



Bexley Voice for Special Needs Children

Newsletter ~ May / June 2015

Issue 21

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BEXLEY VOICE WELCOME

DO YOU NEED SOME SUPPORT?

Bexley Voice attends the Bexley SNAP Information and Assessment mornings that take place at Goals Football Centre Bexleyheath (behind Asda). 'Drop In' for an informal chat with a BV member about any SEND issues you may have on:

Monday 29th June
9.30am ~ 12noon

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The **IASS** (Information, Advice and Support Service) for Bexley has new contact information. If you need support and advice regarding education issues for your SEND child and would like to book an appointment, please call 0208 320 1490 or email iass@bexleysnap.org.uk.



BEXLEY VOICE - FAMILY BOWLING SESSIONS

Our Family Bowling sessions (on the third Wednesday in each month) are going well. Offering families the opportunity to go bowling, confident they will be welcomed by staff and located together. We have made arrangements with the Manager at Ten Pin Bowling in Bexleyheath:

- ◆ Up to 4 lanes available for our group to book
- ◆ Cost ~ 2 games £5.25 per person
- ◆ Session time is 4.30pm start

Please book in advance by calling 0871 221 0000. If you have any questions please call Ten Pin Bowling direct and advise it is a Bexley Voice booking.

The next session will be on: **Wednesday 20th May.**

This is open to any family who are members of Bexley Voice, no matter what the SEND is. Have fun, let us know how you get on!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS

We would like to say thank you to the Nationwide Building Society (£100) and Waitrose in Sidcup (£225) who have donated to our charity.

BV took part in the Sidcup Christchurch 3 mile Fun Run to raise money last month. Full article will be in our next issue.

We are delighted to have received a cheque from John Lewis for £885, after voting took place at Bluewater, as part of their Community Matters Award Scheme. Susan Bhugiar came to meet the BV team and present the cheque.

The donation will help us to support more families in Bexley.



PREPARING FOR ADULTHOOD WORKSHOP

Scope, Bexley Voice and Irwin Mitchell Solicitors are co-hosting a free workshop, for parents & carers of children and young people with SEND from age 14+.

Friday 22nd May ~ 9.30am
Danson Youth Centre

Opportunities will be available throughout the day to discuss private legal issues with a solicitor from Irwin Mitchell. We also welcome the Transition Manager from Bexley Local Authority.

The workshop will provide you with information regarding the new Care Act 2015, the Children and Families Act, Transition through Education/FE, Short Breaks, Education Health & Social Care Plans, Challenging decisions & knowing your rights and how they may affect you and your family.

To book your place: Email: vicky.keeping@scope.org.uk or Tel: 0207 619 7127.

For more information, visit the Bexley Voice website.



Preparing For Adulthood



Scope, Bexley Voice and Irwin Mitchell are hosting a free daytime workshop on transition into adulthood.

The workshop is aimed at parents & carers of children and young people with special/additional needs or disabilities from Year 9 (age 14+).

The workshop will provide you with information regarding the new Care Act 2015, the Children and Families Act, Transition through Education/FE, Short Breaks, Education Health & Social Care Plans, Challenging decisions & knowing your rights and how they may affect you and your family.

Opportunities will be available throughout the day to discuss private legal issues with a solicitor from Irwin Mitchell.

We also welcome the Transition Manager from Bexley Local Authority.



Bexley Voice for Special Needs Children



Friday 22nd May 2015
10.00am ~ 1.00pm (including refreshments)
Registration ~ 9.30am
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ASHMOLE HALL, DANSON YOUTH CENTRE,
BEXLEYHEATH, KENT DA7 4EZ
(Next to Crook Log Sports Centre/Parking is limited)

For more information contact:

Bexley Voice: Tel: 07312 409936 or visit www.bexleyvoice.org.uk

Places are limited and will be allocated on a first come-first served basis. To reserve your place:

Email: vicky.keeping@scope.org.uk or Tel: 0207 619 7127

Bexley SNAP have use of the wonderful **Hydropool** at **Marlborough School** in **Sidcup** on **Saturday** afternoons. These sessions are ideal for those with sensory and severe disabilities, and those with restricted movement, or those who would benefit from the calm atmosphere. There is a fully qualified **Lifeguard** present. The music, lights and water toys ensure your child will have a fun, relaxing and enjoyable time in the water. Sessions are £8 each for a disabled child and one carer and are limited to 10 people in the pool at a time. Call **SNAP** on 0208 320 1488 to book.

PREPARING FOR ADULTHOOD ~ PART I

In 2014 a new law called the Children and Families Act came into force. This has brought about changes in the way young people with special educational needs (SEN) are supported in education, as it will affect young people from 14-25 years of age. In this issue, we are covering education with information from Contact A Family.

