

BULLETIN

January/February 2022

Santa's Little Helpers

The Children's Wellbeing Service spread some much-needed Christmas cheer over the festive period by distributing party bags to 90 children at the Lodge after the Christmas party was cancelled due to concerns over the Omicron Covid-19 variant. We would like to thank the West Kent Freemasons for the generous donation of £500 which meant we could buy the presents.



The Children's Wellbeing Service was a three-year project funded by BBC Children in Need. Services provided were free to access and included a series of different workshops aimed at young people and their families, as well as activity sessions and coach trips.





Hi everyone,

I hope you had a lovely Christmas and wishing you a happy and healthy New Year. Despite Covid-19 continuing into 2022, we continue to offer services to our members in a safe way.

And if you still require a Covid-19 vaccine or booster, nurses from Oxleas Community Learning Disability Team will be running Covid vaccination clinics for people with learning disabilities on 28th and 29th January at Queen Mary's Hospital in Sidcup. Further details can be found on page 5.

Turn to page 19 to find out what activities we have planned for the Round the World Challenge with Bromley MyTime and why not join us for Virtual Challenge Week in partnership with the Special Olympics GB and Mencap (page 20). There is something for everyone and it is a great way to beat those January blues!

Finally do check out our exciting podcast news on page 17.

Until next time, take care and keep well!

Alex
alex.powell@bromleymencap.org

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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/>

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



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 regular catch-up sessions.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT EDDIE LYNCH



Happy New Year to all Bulletin readers

We start 2022 with some fantastic news. Our Bromley Well Young Carers service has won a national **Activities 4 Kids Award**. The service won the Most Loved Charity or Not-for-Profit Community Award.



The awards evening was held at a black-tie event at Warner Bros Studio in November. The award highlights the creative support and positive outcomes the service delivers to Young Carers in Bromley.

Over 600 Young Carers are registered with the service which has been providing support since October 2017. The service supports Young Carers aged 4 to 19 to manage caring relationships whilst enjoying their childhood. It provides opportunities to meet with other young carers, have fun and discuss any worries. Services include emotional support, counselling, workshops, peer support groups, support for preparing for adulthood and a range of fun activities in the community.

The four finalists in our award category were:

1. Bromley Well Young Carers - WINNER
2. Codswallop CIC
3. Devon Antenatal & First Aid CIC
4. Outdoor Mums CIC - HIGHLY COMMENDED

Lorna Hammer, Young Carers Co-ordinator and Hannah Bennett, Young Carers Support Worker with their award



[You can read more about the awards here.](#)

There is further coverage on social media here: [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

Congratulations to Lorna and Hannah who run the Bromley Well Young Carers Service and to the volunteers who provide fantastic support at events and activities.

What a great way to start the New Year!

NEWS CORNER

Covid Vaccination Clinics: 28th and 29th January

The Oxleas Community Learning Disability Team nurses will be running Covid vaccination clinics for people with learning disabilities on **28th and 29th January** at their site at **Queen Mary's Hospital in Sidcup**.

If you still require a first dose or a booster vaccination, please phone **0203 871 5680** to make an appointment.

It is important to keep ourselves safe and healthy this winter by having our Covid and flu vaccines.

Many of you will already have received two doses of the Covid vaccine, but the protection from the Covid vaccines doesn't last forever in your body, so it is important to get your booster vaccine to help keep you safe for longer.

All adults are being offered a Covid booster vaccine three months after their second dose.



The Beckenham & Penge Gateway Club - Change of Venue

The Thursday evening club meetings are moving to a great new venue. With effect from

Thursday 20th January 2022, weekly meetings will be held at Melvin Hall Community Centre, Melvin Road, Penge, London, SE20 8EU. The last meeting at the current premises will be on Thursday 13th January 2022. Club meetings will continue to run from 7pm to 9pm. Please be aware that there is no access to the premises before 7pm. The main entrance to the hall is situated on Melvin Road, and includes disabled access.



If you have any queries, please call 020 8777 0306 or email bpgc1965@virginmedia.com

Treatments for COVID-19

The NHS is offering antibody and antiviral treatments to people aged 12 and over with coronavirus (Covid-19) who are at the highest risk of becoming seriously ill (including those with Down's syndrome). These treatments can help people manage the symptoms and reduce the risk of them becoming seriously ill.

