

Help Us To Help You

Consultation Report November
2011

To improve services for disabled residents



Epping Forest District Council
www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk



Help Us To Help You

Epping Forest District Council has been working for some time to improve the everyday lives of disabled people in the Epping Forest District and to meet its responsibilities under equality legislation. The Council has a role under the Equality Act 2010 to work to develop a more equal environment for disabled people and to develop the awareness and understanding of disability.

The Disability Equality Involvement Group is a group of disabled residents and representatives of local disabled groups who work with us to integrate a consideration of disability into our services and to provide information on the needs of disabled people. The Group has made significant progress towards their aims and are now seeking to review their priorities to make sure they remain the priorities for disabled people in the district.

The Council is also producing a Single Equality Scheme setting out in one overarching document how it will meet its equality duties under the Equality Act 2010, and how it will meet its aspirations for equality in Council services. Part of our work involves identifying 'equality objectives' which are targets based on data and information rather than assumption or stereotypes.

To make sure our equality work is targeting the areas where we can make the most difference, and to provide data to inform our equality scheme and objectives, a survey has been developed to ascertain the priorities and focus for our disability equality related work. This survey, 'Help us to help you' is based on the achievements and aims of the Disability Equality Involvement Group, and the Office for Disability Issues Roadmap 2025 'Achieving disability equality by 2025', where those themes coincide with the Council's responsibilities and therefore would be services where the Council potentially has influence.

Methodology

The survey was sent to residents of the district's sheltered schemes and given out to visitors of the Disability Awareness Day at St Mary's Church, Loughton in May 2011. Also available on the Council's website and to many of the Council's partner organisations in the public and voluntary sectors. People with a disability or a connection with disability eg, a carer of a parent of a disabled child, were encouraged to respond. The criteria for disability used in this survey were, mobility, hearing, vision, learning difficulties and mental health difficulties. Respondents were asked to rate services using levels of importance, which were very important, important and not important to each question. There were 256 responses.

Executive Summary

The survey was commissioned by the Council's Corporate Equality Working Group (CEWG) and carried out by the Performance Improvement Unit.

The consultation took place during October 2011 and the target groups were people with a disability, a connection with disability, or interest in disability who live, work, study or socialise in the district. The results will be fed back to stakeholders via The Forester and on the council's website.

The key findings indicate the following:

The top four very important issues for the respondents of this survey were

- 84% Making housing accessible,
- 82% Providing services for people to live independently,
- 76% Attitudes and behaviours toward disabled people, and
- 76% Services for disabled children and their families.

Three quarters of the respondents feel that car parking (73%) and other transport (69%), is very important.

Making access to leisure and cultural activities easier, is very important to over half of the respondents.

Profile

The average age of respondents was 75+.

72% were female and 28% were male.

97% White British and 3% White Irish.

Working age respondents made up a quarter of the total of respondents (26%).

56% of the respondents said they had a disability. The majority of respondents had mobility disability.

37 respondents had more than one type of impairment, some had all five impairments surveyed. Most of those were mobility, hearing and vision impairments.

Of the respondents who said they were not disabled, the age group average was 66 to 75

90% were Christian, 6% said no religion, 1% were either Muslim Jewish or another religion not specified.

Comments

The comments on areas of concern were divided into six main topics, which were:

- at home,
- travel and parking,
- dropped kerbs and pavements,
- support and representation,
- information communication and training and
- access to services.

There were also comments on attitudes and behaviours towards disabled people.

'The policies and procedures of an organisation reflect attitudes toward disability and are instrumental in working towards equality for people with impairments. They help to remove barriers, which hamper disabled people.'

Findings from the survey

Findings from the survey have helped to identify a number of challenges for the Disability Equality Involvement Group and the council in the coming months, highlighting areas which are felt to be very important, important and not important with regard to promoting the interests of people with a disability. The survey identified where there may be ways of helping adults and children with a disability at home, travelling about the district, in the community and at work. Approximately 56% of respondents said they had a disability.

Profile of Respondents

The demographic profile statistics of the respondents are shown below.

Key demographical profile		Other demographical profile	
AGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 44% of respondents are 75+ 18% of respondents 66 to 75 9% are 56 to 65 	RELIGION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 73% Christian denominations 5% no religion 1% Jewish, 1% Muslim, 1% other
DISABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 56% have a disability 25% do not 	SEXUALITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 53% Heterosexual, 9% prefer not to say
GENDER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 59% of respondents are female 23% are male 	ETHNICITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80% White British 2% other White background
HOUSEHOLD ACCOMMODATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 62% Sheltered Housing 	TRANSGENDER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60% no, 0.4% yes.

From the results below, a third of all respondents said they were not disabled in any way and some were either carers or friends of people with a disability or elderly residents with age related care needs.

