

Access to Health Care Facilities Taskforce 26.2.09



Secretariat memorandum

Author : Vincent Stops

Agenda item 7 (c)

AH14

Drafted 11.2.09

Surveys of access to health care facilities February 2009

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To report to members on recent surveys of access to health care facilities undertaken by the Secretariat.

2 Information

- 2.1 Members have previously agreed that the focus of the Access to health care facilities taskforce would be to investigate the access issues associated with those health care facilities previously highlighted as casework.
- 2.2 As part of this, the Secretariat continues to gather information on these sites, both by visiting them to assess access issues, and by requesting from each a 'Travel Plan'.
- 2.3 This report contains results of surveys of the Princess Royal University Hospital, Bromley; the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Greenwich, and the Royal Free Hospital, Hampstead.

3 Methodology

- 3.1 This has simply been to travel to the hospital by public transport, then walk around and through the site. In particular we looked at :
 - The permeability of the site and the continuity of footways around the site
 - Bus stop and stand locations around and within the site
 - Pedestrian routes to and crossing facilities around the site
 - Information provision

4 Survey results

- 4.1 Princess Royal University Hospital, Bromley

This is a new and very large hospital at some distance from its historic catchment area. It has a large car parking area and is adjacent to Sainsbury's car park.

4.1.1 Footways and permeability

Footways to the site via the main entrance and around it are continuous, but the route to and through Sainsbury's car park is not good, particularly for those with mobility impairments or wheelchairs. The main vehicular entrance would benefit from narrowing and an entry treatment, as this survey found it to be currently too wide.

4.1.2 Bus stops and stands

Stops and stands were well located on the site. Around the site, stops are distributed a short walk away, though stop HD for the 358 is across a busy dual carriageway without a signal controlled crossing. Nor is there a pedestrian phase at the junction of Crofton Road and Farnborough Common.

4.1.3 Information

There are two TfL leaflet and poster sites, but only one had a handful of leaflets. The receptionist implied that this was a continuous problem. The site would benefit from a signage scheme to and from the bus stops.

4.1.5 Parking

There were two cycle parking areas – one with spare spaces and covered. The Car parks were full. Visitors paid £1.50 for an hour or 50p in Sainsbury's car park.

4.1.6 Conclusions

The issues were

- i) there should be a pedestrian and signs audit to and from bus stops and the surrounding area
- ii) there should be a formal signalised crossing across Farnborough;
- iii) the main entrance needs narrowing and an entry treatment.

4.2 Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Greenwich

This is a new site located on an old NHS hospital site. It is some distance from any population centres, but has had many bus services either diverted past, or terminating at, the site. Soon after opening an additional car park was added. We suggest that the travel plan was mainly a tool to justify this car park.

4.2.1 Footways and permeability

The road past the site has footways only on one side for long sections. There are side roads nearby with no dropped kerbs. The main entrance has a footway on only one side. There is no direct footway on the pedestrian desire line to the main entrance, resulting in pedestrians having to walk in the carriageway.

4.2.2 Bus stops and stands

Bus stops were located either directly outside the main entrance or a further entrance. There was a set of bus stands nearby.

Bus stops H1 and H2 were lay-bys and as such need filling in. It was disappointing to note that at such a new development the bus stops were built in this way.

4.2.3 Information

The excellent TfL bus and local map poster is displayed at the main entrance. TfL leaflets are displayed on the reception desk, but we suggest that a leaflet dispenser (such as at Kingston) would improve availability.

4.2.4 Parking

There appeared to be quite low levels of parking, and that was mostly staff. The public pay £1 an hour up to £6 for over 5 hours.

4.2.5 Conclusions

Given the site location, it has good bus links. The Highways Authority needs to implement footways on both sides of the carriageway. The site itself needs to implement continuous footways on both sides of its internal carriageways.

4.3 The Royal Free, Hampstead

This is a large hospital on a very constrained site, with access issues complicated by the fact that it is on a slope.

4.3.1 Footways and permeability

Pedestrian access is poor. From the top of the hospital steps there were no continuous footways. Step free access could be OK, but again there was not continuous, and the drive access was blocked by parked vehicles.

4.3.2 Bus stops and stands

All the stops are on the street, but located reasonably well, with good crossing facilities. The pedestrian route from stop F could be improved with signage and continuous footways along Rowland Hill Street through the hospital grounds.

4.3.4 Information

The TfL leaflet is available on the reception desk. There is no TfL poster and no leaflet dispenser.

4.3.5 Parking

This is a problem area. Parking is £3 an hour and there are queues and frustrated drivers.

4.3.6 Conclusions

The hospital is well located at a good transport node, but pedestrian facilities around and through the site let it down. It is also puzzling to note that the Travel Plan does not promote the use of buses more, with the use of TfL's poster.

The Rail and underground Policy Officer has suggested that opening up the access from Belsize station side would help.

5 Equalities and inclusion implications

- 5.1 Access to hospitals and major healthcare centres is a key equality issue, recognised by the Government's Social Inclusion Unit report: 'Making the Connections' and the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. Adopting the recommendations made in this report will contribute to promoting equality of access to NHS services.

6 Legal powers

- 6.1 Section 248 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 places upon London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) a duty to consider - and where it appears to the Committee to be desirable, to make recommendations with respect to - any matter affecting the functions of the Greater London Authority or Transport for London which relate to transport (other than of freight). Section 252A of the same Act (as amended by Schedule 6 of the Railways Act 2005) places a similar duty upon the Committee to keep under review matters affecting the interests of the public in relation to railway passenger and station services provided wholly or partly within the London railway area, and to make representations about them to such persons as it thinks appropriate.

7 Financial implications

- 7.1 None.

8 Recommendations

- 8.1 As part of its ongoing access to hospitals work, the Secretariat writes to either the hospital authority, the local Highway Authority or TfL to progress the identified deficiencies.