

STATEMENT OF DR FABIA SHAW

1. I am a GP with a practice in Kilburn. I hold an M.B. B.S. from the Royal London Hospital and a D.R.C.O.G. (Diploma of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists).
2. I grew up in Mill Hill. I have lived in Golders Green at 27 West Heath Drive, London NW11 since 1982.
3. I am a member of Golders Green United Synagogue, London NW11. I represent the women of the four United Synagogues within the proposed Eruv area - Finchley, Golders Green, Hampstead Garden Suburb and Hendon.
4. My husband, Stephen and I have four children, Gideon is 11, Gabrielle is 9, Aaron is 6 and the youngest, Rachel is 2.
5. I try to observe orthodox Jewish law, including the laws relating to the Sabbath, to the best of my ability. I recognise that the Sabbath entails the acceptance of certain prohibitions as well as the observance of the day's positive aspects. Among the prohibitions, I accept that one is only permitted to carry in a private home or push a baby buggy in a community area defined by an eruv.
6. For most of the past eleven years, Stephen and I (together with our children) have been unable to participate as a family unit in the life of the community on the Sabbath. We have been unable to go out with our young children because we are not able to use a baby buggy on the Sabbath as there is no eruv. In addition, without an eruv we cannot carry nappies, baby wipes, bottles, food and other supplies which are essential when going out with a baby.

7. Stephen or I have had to stay at home with Rachel, as we previously have had to stay with our other children, if the rest of the family goes out on the Sabbath. Even though Rachel is able to walk, we cannot easily take her out on the Sabbath as we cannot be certain that she will be able to walk to and from our destination. From time to time we do take her out on the Sabbath. At the moment, and for the next six months or so until she is a confident walker, if we do so, it tends to be stressful. We are constantly concerned that she may not want or be able to walk and will ask to be carried.
8. Until each child has become a confident walker, we have been unable to attend Sabbath services at the synagogue as a family. We cannot accept invitations to other families for lunch or tea on the Sabbath nor can we invite other Sabbath observant families with very young children to lunch or tea at our home. The result is a feeling of being unable to participate in Jewish communal life on the day of the week when it is most important to do so.
9. Observance of the Sabbath in a community without an eruv places a great strain on orthodox Jews with young families. It is difficult for a mother after the birth of her first child. I vividly remember my own experience. I felt that I had been transformed from a participant in the community to a mere spectator. Since either Stephen or I had to remain at home, we were no longer able to participate in Sabbath life outside the home as a couple.
10. The fact that couples are always having to make arrangements with respect to the Sabbath - which one will stay at home with the children - places stress on marital relationships. Typically, it is the woman who stays at

home to allow the man to attend services since under Jewish law a man is obliged to pray with a congregation. This is frequently a cause of resentment. It sets up an unnatural conflict which is avoided in the communities all over the World which have established Eruvim.

11. Another area of difficulty is with children aged between 5 and 11 who are old enough to walk but too young to go out alone. Children of this age can become very frustrated when they want to go out but the parents tell them that the family cannot go out together. This situation is particularly difficult for families who are not fortunate enough to have gardens for their children to play in. In such a situation, particularly during the long days in the summer when the Sabbath does not terminate until very late, one can feel imprisoned at home. Similarly, families with late walking or physically handicapped children experience real problems at being trapped in their homes on the Sabbath.
12. On behalf of myself and the other present and future mothers whom I represent, I urge the Inspector to approve the planning application for the Eruv. This is a really useful amenity which will enable hundreds of mothers to live a fuller life and to participate in communal life by giving and accepting hospitality and by attending the synagogue.
13. I have experienced the contrast myself. On Passover and other festivals, when carrying and pushing buggies is permitted and also when I have been in communities which have an eruv, it feels wonderful and natural to go out together to the synagogue and elsewhere as a family.