

Let's get Digital!

Bromley Mencap is delighted to have received funding from both the National Lottery Covid-19 Fund and the London Community Response Fund Wave 3 to further digitalise our services and activities in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. The funding will be used to ensure that disabled people and their carers, with our support, can access technology and services online and reconnect safely with others preventing further social isolation.

Read more about our exciting plans inside!





Hi everyone,

Back in Lockdown again. We are still here though and I hope you are keeping safe and well, at home.

Our first Bulletin of 2021 will keep you informed of what's still on and what's running online. We have our usual updates and some great catch ups with various events that have happened virtually.

Access to technology is so important during these times so the new digital funding Bromley Mencap has managed to secure is great news! See our Executive report on pages 4-6.

We have some fab photos from our Disability Walking and Cycling Club, Children's Wellbeing Service and our Monday Afternooners.

Make sure you take the time to meet our new staff members on pages 20-21 too!

Take care and stay safe,

Luan
luanlanham@btinternet.com

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Events and Activities

Please check our website here <https://www.bromleymencap.org.uk/> or phone our helpline on 020 8466 0790 to find out about our latest events.

<https://www.bromleymencap.org.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-latest-update/bromley-mencap-services-update/>

Bromley Well has various support sessions running virtually, please check the website for details. <https://www.bromleywell.org.uk/events/>



Bromley Well online services include Employment Support workshops, workshops for people with learning difficulties and physical disabilities, Autism support sessions as well as our monthly Facebook quiz night.



NEW DIGITAL FUNDING

Like every organisation, Bromley Mencap is responding to the huge impact that the Covid-19 pandemic continues to have on the lives of our beneficiaries. With further restrictions under the new lockdown, Bromley Mencap will be building on our experience from last year of digitalising our services and activities. This will ensure we continue to be as accessible to as many disabled people and carers as possible.

Last year, at the start of the pandemic, it became clear that many disabled people were disadvantaged by the digital divide. Many either did not have funding for their own IT equipment or lacked the skills to be able to access technology independently.

The internet and digital technology is now very much at the heart of how our lives function. It has transformed how we work, communicate, consume, learn, entertain and access information and services. The pandemic and the lockdown has driven this agenda faster than anyone could have anticipated. Sadly, this meant that many disabled, older and vulnerable people have been left behind amongst the transformation of services. This, in turn, has excluded many groups of people from services and activities which is having a significant negative impact on their mental wellbeing, confidence, independence and causing further social exclusion.

Bromley Mencap is delighted to have received funding from both the National Lottery Covid-19 Fund and the London Community Response Fund Wave 3 to help address these barriers. The funding will enable us to ensure more disadvantaged people are supported to access services and activities through, what are known as, new digital platforms. We will support people to access digital activities, receive personalised support, reconnect with their friends and gain the confidence and skills to cope with living in another lockdown.

**The London
Community
Foundation**



The funding will be used to pay for:

- A pool of tablets and laptops for staff and disabled people to be supported to access services and activities in the new digital world
- Training for our staff to gain new digital skills in delivering services and providing virtual activities
- Equipment to produce digital activities, films and on-line sessions which will be developed into a Bromley Mencap YouTube
- A comprehensive Covid-19 workplace assessment and the cost of recommendations to make our work environment Covid-19 safe and compliant for staff and clients
- Podcast equipment which will be accessible for our clients to produce their own regular podcasts
- A new accessible and interactive website with digital content

This funding and these new activities will lead to decreased isolation and loneliness for disabled people and carers, increased confidence and new skills to cope with the changing COVID-19 world and enable people to reconnect with their local communities. We will be reporting on progress of this work in future Bulletins.

Advice Quality Standard



I am pleased to report that Bromley Mencap has been reassessed and successfully retained the Advice Quality Standard for a further two years. The Standard is the quality mark for organisations that provide advice to the public on social welfare issues. Organisations that hold the Standard are able to demonstrate they are easily accessible, effectively managed, and employ staff with the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of their clients.