Breakdown of impairment of respondents

Counts Base % Respondents	Total	Do you consider yourself to be disabled in any way?	
		Yes	No
Base	203	139 68%	64 32%
Age Group?			
Under 18	-	-	-
18 to 25	3 1%	2 1%	1 0%
26 to 35	2 1%	2 1%	-
36 to 45	8 4%	6 3%	2 1%
46 to 55	11 5%	7 3%	4 2%
56 to 65	24 12%	13 6%	11 5%
66 to 75	45 22%	30 15%	15 7%
75+	110 54%	79 39%	31 15%

The majority of respondents with a disability had mobility disability. 37 had more than one type of impairment (see chart below), some had all five impairments surveyed. The majority of these were mobility, hearing and vision impairments.

Multiple Impairment

Counts Base % Respondents	Total	Missing	It affects my mobility	If affects my hearing	It affects my vision	I have learning difficulties	I have mental health difficulties
		No reply					
Base	37	-	37 100.0%	22 59.5%	26 70.3%	5 13.5%	5 13.5%
If yes, how does it affect you?	37 100.0%	-	37 100.0%	22 59.5%	26 70.3%	5 13.5%	5 13.5%

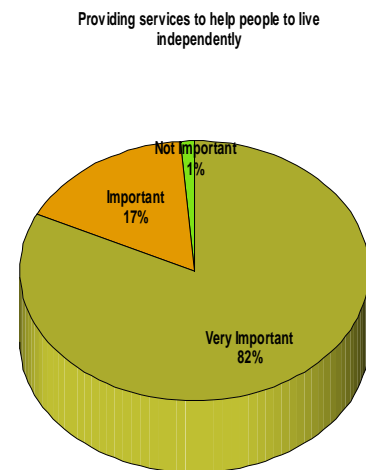
At home

Overall, most respondents felt that making houses and buildings more accessible for disabled people was very important (84%) and 16% felt it was important also.

Analysis % Respondents	Total	Importance		
		Very Important	Important	Not Important
Base	484	83%	16%	1%
Making houses and buildings more accessible for disabled people	249	84%	16%	0%
Providing services to help people to live independently	235	82%	17%	1%

The majority of respondents felt the home was the most important aspect of their lives.

Providing services to help people live independently was equally as important as making houses and buildings more accessible for disabled people (82%).



The average age of respondents was 75+. Working age respondents made up 26% of the total of respondents.

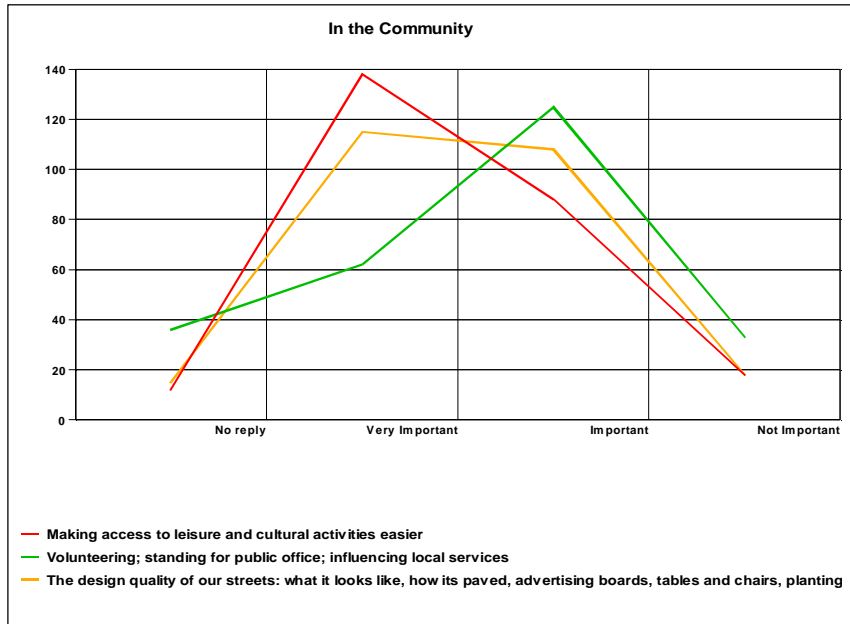
Counts Base % Respondents	Base	Age Group?								
		Under 18	18 to 25	26 to 35	36 to 45	46 to 55	56 to 65	66 to 75	75+	
Total	400	-	10	4	16	23	46	90	211	
		-	3%	1%	4%	6%	12%	23%	53%	
Making houses and buildings more accessible for disabled people	206	-	5	2	8	12	23	46	110	
	52%	-	1%	1%	2%	3%	6%	12%	28%	
Providing services to help people to live independently	194	-	5	2	8	11	23	44	101	
	49%	-	1%	1%	2%	3%	6%	11%	25%	