The NHS is now writing to people with Down's Syndrome about accessing these treatments if they test positive for Covid, and sending them a home PCR test to keep for when they may have symptoms and need to carry out a test.

[More here information here.](#)

Staff Introductions

Jodie Miles

Hello, I started in May as an Employment Advisor for Bromley Well. I have previously worked for London South East Colleges, formerly known as Bromley College, for 17 years as an Learning Support Assistant and for the last 6 years as a Job Coach for young people with learning disabilities/difficulties. Working as a Job Coach is what really cemented my passion for supporting people to find employment and volunteering opportunities and I absolutely love what I do.

I live in Bromley with my partner and our two boys, alongside the dog, rabbit and a snake! In my spare time, I love nothing more than spending time with my family having days out, cosying up with a film or catching up with the girls with a cocktail or two! I enjoy playing on the Nintendo Switch and playing Mario Kart with my son – although with all the practice he is now much better than me!

I am loving every minute of being part of such an amazing organisation. The Employment and Education Team who have been so supportive and welcoming from day one.



Sarah Barclay

Hello I'm Sarah an Employment Adviser for Bromley Mencap's Employ Me London programme. I joined the organisation in August having previously worked for London South East Colleges for 16 years working with young people with learning difficulties/disabilities in mainstream education. I had various roles within the college including teaching on a NEET (not engaged in education, employment or training) programme and leading support for the Creative Industries faculty. I live in Bromley and have two grown-up children, and my first grandchild arrived in July on the day I was offered my job with

Bromley Mencap! My family are so very important to me, and I am also a carer for my older brother.

My spare time is mostly taken up with my grandson which is an absolute joy as well as catching up with friends over a good meal and a glass of wine. I am so pleased to be part of an outstanding organisation that strives to assist young people into sustainable employment with continued support, which is why I applied for the job! Everyone has been very welcoming and so supportive; it is an absolute pleasure to be part of the organisation and especially part of the Employment and Education Team.



Andrew Blake

Hello everyone, my name is Andrew and I have recently started working at Bromley Mencap as the Day Services Manager. I am looking forward to meeting everyone in the organisation. It is an exciting time as we have opened our new day service at Cotmandene Crescent in St Pauls Cray.



I am really looking forward to supporting the people that attend day services, shaping and creating a service that is valuable and meaningful to them.

I have worked for people with disabilities for about 15 years and I have lived in and around Bromley all my life. I live in Beckenham with my family which include my lovely wife Katie, four children, a dog and a hamster.

I love music and I sing and play a few musical instruments (some better than others!). I recently took up canoeing at Beckenham Place Park and so far, I have stayed dry!

Supporting People with Physical Disabilities

Bromley Well

We support adults with physical disabilities by providing information, advice and guidance. We are delighted to say that we are now doing more face-to-face work with clients who appreciate and welcome this change. However, we are taking a precautionary approach due to the Omicron Covid-19 variant and workshop and drop-in dates will be confirmed shortly. We also continue to work closely with our clients via the telephone, emails and Zoom by offering emotional support and help to complete paperwork, forms and grant applications.

Monthly Workshops

In November our workshop was all about celebrating **Self Care Week** and we provided valuable information about keeping well and discussed different ways people look after themselves.



This was from taking regular walks in the park and enjoying nature at its best to doing some meditation, meeting up with friends and family or making time for yourself and doing something you enjoy.

We also talked about making small changes to our eating habits which can have huge health benefits in the long run. For example, swapping fried crisps for baked ones.

The topic for our December workshop was **Keeping Well in The Winter**. This took place over Zoom due to the increased risk of the new Omicron Covid-19 variant.

We spoke about how to keep warm and well by discussing average room temperature, who to contact when you have a common cold and getting the flu and booster jab. We also shared information on [Cold Weather Payments](#) issued by the Department for Work and Pensions and the [Warm Home Discount](#) which is a £140 payment applied directly to your bills to help with the cost of energy over the winter months.

Please note; due to the Omicron variant, upcoming workshop and drop-in dates will be confirmed shortly.



NEWS - Physical Disabilities

Rose Ayling-Ellis becomes the first deaf contestant to win BBC One's Strictly Come Dancing

Watch the moment the results are announced [here](#).