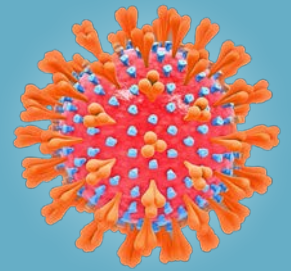
The Standard was reassessed virtually through a series of rigorous online interviews and a desktop exercise which included reviewing our policies and procedures. The assessor wrote:

'...a number of Areas of Good Practice were identified during the assessment. Areas of Good Practice are where the organisation has exceeded the Standard to a significant extent and/or has developed an innovative approach to service delivery. It was an enjoyable experience to witness the dedication and commitment of the team to deliver its service in challenging times.'

We are delighted to have retained this important Quality Standard which is a reflection of the excellent work of our staff and the safe, robust, client-focussed advice we provide.

Coronavirus

Back in lockdown



**If you do go out
be careful**

Covid is spreading fast.
We are back in lockdown
and must all stay at home.
Only go out for

- * Food shopping
- * Exercise and wellbeing
- * Health or care needs
- * Work if you need to



**Wear a face
mask to help
stop spreading
coronavirus**



**Keep your
distance from
other people**



**Wash your
hands to kill
Covid germs**



**Get back
home quickly**



**If you feel unwell
Stay at home
Call 111 or your GP
If life is in danger call 999**

Covid-19 Vaccination Scam Alert

Please be aware of a new scam where people have received a text message saying they need to book a vaccination appointment and urging them to click on a link that takes them to a fake NHS form. This form then asks for their bank details to prove their identity. The NHS will never ask for personal banking information.

There is a texting scam leaflet you can download [here](#) with scam examples and what to look out for.



My Health, My Life

National Mencap has published a report highlighting how people with a learning disability have always had poor access to healthcare and how it was significantly worse for people with a learning disability during the first peak of the coronavirus pandemic. Data released in November 2020 shows the devastating impact of the pandemic, with the rate of people with a learning disability dying from COVID-19 estimated to be 3–4 times the rate in the general population.

The report calls for equal access to healthcare for people with a learning disability and that people with a learning disability should be prioritised for the Covid -19 vaccine.

You can read the easy read report [here](#)

Charities call for delivery charges and minimum spends to be scrapped for shielders

Independent Age, the older people's charity, has published a new report warning that many people are facing mounting costs as they struggle to access food over the winter period.

The charity, which leads a consortium on food access during the pandemic, is appealing for action as people who cannot shop in supermarkets due to health risks – and at the advice of the Government – are being unfairly penalised through delivery charges and minimum spends on online supermarket shopping.

More information including supermarket contact details can be found [here](#)



We support adults with physical disabilities by providing information, advice and guidance. Although we are currently unable to make face-to-face appointments or home visits, we are still able to work closely with our clients via the telephone.

We are able to offer emotional support and we are working remotely to help clients complete paperwork and forms such as blue badge applications and grants.

Monthly Workshops

In November we participated in the Bromley Well Self Care Week and ran a number of workshops via Zoom focusing on eating well.

At our Healthy Eating Workshop, we discussed the 'Eat Well Plate', as well as understanding food labels, swapping foods for healthier alternatives and useful food apps. Clients were given ideas and tips to help them to make better food choices.

This was followed by a live cook-along with Ollie from Vegetarian for Life. He showed us how to make carrot, ginger and orange soup with flatbread and a chocolate and avocado pudding. He also spoke about the charity and the benefits of a vegetarian diet.



To round off the day there was cookery demonstration from our very own Chetan, who showed us how to make low fat chana masala. Sushma, Chetan's wife, also joined the meeting to talk about the health benefits of the spices and ingredients used.

Contact Us:

If you are interested in attending one of our Zoom workshops or you would like to find out more about our service, please contact the office on 020 8466 0790.

You can also contact one of our Support and Information Officers as follows:

Sue Fuller on 07484673090 or email Sue.Fuller@bromleywell.org.uk

Chetan Raval on 07421106922 or email Chetan.Raval@bromleywell.org.uk

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BWPhysicalDisabilities/>

Alternatively you can call us in the office on 020 8466 0790

NEWS -

Physical Disabilities

COVID-19 Vaccine



You can also find all the key public information by visiting <https://selondonccg.nhs.uk/covid19vaccine> including information on who can get the vaccination and why some people will need to wait.

