

Bexley Voice for Special Needs Children

Newsletter ~ March / April 2015

Issue 20

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BEXLEY VOICE WELCOME

Free Workshops

Our workshops on Positive Outcomes for EHC Plans filled up so fast that we are hoping to organise more for later this year. Our 'First Timers' workshop for those who are new to the statutory assessment process received positive feedback. We are looking forward to informing parents on our 'Conversions' workshop later this month.

We are also currently arranging a seminar with Scope and Irwin Mitchell Solicitors that will take place locally in May, including offering our members advice on certain legal issues.

If you would like to register your interest for the above workshops/seminar, email rachel.bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk so that we can contact you if dates become available.

More information will be available on our website soon.

Volunteers Needed

BV is run by volunteer parents and carers of children with special needs and disabilities. We are currently looking for:

- ◆ Website Proof Reader
- ◆ Facebook Moderator
- ◆ Volunteer Coordinator
- ◆ Newsletter Distributors
- ◆ Treasurer / Minute Taker
- ◆ Parent Reps (to attend local meetings)

If you would like to offer your support to the running of BV, please come along to our March 'Drop In' session and speak to a volunteer about how you can get involved. We really hope to see you there!

Bexley Voice FREE membership

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 and join our 'voice'. Don't forget, membership is free!

Bexley Voice Website

Our website offers parents and carers so much information for families of children and young people with disabilities, special or additional needs.

We are delighted to be getting on average 300 hits every day.

You can:

- ◆ Join as a member by completing the on-line form
- ◆ Existing members can update their information and join our Facebook group
- ◆ Use the 'Search Box' to find specific information
- ◆ Find out all about us and how we can support you
- ◆ Dates for BV Drop In sessions
- ◆ Book places at future workshops and seminars
- ◆ Take part in consultations
- ◆ Find information on local and national organisations
- ◆ ...and so much more!

Visit

www.bexleyvoice.org.uk

BEXLEY VOICE SCHOOL VISIT PROGRAMME

From coffee mornings, parent's evenings and school fairs, Bexley Voice would love to come along and meet with parents and carers of children with SEND.

Encourage your SENCO or Head Teacher to book a BV visit soon! If you would like us to visit your child's nursery, school or college, please complete the request form on our website or contact Janet Peart, (our school visit co-ordinator) janetpeart.bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk

We 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 have been invited back to recent coffee mornings at Gravel Hill and Barrington Primary Schools. Claire, Rachel and Moji spent time talking to parents about EHC plans, the Local Offer and the Independent Travel scheme.



contact a family
for families with disabled children

Members of



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

Bexley Voice are once again shaking their buckets as part of the Christchurch Sponsored Fun Run on Saturday 28th of March at 2pm. If you would like to support, help or donate, please visit www.christchurchsidcup.org. GOOD LUCK!

EHC PLANS ~ WHAT ARE THEY?

You may have heard of the new EHC (Education, Health and Care) Plan. So what is it, does my child need one and if so, how do I get one?

What is an EHC Plan?

With the introduction of the Children and Families Act 2014, Statements of Education can no longer be applied for. Now they are known as EHC Plans. It will enable education, health and social care services to plan services together by law - so when their children are assessed, parents will be assured they will get full provision to address their children's needs. Often it is not clear to parents, and to local services, who is responsible for delivering services written into the EHC Plan, for example, speech and language therapy may appear and is funded and commissioned by local health services. An EHC Plan is a legal document and, as such, non-compliance can be legally challenged.

Does my child need one?

Not all children will need one. An EHC Plan may be issued when a school has done all it can be expected to do, and the child is still not progressing satisfactorily. It may also be offered to children and young people with significant difficulties. It is a document setting out the child's special educational/health and social care needs and the help the child should receive. This provision is funded by the Local Authority.

Who is responsible for EHC Plans?

The Local Authority is responsible for the implementation of an EHC Plan. Local Authorities have a 3 year period in which to review and change all existing 'Statements of Education' over to a new EHC Plan. If your child has a statement, you will be contacted to start the process. Bexley Council has started the process by prioritising year 6 and year 11 pupils. If you would like to know more about the transition process, you can download the Bexley Council Transition Timeline from our website.

Who can make an application?

An application for an EHC Plan can be made by a parent or the child's school. It is essential that you seek advice before making an application. Some applications are initially refused due to lack of supporting evidence, causing delays and stress for those involved. Parent Referral forms can be downloaded from our website.

