



Bexley Voice for Special Needs Children

Newsletter ~ November / December 2014

Issue 18

Inside this issue:

Parent/Carer
'Drop In' Dates

Independent Support
FREE Service for
EHC Plans

Bexley Beavers
Swimming Club

Disability Benefits
Free Seminar

Bexley Voice AGM
Report

Adult Social Care
Consultation

Downs syndrome
Parent Workshop

BEXLEY VOICE WELCOME

Welcome to the latest BV newsletter. The new SEND Reforms are now well under way and our 2 workshops to support parents and carers in understanding the changes were well attended. We will be including a full article in next month's issue.

Bexley's 'Local Offer' has now gone live! Under the Children and Families Act 2014, every council is required to produce a local offer including information on all schools SEND provision and local services in education, health and social care. Visit the Local Offer information page on our website for more information or visit www.bexleylocaloffer.uk.

PARENT & CARER 'DROP IN' SESSIONS

Bexley Voice 'Drop In' sessions are an informal opportunity to chat with a BV member and take place at Goals Football Centre, Bexleyheath (by Asda).

There is no need to book to see a BV member, just come along anytime. We can offer support and information about many issues such as:

- ◆ Education
- ◆ Transition
- ◆ EHC Plans and assessments
- ◆ SEN Reforms
- ◆ Local events/workshops
- ◆ Local organisations

The next session for any parent or carer of a child with special or additional needs is;

**Monday 24th November
9.30am ~ 12noon**

This forms part of the Bexley SNAP assessment morning. You will need to pre-book via Bexley SNAP if you wish to see a professional advisor on 0208 320 1488.



PARENT PROVIDER MEETINGS

By Carol Penny, CEO of Bexley SNAP

Bexley SNAP were delighted to welcome a range of short break providers to the first "Providers' Corner" which took place at the SNAP Information and Assessment session at Goals in September.

The idea of the service is to enable parents and carers to meet several short break providers in one setting, discuss their child's needs and support levels and find out if an activity can be provided that is appropriate for their child.

Many Providers noted that there were not many parents of children with complex and/or severe needs in attendance, so it was difficult to have discussions

about what kinds of support need to be put in place to ensure our most disabled children can access a wide range of leisure opportunities.

It would be great to see more parents at the next meeting, perhaps come along with a list of activities you would like your child to do, what stops them from accessing those now and an idea of the specialist support that your child would need. Providers, parents and carers can work together to see how we can make it happen!

If you know of a great provider of services for disabled children, perhaps something your child attends and loves and you are confident provides good support, ask them to contact

SNAP so we can arrange for them to come to the next Information & Assessment session.

We'd also like to hear back from any parents that attended the first meeting with your thoughts on if it was useful, and who you would be interested seeing or chatting with.

The next meeting is scheduled for 9.30am on Monday 24th November at Goals Football Club in Bexleyheath.

Contact Katie Lines at Bexley SNAP on 020 8320 1488 to discuss any aspect of Providers Corner.



contact a family
for families with disabled children

Members of



National Network of Parent Carer Forums
'Our Strength is our Shared Experience'
www.nnpkf.org.uk

Bexley Voice is run by volunteer parents and carers of children with special/additional needs and disabilities living in Bexley. We are urgently seeking a new Treasurer, Minute Taker and Volunteer Coordinator. Visit our website for information.

Disability Benefits and PIP Seminars

Disability Benefits Seminar
Thursday 27th November
Registration ~ 10.00am
Seminar ~ 10.30am
Venue: Hurst Community
Centre, Hurst Rd, Bexley DA5 3HL.

Bexley Voice, Bexley NAS, Bexley SNAP and Bexley Mencap are jointly hosting a FREE seminar for parents & carers who live in Bexley. Oliver Mawdsley Outreach Manager for DWP - will be giving a talk on Carer's Allowance and Disability Benefits. Oliver will outline the entitlement conditions for these benefits, how to claim them, available support and sign post to other benefits; he will also be available at the end to answer any questions.

For more information contact:

- Bexley Mencap: 0208 303 6336 ~ kathryn@bexleymencap.org.uk
- Bexley SNAP: 0208 320 1488 ~ families@bexleysnap.org.uk
- Bexley Voice: 07512 409936 ~ rachel.bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk
- Bexley NAS: juli.atkinson@live.com

To reserve your place email:
rachel.bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk or
Tel: 07512 409936.



