



Bexley Voice for Special Needs Children

Newsletter ~ July / August 2015

Issue 22

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BEXLEY VOICE WELCOME

The BV team would like to extend a warm welcome to the many new members that have joined Bexley Voice over the recent months. With our database and Facebook group growing on a daily basis, we would also like to thank our new volunteers who have been helping with the running of our charity, enabling us to support more parents and carers of children with special needs.

Our recent free workshops on Preparing For Adulthood and the EHC Plan Process were very well attended and positive feedback was received.

Some of the BV team have also attended meetings with Bexley LA regarding various local services and are currently arranging some consultations which we hope our members will be involved with.

We hope you all have a great summer holidays and wish good luck to those moving on to a new school in September.

A FOND FAREWELL AND THANK YOU TO MARY HOWARD

As many of our members may know, Mary Howard (Previously Parent Partnership Officer and currently providing the IASS for Bexley) is retiring this summer and LBB has put the new IASS contract out to tender. Bexley Voice would like to thank all our members who took part in our recent survey on the type of service that you would like from the new IASS provider. Your feedback has influenced the service specification, we hope to hear in the near future who will be providing this new service - keep an eye on our website for updates.

Mary has offered invaluable support and information to many of our members and their families in Bexley. The team at BV and our members would like to thank Mary and wish her a very happy and peaceful retirement.

BEXLEY VOICE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2015

Thursday 24th September at 9.30am
Venue: TBC

We would like to invite you to the Bexley Voice AGM! It will be an opportunity for you to meet our team and for Bexley Voice to share and celebrate our achievements and outline our future plans.

We are delighted that Sybil Camsey, the new Mayor of Bexley will be joining us. We hope there will be some new faces coming forward to join us. If you are interested in being part of our management committee/trustee, please contact us prior to the AGM.

If you would like to attend our AGM, would like to nominate/require a voting slip or want more information about the role of a committee member/trustee, please contact us by the 28th August 2015.

NEW WORKSHOPS PLANNED FOR AUTUMN

Bexley Voice are currently organising free workshops for parents and carers of children and young people with SEND, to take place in October and November.

The workshops will provide you with information regarding the EHC Plan Process, followed up by two workshops on Positive Outcomes for EHC Plans.

To register your interest email: rachel.bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk, call 07512 409936 or visit the Bexley Voice website.

BEXLEY'S LOCAL OFFER EVENT

Saturday 12th September
Time: 11am – 1pm
Civic Offices – Bexleyheath

Having developed Bexley's Local Offer website with key stakeholders, this event aims to raise the profile of the Local Offer with a wider audience and gather views, ideas and suggestions for the next phase of the site's development. At this event parents, carer's, children and young people are

invited to use the Bexley Local Offer website and contribute to its content. The event will also be an opportunity to provide information, signpost and showcase services in Bexley that support children and young people with special needs and their families.

More information will be on our website as available. For information, please contact Janine Wooster (Complex Needs Manager Education and Social care) on 0203 045 5025.

Members of



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

THANK YOU'S! We are delighted to have received a cheque from Asda at Crook Log as part of their Community Life scheme. The 'voting by token' took place earlier this year. The money will help us to support families in Bexley. SE Tyres in Foots Cray and Blackfen now have our donation collection boxes and will soon be generously offering BV members a discount if you are in need of their services. You will need a BV membership card to receive this discount. We will update our members with more information as soon as they are available.

PREPARING FOR ADULTHOOD ~ PART 2

Preparing For Adulthood means identifying the support a young person will need to live a full and active adult life as possible. The Children and Families Act Law and the SEN and disability code of practice: 0-25 years, states that preparing for adulthood means preparing for higher education, employment and independent living.

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

Bexley Twofold are a local employment project support service for those with a learning disability. They help their service users with the following pre-employment support:

- ◆ Travel training
- ◆ Identifying suitable work placements
- ◆ Identifying suitable training courses
- ◆ Carrying out job search Providing access to a job club
- ◆ Attending job interviews with them
- ◆ By working with benefits agencies on their behalf

If you would like more information on the service, please contact Bexley Twofold on 020 8303 7777.

THE LEARNING CENTRE IN BEXLEY

The College fully supports inclusive lifelong learning and welcomes young adults with learning difficulties or disabilities.

They offer a wide range of qualification classes that cover some of the skills that employers are looking for. They also work very closely with Bexley Twofold who inform them about local employment trends.

