

Bexley Voice for Special Needs Children

Newsletter ~ September / October 2015

Issue 23

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BEXLEY VOICE WELCOME

Welcome to the latest issue of the Bexley Voice newsletter. A new school year is upon once again and we wish good luck to those going through the transition process. If your child or young person has started a new school or college, don't forget to update your membership details via the on-line form on our website.

Our school visit programme is taking bookings for the autumn term so if you have not yet had an informative visit from the Bexley Voice team, please get in touch, we would love to hear from you soon.

Our AGM is on the 24th of September at 9.30am. Please join us in celebrating our achievements and we will be outlining our future plans. We look forward to seeing new and existing members there.

BEXLEY VOICE FOR SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
THURSDAY 24th SEPTEMBER 2015

Bexley Voice

AGM 10.00am ~ 12noon
(Registration & Refreshments ~ 9.30am)
 North Cray Community and Children's Centre,
 Davies Way (off Palm Avenue), North Cray, Sidcup, Kent. DA14
(Free parking is available if you follow the road all the way around to the back of the children's centre you will find a large car park. Please do not park over residents driveways.)

Bexley Voice are delighted to welcome the Mayor of Bexley Councillor Sybil Camsey!

Come and collect your new Bexley Voice membership card! (T & C's apply)

- WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR
- APOLOGIES
- CONFIRM MINUTES OF AGM HELD SEPT 14
- CHAIR'S REPORT
- TREASURER'S FINANCE REPORT
- ELECTION OF TRUSTEES
- ANY OTHER BUSINESS
- THANK YOU'S

The meeting will be an opportunity for Bexley Voice to share what we have been doing over the last year, celebrate our achievements and outline our plans for the coming 12 months. The formal business of voting in the new Management Committee will be completed - we hope there will be some new faces coming forward to join us. All the information required to become a trustee (and also a volunteer) can be found on our website at www.bexleyvoice.org.uk. If you are interested in becoming a Trustee or Committee Member or wish to nominate someone else, please contact us by the 14th September to obtain the relevant forms. All nominations must be with us in advance of the meeting so that we can ensure nominees understand the role they will be taking on.

If you would like to join us at our AGM, please let us know by 14th September for catering numbers.

To book your place, please complete the on-line form on our website at www.bexleyvoice.org.uk

For more information contact: 07512 409936 or email: bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk
Registered Charity No. 1142396

NEW MEMBERSHIP CARD SCHEME

Bexley Voice will soon be introducing a new membership card scheme. The card enables Bexley Voice to share offers from local organisations.

Membership of BV is **FREE** of charge and is available for families living in Bexley, who have a child or young person (under 25) with special/additional needs or disabilities. Membership forms can be downloaded or completed online via our website, so if you are not yet a parent/carer member of BV, complete a membership form today!

HOW TO APPLY

Complete the application form on our website to request your card. Please allow 14-21 days for processing.

Cost implications mean that you will need to collect your card from a Bexley Voice meeting, event or committee member.

Our introductory offers are from Michelle at Heart In Me Reiki Therapy and The Salt Cave Therapy Rooms in Bexleyheath. Please see the back page for more details. (Bexley Voice does not endorse any product or service offering member discounts.)

Terms and Conditions will apply and can be found in full on the Bexley Voice website.

- ◆ Only one card will be issued per family.
- ◆ The first card will be issued free of charge. A charge will be made for any replacement cards required.
- ◆ A Bexley Voice Membership Card enables us to share offers from local organisations.
- ◆ These offers are subject to availability and may be time/quantity limited.

Please visit our website for more information.

Members of



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

EHC PLAN SEMINAR AND WORKSHOPS



Bexley Voice are also currently organising 2 more 'Positive Outcomes For EHC Plans' workshops for parents and carers of children and young people with SEND. They will take place in November at North Cray Community & Children's Centre.

We previously ran 2 'Positive Outcomes' workshops earlier this year and both were a great success (and also fully booked very quickly!).

The workshops will follow on from the EHC Plan Process Seminar (please see information to the right) and will provide parents and carers with information on Positive Outcomes for EHC Plans. The first workshop is for 'First Timers', for those who are just starting the EHC Plan Process. The second workshop is for 'Conversions', for those whose child already has a Statement of Education and are converting it to an EHC Plan.

TO REGISTER YOUR INTEREST:

Visit the Bexley Voice website and complete the on-line form, email rachel.bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk, or call 07512 409936.

Understanding the new EHC (Education, Health & Care) Plan Process

Bexley Voice

Bexley Voice For Special Needs Children are hosting a free seminar for parents and carers of children and young people (up to age 25)

This seminar is aimed at parents and carers who would like information on the new EHC Plans that are currently replacing Statements of Education.