Disability Horizons: shielding stories

Raya Al-Jadir, a shielder herself, shares the stories of people who have remained in a form of lockdown since the start of the pandemic, many of whom have been left feeling frustrated, anxious and forgotten. Read the stories [here](#)



How iPhone 12's Lidar and AI help me to navigate

Technology that can describe the environment can be life changing for blind people or those who have sight loss. Find out more [here](#)



Locked In: Breaking the Silence

Xavier Alford is a filmmaker who is used to telling other people's stories. Now he has turned the camera on himself to explore his incredibly rare impairment – multifocal motor neuropathy. Read the full story [here](#)



Caroline Wyatt: MS research

A UK medical trial investigates whether an old drug used to lower cholesterol can be used to help patients with advanced multiple sclerosis. Read more [here](#)



UK designer's wheelchair innovation wins the Toyota prize

A Scottish designer has won \$1m (£753,000) to fund the manufacture of his innovative smart-wheelchair. [Here](#) is the story in more detail.



We support people who have a learning disability or learning difficulty through one-to-one appointments, assisting in meetings or contacting organisations. Our approach is to run a person-centred service giving information, guidance and support. The Learning Disability Pathway has recently offered emotional support for people in isolation, support with new benefit applications and benefit checks, and with various housing matters.



Outreach

Please visit our Facebook page [here](#) for up-to-date guidance and information for people with learning difficulties. We have shared a number of stories and articles on our page including the latest guidance regarding the new lockdown. We also have a Facebook group. This is a private group on Facebook where only members of the group can see what you have written or posted. We are available every working day and are currently in regular contact with many clients on this platform.

If you would like to learn more, please join the group [here](#) or contact Rob for help with setting this up.



Bromley Well LD Workshop Group

Private group · 41 members



Monthly Workshops and Drop-ins

We were very excited to be involved in Self Care Week for Bromley Well in November.



We organised a number of workshops for these sessions including:

- Health and Exercise with Bromley All Stars (Advocacy for All)
- Meet Your Social Prescriber
- Flu and Winter Wellbeing with Age UK
- A Coronavirus Update with the Clinical Commissioning Group
- Have Your Say on Social Care with Healthwatch Bromley
- Adult Dyslexia, Neurodiversity and Mental Health - the challenges faced in a time of Covid-19 with the Dyslexia Association.

Contact us if you would like any of the resources from these sessions. They can also be found on our Facebook group. You can view the All Stars Keep Fit video on YouTube [here](#)

Call, text or email Rob Morgan if you would like any more information about the Learning Disability Service on 020 8466 0790, mobile 07482 558 660 or email robert.morgan@bromleywell.org.uk

NEWS -

Learning Disabilities

Adults with learning disabilities 'miss out' during pandemic

People with learning disabilities have been "at the back of the queue" during the coronavirus pandemic, a panel of MPs has been told.

Those living in supported accommodation were left waiting weeks for guidance on testing and visits.

More [here](#)



People with learning disabilities should be prioritised for a Covid-19 vaccine

'As well as far higher coronavirus death rates, learning disabled people experience more isolation than the general population', writes Steve Scown.

You can read the full article [here](#)



Fairer justice system for neuro-diverse people to reduce crime

A government press release states that quicker recognition and better support for offenders who have 'neurodivergent' conditions such as autism, ADHD and dyslexia, will help combat crime.

More information [here](#)

Strategies to support students with dyslexia or ADHD to improve writing skills

There are many ways that teachers can take steps to support students improve their writing skills. Tips include decluttering workspaces, building strong academic routines and to introduce shape and colour in writing lessons.

More [here](#)



Supporting People with Autism

Bromley Well

We support people aged 16 and over who have an Autism diagnosis, or believe they have Autism and are seeking a diagnosis, through one-to-one appointments, assisting in meetings or contacting organisations. Our approach is to run a person-centred service giving information, guidance and support. We have recently supported students returning to school and college, tenants dealing with rent arrears, and supported people with benefit appeals and enquiries.