Parental Request for Statutory Assessment (Education, Health and Care Plan)

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS

CHILD'S DETAILS

Child's Name: _____ Home address: _____
 Post code: _____ Telephone number: _____
 Date of birth: _____

Parental Care Responsibility

Child's ethnicity: _____
 Religion: _____
 Mother's name: _____
 Father's name: _____
 Is a beneficiary of an Education Allowance? Yes/No

Relationship of other people with parental responsibility to child

Do you have any disabilities that require additional forms or arrangements for access arrangements for meetings?
 Yes/No

Special educational needs

Is there to be a request for support in preparation to present with a statement when the school or other services living in the family have already been a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan?
 Yes/No

Other people with parental responsibility

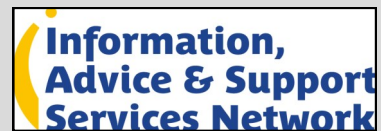
Full name: _____
 Relationship to child: _____
 Telephone number: _____
 Email address: _____
 Date of birth: _____
 Medical condition and address: _____
 Designation: _____

Who needs to see the child's parent and who is working with them?
 Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Telephone number: _____
 Email address: _____

Where can I get local advice?

IASS

Previously known as the Parent Participation Service, the IASS is now the 'INFORMATION, ADVICE AND SUPPORT SERVICE (IASS)' IASS are statutory services offering information to parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs from birth to age 25. Contact: Mary Howard
 Tel: 0203 0454407 Mob: 07817471395
 Email: mary.howard@bexley.gov.uk



Independent Support

This service provides FREE independent advice for families in Bexley and Greenwich. From the early stages of applying for an EHC plan to changing over from an educational statement to the new EHC plan. Website: www.gad.org.uk
 Email: info@gad.org.uk
 Tel: 0208 269 0674



Please visit the EHC Plan, SEN Reforms and Education sections on our website for more information on local and national support.

BEXLEY NAS AND ADHD COFFEE MORNINGS

Our local branch of the National Autistic Society holds regular Coffee Mornings for parents and carers at Sidcup Youth Centre, Burnt Oak Lane, Sidcup.

The next coffee morning is: Thursday 19th March 9.30am ~ 12.30pm.

There will be a short talk by Liesil Batterham from NAS Head Office about education rights. This is followed by the chance to share ideas and concerns with others whilst relaxing with coffee.

Entry is free and anyone with a child on the spectrum is welcome.

As part of their coffee morning Bexley NAS have kindly allowed an area to offer support to a new group of parents of a child or young person with ADHD. They would love you to join them!

Call Bexley NAS on 07826 950496 for more information.



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.

Visit www.autismshow.co.uk.



Bexley Voice has recently received some donations and would like to say a big THANK YOU to John Lewis at Bluewater, Waitrose in Sidcup and Asda at Crook Log! The full story will in the next edition of our newsletter.

LOCAL NEWS

DOWN SYNDROME FIRST COFFEE MORNING SUCCESS!

Bexley Voice, Portage and Bexley SNAP recently hosted it's first ever coffee morning for parents and carers of children with Down Syndrome.

This was held at Little Stars premises, St Augustine's school.

We enjoyed chatting and meeting new parents with young babies and shared ideas whilst enjoying a cup of tea and biscuits. We let everyone know we are here to support one another.

We felt it was a great success and had very positive feedback from the parents who attended. Due to this, we are aiming to hold more coffee mornings in the near future. Thank you to everyone who helped make this event happen.

BEXLEY VOICE - FAMILY BOWLING SESSIONS

Following discussions on our Facebook page - we are keen to offer families the opportunity to go bowling, confident they will be welcomed/expected by staff and located together.

We have made special arrangements with the Manager (Adus) at Ten Pin Bowling in Bexleyheath for a number of lanes to be made available to our families as follows:

- ◆ Up to 4 lanes available for our group to book
- ◆ Cost ~ 2 games £5.25 per person
- ◆ Located at one end or the other to help contain the runners!
- ◆ Session time is 4.30pm start (before it starts to get busy)

Please book in advance by calling **0871 221 00 00**, If you have any questions please call Ten Pin Bowling direct by speaking to Adus or the Duty Manager. Please advise it is a Bexley Voice booking. (As this is a new session, you may need to explain the arrangement to start with).

Session day is the third Wednesday in each month. The first session will therefore be on:

WEDNESDAY 18th MARCH.

This is open to any family who are members of Bexley Voice no matter what the SEND is.

We hope you enjoy your experience, please let us know how you get on!

NATIONAL SUPPORT WEBSITES

CONTACT A FAMILY

Finding out your child has a special need, disability or medical condition can be difficult and bewildering. Parents of disabled children need support, information and advice. The website contains lots of booklets to download or you can call the helpline for a free copy to be sent to you.

They are the main support for Bexley Voice and we highly recommend you visit their website for information on:

- ◆ Getting a diagnosis
- ◆ Early years/Portage
- ◆ Statutory Assessments
- ◆ Statements/EHC Plans
- ◆ Transition Planning
- ◆ Home education
- ◆ Bullying
- ◆ Exclusions
- ◆ School transport

Free Helpline: 0808 808 3555
Find out more at www.cafamily.org.uk



SCOPE

Scope provides free, independent and impartial information and support on the issues that matter to disabled people and their families. Whether your child has a physical impairment, learning disability or any other condition, their information is for you.

