
Redbridge Disability Consortium

**Redbridge Conversation
London Borough of Redbridge
Budget Consultation, 2014**

Jon Abrams
jon@redbridgeconcern.org
www.rcmh.org.uk
020 8925 2435

4th February 2014



Introduction

Redbridge Disability Consortium welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Redbridge Budget Consultation. We recognise the budget constraints on the local authority and the fact that national not local government has control over the level of many funding streams and the welfare system. We also appreciate that Redbridge Council will have to make difficult judgements over the coming years in light of the further savings of that will have to be made over the next few years.

Redbridge Disability is committed to working in partnership with Redbridge Council to ensure that we minimise the pain that will inevitably be caused and to ensure that the most disadvantaged and vulnerable members of our community are not unfairly impacted by any reductions and cuts in services.

In the current economic climate as public services are cut – we strongly believe - that fairness matters more than ever. It is incumbent on Redbridge, Council to ensure that we improve the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in Redbridge, making it a fairer place.

There are certain groups in Redbridge that are particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged including those who are very young, very old or disabled or have complex mental health conditions and their interests need to be protected in a time of smaller budgets.

In light of rising demand and reduced money we are concerned about Redbridge's ability to fund social care in a way that results in high quality services, in places that people need them, at the heart of the community enabling people to live with dignity and pursue independent and flourishing lives.

Summary of Recommendations

- ✓ Redbridge Council must remain committed to supporting and empowering the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in Redbridge.
- ✓ Increase Redbridge Voluntary Sector investment and funding in real terms
- ✓ London Borough of Redbridge to carry out a Cumulative Impact Assessment to gauge impact of cuts, welfare reforms and changes to services on local disabled people

Disabled people

There are no exact measures of the numbers of people with a disability. The best proxy measures are the numbers claiming certain benefits because of a disability. Disability living allowance (DLA) is generally paid to people aged under 65 years of age.

- In Redbridge there the number of working age people who are disabled is 15.18% which equates to 27,700 local residents.
- 11.5 million people in the UK who are covered by the disability provisions set out in the Equality Act. This is 19% of the population¹.
- It is estimated that the number of older people in London (55 and over) will increase by 39 per cent as older people, with a significant rise in the numbers of disabled people is likely to reflect this increase.
- Mental illness is the largest single source of burden of disease in the UK. No other health condition matches mental illness in the combined extent of prevalence, persistence and breadth of impact.

The link between disability, poor mental health and poverty is well established.

- Mental illness is consistently associated with deprivation, low income, unemployment, poor education, poorer physical health and increased health-risk behaviour
- High levels of unemployment among the disabled population means disabled people have lower incomes than average and are disproportionately likely to live below the poverty threshold and be dependent on benefits for a large proportion of their income.

¹Fulfilling Potential: Building Understanding report <http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/fulfilling-potential/index.php>

- According to the DWP in 2008, over half of disabled people incurred extra expenses as a result of their impairment (DWP July 2008, 145)
- According to a Demos 2010 report, the proportion of households with a disabled person who are below the poverty line is more than doubled to 47% when the extra costs of living with a disability are included (Demos, October 2010, 20). Apprentice
- Disabled people face higher costs of living for instance you may need to pay for taxi more frequently than non disabled people, or pay for people to support you with various tasks or to buy pre-pared food.

Disabled people are being hit by multiple cuts

Disabled people are being hit by cuts to care and support and multiple cuts to welfare benefits resulting in a lower income for many. Some welfare benefits such as Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and Universal Credit have yet to be rolled out, so the true impact of all the welfare reforms on disabled people, especially in London where rents are high is not fully known yet.

Cumulative impact

Disabled people have been disproportionately hit by the government's austerity measures: The cumulative impact of the welfare benefit cuts and cuts to care and support have hit disabled people 9 times more than most other citizens².

- Disabled people, (8% of the population) bear 29% of all cuts³.
- Disabled people with high support needs will lose on average 19 times more than most other citizens⁴.

Cuts in care and support

Disabled people have been hit hard by the cuts in care and support funding made by Local Authorities: £890 million was taken from the national care and support budget between April 2012 and March 2013.⁵

In many areas the funding for support packages is being cut in real terms, so disabled people are either having to fill the funding gap to maintain the same level of care, at the same time as the costs of care are rising, or face a cut in support.

² <http://www.centreforwelfarereform.org/library/type/pdfs/a-fair-society1.html>

³ <http://www.centreforwelfarereform.org/library/type/pdfs/a-fair-society1.html>

⁴ <http://www.centreforwelfarereform.org/library/type/pdfs/a-fair-society1.html>

⁵ http://www.adass.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=813:a

Disabled people are very concerned that their rights under Article 19 of the UNCRPD will be ignored and they will be forced move to residential care, with the accompanying risks of abuse and loss of independence, because the level of domiciliary care is adequate. For users of the Independent Living Fund, which the government proposes to close in 2015, the issue of a forced move to residential care is a huge concern.