Regulator probes train ramp safety failings

Rail operators across the country are being investigated by their regulator after a series of concerns about potentially fatal safety flaws in the use of the ramps used to allow wheelchair-users to board trains.

[More here.](#)

Government must re-introduce Covid-19 protections for disabled people, says disability charity

Disability Rights UK is challenging the Home Secretary Sajid Javid to re-introduce protection for clinically vulnerable people.

[Read the full article here.](#)



'It was magical' – meet the first disabled crew to fly in zero-gravity

New space firm, Mission Astro Access, wants to challenge the perception that space travel is only for those who meet specific physical criteria, and has sent its first disabled crew on a zero-gravity flight. [More here.](#)



Alt-J's Thom Sonny Green: From shielding to getting back on tour

A rare genetic condition has meant that Alt-J drummer Thom Sonny Green has spent a lot of the pandemic shielding. Thom is classed as clinically extremely vulnerable because he had a kidney transplant when he was at university. But in February he'll be going back out on tour with his Mercury Prize-winning band - playing stadiums and arenas across the US and UK.

[Read the full story here.](#)



Contact Us:

If you are interested in finding out more about our service, please contact our Support and Information Officer as follows:

Chetan Raval on 07421 106922 or email Chetan.Raval@bromleywell.org.uk

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

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 socialising, correspondence, forms, grants,

benefits and banking.

Outreach

Please visit our Facebook page [here](#) for up-to-date guidance and information for people with learning difficulties. We have run a number of stories and articles on our page including easy read guidance on the lifting of restrictions, flu jabs and Covid-19 safety advice.

We also have a private Facebook group. 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.



Monthly Workshops and Drop-ins

In November we held a face-to-face workshop on the subject of Winter Wellbeing, focussing on our mental and physical health over the winter months. The workshop was very well attended and it was great to see some new faces.

Later in November, we contributed to Self Care Week with a virtual workshop around this year's theme of Self Care for Life. We focussed on our 'Self Care Aims', looking at what we would like to do or change, how we will make this change, what might make this difficult and how we will overcome these difficulties. You can find more about Self Care Week in the [Bromley Well Services Information Hub here](#).



In December we held a virtual Christmas-themed workshop, with information about support services over Christmas and advice about Covid-19. We were delighted to learn that all of our attendees have either received or have signed up for their Booster Jab!

Call, text or email Rob Morgan for more information about the Learning Difficulty Service on 020 8466 0790, mobile 07482 558 660 or email robert.morgan@bromleywell.org.uk

IN THE NEWS

The challenge of starting a new Job with Learning Disabilities

Kelly is a writer and was diagnosed with a Learning Disability, Dyscalculia and ADHD late in life. Here she describes the difficulties she faces when starting a new job and ways she has eased her anxieties.

Kelly states, "Having patience and giving myself the grace to make mistakes has been a huge game-changer for my overall mental health too."

[Read the full article here.](#)



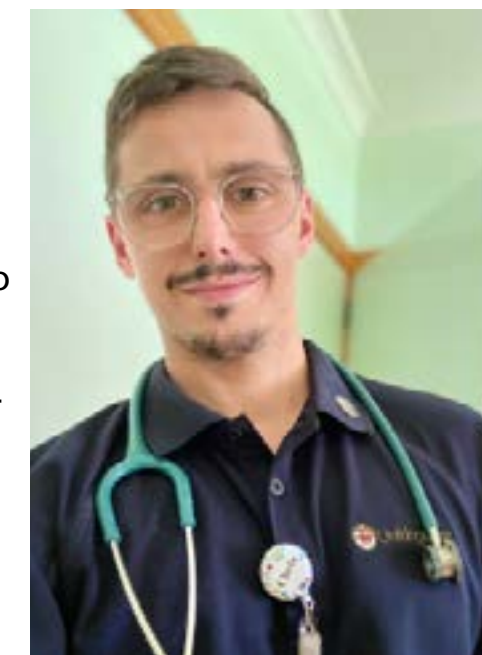
Living with Dyscalculia

Chris Long describes what it's like to live with dyscalculia, sometimes referred to as 'mathematical dyslexia', which often goes undiagnosed.

Attributes of this neurological condition include lacking effective counting strategies, inability to add simple, single-digit numbers mentally and poor fluency in identification of numbers. For Chris Long, it was the inability to convert numbers he was reading.