Comments

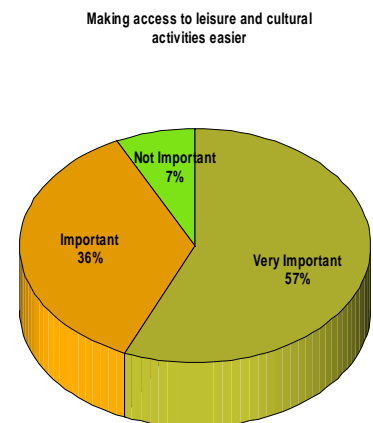
'More consideration should be given to disabled people on the Housing Waiting List, in particular the difficulties with their current housing circumstances'. And, 'Support for volunteer groups to enable home visiting and social connection for those who are housebound. Loneliness makes people feel ill so more social contact could provide a positive effect on health problems. Also enables people to feel a sense of pride and ownership in where they live and a sense of being in the real world and not an institution'.

In the community

Making access to leisure and cultural activities easier is very important to over half of the respondents and important to over a third (overall 93%).



The level of importance was greater for making access to leisure and cultural activities easier.



Analysis % Respondents	Total	Importance Level		
		Very Important	Important	Not Important
Base	705	45%	46%	10%
Making access to leisure and cultural activities easier	244	57%	36%	7%
Volunteering; standing for public office; influencing local services	220	28%	57%	15%
The design quality of our streets: what it looks like, how its paved, advertising boards, tables and chairs, planting schemes	241	48%	45%	7%

'No replies' were excluded, charts show number of respondents

The design quality of our streets is equally important to almost all respondents and there were many comments about the state of pavements and lack of dropped kerbs.

Comments

'I have MS and would appreciate closer seating areas as it would make it easier for people like me who have a walking problem to go out knowing that if our balance starts to be affected there will always be a place nearby to sit'.

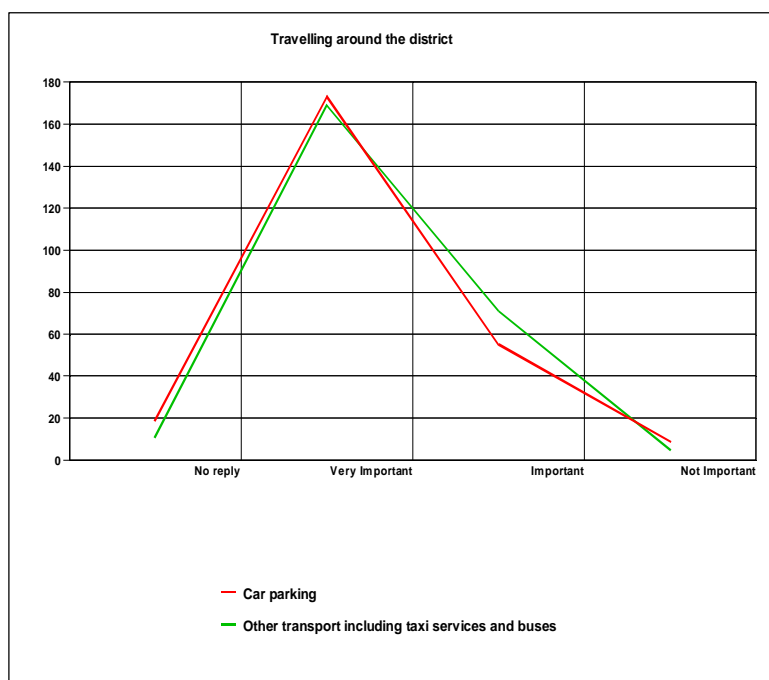
'Finding ways to allow able bodied and people with disabilities to integrate more through art, drama and other social contexts. Also helping people understand that they will not be discriminated when reporting abuse and hate crimes'.

Volunteering; standing for public office and influencing local services, received the lowest number of responses saying it was very important (28%) in the whole survey. When set against the top issues of the 'Home', 'Services' and 'Attitudes' the response rates for this category may indicate greater importance being placed on problems closer to home and having more immediate impact.

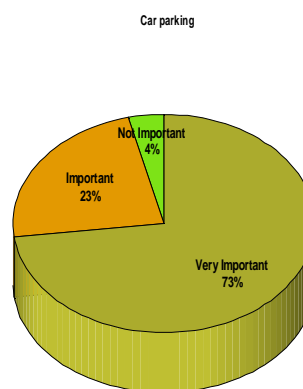
Travelling around the district

Car parking is very important to most respondents (73%) as are other forms of transport including taxi and bus services (69%) as residents with mobility impairment may need assistance to access shopping and health care etc.

