



FEASIBILITY STUDY REPORT

Leicester Disabled Action Group (LDAG) is a local charity of Leicester. It offers assistance to Black and Ethnic Minorities (BME) suffering with disability. The organisation has conducted a study within Leicester to establish the needs of disabled individuals. The purpose of the study was to formulate a base which serves for making potential decisions. The participants in the study were able to respond to their specific needs. LDAG determined the physical parameters of its target population. The aim was firstly to look into the plight of disabled individuals and their carers and secondly to ascertain their needs and establish if the services they currently receive were adequate.

THE STUDY

The sample of the study was BME disabled communities and their carers and limited to within Leicester city. The study was conducted in strict and confidential manner in line with Organisation's research policy and ethics.

Demographic and other related data was collected to determine what particular service they require and if it exists already within the community or not. After collection of data the technique of in-house analysis was used to make sure the Organisation's procedure of obtaining authentic, valid and reliable information. A pool of resources collected from the study provided an invaluable data.

At the stage of analysis the collected data was evaluated to determine the number of disabled within the community. Additional factors such as their general health status, financial status – the available range of income, housing adaptability and the predominant type of disability were also determined. In respect to housing the focus was on housing availability, location, occupancy rates and waiting list for existing housing projects.

RESULTS

The study presents an overview of problems faced by individuals with disability in BME communities. It further clarifies the needs of those individuals.

MAIN FINDINGS

The study showed that there was enormous range of variance in respect to housing and services available. Almost 83% of interviewed individuals indicated that their current dwelling was not enough suitable to cater for their needs. This was also the case with carers who provided essential services to individuals with disability. The Figure 1 below presents a pie-diagram to understand this finding.

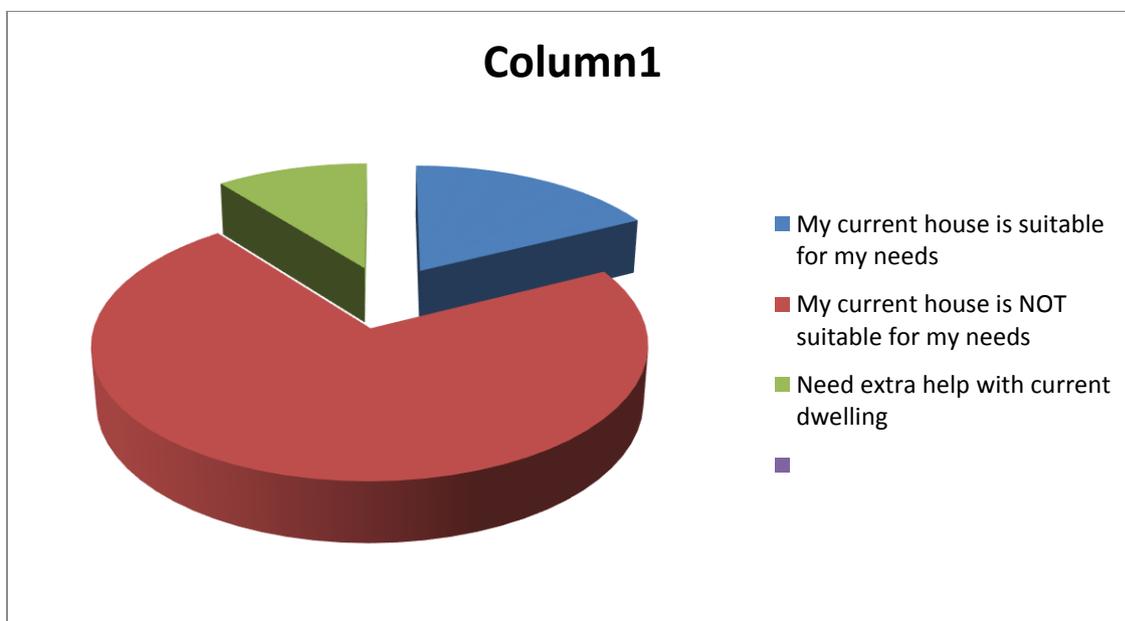


Figure 1: Housing Suitability

The majority of interviewed individuals were living in areas which were characterised as low-income and further were suffering of a physical disability. Amongst interviewed individuals who had a suitable house which catered their needs represented a small portion. Similarly it was found that many individuals with disability had to incur additional expenditures as a result of their impairment which could lead to substantial reduction of finances for food etc. In respect to age, children with disability compare to non-disabled children of the lower income households, were living in areas of high deprivation such as St

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Matthews and Highfields. A critical situation was found by knowing that their parents were also unemployed.