"I'll be looking at a 4 but it doesn't read as a four. I'll remember it as a six," the 34-year-old says. "I'll sometimes struggle to interpret a table or graph, to assign that value to that number."

It was in his first year at university studying nursing that Chris learnt that he has a lifelong learning disability. "It was a relief," he says. "I'd had to resit maths to get into university. My diagnosis led to support showing me ways around it, and it wasn't going to push me out of the nursing career I'd long desired." [Read more about dyscalculia here.](#)



Dimensions Leaders List 2021

Dimensions recently published their annual list of Learning Disability and Autism Leaders winners. Nominees include people with Learning Disabilities and Autism who have been making their own lives better, or the lives of others. As always, it is a hugely inspirational list as those with lived experience are celebrated and are able to feature in guest blogs on the Dimensions website and social media. [Read the list of winners 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.

Online

Find us on social media for up-to-date guidance and information for people with Autism. Facebook:

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

Facebook group:

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

Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/bromleywellautismsupport/>

WhatsApp groups:

- Autism Support Group: if you are aged 16+ with Autism, join us to meet new people, chat with like-minded individuals and join in with daily games.
- Autism Parents & Carers Group: A space to chat about supporting someone with Autism aged 16+.

You can also sign up to our regular e-newsletter with details, including Zoom links, for all of our upcoming events. Please contact the office to subscribe by telephoning 020 8466 0790.

Monthly Workshops and Drop-ins

Our catch-up sessions run on alternate Fridays on Zoom. Here we discuss what we have been up to, any information or stories we would like to share and there is also an opportunity to take part in a group activity such as a quiz or bingo. TV and Film Club runs on alternate Wednesdays on Zoom. We 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. Call 020 8466 0790 if you would like any more information about the Autism Service.

IN THE NEWS

Bromley Well

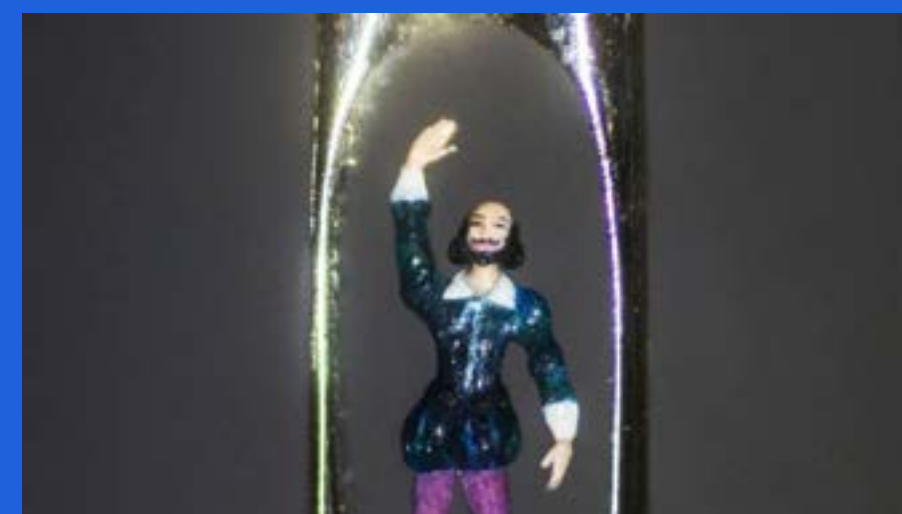
'A lot fell into place': the parents who discovered they were autistic after their child was diagnosed

The recorded incidence of autism has increased 787% in 20 years. For many parents, such as John Purnell, getting help for an autistic child alerted them to their own autistic traits and eventual diagnosis. [Read more here.](#)



Willard Wigan: Challenge of autism drove artist to succeed

An artist famed for creating microscopic sculptures said his autism has inspired his success. Willard Wigan MBE, 64, was diagnosed when he was 50, but believes his mother knew he struggled at school and encouraged him to create his tiny works of art. The Birmingham artist, who was giving a motivational talk at a school, described his autism as a blessing. "My inspiration is underestimation, because people underestimate," he said. [Read more here.](#)



Mutual Carers News and Events

Bromley Well

The pathway provides specialist support to mutual carers where one of the carers is aged 55+ with a disabled son, daughter or sibling living at home

The older carers workshop and lunch has been well attended. In November, Tina was delighted to welcome guest speaker Dominic Bercelli, Energy Advisor from South East London Community Energy (SELCE), who give an informative talk on money saving tips in the home. If clients would like to receive a home visit from an energy advisor, please contact Tina for a leaflet with all the details.