Disability Benefits Seminar

Bexley Voice, Bexley Snap, Bexley NAS and Bexley Mencap are hosting a free half day seminar for parents and carers on Carers Allowance and Disability Benefits.

The guest speaker will be Oliver Mawdsley - Outreach Manager from the Department for Work and Pensions. Oliver will outline the entitlement conditions for these benefits, how to claim them, available support and sign post to other benefits. Oliver will also be available at the end to answer any questions you may have.



Thursday 27th November 2014
(10.00am ~ Refreshments & Registration)
Seminar 10.30 ~ 11.30am
Q & A 11.30 ~ 12.00noon
HURST COMMUNITY CENTRE
HURST ROAD, BEXLEY, KENT. DA5 3HL

For more information contact:

Bexley Mencap: 0208 303 6336 ~ kathryn@bexleymencap.org.uk
Bexley SNAP: 0208 320 1488 ~ families@bexleysnap.org.uk
Bexley Voice: 07512 409936 ~ rachel.bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk
Bexley NAS: juli.atkinson@live.com

To reserve your place:

Email: rachel.bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk or Tel: 07512 409936

Post: Send the completed reply slip below to: 1 Bullers Close, Sidcup, Kent. DA14 5LD

I would like to reserve a place at the Disability Benefits Seminar on 27th November 2014

Name: _____ Telephone number: _____
Email: _____

P.I.P seminar was attended by over 50 parents and carers!

On the 16th of October, Bexley Voice, Bexley NAS, Bexley SNAP and Bexley Mencap jointly hosted a free seminar for parents & carers about Personal Independence Payments.

Lee Simpson from the Department of Works and Pensions gave an informative talk including information on the application process, point scoring, how to claim and an overall view on how the new system will work to replace DLA for those aged 16+.

If you were unable to attend the seminar but would like information, visit the PIP webpage in the financial section on our Bexley Voice website, where you can also download leaflets from DWP and Contact A Family.

Our thanks go to Lee Simpson and everyone who helped in organising and supporting this free event.



Bexley Beavers Swimming Club

Bexley Beavers Swimming Club for the Disabled meets every Friday evening from 6.00-7.30pm at Crook Log Swimming Pool, Brampton Road, Bexleyheath.

We welcome anyone with a disability or special/additional need, along with their family, friends and carers to join in and have fun in a very relaxed and friendly environment.

It is run entirely by volunteers, with fully trained volunteer lifeguards. We have exclusive use of both pools and a hoist is available in the larger pool.

Please ask for a membership form as both Parkwood Leisure Centre and Bexley Beavers need your details for statistics and record-keeping. We became a Charity last year as funding had stopped and now we raise our own funds.

There is no entry fee but donations are very welcome.

Just turn up, no need to book!
Call 0203 393 8305 or find us on Facebook for more information.

If you are a parent or carer of a child or young person or a professional working with SEND in Bexley, then you can become a Bexley Voice member, gain support, information and join our 'voice'. Don't forget, membership is free!

Independent Support for EHC Plans & Assessments

By Yvonne Linton
Independent Support Manager
from 'GAD'.

In September 2014, the Government made changes to the law for children and young people aged 0-25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Instead of a "Statement" children & young people will have an Education, Health and Care plan (EHC) - for the first time combining health and social care with education to achieve your aspirations.

'GAD' (Greenwich Association of Disabled People) and Greenwich Mencap are working together to support families in Greenwich and Bexley by offering a new FREE and independent support service.

The service aims to make the process simple, putting the child or young person at the heart of the plan and has team members fluent in BSL. We combine person centred thinking with expertise on the new SEN Code

of Practice to prepare families to be equal partners in the planning process.

What we can do:

- ◆ Explain how the statutory assessment process works, supporting you through the process from making a request for an assessment through to reviewing the final EHC plan.
- ◆ Ensure your views, needs and wishes are listened to throughout the process.
- ◆ Attend meetings with you for support.
- ◆ Support you in drafting letters and other supporting paperwork.
- ◆ Reviewing with you, your EHC plan to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- ◆ Signpost or refer you to other support or specialist services if required.
- ◆ Provide information on how to access the 'Local Offer'.
- ◆ Provide information on how to use a 'Personal budget' if you have one.



