



# Bexley Voice for Special Needs Children

## Newsletter ~ January / February 2015

Issue 19

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### BEXLEY VOICE WELCOME

Welcome to the latest Bexley Voice newsletter. We would like to wish all of our members a very Happy New Year and look forward to a positive 2015.

Our recent seminar on Carers Allowance and Carers Credit was attended by over 50 parents and carers. Our thanks go to the speaker, (Oliver from the Department of Works and Pensions) for his excellent presentation and leaflets. Many attendees commented that they previously did not know about claiming Carers Credit, a very important part of your future pension. More information is on our website.

If you are a parent or carer of a child/young person or a professional working with SEND in Bexley, you can become a member, gain support, information and join our 'voice'.

**Don't forget,  
membership is free!**

### BV Facebook Group

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

- ◆ Behaviour Issues
- ◆ Schools/Placements
- ◆ DLA and other benefits
- ◆ EHC Plans
- ◆ Social Activities
- ◆ Sleep Remedies

All BV Facebook members are registered parents and carers on our Bexley Voice membership database to ensure confidentiality.

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



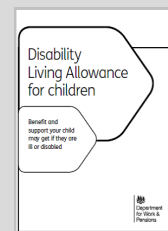
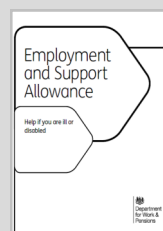
### DLA/ESA Seminar

Monday 9th March 2015  
Registration 9.30am  
Hurst Community Centre,  
Hurst Road, Bexley.

Due to requests from our members and the popularity of our Disability Benefits seminars we are currently organising another FREE seminar on **Disability Living Allowance** for children up to age 16 and **Employment and Support Allowance**.

Our speaker, Lee Simpson, is from Department of Works and Pensions (DWP).

'New on-line booking system'. Please complete the booking form on our website at [www.bexleyvoice.org.uk](http://www.bexleyvoice.org.uk).



### PARENT & CARER 'DROP IN' SESSIONS

Bexley Voice 'Drop In' sessions take place at Goals Football Centre Bexleyheath. (by Asda). It is an informal opportunity to chat with a BV member about any concerns you may have regarding your child or young person with special needs.

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

**Monday 26th January  
9.30am ~ 12noon**

There is no need to book to see a BV member, just come along anytime. This forms part of the Bexley SNAP assessment morning, and you will need to pre-book via Bexley SNAP if you wish to see a professional advisor on 0208 320 1488.

We can offer support and information about many issues such as:

- ◆ Education/Transition
- ◆ EHC Plans and assessments

### Volunteers needed!

BV is run by volunteer parents and carers of children with special needs and disabilities. We have roles for volunteers and trustees, including general admin and fundraising. We are also looking for parent reps to attend local meetings on SEND issues.

If you would like to offer your support to the running of BV, please come along to our January 'Drop In' session and speak to a volunteer, we really hope to see you there!

**contact a family**  
for families with disabled children

Members of



National Network of Parent Carer Forums  
'Our Strength is our Shared Experience'  
[www.nnpf.org.uk](http://www.nnpf.org.uk)

Bexley Voice is urgently seeking a new Treasurer and Volunteer Coordinator. Visit our website for information on how to become a volunteer or come along to our January Parent and Carer Drop In session and offer your support!

## SEN REFORM SEMINARS AND UPDATES

Bexley Voice recently hosted a free daytime and evening seminar for parents and carers in Bexley on 'Understanding the New Special Educational Needs Reforms'.

Our thanks go to Kay Moore from Bromley Parent Voice who was our speaker for both seminars. She received great feedback from our parents and her knowledge and understanding were invaluable.

Places were limited and both seminars were fully booked. The daytime seminar was well attended and parents enjoyed a light lunch and an opportunity to speak to other parents. However, Bexley Voice were very disappointed that 10 out of the 20 parents confirmed for the evening seminar did not attend, taking valuable places for those who were on our waiting list.

We provided information regarding the new changes, implementation timescales, EHC (Education, Health and Social Care) Plans and how the new Children and Families Act may affect you and your family. Such as:

- ◆ EHC Plans (previously statements)
- ◆ The Local Offer
- ◆ Individual Budgets

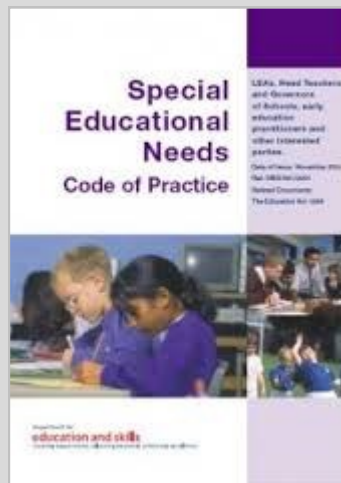
If you were unable to attend, all the information from the seminars has been added to our website.

The new SEND Code of Practice from the Department for Education and the Department of Health, was published on the 11th of June 2014.

