

Please find attached some **comments regarding the Mayor's 'A City for All Londoners' document from the Southwark Dementia Action Alliance**. The SDAA brings together a wide range of local organisations aiming to enable local people living with dementia and their carers to continue taking part in their local community. This could be by getting out about shopping in their high street, attending events and activities, pursuing sports and hobbies or making their voices heard in local groups and forums.

We have concentrated our comments on issues relating to transport as this was the only part of 'A City for All Londoners' which referred directly to people affected by dementia. (Elderly people were also briefly mentioned in relation to air pollution and the built environment and we especially welcome the commitment to Inclusive Neighbourhoods given the degree of redevelopment currently taking place within our borough and beyond). It should be noted that we find **public transport services are key to enabling people affected by dementia to continue participating in their local community**, keep in touch with friends and family and accessing the specialist services and provision so vital to their ongoing health and wellbeing.

In addition there has recently been some **survey and consultation activities with elderly and disabled people in the borough of Southwark around the issue of transport** so we have been able to draw on views they have gathered to illustrate and inform our comments. However, we would like to point out that **with over 70,000 Londoners living with dementia and hundreds of thousands of their friends and relatives across the capital caring for and supporting them, the needs of all those affected by dementia should be taken into consideration within a much broader range of policy areas** including housing, employment and arts and leisure.

The SDAA welcomes the Mayor's support for the **Freedom Pass and the 60+ bus pass**. Comments on their experiences on buses gathered from elderly people this issue in Southwark recently indicate **that buses are vital in enabling local people with dementia and other disabilities to go shopping, visit friends and family and attend doctor's or hospital appointments**.

Given this situation the SDAA welcomes the Mayor's plans over the next two years to **train bus staff** to help people with dementia to travel more easily by bus. While elderly people taking part in the consultation found many bus drivers are helpful and considerate particularly when the person is using a visible sign of their condition such as a walking stick, some are inclined to drive very fast, pull away too quickly (before passengers have found a seat) or stop too far away from the kerb.

Elderly and disabled people often travel alone and the issue of having **invisible disabilities** can be particular hard to handle. As two respondents commented **"It is not always clear to other people how difficult I find it to stand on a bus or train"** and **"There is a lack of awareness about invisible disabilities both with the transport providers and the general public"**. In relation to people with dementia and their carers, it can also be very difficult travelling by public transport if the person with dementia behaves in an uninhibited way which can bring them into conflict with another passenger, the driver or station staff.

Drivers who have a passenger with dementia who has become confused or upset can help this person feel more comfortable and at ease by making eye contact with them, and talking

to them clearly and calmly. The **Southwark Dementia Action Alliance and its equivalents across London would be happy to run free 45 minute Dementia Friends awareness sessions for bus drivers and other staff based at bus garages throughout the capital.** These sessions are designed to provide participants with a greater understanding of dementia so they can engage and assist people affected by the condition in just such a helpful and positive way.

The **design of stops and buses** can also be an issue for elderly and disabled people and those living with dementia. A lack of covered stops and seating can be offputting for some people and greater availability of real time data services would be welcome in order to reduce anxiety. With regard to seating some people find certain areas of seating on the new Routemaster buses too high and so difficult to access while on other services they can find the seating situated in too low a position.

Elderly and disabled passengers and those living with dementia can become confused when **journeys are truncated or redirected and bus stops closed.** Similarly they can find **overcrowded buses** uncomfortable and intimidating, and so we welcome the Mayor's plan to address this issue. It is partly as a result of such difficulties that many people questioned in a recent study of elderly and disabled people say they do little physical activity. This can lead to or worsen health and behavioural difficulties among people living with dementia and have knock on effects on those who are caring for supporting them.

This is why SDAA welcomes the Mayor's commitment to **Dial-a-Ride** which is another vital service for many people affected by dementia. However comments gathered from local people with dementia and their carers in recent months indicate that there have been a number of issues around access to this service for people living with dementia. For example, the **accuracy of information provided** by Dial-a-Ride staff by phone has been questioned as well as concerns about a **blanket requirement for people with a diagnosis of dementia to be escorted** regardless of their particular needs. Similarly, concerns have been raised about eligibility for the service being based purely on physical capacity. This suggests a **lack of understanding on how a cognitive impairment can also affect people's ability to fully control their movements** and make utilising public transport extremely difficult. Finally its **limitation to regular appointments** prevents people using it to attend occasional but valued outings or events and **the need to book even regular appointments every week** can prove difficult for those living with memory problems.

Many people with dementia also find the **Taxi Card** service a very useful facility. However they can find the costs prohibitive when they want to travel beyond the boundaries of the borough due to normal charges kicking in at this point.

The SDAA welcomes the Mayor's commitment to provide **more seating at stations and reduce clutter** that gets in people's way. However to enable many elderly people and those with dementia and other disabilities to continue to remain independent and engaged in the community **street clutter also needs to be removed from high street pavements and in addition greater availability of recognisable seating and toilets** should be provided in these areas.

If you would like to discuss any of these issues and how they impact on the lives of people affected by dementia in greater depth with members of the Southwark Dementia Action Alliance we would be happy to facilitate this. Please feel free to contact our Co-ordinator at **caroline.clipson@alzheimers.org.uk**