They are pleased to be a provider in the **Local College First** programme run by Bexley Council, for young people who have just left school and may otherwise have left the Borough to go to college. The programme also offers skills for life, work and personal enrichment in conjunction with Bexley College. For more information visit their website at www.thelearningcentreboxley.ac.uk or telephone 020 3045 5176.



OXLEAS TRUST - LEARNING DISABILITY TEAM

Oxleas services are funded by the NHS to provide specialist support for people with a learning disability from the age of 18. However, it is important to begin the planning stages for transition much earlier than this. The Department of Health recommends that children's services work jointly with adult learning disability teams from the age of 14 (at the Year 9 review) onwards.

Psychologists, social workers, occupational, speech and language therapists are all part of the team. The Health Transition Team will be hosting regular coffee mornings of parents of youngsters moving from Child to Adult services - keep an eye on our website for dates and talk topics.

Contact Mark Bradley (Clinical Lead for Transition) for information relating to health services and transition for young people with learning disabilities at mark.bradley@oxleas.nhs.uk or by phone on 020 8269 3349.



NAS TRANSITION SUPPORT SERVICE

The NAS TSS is a free and confidential service that provides a range of information and support for young people with autism (from age 14+) and their families during the transition process from;

- ◆ Secondary school to post 16/ further education.
- ◆ Post 16/further education to higher education or adult services.
- ◆ Higher education to adult services.

They aim to empower individuals and families with the correct information so that they are able to advocate effectively to professionals, have a good quality transition plan, that they receive the support they need in the future and that transitions are well managed and have a positive impact on people's lives.

Because the transition process can often be a long and at times difficult process, they strongly advise individuals/families to contact them from as early as possible (year 9) to ensure you are aware of the process, your rights and entitlements etc.

They offer support and information on a range of subjects including;

- ◆ Questions about preparing for leaving school.
- ◆ Planning for a big transition.
- ◆ Accessing further or higher education.
- ◆ What are adult services and what is available in my area?
- ◆ What am I and my family entitled to when I am 18?
- ◆ Support to understand and ensure the community care assessments.

Although the TSS is part of the National Autistic Society, they offer a range of information on a variety of providers and services that will best meet you and your child's needs.

How do I contact the TSS?

You can contact the TSS on email at transitionsupport@nas.org.uk or leave a message on 0808 800 0027. Please be aware that during busier periods it can take several days to contact you but rest assured one of their VIPs will be in touch as soon as they can.

BNAS are hoping to host a local meeting for those wanting to find out more about this service.



Bexley Voice have been asked if schools that have had a visit, can have a banner to display. We thought it might be fun to get the children to design it for us. We are contacting the schools to let them now about this, but if parents want to organise the entries from their schools that would work too. More information can be found on our website. What we need - a A4 landscape design using up to 3 colours. It can include words such as feedback from our visit or it can just be a picture. We hope that schools will enjoy helping us to raise awareness of what we do.

LOCAL NEWS

LITTLE STARS

Little Stars introduces the principles of conductive education to parents of pre-school children who have a physical impairment or delayed motor development. The team work towards helping children to meet the challenges they face independently with an emphasis on developing the child's abilities through active learning.

The program is run in a small group setting using games, songs and toys to motivate the children. They aim to encourage each child to achieve in everyday activities such as;

- ◆ General mobility
- ◆ Communication/attention skills
- ◆ Purposeful play and self esteem
- ◆ Eating, drinking and dressing

Sessions are held on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday during term time at Shenstone Early Years Centre in Sidcup. For more information please call 07926 375887 or email littlestars@bexleysnap.org.uk



MARLBOROUGH SCHOOL CAFÉ IS OPEN

Café L'ecole is an ideal place to meet with other parents for a coffee, cake and catch up. The café is open weekdays during term time, 9.30am until 2pm. They serve sandwiches, hot and cold drinks, cakes and much more!

Marlborough students who have learning disabilities gain work experience by helping out in the café. All proceeds support the school.

Contact Marlborough School, Marlborough Park Avenue in Sidcup on 0208 300 6896 for more information.



LARK IN THE PARK 2015

Sidcup Place: 25th July to 9th August

A free summer event hosted by New Generation Church with support from Sidcup Baptist Church and Churches Together in Sidcup.

The **Let's Get Moving Tent** has specialist provision for all children under 5 with additional needs.