Disabled people receive Disability Living Allowance, which aims to help pay for these extra costs. Around one in ten disabled people receive the care component of the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) (11.4%) and the mobility component of the DLA (11.7%). This approximates to 160,000 DLA recipients in London.

However, DLA is being abolished and replaced with Personal Independence payment (PIP), which has tighter eligibility criteria so 607,000 fewer people will receive PIP than would have got DLA – a 28% reduction in the caseload, according to government's own figures⁶.

Recommendations

Redbridge Council must remain committed to supporting and empowering the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in Redbridge.

There are certain groups in Redbridge that are particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged including those who are very young, very old or disabled or have complex mental health conditions **and their interests need to be protected in a time of smaller budgets.**

The link between disability, poor mental health, and poverty is well established. High levels of unemployment among the disabled population means disabled people have lower incomes than average and are disproportionately likely to live below the poverty threshold and be dependent on benefits for a large proportion of their income.⁷

It is imperative that Redbridge Council continues to support people to do day-to-day things such as getting out of bed, cooking a meal, shopping, caring for families, having a shower and getting around. It is also of fundamental importance to continue to develop and promote services that meet people's needs and enhance their dignity and promote independent living and encourage flourishing lives.

⁶ [\(Personal Independence Payment\) Regulations 2013... - Parliament](http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN06538.pdf)
www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN06538.pdf

⁷ Demos, The most effective way to tackle disability poverty is by reducing costs...
http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/countingthecost

Increase investment and funding in Redbridge voluntary sector

We are concerned that in real terms that there has been cuts to funding of local voluntary and community organisations in Redbridge. Evidence is also emerging that there is an increased demand for the services and resources provided by voluntary and community sector groups, particularly those working with 'disadvantaged' groups, but that crucially these groups are struggling to survive.

The voluntary sector in Redbridge plays an essential role in preventative services, so what appear to be cash savings now may be storing up considerable challenges for the future.

Reduced investment in the Redbridge Voluntary and Community Sector coupled with the growing restraints due to the economic and financial climate could curtail the ability of the sector in several areas:

- To advocate on behalf of vulnerable people
- To press for changes in public and social policy
- To be the voice of service users
- To suggest alternatives to market approaches to meeting need.

Research in other parts of the country has also pointed out a number of concerns that cuts to local funding will have on volunteering:⁸

- Reduced the capacity of voluntary sector organisations to provide support, training and suitable placements for volunteers
- Reductions in funding have forced to depend on volunteers to provide services, reducing their users' access to qualified professional staff'.

London Borough of Redbridge to carry out a Cumulative Impact Assessment to gauge impact of cuts, welfare reforms and changes to services on local disabled people.

We have over the last few years made a number of requests for a 'Cumulative Impact Assessment' to determine the impact on the disabled community. It is becoming increasingly difficult to assess and judge the impact of all the different changes to benefits, charges, service restructuring on the disabled community.

Many disabled people now face the combined impact of social care cuts, benefit cuts, changes to in and out-of-work benefits; housing cuts, and shortly the roll out of Personal Independence Payments.

⁸ Manchester Metropolitan University Community Audit and Evaluation Centre
Community North West, Surviving, Thriving or Dying, June 2012

About Us

Redbridge Disability Consortium

www.redbridgedisabilityconsortium.org

Our work is driven by the goal of a society in which disabled people are treated with dignity, fairness, respect and understanding. We are passionate about developing high quality, accessible services for disabled groups, working in partnership to influence policy and outcomes affecting disabled groups; and challenging the stigma and discrimination that disabled people encounter in their day-to-day lives

Redbridge Concern for Mental Health

www.rcmh.org.uk

Redbridge Concern for Mental Health - established over 15 years ago – is a service user led organisation based in the London Borough of Redbridge dedicated to promoting, improving and protecting the mental health and emotional wellbeing of the wider community.

We offer high quality services to local residents seeking mental health support. We also provide information and signposting as well as challenging the stigma and discrimination that people experience in their everyday lives.

Redbridge Forum

www.redbridgeforum.co.uk

Our aim is to help improve the quality of life for people with a learning disability and their carers, including those on the autistic spectrum. A lot of our work at present is based around children's services and we run 4 projects Fun 4 All, Bright Ideas, TrueColours and Childrens Advocacy. We also support people with a learning disability to speak up for themselves and we also engage with local carers to find out what they think about services in Redbridge