Online

Please visit our Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BWAutismSupport>

for up-to-date guidance and information for people with Autism. We share relevant stories and articles on our page, including supported internships for young people with Autism, what it is like to be diagnosed with Autism as an adult, and free assistance with managing money.

We also have a Facebook group and only members of the group can see what you have written or posted. We are available every working day and are currently in regular contact with many clients on this platform. If you would like to learn more, please join the group at

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/BWAutismSupport> or contact Lauren for help with setting this up.

We also have a regular e-newsletter with details, including Zoom links, for all of our upcoming events. Please email Lauren to receive this newsletter.

Monthly Workshops and Drop-ins

We are currently running workshops via Zoom in association with CASPA on the last Tuesday of every month. We have recently been discussing coping with anxiety which our members have found useful.

We are also running a TV and Film Club via Zoom on alternate Wednesdays. We can share our favourite films or what we have recently been watching. It is a lighter session and a great way to get some good recommendations and to let the group know why your choices are important to you.



We now have catch up sessions on alternate Fridays and have been discussing what we have been up to, any information or stories we would like to share, and the opportunity to take part in a group activity such as a quiz.

Call Lauren if you would like any more information about the Autism service on 020 8466 0790 or email lauren.titheridge@bromleywell.org.uk

IN THE NEWS

Diagnosed with autism as an adult

Helen Keen found out she was autistic as an adult. In *Broad Spectrum*, she speaks to psychologists and people with Autism to find out why diagnosis can take so long, what happens when it's missed, and how discovering they're autistic changes people's lives.

Find out more [here](#)

10 things autistic people want others to know about talking to them

People who have autism experience the world differently, and this often makes it harder for them to communicate. Read on for ten important insights into the challenges autistic people face in social situations, and what others can do to make things easier.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/2FMBbsIJ3bS8GLfqNXfSc4T/10-things-autistic-people-want-others-to-know-about-talking-to-them>



Bromley Well

Dr Camilla Pang: 'Autism has its advantages'

The youngest-ever winner of the Royal Society's science book prize said her Autism helped her succeed. Dr Camilla Pang's celebrated book, *Explaining Humans*, is a memoir of growing up with Autism. She said she used science "as a lens to understand human behaviour".

Find out more [here](#)



Coronavirus and mental health support

As the information and rules relating to coronavirus are constantly being reviewed and subject to change, bookmark the National Autistic Society website for the latest advice on mental health and wellbeing during this difficult time.

Find out more [here](#)