Analysis % Respondents	Total			
		Very Important	Important	Not Important
Base	482	71%	26%	3%
Car parking	237	73%	23%	4%
Other transport including taxi services and buses	245	69%	29%	2%



The chart below shows that car parking around the district is very important to most respondents. Other transport including taxi services and buses are equally as important.



'No replies' were excluded, charts show number of respondents

Comments

'More dropped kerbs, more ramps, more buses with dropped platforms for wheel chairs and people who can't step up the steps'.

'I recently tried to travel by train and even though my local station had, had millions of pounds spent on it to make it accessible, they overlooked the gap between the platform and the train making it impossible for me to board the train a small ramp was all it needed. Overgrown hedges next to pavements and not enough dropped kerbs make it impossible for me to leave my care home'.

'I'm particularly interested in the state of our pavements. I have a small scooter but do not use it very much because the pavements run offs are very poor. I have nearly fallen off several times. Also I would like better access to the swimming pool. I would like to swim but I can't get into the pool. No way would I use the hoist, its too embarrassing'.

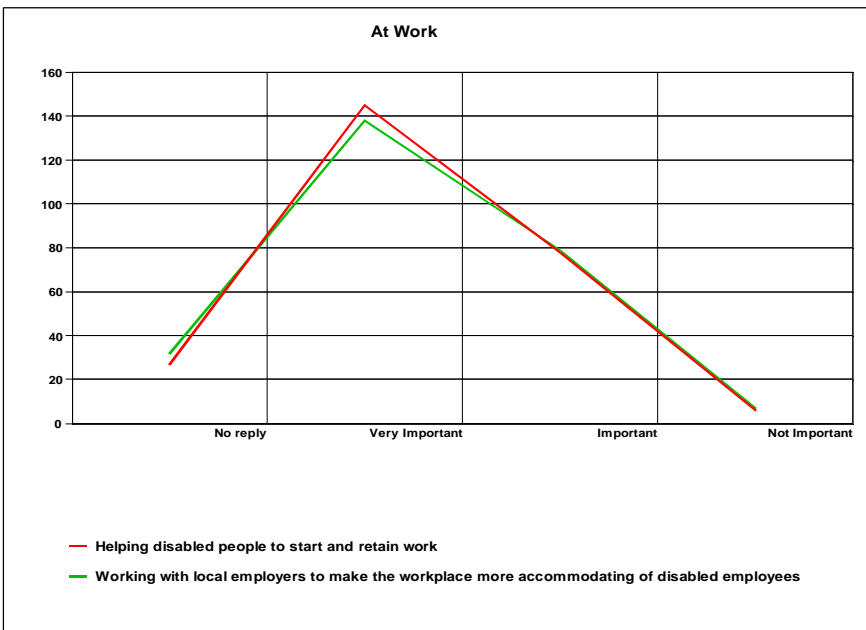
'Stop cars and vans being parked on footpaths and enforcing illegal parking that forces one to walk in the road and impossible for people with walking problems to cope with'.

At work

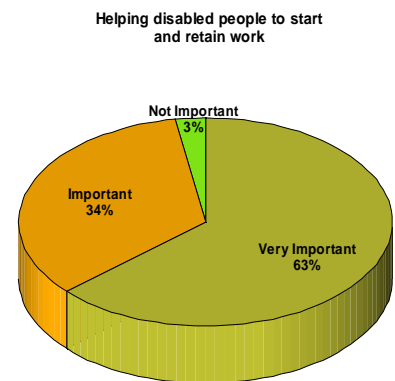
Helping disabled people to start and retain work and working with local employers to make the workplace more accommodating of disabled employees.

Analysis % Respondents	Total			
		Very Important	Important	Not Important
Base	453	62%	35%	3%
Helping disabled people to start and retain work	229	63%	34%	3%
Working with local employers to make the workplace more accommodating of disabled employees	224	62%	35%	3%

Two thirds of respondents felt that these issues are very important. 3% felt they were not important.



The levels of importance was high even though most respondents were not of working age.



Comments

'More disabled people should be seen in front-line jobs so as to be more acceptable, ie, in shops etc'.

'Any services, attitudes, devices that can help people with very little vision and considerable deafness'.