Unfortunately, our planned Christmas lunch was postponed due to concerns regarding rises in Covid-19 infections. However, clients were delivered Christmas food hampers to help spread the Christmas cheer. These were warmly received by clients and Tina received some lovely emails showing clients' appreciation.

The next workshop and lunch is planned for 21st January. Tina will be in touch shortly to inform clients if this will be taking place.



The Learning Disability Cookery Class has also been well attended and Tina was delighted to welcome a new client to the group. In November clients cooked up a storm making cheese and bacon stuffed jacket potatoes and chocolate chip cookies. Clients said they enjoyed the jacket potatoes so much they would make them again at home.



On 3rd December clients attended the Christmas cookery class. Due to Covid-19 safety measures, clients were unable to cook the usual Christmas dinner, but instead cooked turkey kebabs and had Christmas pudding/mince pies with ice cream or cream for dessert. Clients also took part in a Christmas word search, a Christmas-themed singalong and Christmas bingo, all of which the clients said they enjoyed.

The next cookery class is 14th January. Tina will be in touch to inform clients if this will be taking place.

A fond farewell to Shirley Poole

The Monday Afternooners have been very fortunate to have Shirley Poole as a volunteer for over 16 years!

Shirley has given her time regularly to support us and always comes with a smile on her face. She is a valued member of the Bromley Mencap volunteering team and has supported us in other areas of our work such as volunteering at the older carers lunch, various coach trips and activity days.

Shirley's warm and helpful nature will be sorely missed, and we would like to wish her much luck for the future.



Day Opportunities, The Lodge and Saturday Club Update

The Day Services team had a busy time in the lead up to the festive season preparing for our Christmas fair at The Lodge. The event, held back in November, was a great success and we raised over £1,300 which was a huge increase on our 2019 pre-Covid fair!



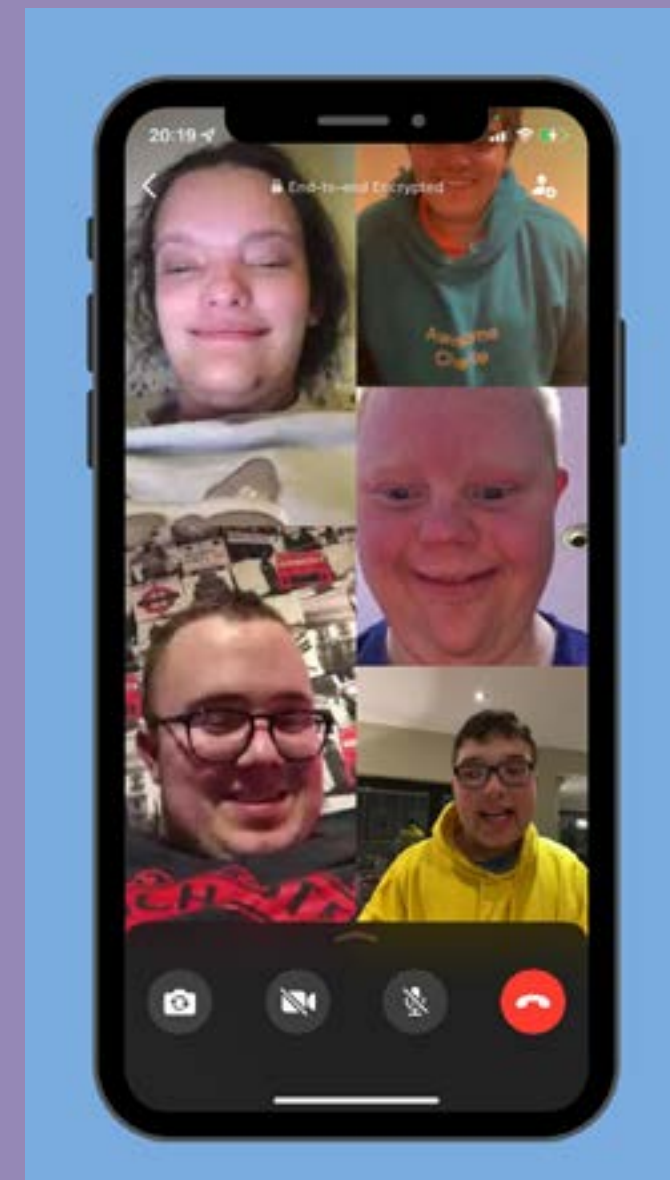
There are so many people to thank for their help, donations and ongoing support but a special mention goes to our amazing volunteers, Nicky and Richard from Tai Chi Simplicity for their Tai Chi demonstration, Sushma and Chetan from Naani Maa's Kitchen for their delicious food, Sweet Harmony Choir, the Grove Park Singers and the Zero to Hero Runners group who came along to support us. We would also like to thank the retailers in West Wickham High Street including Tugra, Brid's Tanning and Beauty, Inaga, Cook, Scott's Kitchen, Simmons Industrial Services, Bella Rose Bromley, Emma's Pottery and Costa for their generous donations.