The guest speakers are from Bexley LA. They will outline how the local process works, from applying for a Statutory Assessment through to gaining an EHC Plan. Including information on the SEN law, SEN Code of Practice and Section A part of the plan. They will also be available at the end of the seminar to answer any questions you may have.

Wednesday 21st October 2015
(Registration & Refreshments ~ 9.30am)
10am ~ 12noon
North Cray Children's Centre,
Davis Way, North Cray, Sidcup. DA14 5JR

For more information and to reserve your place:
Complete the on-line booking form on our website:
www.bexleyvoice.org.uk or call 07512 409936.
Charity Number: 1142366

THRIVING FAMILIES SERVICE IN BEXLEY



WHAT IS THE THRIVING FAMILIES SERVICE?

It is a key part of Bexley's Early Help and Prevention service. They work with families and agencies to provide support tailored to meet individual family needs. The service aims to provide children and young people (up to age 18) and their families with the right level of support at the right time.

HOW DOES THE TF SERVICE WORK?

A named keyworker will be your regular point of contact and will work with you to develop a plan of support. The family key worker will assist you in working with children's centres, schools and health services.

WHAT TYPE OF SUPPORT IS OFFERED?

They will work with you and other professionals to help improve you and your children improve their lives. This may include:

- ◆ Doing better at school and maintaining a good attendance.
- ◆ Providing you with practical advice and supporting access to local parent groups.
- ◆ Working with you to develop and maintain positive family relationships
- ◆ Making sure the children and young peoples views are listened to.
- ◆ Directing you to support services including job and training opportunities, budgeting and planning.

HOW CAN I GET HELP?

If you feel that you need additional support over and above what your child's school, health visitor, youth worker or children's centre are providing, have a chat with them first to see if it is appropriate for a referral. You can also refer yourself by calling 0208 303 7777 and asking for Thriving Families or email thriving.families@bexley.gov.uk



The Dyslexia Association of Bexley, Bromley, Lewisham and Greenwich are hosting a free workshop on Thursday 22nd October at 7.30pm on handwriting difficulties. "It Is Not All About Pencil Grips!" by Helene Agnew. Come along to learn about possible reasons for handwriting difficulties and the strategies that could help.

For more information email the DABBGL at info@dyslexiawise.co.uk or call 0208 315 2526.



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.

We are delighted to be getting on average 350 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

Come and join those who understand the issues that parents and carers may face whilst caring for a child with special needs. Our 'secret' group is growing fast and we now have 289 parent and carer only members sharing information, ideas and offering support on many issues such as:

- ◆ Transport
- ◆ EHC Plans
- ◆ Transition
- ◆ Local Support Groups
- ◆ DLA and PIP
- ◆ Gadgets and Apps
- ◆ Free seminars/workshops

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.



PLEASE FOLLOW THE RULES

In order to support and respect each other, we want to try to keep our Facebook page positive and focussed.

- ◆ No swearing, short hand swearing or hieroglyphics *#*##.
- ◆ No upsetting controversial posts.
- ◆ No distressing or upsetting videos or links.
- ◆ Follow the thread of a post and try to offer constructive advice and support.
- ◆ Respect that our BV admins are volunteers and are not always available, especially during school holiday periods.

Given that posts appear in real-time, it is impossible for Bexley Voice to review a post before it becomes publicly readable. Bexley Voice admin (who are all very much appreciated volunteers) actively monitor posts but are not always available 24/7.

So become a Facebook group member today and join in with daily chats with other parent and carers of special needs children and receive updates, information and support!

BEXLEY DEAF CENTRE

Bexley Deaf Group formed in 1986 and became a registered charity in December 1990. It is responsible for the management of Bexley Deaf Centre which aims to provide information, education and support for Deaf people in Bexley, enabling them to enjoy the same quality of life as those with normal hearing.

The Bexley Deaf Group have an agreement with the London Borough of Bexley to provide the following four services:

- ◆ An Information and Advocacy Service for all ages
- ◆ Specialist equipment services
- ◆ A Training and Liaison services
- ◆ Management of Bexley Deaf Centre

It aims to make a difference to the lives of Deaf people through encouragement to live independent lives whilst also increasing Deaf Awareness wherever possible.

We also hold regular sign language and lip reading courses. We will be holding a Basic Deaf Awareness and Sign Skills course on Friday 2nd October, from 1.00 – 2.30 pm at Bexley Deaf Centre. The cost is £15 (including tea, coffee and biscuits). Deaf Awareness Courses usually held every month, please ring for details of future courses or to book your place.



