue. It is very possible, due to the positive actions that have resulted from the group that the meetings will continue.

All BCH Disability Forum members are welcome to attend these meetings and will be notified of the date of the next meeting, due to take place in November.

Y Hammond stated that the Disability Awareness DVD had been shown at the last meeting and had received many positive comments. New members asked if this could be shown at the next Disability Forum meeting to which this was agreed.

Y Hammond also provided an overview of the Disability Independence Day which took place on 4th September at Stanley Park Sports Centre. There were lots of agencies and organisations at the event showcasing the different things they could offer people - services, social meets, dietary advice, new equipment etc.

Many people commented that the day had offered them fresh perspectives and confidence to try new things, raised their awareness and opened up a new range of services to them. A number of people were interested in the Disability Forum and took information away on this.

6. Single Equality Scheme

Y Hammond provided an overview of the Single Equality Scheme and explained this will encompass all previous equality schemes/regulations. In preparation for the inspection in

February 2011, BCH are working on areas for improvement and targeting key areas to ensure accessibility and greater satisfaction.

7. Any Other Business

Attendees asked for examples of good practice from other organisations relating to disability issues to be reported at future meetings.

- Future Projects

Attendees agreed that they would like to be involved in developing a disability specific satisfaction survey – this is to be discussed further at the next meeting.

- Disability Hate Crime reporting

A brief discussion took place into Disability Hate Crimes and attendees thoughts on reporting incidents. All agreed that they would have no concerns in reporting such instances and one attendee explained that they had been through the process and were supported throughout with a positive outcome.

Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 12th January, 2pm at Blackpool Centre for Independent Living, Whitegate Drive.