Preparing For Adulthood means identifying the support a young person will need to live a full and active adult life as possible. The new SEN and disability code of practice: 0-25 years (which supports the new law), says preparing for adulthood also means preparing for:

- ◆ higher education and/or employment
- ◆ independent living
- ◆ participating in society: friendships and contributing to the local community
- ◆ being as happy and healthy as possible in later life

There is now a single system of support for children and young people with SEN between the ages of 0 and 25. This means that no one should lose the right to extra support for their educational needs, simply

because they have reached 16 or left school. Young people who need more support may be able have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan until they are 25.

Support in Schools

Schools have a legal duty to provide impartial careers advice to all young people from at least Year 9 (age 14). They must tailor it to the needs of their pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. For young people with EHC plans, the Year 9 annual review of the EHC plan and every review after that, must include a focus on preparing for adulthood.

Support in FE colleges

Mainstream further education (FE) colleges must support students with SEN in a similar way to schools. Students with SEN who do not need EHC plans, must be given help through SEN support. Some young people with SEN will also be disabled. Under the Equality Act 2010 mainstream FE colleges must do everything they reasonably can to remove barriers to learning for disabled students.

Please visit the Education section on our website for downloadable factsheets full of more information.

FREE WORKSHOP PREPARING FOR ADULTHOOD FRIDAY 22nd MAY

BV, Scope, and Irwin Mitchell are co-hosting a workshop for parents. Please refer to the information on the front page of this issue.



FREE WORKSHOP THE EHC PLAN PROCESS WEDNESDAY 3rd JUNE

Bexley Voice are hosting a workshop with the IS service (see below) to support parents and carers who would like to know more about the EHC Plan process. To book your place, please visit our website.

INDEPENDENT SUPPORT

This service provides FREE independent educational advice on EHC Plans, for families in Bexley and Greenwich. From the early stages of application and assessment, 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



BEXLEY INDEPENDENT TRAVEL TRAINING

BATS have developed a Travel Training service: **Bexley Independent Travel Scheme (BITS)**.

This service operates in conjunction with Bexley Council Road Safety, Transport For London, the Travel Training Forum and Bexley Police.

Travel Training is about gaining confidence when using public transport, road safety and ensuring persons are able to do straightforward journeys themselves without confusion or anxiety. Those who partake of the service are taken on everyday journeys by a trained and accredited travel trainer, who highlights important aspects of travel; the rules of road safety, personal safety and what to do

if lost or anxious. Travel training is a gradual process, and finishes with unaccompanied journeys.

BITS Travel Training is available to SEN children and adults with learning, mobility, mental health or sensory difficulties in Bexley and can be booked by a special needs school, care provider or by Bexley council to assist an individual in becoming independent and confident using public transport.

For further details contact:
Tel: 01322 311333
Email: enquiries@bexleyct.co.uk or visit www.bexleyct.co.uk

Travel Safety

BITS
BEXLEY INDEPENDENT TRAVEL SCHEME

Bexley Independent Travel Scheme

Everyone should have the opportunity to use public transport. Having the confidence, skills and knowledge to use public transport is an essential life skill.

This is a chance for you to gain the confidence and skills to use public transport.

It is a key life skill that is essential for many of us. It is a key life skill that is essential for many of us. It is a key life skill that is essential for many of us.

For further details contact:
Tel: 01322 311333
Email: enquiries@bexleyct.co.uk

BATS: Oak Grove • Thames Rd Depot • Thames Rd • Oxleyford • Kent • DA15 0U

Bexley Voice is delighted to welcome 5 members to our volunteer team! Lisa and David are now proofing the BV website, Sukina supports parents on our Facebook Group and Drop In sessions, Claire is contacting schools to arrange our visits and Brenda is helping distribute our newsletter to schools and Children's Centres. Thank you all very much for your help, enabling us to support more families in Bexley. If you would like to get involved and become a volunteer, however much time you can spare, then visit our website for volunteer information.

LOCAL EVENTS

DOWN SYNDROME INTERACTIVE SESSIONS

Date: Tuesday 19th May
 Time: 12.30-2.45pm
 Venue: The Bedonwell Centre
 Bedonwell Road, Belvedere. DA17 5PF
 (next to Bedonwell Infant school).

Gillian Bird from the Down Syndrome Association returns to Bexley to offer an interactive session for Parents and Carers, covering education and health & social needs. Cost - £15.

For more information contact Bexley SNAP on 0208 320 1488 and to book your place.

There is also a Teaching Staff/ Professional session arranged in the morning at 9.15am. Please contact Bexley Services Network Helpline on 0203 045 5499 to book your place.