Other services offered by the Bexley Deaf Centre include:

- ◆ Job club including Internet job searching and CV writing
- ◆ Hearing aid clinic for hearing aids from Queen Mary's at various drop in clinics around Bexley
- ◆ Home visiting service for house bound users of hearing aids
- ◆ Assist with a variety of aids and adaptations available to the deaf and hard of hearing from the practical, such as flash and sound doorbell, the sound and light baby alarm to the essential fire alarm.

For any further information:

Phone: 01322 351122

Fax/Minicom: 01322 351122

Web: www.bexleydeafcentre.org.uk

Email: info@bexleydeafcentre.org.uk

The Learning Centre in Bexley are offering a 6 week evening 'Time Out for Teens' Course starting 5th of November. This course is for parents and carers of pre-teens, helping you through the challenges of the teenage years. (Please note this course is not specifically for special needs). The College also runs many courses and welcomes young adults with learning difficulties or disabilities. For more information visit their website at www.thelearningcentrebexley.ac.uk or telephone 020 3045 5176.

Next Issue:

SIBS ~ THE CHARITY FOR SIBLINGS

School Visit Programme

Child Tracker & Safety Alarms

Free workshops on Positive Outcomes for EHC Plans

Local News

Membership Card Offers for BV Members

S.A.F.E School For Bexley

Sibs is the only UK charity representing the needs of siblings of disabled people. Siblings have a lifelong need for information, they often experience social and emotional isolation, and have to cope with difficult situations. They also want to have positive relationships with their disabled brothers and sisters and to be able to choose the role they play in future care.

WHO WE SUPPORT

We support siblings of all ages who are growing up with or who have grown up with a brother or sister with any disability, long term chronic illness, or life limiting condition.

We work by providing information and support to young siblings (children and young

people) on any sibling issue. We also run workshops for siblings on understanding their brother or sister's disability and on coping strategies for dealing with difficult siblings issues.

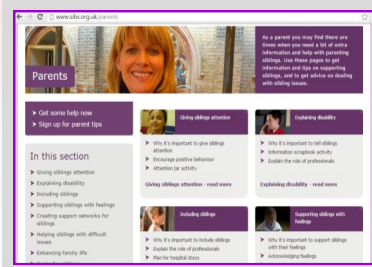
We have a parenting siblings phone service for parents, to help them support siblings with issues such as giving attention, explaining disability, and dealing with siblings' feelings. Sibs run workshops for parents on supporting siblings. These workshops can be bought in by statutory and voluntary agencies and Bexley Voice are hoping to offer a workshop in the near future.



We also work with service providers to provide training and consultancy for professionals on supporting siblings, how to develop local services and how to run sibling groups using the Sibs FRAME model of groupwork.

CONTACT INFO:

Website: www.youngsibs.org.uk and www.sibs.org.uk
 Phone: 01535 645453
 Email: info@sibs.org.uk



CONTACT US

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FREE REIKI & SALT CAVE SESSIONS

Do you need some 'time out' to relax? Now the children have gone back to school, you can enjoy a free session for Bexley Voice members only!

'Heart In Me' Reiki therapy is a form of hands on healing that aids relaxation and stress reduction with many health benefits such as relaxing, promotes natural wellbeing and de-stresses. You remain fully clothed and the treatment is suitable for everyone. Some Bexley Voice members have already enjoyed their free session. "Michelle is very welcoming, I felt so relaxed and it was really good to have some rare time for me" "It was my first time, so was a bit nervous. Reiki is relaxing, I felt warm, comfortable and I will definitely book another session"

Your first 30 minute session is free. If you wish to book a 2nd & 3rd session, Michelle will be offering them at half price (normally £20 per 30 minute session). Call Michelle on **07958 142298**. Opening times vary, please call to book an appointment. Offer is subject to availability only and valid until 31st December 2015.

The Salt Cave in Bexleyheath have made a special offer for Bexley Voice members. Salt Cave clinics provides salt therapy for people with respiratory illnesses (asthma, COPD, allergy etc) and skin conditions (eczema, psoriasis, skin infection). The Salt Cave has two therapy rooms, one for adults and one for children. The rooms are essentially the same, except for children there are toys, cartoon TV.

The first session is free for everybody. However, Salt Cave are offering Bexley Voice Members 50% off any package of treatment sessions that they may decide to buy after the 1st free session. Please contact them direct on **0208 166 4100** to arrange your sessions and tell them you are a BV Member. Website: www.saltcave.co.uk The offer is subject to availability and time limited.

BV are not endorsing either of these services in any way, simply passing on the offer from the provider for our families. Please let us know what you think so we can share with our members!