

## Join the Conversation! What Is It Like To Be Disabled In Merton Today?

We've been asking our members, what is it like to be disabled in Merton today? You can join the conversation too – get in touch on by phone, email, Facebook or Twitter, we can't wait to hear from you!



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### Here is what people have told us so far...



- There are lots of barriers!
- Barriers to getting out and about
- Limited inclusive education and support for young people
- Barriers to training and work
- Hate Crime is an issue
- Barriers to independent living and cuts to support
- Welfare reform is having a big impact on people
- People's wellbeing is being affected

### There are lots of barriers

"You are almost invisible"

"I find it difficult to join in with the rest of the world"

"I drop out of conversations because I'm only hearing 70% of the conversation."

"I don't get the joke."

"I don't hear my television. I miss the dialogue. Subtitles don't always help."

"I don't know where to go to find information on how to meet my needs."

"I am missing something but I've got used to it and accept who I am. I am conditioned into accepting less than others,"

"People ask me if I understand English. I understand it very well. I just don't speak it too good."

"The Council are just not listening"

"Consultations are always too late to change anything"

## Barriers to getting out and about

"At Raynes Park station it is only possible to go in one direction"

"All those plans to develop town centres - we keep being assured we'll be involved, and we aren't"

"They have taken dog poo bins away so there is more poo on pavements which we can't see to avoid, or our wheelchairs and scooters can't avoid it"

"Think about not being able to take rubbish to the tip, council won't take it so we have to rely on neighbours."



"The Council promise not to leave wheelie bins in middle of road but they do. We feel like we do not count. It an insignificant detail to them but impacts us."

"Pavement parking is an issue - I have to go on the road around it. It is dangerous."

"Why can't scooter users plug into electric car charging points?"

"It is so hard to get into the Wimbledon theatre - I have to stand by the stairs waiting to be noticed"

"Why do shops/ restaurants have accessible toilets up a set of stairs? Like the chicken shop in Wimbledon!"

"Why do new shops/restaurants open which aren't accessible?"

"Why do shops put so much stock out? I can't get around Clintons in Wimbledon anymore. If I can't get through a pram can't get through"

"I hate it when they use the accessible loo as storage"

**"All those plans to develop town centres - we keep being assured we'll be involved, and we aren't"**

"That bus-stop in Wimbledon! Even after a 3 hour meeting where we told them, this would be a problem, they didn't listen, and now it is a problem, you can't get on a bus there."

"The journey planner on TFL is useless - it's never updated so I go back and forth on the underground trying to find a step-free station."

Its so hard to get a taxi that will take me. I have to threaten them with legal action, it is exhausting"

**"If I use a taxi I have to think, what if I get somewhere then I can't get home because I can't get another taxi?"**



## Limited Inclusive Education and support for young people

"I was kept separate to others at school."

"I don't know what the benefit of SEN schooling was to me. I think it's a good thing that more of us get choices to attend mainstream. We have to want it though."

"Educational choices are being reduced. Kids are getting to see choice".

"It worries me to hear that more children are being provided for in the psychiatric system."

"They closed Whatley Avenue – I felt so devastated they didn't listen to what we said"

"Having to go through the EHCP Process – there's nothing in the local offer to help"

"There is no access to social activities, especially outside term time, for young people"

"There's nothing accessible in playgrounds"

"No support for young people outside education and healthcare needs"

## Barriers to training and work

"I have not worked for a long time. The average employer doesn't want me. They think I would cost too much."

"You can get help for enrolment on courses, but where does it go? Who's going to give me a job? I got trained – I got skilled up and nothing."

"There is a limit on good jobs. I only ever get directed to the crap jobs."



## Hate Crime is an issue

"Some people just don't want to tolerate me. They think I'm a nuisance. They don't care and don't want to spend the time with me."

"Bullying has always been around. Because I look different I get harassed."

"It doesn't help when political parties want to sound like the BNP. There's a hard core of important people who just don't want to help."

"Discrimination is more subtle. It doesn't have to be about violence for it to be a problem."

"People with learning disabilities have it much worse. They are more vulnerable than me."

"People don't like me. They say I'm slow, not with it, not normal. You can't say much. You just get on with it."

"Words are hate crime. Watch your mouth."



**"I isolate myself. I don't trust people anymore."**

## Barriers to Independent Living and cuts to support



"I can't just get out of the house and travel without support."

"You can't put a seed in the ground and just leave it. I feel like a seed thrown to the ground. The earth around me, my house, isn't ready. My support workers aren't there to water me anymore. I'm not allowed to grow."

"What happened to youth clubs? Where do I meet people today? I can't get out and I have nowhere to go."

"I hear serious talking about how much my disability costs, how much I have to contribute, how much they want to take, how much they can't give. I don't see anyone asking me what I need. Isn't it time someone asked?"

"My disability is not an issue for anyone else. Most people don't care. Those who do only push their ideas of me."

"Costs of care don't go away, but if no-one does this the cost is going to fall on me. The cost is going to be greater the more my needs are not met. This makes the cost worse for you but greatly damaging to me."

"Cuts to social care is a false cost. More beds get blocked, more people can't go home. It's stupid. It's bad organisation. Why is this happening?"

**"It is awful – you are abandoned and then every year you're assessed and you know its going to be a cut and you are living in fear"**

"My Housing Association suddenly become helpful after the fire - they have now fixed my door and hoist after years of asking"

"What would I do in a fire?"

"For disabled people in private housing it is also hard to keep meeting the rent"

**"Financial assessments are causing me so much stress – they are trying to make me keep all of my receipts, I just can't do that"**





## Welfare Reform is having a big impact on people

"My friend's sister struggles to breathe. She can stop breathing when sleeping and yet they tried to take her mobility car off her."

"Cuts are an ideology. They are not necessary in the fifth richest economy."

"I am waiting for my benefits assessment. I've been waiting for the knock on the door. I try to act like it doesn't matter, but it's stressing me out."

**"I have a word for that. Brown envelop syndrome. The envelop drops on your mat and it's so freaky you first can't open it. You eventually pick it up putting it somewhere and try to forget about it and slowly your life falls apart at the seams, but you still can't face opening that scary letter."**

"I pretty much rely on food banks. You have to have something to help you get through another two weeks. It's good that someone can help but it shames me. I need to work and provide. Now I'm just desperate all the time."

"The more I see of people like me being hurt the more I get angry."

"People who assess me know nothing about me and what life is about for me but they make decisions that hurt me."



**"I am one of the lucky ones. People in charge of welfare can't look at me and say there is nothing wrong with me. It's clear I am disabled. It helps to make my life easier. I have a safety net so don't have to deal with the stress others have to deal with."**

## People's health and wellbeing is being affected

I get out of bed with depression and think I've got to get through another day."  
"I try not to feel sorry for myself but I don't see people who are worse than me, but it's not a level playing field for any of us."  
"I can't control the pain in my stomach or when it happens but no-one sees this"

**"The patient doesn't come first. The budget does".**



Share your view on what its like to be Disabled in Merton— We would love to hear from you to! Join the conversation and get in touch by phone, email, on Facebook or Twitter, we can't wait to hear from you!



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