

# **BLOOMSBURY RESIDENTS' ACTION GROUP**

## **PROOF OF EVIDENCE 9**

### **Problems caused for people with impaired mobility**

#### **STATEMENT**

**By ELIZABETH PAUL**

#### **Disabled resident in Sandwich Street**

- a) I have lived in Sandwich Street for 40 years. I am now retired; I worked as a Lecturer in Epidemiology and Medical Statistics and cycled to work to teaching hospitals in Westminster, Whitechapel, Paddington, Barbican and South Kensington. After a traffic accident (waiting for a bus on the pavement), I was no longer able to cycle or use the tube, so have travelled overground in buses and taxis. I think cycling should be encouraged and made as safe as possible, while taking account of local needs for essential motor traffic and the needs of the disabled. The closure of Tavistock Place to westbound traffic is not achieving this.
- b) As a disabled resident I have been severely affected by Camden's closing of Tavistock Place. Buses in Southampton Row are frequently barely moving, it has taken 1 hour to travel between Tavistock Place and Holborn. On 3 occasions the bus driver has suggested that passengers get off and walk. I have mobility and balance issues and sometimes can only get home by taxi. Since the Trial started, a taxi ride that used to cost £10 can now cost £40; a ride that used to cost £15 can now be £45. All the additional cost comes from the gridlock on Southampton Row, Guilford Street and Judd Street.
- c) Before the new scheme was introduced traffic flowed easily round here. The stop-start traffic is increasing pollution and, for the first time in my life, I now suffer wheezing at night.
- d) One aim of the Tavistock Trial was to remove the dangerous two-way cycle lane on the North side. The two-way cycle lane was originally introduced in the face of considerable local opposition. The dangers to pedestrians and cyclists and the hazards for any motor vehicle turning were inevitable. It is an insult to the local community that the only option offered as an alternative to the Trial is a scheme that Camden is aware is not supported locally. The road layout before the introduction of the two-way cycle lane, with one-way cycle lanes on either side of the road, worked well, but was not offered as an option.
- e) Closing Tavistock Place to westbound traffic has resulted in the small gain of a slightly faster cycling commute over 0.4 mile, at the expense of residents, particularly those with disabilities. It has increased pollution, made access to the area difficult for both residents and businesses, and disrupted emergency services in this high security risk area.