This statutory code is for:

- ◆ SEN coordinators
- ◆ early education providers
- ◆ health and social services staff
- ◆ local authorities
- ◆ headteachers/school staff

To help you understand the Code of Practice (217 pages), you can also find a short parent guide (59 pages) produced by the Department of Education on our website. To download your free copy, please visit the 'SEN Reform/SEND code of practice section' on our website.



## Extra SEN support in mainstream schools

Most children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) or a disability will attend mainstream schools. Guidance to schools on their legal duties is contained in section 6 of the code of practice.

The Code says that schools must: Use their best endeavours to make sure that a child with SEN gets the support they need.

In mainstream schools, a single category called SEN support has now replaced School Action and School Action Plus. Schools must identify pupils who have SEN and need extra help through SEN support. They should record this in the school records and must inform parents if they are making special educational provision.

Schools should meet with you at least three times a year to review how your child is progressing and must provide a report at least once a year on your child's progress. If your child is not making the expected progress, you or the school can ask for an Education, Health and Care needs assessment.

Please visit the education section on our website for more information.

## DYSLEXIA COFFEE MORNINGS & CONFERENCE

The Dyslexia Association (DABBGL) has received funding to run a series of Coffee Mornings. There will be a short talk followed by the chance to share ideas and concerns with others while relaxing with coffee and cake.

**6th Feb & 6th March, starts at 10am.**

Call 07000 505055 for more information.

Entry is free and all are welcome.



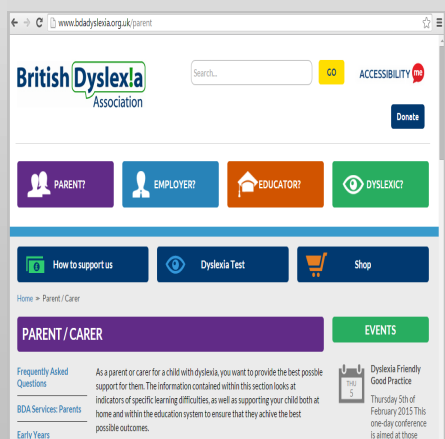
## Dyslexia Friendly Good Practice London Conference

**Thursday 5th February 2015**

This one-day conference is aimed at those individuals who wish to improve their environment in order to make it more dyslexia friendly. A range of speakers will explore the benefits of being dyslexia friendly in schools, colleges, youth offending teams, universities and organisations.

Being dyslexia friendly benefits all children, not just those with dyslexia and the positive outcomes have been well documented.

For further information please contact BDA- [conference@bdadyslexia.org.uk](mailto:conference@bdadyslexia.org.uk) or call 0333 405 4555.



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!

## BEXLEY'S 'LOCAL OFFER' HAS GONE LIVE!

Under the new Children and Families Act introduced in September 2014, every council is required to produce a 'Local Offer'. Bexley's Local Offer, as with most councils, is in the early stages and will continue to be developed.

### What is the Local Offer?

To provide information for children and young people from birth to 25, with special/additional educational needs (SEND) and/or disabilities and their parents or carers in a single place.

### What is its purpose?

To enable parents and young people to see more clearly what services are available in their area and how to access them. It is being developed in conjunction with children and young people, parents and carers, and local services, including schools, colleges, health and social care agencies.

### What does it include?

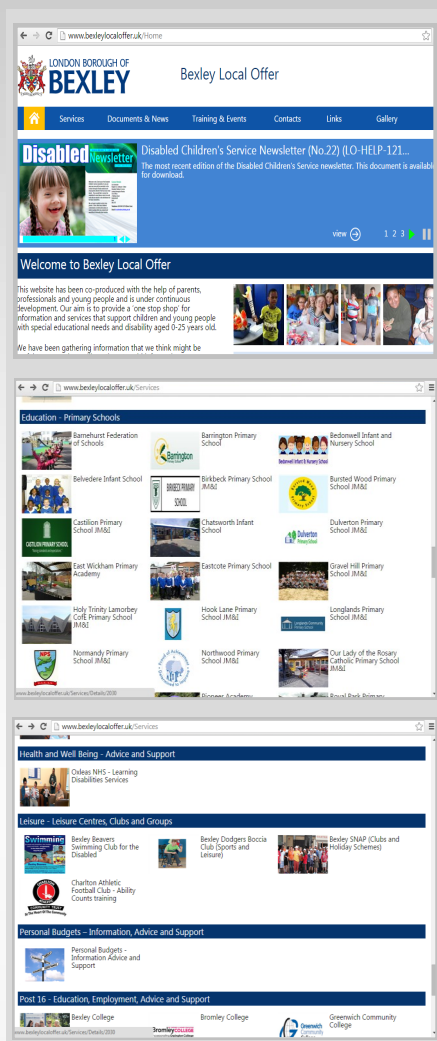
Provision from across education, health and social care including training, support and preparing for adulthood, housing and employment. It will also include travel arrangements for children and young people to schools, colleges and early years education.