A unique partnership for Bexley and Greenwich

Greenwich Association of Disabled People (GAD) and Greenwich Mencap have been working for the benefit of disabled people for nearly 40 years. We joined forces in 2014 to share expertise and to enable us to support as many young people and families as possible through the Independent Support programme.

We both have offices within the Forum in Greenwich and have a combined team of seven Independent Supporters fully trained and with specialist expertise in working with young disabled people. All of our team are fully vetted and DBS checked.

All referrals and initial contact is via GAD who then allocates the best member of the team to support you through the EHC process.

The Forum @ Greenwich,
Trafalgar Road,
Greenwich, SE10 9EQ

Tel: 020 8269 0674
Email: info@gad.org.uk

www.gad.org.uk

Registered charity: 1052814


Independent Support

Personal advice for young disabled people and their families with the new Education, Health and Care plans in Bexley and Greenwich

020 8269 0674

independent support

Contact GAD on:
Tel: 0208 269 0674
Email: info@gad.org.uk
Website: www.gad.org.uk



Independent Support

In September 2014, the Government made changes to the law for children and young people aged 0-25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The new law will result in changes to the way children and young people receive support from their local council, health and social care services and nursery, school or college.

Instead of a 'Statement' people will have an Education, Health and Care plan (EHC). For the first time combining health and social care with education to achieve your aspirations.

Has yet to be asked or not getting support?

If a child or young person is not yet in school or has a learning need or disability, which is not currently being supported in a school, you will need an assessment to determine if they need support identified through a EHC plan.

Existing statements or LDA

If a child or young person has an existing SEN Statement, the local authority will be in contact with you to inform you when your Statement or LDA is due to be transferred into an EHC plan.

EHC plans are to support a child or young person where their needs cannot be met by the existing resources in schools or colleges. It looks at the aspirations of a child or young person and sets out the duties of statutory authorities to achieve those aspirations.

Our service aims to make the process simple and transparent putting a child or young person at the heart of their plan.

What we can do:

- ◆ Explain how the statutory assessment process works, supporting you through the process from making a request for an assessment through to reviewing the final EHC plan
- ◆ Ensure your views, needs and wishes are listened to throughout the process and are clearly reflected in the final plan
- ◆ Attend meetings with you for support in the assessment process
- ◆ Support you in drafting letters and other supporting paperwork
- ◆ Reviewing with you your EHC plan to ensure it is fit for purpose
- ◆ Signpost or refer you to other support or specialist services if required
- ◆ Provide information on how to access the 'Local Offer'

What is a Local Offer?

The Local Offer is a detailed list of services and provision accessible for people who live in Bexley or Greenwich. It will help you to identify relevant services that may be needed to support individual needs and aspirations.

We can help you to understand what is available locally

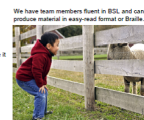
Personal Budgets

A new feature of the EHC plans is the opportunity to request a Personal Budget. This can enable young people or their families to have more control over how and where they can receive support. We can provide more information on this and how to request a budget during the EHC process.

Named contact

When you contact us or are referred to us, we will give you a named Independent Supporter who will support you throughout the process.

We have team members fluent in BSL and can produce material in easy-read format or Braille



Local News

Adult Social Care Consultation

The 2014 Annual Report for Bexley's Adult social care services has now been published. It outlines what the Council has achieved and has information on spending to support vulnerable adults to lead independent lives. It explains how the Council is meeting the social care and support needs of adults in Bexley. This includes carers, older people, people with disabilities or mental health needs, together with other vulnerable adults.

Residents are invited to give their views on the content of the report by completing a short survey by March 2015. Should you wish to comment it can be found at:
www.bexley.gov.uk/ourconsultations

Before you know it your children will be adults so it is worth taking a look even if you don't feel able to comment.

Downs syndrome Workshop

Following on from the conference earlier this year supporting children with Downs syndrome in schools, a parent workshop where the children could also attend was recently held.