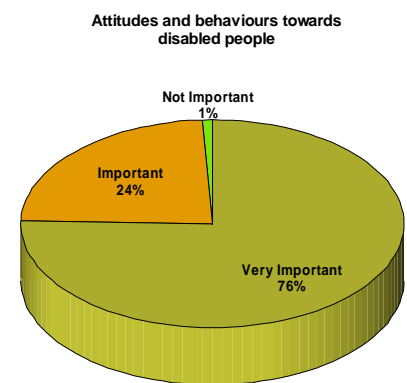
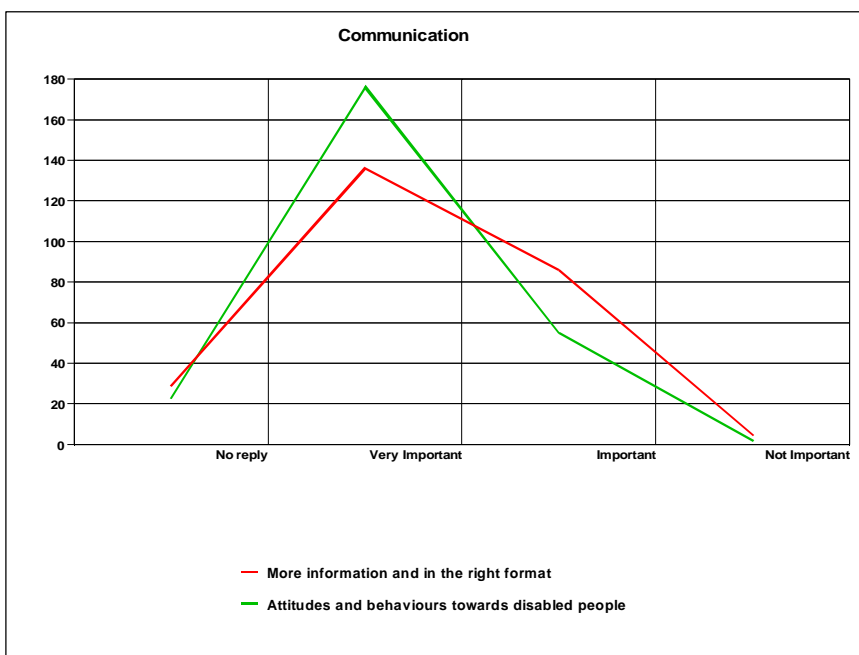
Communication

The majority of respondents felt that more information and in the right format and attitudes and

Analysis % Respondents	Total			
		Very Important	Important	Not Important
Base	460	68%	31%	2%
More information and in the right format	227	60%	38%	2%
Attitudes and behaviours towards disabled people	233	76%	24%	1%

behaviours towards disabled people were very important. Almost 100% overall, indicating a high level of feeling about how disabled people are perceived and treated.

The level of importance was higher for 'attitudes and behaviour towards disabled people' than almost all other aspects of life with a disability other than suitable homes and independent living.



Comments

'There are lots of disabled people who do not understand their benefit rights. I wish it could be explained more to people so they understand it when rent goes up or down they are not told by how much in plain English'.

'More people need to be involved in council decision-making and Councillors must make time to speak to groups of people with disabilities so they can represent their interest'.

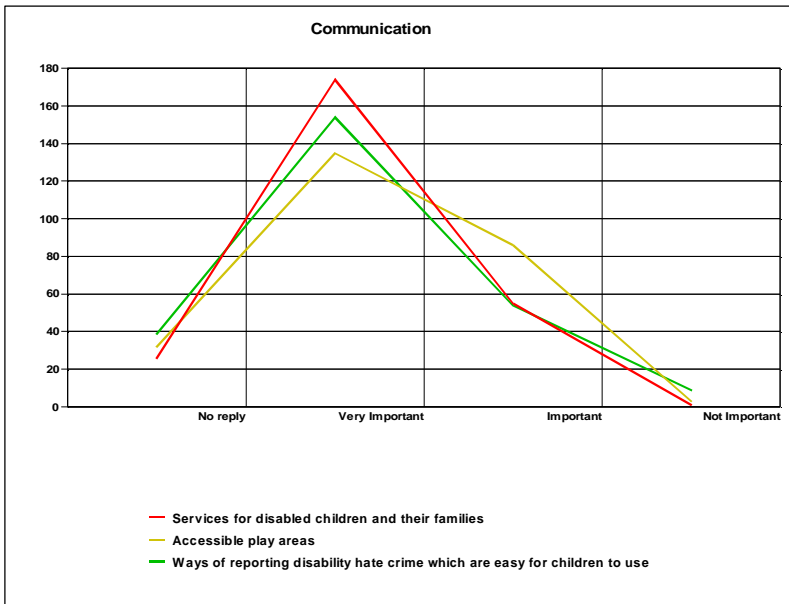
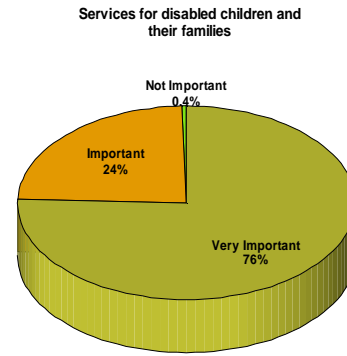
'Better consultation with related disability groups. Partnership with disability groups to encourage shared ownership, collaborative working and shared responsibility of issues'.