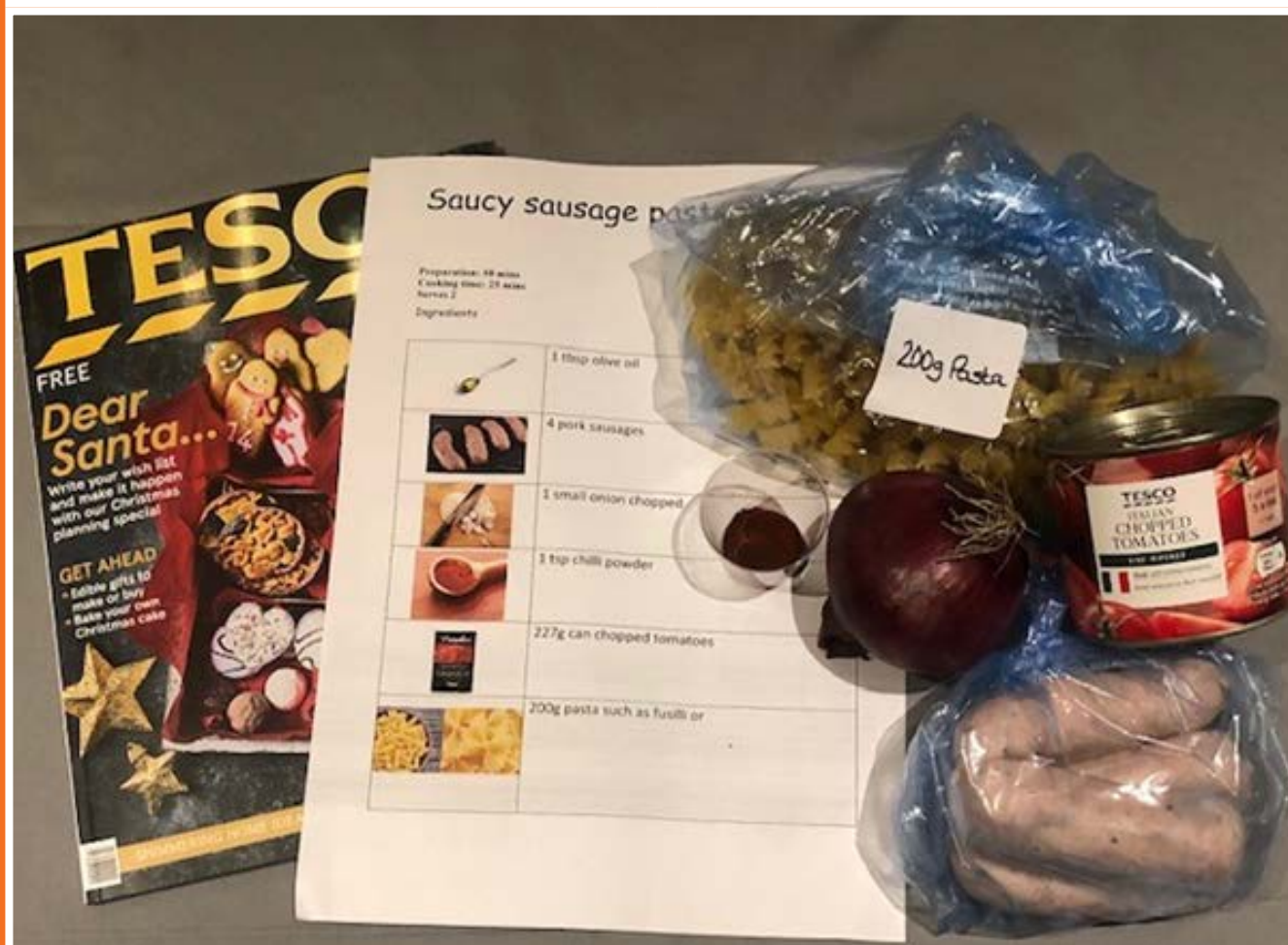
National
Autistic
Society

The Mutual Carers Support Worker, Tina Penn, continues to provide specialist support to mutual carers where one of the carers is aged 55+ with a disabled son, daughter or sibling living at home. She is still very busy providing telephone support and checking in regularly with all families. Tina can be contacted on 07719426680 or 020 8466 0790.

With the postponement of our Older Carers workshop and lunch, we delivered a Christmas hamper to our clients instead. Clients were absolutely delighted to receive them, and we received some lovely feedback. It also gave each family the chance to talk directly to the Mutual Carers Support Worker safely from their front door and it was lovely to see everyone looking well and staying safe.



The clients that normally attend our learning disability cookery club received a bag of ready measured out ingredients to make saucy sausage pasta and chocolate Rice Krispie cakes, along with easy-read recipe cards and a supermarket magazine, full of different Christmas recipes to try. Again, this was warmly received, with excellent feedback from clients. Plans are in place to deliver another bag of ingredients in the new year, so watch this space.



Step Forward update

Happy new year everyone from Ian and Sharon. We have been busy again, supporting people throughout tier 4. As we now move into another lockdown, Step Forward is again looking at new ideas to keep the workshops going and to support people while they are at home. In the coming months we will be producing workshop films which can be accessed at any time and Sharon and Ian will also be available to go through the workshop films with each candidate individually. This is a whole new approach and a very exciting one. The photo of Ian, with broom in hand, was taken while he was helping to clear water away from the Lodge after a burst water main at Bromley Common put the Lodge at risk of flooding.



Christmas Virtual Disco

Following on from the successful virtual disco in the summer, our DJ Steve Catchpole produced a special Christmas disco for us all to enjoy via Zoom. 34 attendees joined with their families and carers and danced the evening away to their favourite songs. It proved to be very popular with many people saying how lovely it was to see their friends and lots of smiling faces.