This was organised by Lisa Randell a parent of a child with Down syndrome (and a newly appointed trustee for Bexley Voice) and Rose from Bexley SNAP. It was held at the Erith and Belvedere Congregational church, Picardy Road, Belvedere on the 27th September.

Once again Gillian Bird from the Downs syndrome Association was the guest speaker and gave lots of information to parents along with giving parents a great opportunity to ask questions and gain valuable information. The children had a fantastic time making full use of the indoor play area and would like to

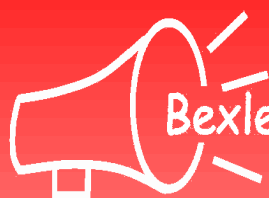
thank the SNAP staff for all their help keeping all the children entertained.

We would also like to thank Asda Belvedere for providing the food and refreshments for the event.

We had very positive feedback from all those who attended especially the children and we are looking forward to organising the next one.



If you would like to keep up to date with local events, become a member of Bexley Voice so we can send you updates.



Bexley Voice for Special Needs Children

Next Issue:

Dyslexia
Conference
for Schools

SEN Reforms
Workshop
feedback

Bexley School
Local Offers

Parent/Carer
Drop In Dates

ADHD
Local support

BV Volunteer
Support needed

BEXLEY VOICE EVENTS

Bexley Voice AGM 2014

Thank you to everyone who came and supported us at our recent AGM where we were delighted to welcome a new trustee, Lisa Randell to our team.

We would like to thank Frances Bush for all her hard work and commitment since the start of BV, who although is stepping down as a trustee, will continue to be an active volunteer.

Thank you to our chair Claire who gave a great speech and reminded us of all the fantastic things we have achieved over the last year. We all look forward to another positive year at Bexley Voice.



Training Opportunities

Bexley Voice are currently planning our training for early 2015 and are hoping to provide the following for parents and carers:

- ◆ How to be a Bexley Voice Parent Rep.
- ◆ Understanding Outcomes and their importance in the new SEN legislation.
- ◆ The Local Offer and how to get the best from it in Bexley.

It would be helpful to know if these are what parents and carers want - please could you either comment on our Facebook page or let us know by email to: bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk if you would be interested in any or all of the above.

Many thanks.

School Visit Programme

Bexley Voice have been visiting schools in Bexley for the last 3 years and have supported many parents and carers, from providing information on many issues to being a 'listening ear'.

A BV volunteer was made very welcome on a recent visit to Barrington Primary School in Welling with a tour of their new SEN provision for speech, language and communication.

From coffee mornings, parents evenings and school fairs, BV is happy to come along and meet with parents and carers of children with SEND. If you would like us to visit your child's school, complete the request form on our website or ask your school to contact janetpearl.bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk.

CONTACT US

VOLUNTEER HELPLINE:

07512 409936

EMAIL:

bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk

WEBSITE:

www.bexleyvoice.org.uk

**REGISTERED CHARITY
NUMBER: 1142306**

BV Facebook Group

To ensure confidentiality of our members we have changed to a 'secret group' and all Facebook members are registered parents and carers on our Bexley Voice membership database.

If you are an existing member of Bexley Voice and would like to join the group, send us an email request or complete the FB group request form on our website.

We have over 200 members sharing information, ideas and offering support on issues such as:

- SEN Reforms
- DLA and PIP Benefits
- EHC Plans

Why not join our parent/carers only Facebook group today?



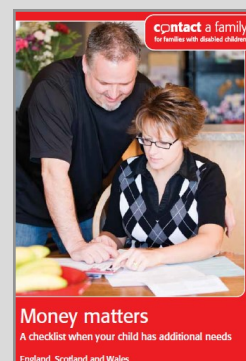
Bexley Voice Website

Our new 'Financial Support' section has now gone live! It includes information on:

- ◆ Direct Payment & Short Breaks
- ◆ DLA, PIP & Tax Credits
- ◆ Carers Allowance
- ◆ Aids & Equipment
- ◆ Family Fund
- ◆ Transport

You can also view and download many guides from Department of Works & Pensions and Contact A Family.

If you have any suggestions for our website, please send us an email.



Money matters
A checklist when your child has additional needs
England, Scotland and Wales