'Making the best use of access to information via internet etc. Council staff having an awareness of alternative communication systems'.

Children

Services for disabled children and their families, accessible play areas and ways of reporting disability hate crime which are easy for children to use were very important again to the majority of respondents even though the age profile of respondents was older, 44% were 75+.

Analysis % Respondents	Total			
		Very Important	Important	Not Important
Base	671	69%	29%	2%
Services for disabled children and their families	230	76%	24%	0%
Accessible play areas	224	60%	38%	1%
Ways of reporting disability hate crime which are easy for children to use	217	71%	25%	4%



The levels of importance was greatest with services for disabled children and their families.

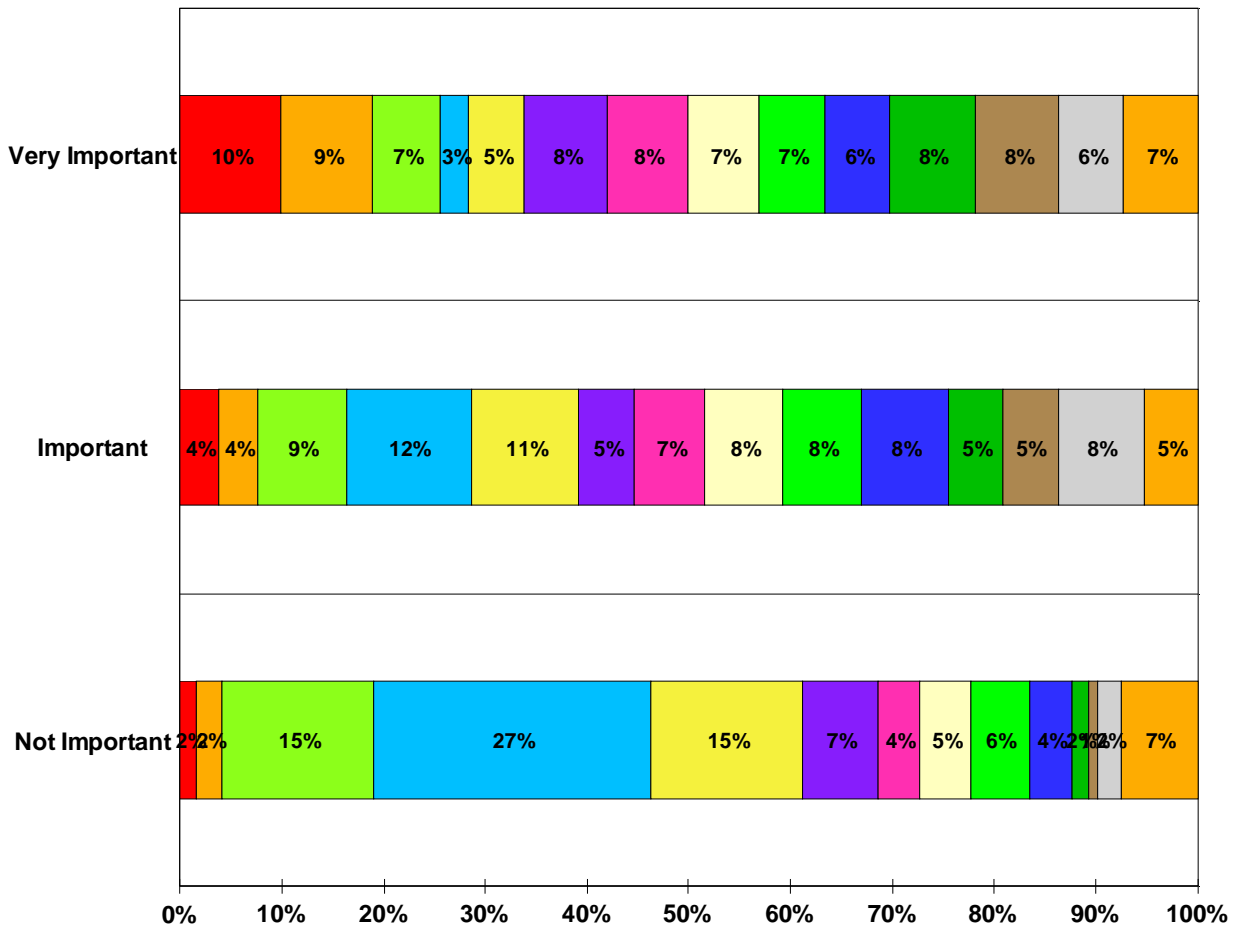
Comments

Services for children were felt to be important but were not the main focus of respondents in this survey. The following comments were made by carers or parents.