Our final thanks go to our amazing clients and staff at The Lodge & Day Opportunities groups who made bespoke gifts to sell, some of which are pictured above. After the challenging year we have all been through, it was lovely to be able to spread some festive cheer and raise some much-needed funds for Bromley Mencap.



Podcast Club

Some exciting news for 2022! We will be training up young people from the 'Awesome Charlie' group to use our podcasting equipment and produce and edit podcasts. The 'Awesome Charlie' group consists of a number of friends aged between 16 and 17 from a special needs school in Bromley who got together virtually during lockdown to stay in touch. With their parents' involvement, the friends set up a WhatsApp group to connect with each other and now there are about 25 members! They have organised cooking sessions and quizzes - helping each other when feeling down and supporting each other during a difficult time.

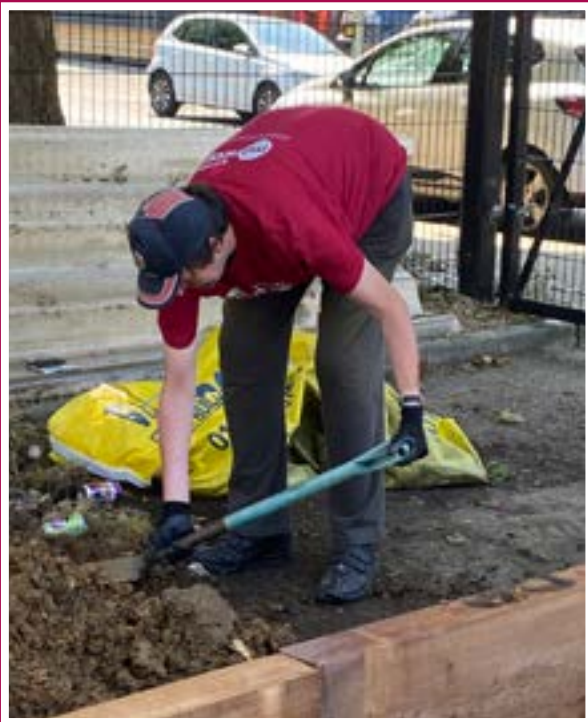


Stay tuned for their first recording which will be out soon! You can also listen to our previous podcast episodes and find out more about our services by [visiting our website here](#).

Step Forward Update

Back in the summer, three of the Step Forward candidates were offered an exciting opportunity with Grove Pensions.

The Step Forward Team have a long-standing relationship with this organisation and when the company moved offices, they asked us to help landscape the garden and continue to do weekly maintenance. Under the supervision of a contractor, the team transformed an overgrown area into a wheelchair-accessible garden for the staff to enjoy. This included raised flower beds, planting of fruit trees, a wild-flower area and seating. Grove Pensions have awarded the maintenance contract to Bromley Mencap carving out three paid roles for our candidates.



Get Active with us: Round The World Challenge and MyClub



New for January : MyClub and free swimming!