If we summarise the findings of the study into brief points the important ones are as:

- Disabled individuals mostly rely on family members and relatives to cater for their needs.
- Getting work is more difficult for disabled than non-disabled. As a result employment rate is low.
- Approximately half of the interviewed individuals had income below the half the common income. Those who live in private housing had to pay more rent than their council counterparts.
- Most of them are not satisfied with their current house/dwellings. The suitability also varied between the council/housing association and private tenants.
- The trends of housing occupancy varied from council to private in certain areas. The below Figure 2 explains this in a chart. It was interesting to examine that council/association tenants demonstrated greater satisfaction than those were in privately owned or rented houses/flats.

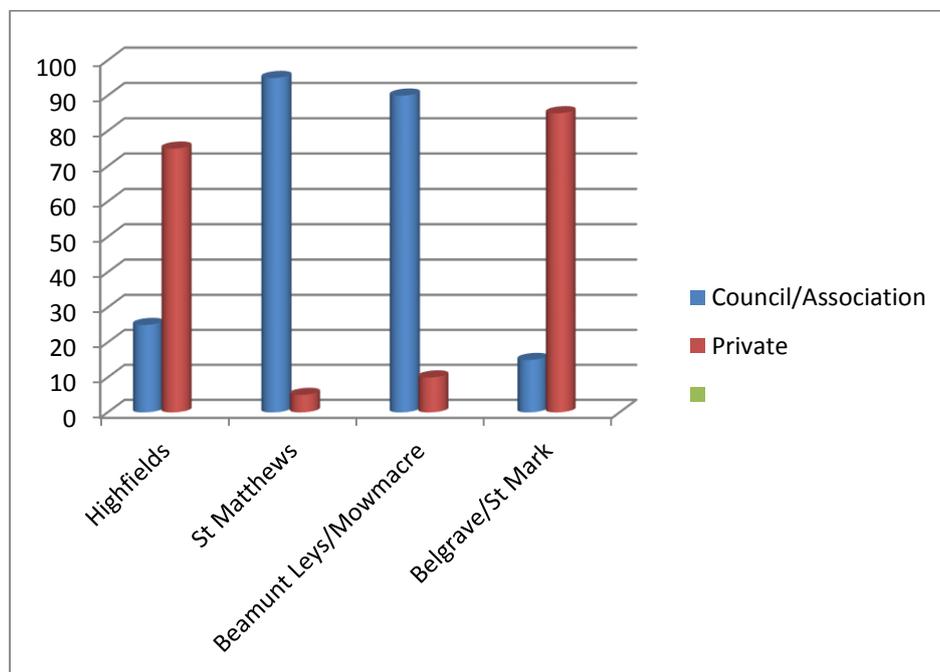


Figure 2: Housing Option

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- Due to language and cultural barrier, most of them were not fully aware of their rights such as the government's overall restructuring of disability allowances. For example by law the council may be responsible for providing help to them. This is to enable them to move in and out of their homes, to access and use living and sleeping areas, cooking, bathing, and toilet facilities within the home.
- Most of them were unaware of their right to complain to the Housing Ombudsman about the actions of a housing landlord - whether that is the local authority, a housing association or private. Further mostly private tenants were unwilling to fit aid equipment into the property because of the removal costs if they were offered council/association house.

CONCLUSION

Given the significance of this study the needs of individuals with disability can no longer be ignored. It is true that BME disabled communities face a number of potential problems in accessing services. The problems what this study found are of great importance. Some of them are:

- Lack of knowledge of a disabling environment;
- The difficulties related to communicate their necessities or access service information in a language that is not their native tongue;
- Flawed beliefs made by those evaluating or providing service as to their cultural or religious practice or needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study overall concludes on the following recommendations in respect to BME individuals with disability.

- There is first of all an immense need of interpreters. It will help the disable individuals to communicate in their own language with confidence. Further this will reduce the language barrier. This will also help to service providers to understand the particular needs of those individuals.

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- Secondly it is important for the local authorities as well agencies to address the variation of needs of the ethnic minority communities. These needs can be housing, financial and other related. It is understandable that the local authorities have an obligation to deliberate how they can reduce these difficulties especially by preparation and delivering the adaptation provision in their locality.
- Thirdly it is important to keep informed of entitlements and needs to disabled individuals and their carers. This will increase service satisfaction and lead to provision of proper solution.
- Finally priority should be given as urgently as possible to those individuals and their concerning needs who are in serious situation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

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