'I have a disabled son and find it difficult to access local transport, I would like to take him to London more but I have no local station that facilitates disabled access. Also his support workers are unable to take him on the bus comfortably as the pole in the middle of the disabled part will not allow his wheelchair to fit in! The pavements for his chair leave much to be desired. The centre where he attends in the day needs to be more geared up for disabled people with his complex needs.'

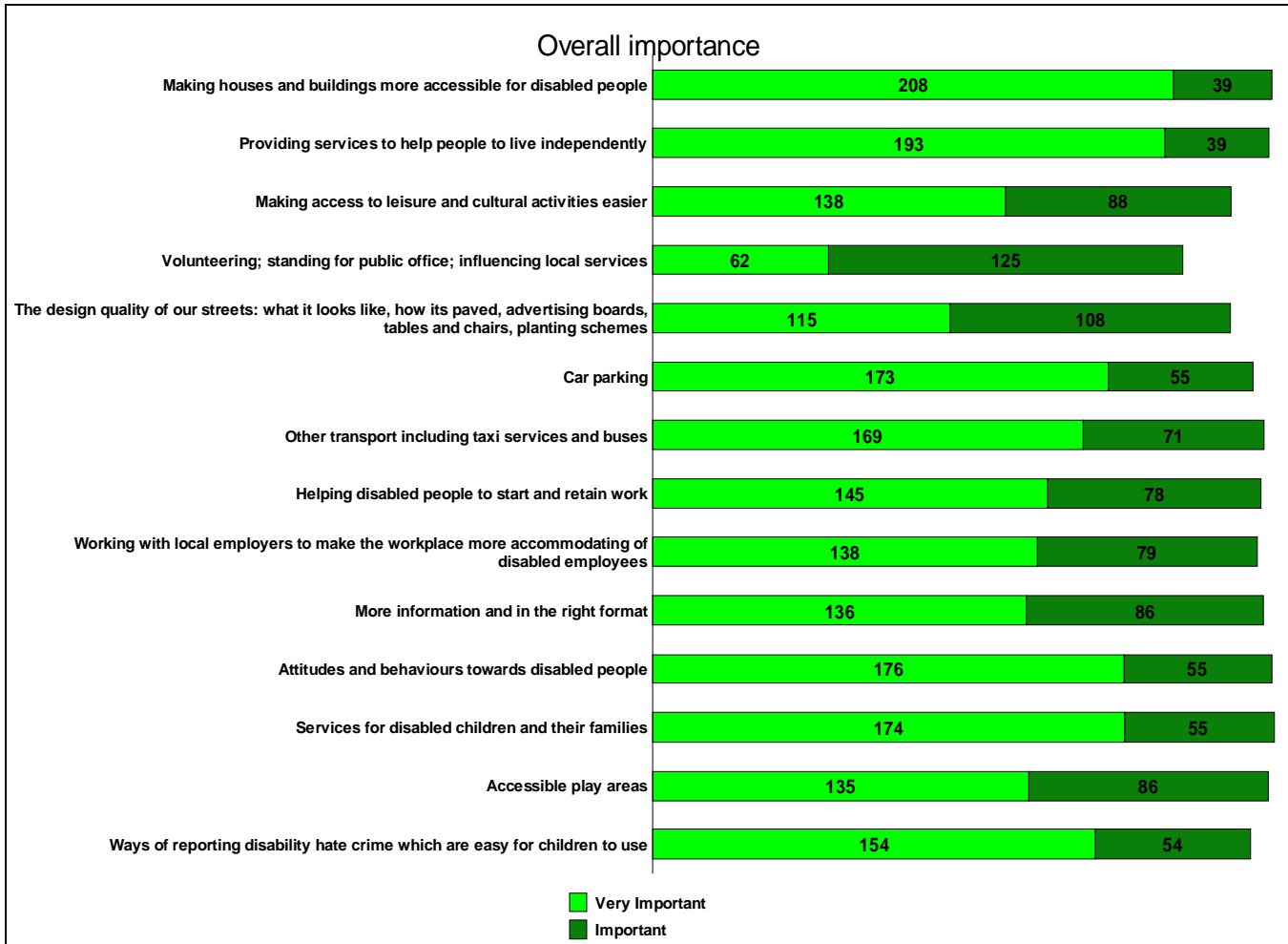
'There are too many financial cuts for vulnerable disabled (and elderly) people, they are the last ones who should be penalized and care reduced, they already have a disadvantaged life ahead and require services to aid daily existence and an enriched quality of life.'

