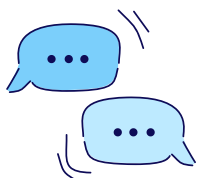


Disabled People's Action Forum minutes



Meeting date:
12.03.26



What we talked about

KeyRing



KeyRing supports people to develop their skills and get connected in with their community.



In Southwark they run the Southwark Disability Hub.



As part of this they will support the Disabled People's Action Forum.



We agreed that KeyRing will help with:
Planning and running the meetings



Getting the right people to come along e.g. people from the council



Making sure everyone knows about the forum

Disabled People's Action Forum minutes

We agreed what the forum will do:



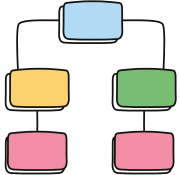
The forum represents disabled people in Southwark. It will look at any issues that affect disabled people.



It is open to all members and allies.



It will meet 4 times per year.



There will be working groups that focus on different topics. They will have their own meetings and report back to the forum.



The forum can also give their ideas in consultations run by other people.

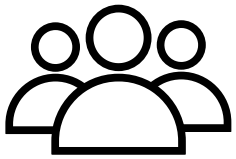
At the last forum:



Housing was agreed the most voted issue people would like to focus on.

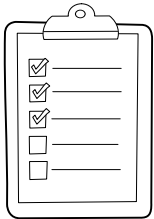
Disabled People's Action Forum minutes

Working groups:



We are now looking to set up a working group that is looking at housing. This group will meet in between the forum and decide what actions to take around housing.

The working group can:

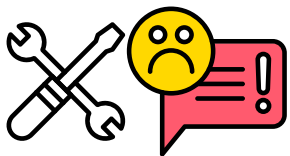


- Choose the main issue to focus on (within Housing)
- Decide what actions to take
- Help the forum work towards clear outcomes
- Invite the right people to the forum

At the forum, we then broke up into groups and discussed three topics within housing, these were:



1. Accessing Housing



2. Repairs and Complaints



3. Housing Staff

Notes from people who came to the Forum



Accessible Housing

Problems getting housing



- People said the housing system is hard to use
- The bidding system is confusing
- It does not meet disabled people's needs

Some people felt:

- They had to prove their disability
- This made them feel not believed or respected

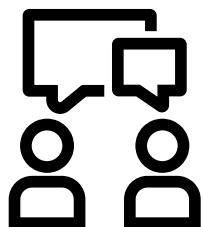
Support is also difficult to access:

- You have to be in the right place at the right time
- Long phone calls can be hard
- This does not work for people with mobility issues or caring responsibilities

Waiting lists are long and not many options:

- People want clear information on how housing is allocated
- More options for people with lower support needs
- Accessible format for information

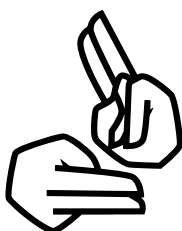
Notes from people who came to the Forum



Communication and access:

People want:

- Information in different formats (paper, large print, plain English)
- Different ways to communicate (text, WhatsApp, face-to-face)



Deaf people face serious barriers:

- Long waits for interpreters (sometimes up to 2 weeks)
- Limited time with interpreters
- Time is often wasted waiting on hold
- Websites and forms are not accessible (no BSL)
- They are left out of meetings and information

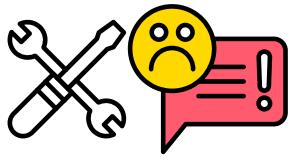
Safety concerns:

- No visual intercoms
- Fire alarms are not deaf-friendly
- New homes are not always designed for Deaf people

Some Deaf people said:

- Being told there is no budget for interpreters made them feel like their needs were not important

Notes from people who came to the Forum



Repairs and Complaints

Reporting Repairs:

People said reporting repairs is slow, difficult, and not accessible.

Delays in repairs can be unsafe.

People want:

- Easy ways to report repairs (text, email, WhatsApp, with photos/videos)
- Contact with a real local person (not just call centres)
- A way to flag repeated repairs so they are fixed urgently

Deaf people said:

- Phone-based systems do not work
- Long waits waste interpreter time
- Teams often call instead of text
- Poor communication means some issues are not reported
- New systems are not explained clearly

Some people feel forced to rely on family for help.

Notes from people who came to the Forum



Quality and contractors:

People reported poor-quality repairs:

- Problems not fixed properly and repeated visits
- No checks after work is done

People want:

- Better monitoring and inspections
- Clear standards for good work
- Clear information about who is visiting and when

Some also reported disrespect and lack of cultural awareness.



Support and system changes:

People want:

- Support during visits if needed
- Disability awareness training for contractors
- Systems to prioritise repeated issues
- A named contact if problems build up

They also want:

- A clearer complaints process
- Better support if issues with housing officers arise
- Equal standards across all housing types
- Stronger council oversight

Notes from people who came to the Forum



Housing Staff

Many people said they need a Disability Housing Officer:

A trained staff member who understands different disabilities

They will be a main contact for disabled residents

Someone who can support other housing staff



Communication and understanding:

Many people had negative experiences:

- Felt disrespected, not listened to, and treated differently
- Experienced poor communication

Deaf people said:

- Their needs are often missed or ignored
- Communication is not accessible (phone-based, no BSL, unclear explanations)
- Staff assume BSL users can easily read English

People want:

- Better training (deaf awareness, disability, mental health, neurodiversity, dyslexia, cultural awareness)
- Accessible communication (video calls, speech-to-text, text-to-voice)

Notes from people who came to the Forum

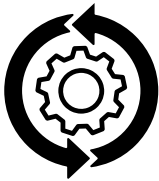


Consistency and trust:

Support is inconsistent and depends on individual staff.

People want:

- One named contact or advocate
- Clear escalation routes and better follow-up
- Less reliance on call centres



Improvements needed:

People want:

- Better training and more consistent staff
- Clear complaints processes and proper notice before visits
- Respectful communication and no unexpected contractor calls

They also want:

- Clear standards (resident charter)
- Equal support across council, Housing Associations, and private renters
- More clarity on how new housing laws will affect disabled people

Notes from people who came to the Forum

Other Council notices:

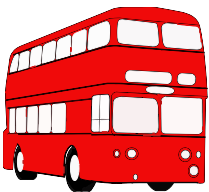


Voting:

Reminder to register to vote in local election that is on

Thursday 7th May.

Reminder: You need ID to vote, if you do not have ID you can apply for a 'Voter Authority Certificate' for free. You can also do a postal vote.



Better Bus Southwark:

Attendees invited to share there thoughts on bus routes using this link:

<https://engage.southwark.gov.uk/en-GB/folders/better-bus-southwark>

Or search 'Better Bus Southwark' and click on Southwark council web page.