TUESDAY
The Pavilion, the Glades, Bromley BR1 3EF

- BOWLING* 10.00-11.30
- KEEP FIT 11.45-12.25

WEDNESDAY
Bromley Golf Centre, Magpie Hall Lane, BR2 8JF

- WARM UP WORKOUT 13.00-13.45
- GOLF 14.00-15.00

THURSDAY
The Pavilion, the Glades, Bromley BR1 3EF

- BOWLING* 10.00-11.30
- DANCE PARTY 11.45-12.30

FRIDAY
Walnuts Leisure Centre, Orpington BR6 0TJ

- MULTI SPORTS 10.30-11.30
- STRETCH & RELAX 12.00-13.00

Round the World Challenge participants can now register for our exciting Mytime Active Club for adults with learning disabilities and autism. This club is for **YOU** and is called **MyClub**

Activities are **FREE** except for Bowling which is subsidised for **MyClub**

FREE SWIMMING now available at Mytime Active general swim times
NOTE: This activity is not supervised. You need to attend independently or with a carer and registration for **MyClub** will be needed to access swimming for free.

Contact fay.spencer@mytimeactive.co.uk to register for **MyClub** and keep clocking up those miles for Round the World Challenge.



LOTTERY FUNDED

<https://www.mencap.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/mencap-sport>

Registered charity number 2215177 (England and Wales), 302410785 (Scotland), 201191801. Royal Mencap Society, 121 Galsdon Lane, London, E12 9BT

Take a look at our January Round the World Challenge timetable above. Round the World Challenge participants can now register for our exciting Mytime Active Club for adults with learning disabilities and autism. This club is for YOU and is called MyClub. Activities, including swimming, are FREE except for bowling which is subsidised for MyClub members. Contact fay.spencer@mytimeactive.co.uk to register for MyClub and keep clocking up those miles for Round the World Challenge.

Get Active with us: Virtual Challenge Week 2022

Are you looking for a fun and easy way to get active and fancy a bit of competition? Why not join our Bromley Mencap team and take part in the Special Olympics Great Britain and Mencap Virtual Challenge Week.

Challenge week takes place from Monday 24th January to Thursday 27th January with a virtual awards ceremony on Friday 28th January.

Last year we came fourth which was amazing. Can we do even better this year?

Telephone 020 8466 0790 or email ann.stott@bromleymencap.org to find out more and to register.



Community Fundraising

The Lodge Christmas Fair

Thank you to everyone who attended our Christmas Fair back in November.

It was a great success with us raising almost £1,300!

It was lovely to see so many people come along and support us and it was a wonderful opportunity for students at the Lodge and clients from our day services to showcase their work at the stalls.



Upcoming Events

RideLondon 100, 29th May 2022

RideLondon – the world's greatest festival of cycling – returns on Sunday 29 May 2022, with a new format, featuring a unique opportunity to ride 100 miles on traffic-free roads through the heart of London and neighbouring Essex, and Bromley Mencap have four places available for riders. You will need to commit to raising a minimum amount of £500 in order to secure one of the places.



The event will start on Victoria Embankment and finish to rapturous applause at Tower Bridge, with 65 miles through some of Essex's most beautiful countryside and villages in between. The full route will be announced in early 2022 – so watch this space for details!

If you are interested in applying for one of our places, please email enquiries@bromleymencap.org

Ways you can help

There are lots of ways you can help to raise money for Bromley Mencap

Online Shopping

Don't forget to buy your shopping online via easyfundraising.org.uk and you will be raising a free donation for Bromley Mencap with no extra charge to you.

It's free and simple to use and thousands of online retailers are part of the scheme.



Recycle Your Ink Cartridges

Did you know that you can help us raise funds simply by recycling your ink cartridges via our Recycle4Charity programme?

For each ink cartridge recycled via the programme we will receive up to £2 donation.

To send your cartridges or start collecting for us go to Recycle4Charity.co.uk



Get rid of your unwanted car. Fast, free and for charity.

Giveacar is a not-for-profit social enterprise that can turn your old car into cash for any UK charity. With free collection, your car will be auctioned or sold for scrap, depending on its condition, and the proceeds (minus service fees) raised will go to Bromley Mencap.

[Find out more here](#) or call 020 7736 4242.



E-cards

Do your bit for the environment and raise money for charity at the same time by sending a charity e-card and donate the cost of the greeting cards to Bromley Mencap.

[Take a look at the different designs and occasions here.](#)

Copy deadline for March/April 2022 is 1st March 2022

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