Overall Importance



- 1 Making houses and buildings more accessible for disabled people
- 2 Providing services to help people to live independently
- 3 Making access to leisure and cultural activities easier
- 4 Volunteering; standing for public office; influencing local services
- 5 The design quality of our streets: what it looks like, how its paved, advertising boards, tables and chairs, planting schemes
- 6 Car parking
- 7 Other transport including taxi services and buses
- 8 Helping disabled people to start and retain work
- 9 Working with local employers to make the workplace more accommodating of disabled employees
- 10 More information and in the right format
- 11 Attitudes and behaviours towards disabled people
- 12 Services for disabled children and their families
- 13 Accessible play areas
- 14 Ways of reporting disability hate crime which are easy for children to use

The chart above showing overall importance gives priority to helping disabled people to live independently by improving access to homes, travel and services. There is also a need to improve attitudes toward the disabled. The majority response was also by older residents who mainly resided in sheltered schemes which made these issues a priority for them.



Given the overall average age and type of occupancy of respondents, it is not surprising that making houses and buildings more accessible for disabled people and providing services to help people to live independently, are the most important. In the comments section of the questionnaire, respondents said that access to transport, shops and restaurants, leisure and cultural facilities and the quality of our pavements are all very important. The issues around care of older residents become more important to relatives, friends and the caring professions as those residents activities become impaired.



Help Us To Help You!

Prize Draw Win £20 of Vouchers

For some time now the council has been working with local disabled people to help to improve their lives by involving them in our policy making and decisions on our service provision. We are in the process of deciding the future direction of our work around disability.

We want to know what we should be concentrating on and what is important to you as we need to be sure we are focussing on the right things.

The information we collect will be used only to improve services for disabled people and will be kept strictly confidential. For more information on work to improve the Council's services for disabled people contact: Barbara Copson, Performance Improvement Officer, by Telephone to 01992 564042 or Email to equality@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Please answer the following questions by ticking in the boxes to show what you think the council should be focussing its disability equality work around

Q1 At home			
	Very Important	Important	Not Important
Making houses and buildings more accessible for disabled people	208	39	2
Providing services to help people to live independently	193	39	3
Q2 In the community			
	Very Important	Important	Not Important
Making access to leisure and cultural activities easier	138	88	18
Volunteering; standing for public office; influencing local services	62	125	33
The design quality of our streets: what it looks like, how its paved, advertising boards, tables and chairs, planting schemes	115	108	18
Q3 Travelling around the district			
	Very Important	Important	Not Important
Car parking	173	55	9
Other transport including taxi services and buses	169	71	5

Q4 At work			
	Very Important	Important	Not Important
Helping disabled people to start and retain work	145	78	6
Working with local employers to make the workplace more accommodating of disabled employees	138	79	7
Q5 Communication			
	Very Important	Important	Not Important
More information and in the right format	136	86	5
Attitudes and behaviours towards disabled people	176	55	2
Q6 Children			
	Very Important	Important	Not Important
Services for disabled children and their families	174	55	1
Accessible play areas	135	86	3
Ways of reporting disability hate crime which are easy for children to use	154	54	9
Q7 Is there anything else which you feel should be included?			
73			

About you

This section helps us to identify multiple factors which may affect your experience of the district. We need to make sure we provide information and services to suit your requirement. You do not have to complete this section but it will help us to get it right. We would like to be able to contact you again. However, if you prefer to remain anonymous please leave this section blank.

Q1 Name 172	Q3 Postcode 168
Q2 Address 170	Q4 Telephone number 115
	Q5 Email 49
Q6 Are you? 58 Male 152 Female	Q11 What is your religion, even if you are not practising? 187 Christian 0 Hindu 2 Muslim 2 Jewish 0 Buddhist 3 Any other religion 0 Sikh 13 None
Q7 Are you transgender? 1 Yes 154 No	Q12 Do you consider yourself to be disabled in any way? 143 Yes 65 No
Q8 Age Group? 0 Under 18 5 18 to 25 2 26 to 35 8 36 to 45 12 46 to 55 24 56 to 65 47 66 to 75 114 75+	Q13 If yes, how does it affect you? 118 It affects my mobility 3 I have learning difficulties 9 It affects my hearing 2 I have mental health difficulties 10 It affects my vision <i>It affects me in another way (please specify)</i> 56
Q9 Do you consider yourself to be? 137 Heterosexual 0 Gay or Lesbian 0 Bisexual 20 Prefer not to say	
Q10 To which of these groups do you consider you belong? 205 White British 0 Black or Black British - African 6 White Irish 0 Any other Black background 0 Any other White background 0 Asian or Asian British - Indian 0 White and Black Caribbean 0 Asian or Asian British - Pakistani 0 White and Black African 0 Any other Asian background 0 White and Asian 0 Chinese 0 Any other Mixed background 0 Any other ethnic background 0 Black or Black British - Caribbean	

The results of this survey will be published on the council website. Thank you for helping us to get it right.