The vision for the Local Offer:

- ◆ It envisages a multi-agency approach with joint commissioning to meet the needs of children through the local offer and through individual Education, Health and Care Plans.
- ◆ It holds the potential for other services to enhance the local offer such as leisure and housing.
- ◆ Keeping the local offer under review will be important to its development, improvement and the engagement of all parties.

The Local Offer must also provide SEND educational provision information from every infant, primary and secondary school and all further education such as colleges etc. This will be a vital point of information for any parent or carer looking for a new nursery, school or college during the transition stages.

Visit the Local Offer information page on our website for more information about the Local Offer or visit [www.bexleylocaloffer.uk/home](http://www.bexleylocaloffer.uk/home)



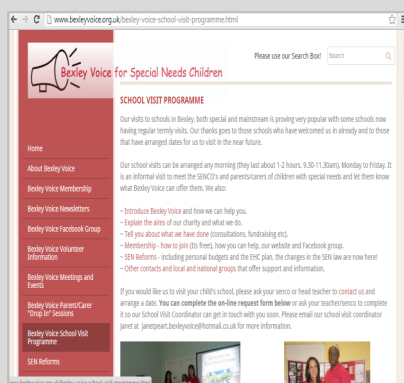
## BEXLEY VOICE SCHOOL VISIT PROGRAMME

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

BV volunteers are getting repeat requests and were made very welcome for a second visit at a recent coffee morning at Crook Log Primary School in Bexleyheath. Claire, Rachel and Sandra spent time talking to parents about the change over from Statements to EHC plans and the Local Offer.

From coffee mornings, parents evenings and school fairs, BV is happy to come along and meet with parents and carers of children with SEND. Encourage your SENCO to book a BV visit!

If you would like us to visit your child's school, complete the request form on our website or ask your school to contact Janet Peart, (our school visit co-ordinator) at [janetpeart.bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:janetpeart.bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk).



## Bexley Voice Website

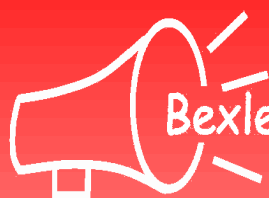
We are delighted to be getting on average 200-400 hits per day!

For those that are unable to attend our upcoming DLA/ESA seminar on the 9th of March, we have updated our Financial Support section to include information on Employment and Support Allowance. Other new updates include information on:

- ◆ SEND Jargon Busting
- ◆ Dyslexia Coffee Mornings
- ◆ Family Athletics Sessions
- ◆ Dates for BV Drop In sessions
- ◆ Parents guide for the new SEND Code of Practice

Visit [www.bexleyvoice.org.uk!](http://www.bexleyvoice.org.uk!)





# Bexley Voice for Special Needs Children

## Next Issue:

Parent/Carer  
Drop In Dates

Employment  
and Support  
Allowance

Our local  
Samaritans

New Parent  
and Carer  
workshops

ADHD  
Local support

Special Needs  
Scouts Group

## LOCAL AND NATIONAL EVENTS

### Time Out For Special Needs 10 week Parenting Course

23rd April 2015  
(for 10 weeks)

Thursday evening 7pm until 9pm.

Danson Children's Centre (Near Crook Log Sports Centre)

The course description: Common sense, jargon free information for parents and carers to help you engage with your children and boost your relationship.

Together with the opportunity to explore ways of sharing similar experiences of life with children with additional needs which will include managing behaviour and dealing with home/school issues.

Hopefully by the end of the course you will have learnt strategies to keep going as a parent, helping with self-esteem, understanding behaviour, understanding the SEND Code of practice and SEND Provision, and looking at the wider issues for families and children.

This course is ideal for parents of a child with ASD, ADHD or any type of emotional, challenging or behavioural issues.

The cost will be £10. To book your place, please call 0208 298 2842.



### The Autism Show 12th & 13th June London Excel

The Autism Show, the national event for autism, dedicated to the people who live and work with autism on a daily basis.

The Autism Show is for the growing community of parents, carers, professionals and individuals on the autistic spectrum.

The event offers more practical advice, support, products and information on autism than can found anywhere else in the UK.

Visit [www.autismshow.co.uk](http://www.autismshow.co.uk).



## CONTACT US

VOLUNTEER HELPLINE:  
07512 409936

EMAIL:  
[bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk)

WEBSITE:  
[www.bexleyvoice.org.uk](http://www.bexleyvoice.org.uk)

REGISTERED CHARITY  
NUMBER: 1142306



## Bexley Family AthleFit

**Fun, inclusive athletics-based, sessions for the whole family to take part!**



**Open to families with a disabled child**

- ◆ 8 free sessions starting 17 January 2015
- ◆ Saturdays 1.30-2.30pm
- ◆ Erith Leisure Centre  
Avenue Road, Erith DA8 3AT



For more information contact  
Lynne Atkinson on 07718 394825 or  
[lynneatkinson@englandathletics.org](mailto:lynneatkinson@englandathletics.org)



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