Scope exists to make this country a place where disabled people have the same opportunities as everyone else. They provide support, information and advice to more than a quarter of a million disabled people and their families every year and raise awareness of the issues that matter.

- ◆ Young disabled people
- ◆ Just diagnosed
- ◆ Find support in your area
- ◆ Professionals section
- ◆ Treatments
- ◆ Money, Wills and Trusts

Free Helpline: 0808 800 3333
Find out more at www.scope.org.uk



SPECIAL NEEDS JUNGLE

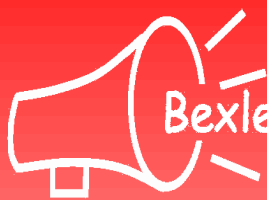
Special Needs Jungle was started in 2008 by Tania Tirraoro as a way of preserving the knowledge she had gained successfully navigating the 'jungle' of the increasingly complicated statementing system for her children.

Over the years, it has expanded from a personal blog into a site which is packed with useful information about special educational needs and disability issues faced by children and their families. The aim is to highlight resources and empower families by providing resources, tips, facts and personal examples.

It has personal stories from parents, articles from charities and useful resources and has become a parents' (and professionals' for that matter) guide to the SEN reforms that are taking place.

Find out more at www.specialneedsjungle.com





Bexley Voice for Special Needs Children

Next Issue:

BEXLEY SNAP EVENTS

Parent/Carer
Drop In Dates

Thank you for
our donations!

Independent
Travel Training
scheme

New Parent
and Carer
workshops

Christchurch
Sponsored Fun

Summer
Activities

Bexley SNAP support families of disabled children and young people and organise various events.

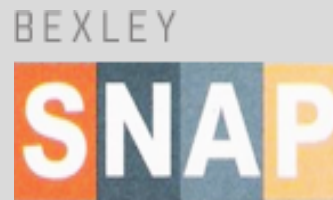
Information and Assessment Mornings invite parents and carers to book appointments at these sessions to access a whole host of support. Morning and afternoon appointments are available at 2 different locations on various dates. Booking is essential.

- ◆ Join SNAP as a member and find out which of our services your family may be eligible to attend. (Membership is free).
- ◆ Advice on statements, accessing Special Education Need support and school communication.
- ◆ Specific advice, strategies and information on Autism, ADHD, communication and sensory needs & challenging behaviour.

Youth Club is run on Thursday evenings - 7 to 9pm (term time only), based at Woodside School, Halt Robin Road, Belvedere. It is for young people aged 11 to 18 years and has a tuck shop! The Youth Scheme offers disabled young people access to enjoyable youth groups, social activities, events and opportunities to meet and develop friendships.

Saturday Fun Club at Hillsgrove Children's Centre. (Ofsted inspected). Supported by the SNAP leisure team enabling development of mobility, communication, social and play skills. It is based at Hillsgrove Children's Centre on Saturdays (term time), 10am to 1pm for children aged 2-10 years.

For more information on the above events or to book your place (please note that some events follow an entry criteria), please contact Bexley SNAP:
Email: admin@bexleysnap.org.uk
or call 020 8320 1488.



DO YOU NEED SOME SUPPORT?

Bexley Voice attends the Bexley SNAP Information and Assessment morning that take place at Goals Football Centre Bexleyheath, behind Asda.

The next session for any parent or carer of a child or young person with a disability, special or additional need is;

**Monday 23rd March
9.30am ~ 12noon**

It is an informal opportunity to 'Drop In' and chat with a BV member about any concerns you may have regarding your child or young person with special or additional needs.

There is no need to book to see a BV member, just come along anytime.

CONTACT US

VOLUNTEER HELPLINE:

07512 409936

EMAIL:

bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk

WEBSITE:

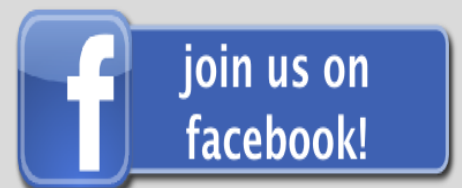
www.bexleyvoice.org.uk

**REGISTERED CHARITY
NUMBER: 1142306**

BV FACEBOOK GROUP

Our FB group is growing on a daily basis and we now have over 240 members sharing information, ideas and offering support on issues such as:

- ◆ Support for ADHD
- ◆ Where to get a 'Radar Key'
- ◆ Out of Borough Schools
- ◆ NHS Nappy Service
- ◆ EHC Self-Referral Forms
- ◆ Summer Holiday Activities
- ◆ Family Fund



Our group is 'Secret' to ensure confidentiality, which means you will be unable to find it on a Facebook search. All Bexley Voice Facebook members are registered parents and carers on our membership database.

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.