We have some more exciting events planned for 2021 so watch this space.



Matt Yule and three volunteers, Joseph Martin, Phillip Branch and Kim Bygraves met in Norman Park on 19th December for a walk and to be interviewed for a Bromley Mencap podcast. Special care was taken to keep safe and follow the social distancing guidelines. All those in attendance agreed what a difficult year it had been but were excited to discuss future plans and prospects of meeting up again in 2021.



During the past year, Monday Afternooners have kept in touch and supported each other via their WhatsApp group after our normal outings were cancelled due to Covid-19. WhatsApp has been used for games, quizzes and sharing photos to keep everyone entertained and prevent isolation. When restrictions were eased in the summer, we were able to meet up outdoors on several occasions for a picnic.

More recently many of our members have taken to zoom and we were able to hold our annual quiz and tea cream virtually as a result. Louise, one of our helpers, put together the quiz questions and cream teas were delivered by Kim, Andrew and Sue. It was great to get everyone together and enjoy a chance to socialise and catch up. Thank you to Soroptimist International for their kind donation towards the cream teas.

Although we were unable to go out for our annual Christmas meal, we were able to deliver Christmas hampers to our members containing some Christmas treats, goodies and a Secret Santa gift. Again, we used zoom for our final catch up of 2020. Mel sung us some carols and some funny Christmas poems were recited.

We all hope we can meet again in 2021.



The Children's Wellbeing Service

As Christmas approached, the Children's Wellbeing Service, funded by BBC Children in Need, was busy putting together an exciting programme of online activities for the children to enjoy during the festive period.

Craft Packs

To keep children entertained and busy during the weeks before Christmas, craft packs were put together and sent to 44 children. They included a scratch art activity, fuzzy felt colouring, a kit to decorate your own stocking, card, paper chains, stickers and felt.

A virtual Christmas party day with three activities was also planned. This included a special Christmas craft session where children decorated a Christmas stocking together online, showed off their finished craft projects and chatted about what mischief their Elf on the Shelf had been up to!

There was also the opportunity to take part in a festive family quiz and play some party games and dance. Lots of fun and laughter was had by all and we received some lovely feedback from families.

'She loves the zoom session and it's a brilliant way to keep in contact with others'

'A huge thank you for everything this year'



BBC
**Children
in Need**

Meet our new staff members...

Steve Barnes

Hello, I'm Steve and I've recently joined Bromley Mencap as the new Deputy Chief Executive. My role is quite broad and involves managing the business side of the organisation, including premises, IT, policies, safeguarding, quality assurance and consultations. I also manage the Capital Appeal Fundraising Manager and Communications Officer, as well as having overall responsibility for volunteers.

I have been with Bromley Mencap since October and despite having started during a time of increased restrictions, I've been made to feel very welcome by the staff team and have very much enjoyed starting to get to know the wide range of activities that we carry out.

Prior to joining, I worked as a director of a hospice in Westminster for six years. My professional background is in social work and I have also worked across the NHS and local government as a commissioning manager. At the beginning of my career, I worked for two years for a local Mencap in Nottinghamshire as a support worker.

Outside of work, I am a trustee of a dementia charity and enjoy watching live sport, reading and I am also a keen cyclist. In 2019, I rode from London to Paris with a group of families and will never forget the experience of approaching the Arc de Triomphe with my then 14-year-old son, and the realisation that we had accomplished something truly special.



Lauren Titheridge

My name is Lauren, and I am the new Information and Support Officer for Autism at Bromley Well.

My role includes supporting individuals aged 16+ who have been diagnosed with Autism or who believe they may have Autism. I provide information and support on a range of topics, such as accessing social activities, accessing health services, managing money or guidance to other services. I also run the Autism Peer Support Groups, which are currently on Zoom, alongside managing our Instagram account @bromleywellautismsupport.