DYSLEXIA COFFEE MORNING IN WELLING

Date: Thursday 25th June
 Time: 9.30-11.30am
 Venue: East Wickham Primary Academy, Wickham Lane, Welling DA16 3BP

The Dyslexia Association of Bexley, Bromley, Lewisham and Greenwich are hosting 3 local Coffee mornings. As usual, there will be a short talk followed by the chance to share ideas and concerns with others while relaxing with coffee and cake.

There will be a craft table for children but no crèche.

Entry is free and all are welcome.



LONDON ZOO SPECIAL CHILDRENS DAY

Date: 16th & 17th May
 Time: From 9.30am
 Venue: London Zoo, Regent's Park London. NW1 4RY

Special Children's Day is a unique annual event at ZSL London Zoo welcoming children with special needs and their families and friends.

With increased specialist facilities and number of staff, as well as special interactive events and discounted entry, Special Children's Day is an exciting and exceptional event not to be missed.

Tickets cost from £8.50.

Visit: www.zsl.org/zsl-london-zoo/whats-on/special-childrens-day-2015



BEXLEY'S LOCAL OFFER FEEDBACK NEEDED

Bexley Voice committee members recently met with the Local Authority to review how the development of Bexley's Local Offer was going.

The Local Offer should provide a 'one stop shop' for information and services that support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged 0-25 years old.

The Bexley Local Offer can now be accessed via the Bexley Council Website – it is on the front page! The hope is that the new layout is more user friendly and the development team are keen to know if they have the right content in there. The site is very much a work in progress and changes can and will be

made in response to our input – they will welcome good feedback as much as constructive criticism.

This is where you come in – it would be great if each parent could think of at least one question that you need the answer for, or may already know, and go into the Local Offer site and see

- If you can find an answer
- If it is a useful answer
- How easy it was to find

Whatever the outcome – if you could then use the feedback email to let the developers know what you think:

- ♦ Of the information you found
- ♦ What you could not find
- ♦ How easy you found it to navigate the site

Bexley Voice are currently organising a **Local Offer Workshop** for parents, taking place soon, showing you how to use the website and asking for your valuable feedback.

To register your interest, please email your contact details to: rachel.bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk.





Bexley Voice for Special Needs Children

Members of

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

Next Issue:

BEXLEY VOICE SCHOOL VISIT PROGRAMME

Parent/Carer Drop In Dates

Christchurch Sponsored Fun

Free workshops for parents!

Summer Fun Activities

Animal Days Out offer more Therapy sessions

Confidence Course

Bexley Voice have been visiting schools in Bexley for over 4 years and have supported many parents and carers, from providing information on many issues to being a 'listening ear'. From coffee mornings, parent's evenings and school fairs, Bexley Voice would love to come along to your child's nursery, school or college and meet with parents and carers of children with SEND.

Encourage your SENCO or Head Teacher to book a BV visit soon! Please complete the request form on our website or contact Janet Peart, (our school visit co-ordinator) janetpeart.bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk.

Volunteers Claire and Rachel recently visited Orchard Primary School in Sidcup. We were made very welcome and were impressed at the support that Meg and the staff offer to the parents of special needs children. The visit was a lovely informal opportunity to chat to parents over a cup of tea, giving them information on issues such as the SEND Reforms. We also recommended some other local groups such as Bexley NAS, Bexley SNAP, Bexley Beavers Swimming Club and Animal Days Out. We look forward to visiting the school again soon.

Feedback from parents:

- ◆ "It was really useful. It would be good to have another meeting, to hear about any other useful information".
- ◆ "It was really interesting, very informative. I got lots of useful information which I have followed up on".
- ◆ "I think that there is not enough support for parents so these kinds of groups are important. There's a lot of information that parents don't know about eg. legal rights for parents and educational issues".



JOIN BEXLEY VOICE!

BEXLEY VOICE 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'. Let us keep you up to date on local and national consultations and events.

Membership is free, complete the on-line form on our website.

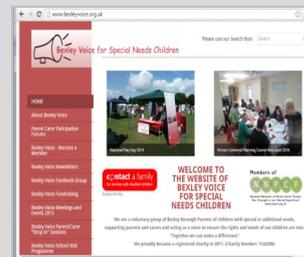
BEXLEY VOICE FACEBOOK GROUP

Our 'secret' group is growing on a daily basis and we now have over 240 parent and carer members sharing information, ideas and offering support on many issues. You must be an existing member of Bexley Voice 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.



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, find out all about us and how we can support you, take part in consultations, find information on local and national organisations and so much more! Visit www.bexleyvoice.org.uk



CONTACT US

VOLUNTEER HELPLINE:

07512 409936

EMAIL:

bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk

WEBSITE:

www.bexleyvoice.org.uk

REGISTERED CHARITY

NUMBER: 1142306