The tent will be equipped with sensory and specialist toys, soft play, sand and water play. Siblings under 5 are also welcome. The Let's Get Moving team can also help you access all the other play areas in Sparkles.

The **Bubbz** team has a high adult to child ratio, which works together with Fizz, All Stars (formally Buzz) and Free60. This venue is for children aged 5-14 years with a mild/moderate diagnosis of additional needs or for children who may find the large venues intimidating and may need a more tailored environment to suit their individual needs.

Visit www.larksidcup.com for more information.



COME AND JOIN BEXLEY VOICE!

BEXLEY VOICE MEMBERSHIP

Are you a parent or carer of a child/young person (up to age 25) living in Bexley? Or are you a professional working with SEND in Bexley? If so, you can become a member and join our 'voice'. Let us keep you up to date on local and national issues, consultations and events.

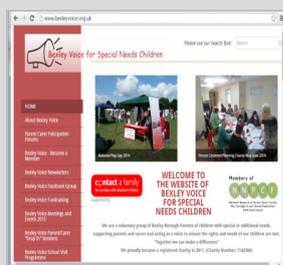
Membership is **free**, just complete the on-line form on our website today.

BEXLEY VOICE WEBSITE

Our website offers parents and carers so much information for families of children and young people with SEND.

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 various consultations, find information on local and national organisations and so much more.

Visit www.bexleyvoice.org.uk



BEXLEY VOICE FB GROUP

Our 'secret' group is growing on a daily basis and we now have over 270 parent/carer only members sharing information, ideas and offering support on many issues. Come and join those who understand the issues that parents and carers may face.

To ensure confidentiality, 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.



Next Issue:

BEXLEY VOICE 'CONFIDENCE COURSE'

School Visit Programme

Bexley Voice September AGM

Free workshops for parents and carers on EHC Plans.

Local News

Child Tracker & Safety Alarms

Membership Cards for BV

ENDEAVOUR TRAINING FOR THE BEXLEY VOICE VOLUNTEER TEAM

After completing a very successful 6 week course Endeavour Course delivered by Julie O'Neil from Phoenix Outreach Service, the Bexley Voice team have a new found confidence!

The programme is designed to support woman looking to make positive changes in their lives.

The Bexley Voice team worked through past, present and future issues, using confidence in many areas of our lives and working together as a team.

Our Feedback:

"Well packaged and informative. Julie is friendly and professional."

"Going on the course really helped me develop my confidence in all areas of my life and it was good to meet up with the BV team."

"I am more understanding of the team, of our own personal and volunteer pressures."

"I had a fabulous time learning about what confidence is and getting to know the team outside of meetings!"

"Thank you so much for such an enjoyable course. I realised that confidence is actually shown in so many different ways."

The team enjoyed the course so much that we are now meeting up every month to support each other and continue building our team 'confidence'.



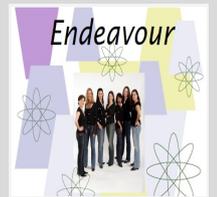
Julie offers many courses to suit individuals and groups for woman, men and children of all ages. Bexley Voice members have also completed her 'Valued Parent Programme' course with very positive feedback.

Contact: Julie O'Neil

Tel: 07727 662977

Email: julieoneilcoach@live.co.uk or phoenixparentoutreach@live.co.uk

For more information on the Valued Parent Programme, ADHD Workshop, Teen Zone, Huff 'n' Puff, Private Courses and the Just 4 Me Course please visit: www.phoenixparentoutreach.co.uk



CONTACT US

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WEBSITE:

www.bexleyvoice.org.uk

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1142306

LISTENING BOOKS

Listening Books are a UK charity providing a fantastic selection of high quality audiobooks to some 38,000 people across the UK who find it difficult or impossible to read due to illness or disability. They help a wide range of organisations and individuals and provide audiobooks on 3 easily accessible formats: through the post on CD, downloaded online and streamed from the website. Members can choose from a range of options to find the service that best suits their needs.

If you have an illness or disability which makes reading difficult, you can join Listening Books to gain access to over 8000 fantastic audiobooks for leisure and learning. Their library boasts fiction and non-fiction titles for both adults and children. They support the National Curriculum from Key Stage 2 to A-level and record many texts and study guides that are not available elsewhere.

Membership starts from £20 per year and they have limited offer of free membership (criteria applies).

General enquiries: 020 7407 9417 or visit the website at info@listening-books.org.uk



Listening books