Prior to this role, I have worked in a range of childcare and SEN-based settings. At the beginning of 2020, I took time out to travel around New Zealand, where I then settled for a few months whilst working in an autism specialist school. The Covid-19 pandemic cut my travels short and I returned to the UK where I resumed working with children, before securing this role and I am thrilled to be part of the Bromley Well Autism Project.

In my free time I enjoy travelling, arts and crafts, and baking. I run social media accounts for my creative projects to provide inspiration for others to create their own gifts or bakes.

Hannah Bennett



Bromley Well Young Carers Support Worker

I joined the team back in November and I've been lucky enough to meet quite a few young carers now via our zoom sessions. These last couple of months have flown by and I'm now well and truly settled into the team. Before joining Bromley Well Young Carers, I worked in various roles with children and young adults including the Prince's Trust, ReachOut and within the education sector. I am now really looking forward to working with the young carers of Bromley and their families.

Outside of work I play field hockey for local team Bexleyheath and Belvedere. I also enjoy being outside and am a self-confessed foodie.

Happy New Year to everyone!

2020 was definitely a year like no other! With lockdowns and restrictions throughout the year it was a tough time for everyone. Most fundraising events were cancelled but so many supporters took to virtual events and challenges to help our cause and we are truly grateful for your continued support.

Christmas Appeal & Raffle

Thank you to everyone that supported our Christmas appeal and raffle which raised an amazing £2,340. Congratulations to all the winners of the raffle and we hope you enjoyed your prizes that were delivered in time for Christmas.

The Vitality Big Half – Sunday 25 April 2021

The Vitality Big Half will return to the streets of London on Sunday 25 April 2021!

After a challenging 2020, we're really looking forward to getting back out there and running together as one again – that's why we're inviting you to take part in The Vitality Big Half 2021 to support Bromley Mencap.

It's a great chance for you to enjoy the camaraderie and fun of a mass participant event while raising funds for us! And what better way to start a brand-new year than by having something positive to aim for in the spring?

We have a limited number of charity places available, so if you'd like to take part and raise much-needed funds for us please email jane.barnes@bromleymencap.org today. The registration fee is £25 with an additional minimum fundraiser of £300.00 (excluding gift aid).

Rest assured, there'll be appropriate social distancing measures in place at the event to ensure you have a safe and comfortable day. And if it is postponed or cancelled for any reason, you'll receive a full refund of the entry fee you paid.

You'll find more information about The Vitality Big Half at thebighalf.co.uk.

We really hope you'll join #TeamBromleyMencap for The Vitality Big Half and help us raise much-needed funds for 2021.



Recycling for Good Causes Scheme

You can donate all your broken and unwanted jewellery to raise money for Bromley Mencap. If you have any gold, silver, odd earrings, broken chains, costume jewellery and watches, you can recycle them at no cost to you whilst making money for us. You can donate any unwanted banknotes from ANY country of any age, so all of those obsolete pre-euro notes are a perfect start!



Our partners at Recycling for Good Causes will reuse and recycle the jewellery and banknotes, giving the proceeds to Bromley Mencap, saving precious raw materials at the same time. If you would like to send your jewellery and banknote recycling to us, simply use your own envelope or jiffy bag (No bigger than A5 in size) and use the free returns label. Link to be added to our website shortly.

Please do not send coins or stamps to the freepost address as the postage costs will far outweigh your donation.

Donate your stamps

You can also donate stamps. Simply cut or carefully rip the postage stamp from the used envelope, being careful that you don't damage the stamp, and once you have a collection pop them in an envelope making sure you have the correct postage to:

Bromley Mencap
PO Box 16992
Sutton Coldfield
B73 9YA
(*postage needs to be applied*)

A huge thank you to our supporters:

Thanks to Michelle Quinlan and all the members of Sundridge Park Golf club. Despite a very difficult year, resulting in most of the planned fundraising events being cancelled, the club still managed to raise an amazing £7,978.06.

Thanks to SSP Group Plc for a generous donation of £1,000, and a big thank you to Soroptimists International, Christchurch, Petts Wood and the many supporters that have donated throughout the festive period.

THANK YOU!



Don't forget you can keep updated on what is going on at Bromley Mencap by following us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Copy deadline for March/April 2021 is 1st March

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