

BULLETIN

Welcome Anna!



Did you know that as part of the recruitment process, Anna was interviewed by our User Representative Panel?

Our panel was made up of both parents and clients from across the organisation.

You can find out more and get involved on page 5.

We are delighted to welcome Anna McEwen as our New Chief Executive Officer at Bromley Mencap.

Anna (photographed at Cotmandene Day Opportunities) is currently settling into her role and is busy meeting staff, volunteers and service users at our different projects.

Anna is very much looking forward to getting to know our services and the support we provide.

Please turn to page 4 to find out more about Anna.

One of Anna's main priorities this year will be to co-produce a new Strategic Plan for our charity. Our members and stakeholders will be involved so that everyone's views are represented and feed into the future direction of the organisation.



Follow us

@bromleymencap

www.bromleymencap.org.uk

Editor's Note



It is an exciting time for Bromley Mencap as we welcome our new Chief Executive, Anna. I am sure many of you will have the opportunity to meet her in the coming weeks so please make her feel welcome!

As well as the usual updates across our many services, please do take a look at the fantastic feedback we received from the parents and carers who use our Short Breaks Service on pages 14-15.

It really is a testament to the wonderful work our staff do. However, we are always looking at ways to improve the service and value your ideas and suggestions.

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Happy Reading!

Alex Powell

Communications Officer

alex.powell@bromleymencap.org



Incorporating Bromley Scope

Supporting disabled people, their families and carers to enjoy better lives

Events and Activities

BROMLEY MENCAP

Please check our [website events section](#) or phone our helpline on 020 8466 0790 to find out about our latest events.



Don't forget to keep updated on what is going on at Bromley Mencap by following us on [X \(formerly known as Twitter\)](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).



21
May

Autism Drop-in

 **Date** 21 May 2024

 **Time** 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

 **Venue** The Bromley United Reformed Church

 **Organiser** Emma Andrew

 **Category** Bromley Mencap Events

[MORE INFO](#)



BROMLEY WELL

Bromley Well has various support sessions running virtually and in person. Please check the [website for details here](#).

Bromley Well services include employment support workshops, workshops for people with learning difficulties and physical disabilities, autism support sessions as well as regular catch-up sessions.

Thank you: Big Yellow Self Storage

Thank you to Big Yellow Self Storage Bromley for providing free storage space. With no space in our office, this is an invaluable space to keep equipment for events and donated goods.

Members also receive a 10% discount on storage from Big Yellow when mentioning Bromley Mencap. Telephone 020 8313 0854 for further details.





Welcome from our Chief Executive

Hello everybody, I'm Anna McEwen, the new Chief Executive Officer at Bromley Mencap and I'm so excited to be working here.

I'm really looking forward to getting to know you all and seeing more about the services we provide at Bromley Mencap.

I know Eddie Lynch left last week and that may be difficult for the families and people we support. I want to reassure you that I am here to support you and to work with you through this period.

My priority for the first month is to listen and learn, to spend time in our services, to spend time with the people that we support, to spend time with staff and volunteers and families and to really listen and find out what's going on at Bromley Mencap, what's working well, what might not be working so well and just listening to you. I am looking forward to visiting all our services which I've heard so many good things about.

Just a little bit about me so you know who I am - I've worked in social care for over 25 years with disabled people, primarily people with a learning disability.

I started my career working in a care home for people with learning disabilities and I've worked my way up through to managing services and commissioning. My last two positions have been in senior roles in charities both nationally and locally. I was most recently the Chief Executive at Headway East London, a charity supporting people affected by brain injury.

I'm really passionate about supporting disabled people to have a good life in a way that works for them.

I know that's exactly what we do at the services that we provide here at Bromley Mencap: through our day services, supporting people into employment, working with children and young people, supporting families, and supporting people with autism.

Finally, I just want to let you know again how honoured I am to be your new Chief Executive and I'm genuinely really looking forward to meeting you and spending time in our services over the next few weeks.

User Involvement

Words by Amana Wilkins

As we welcome Bromley Mencap's new CEO Anna McEwen to the organisation, I would like to extend my thanks to the User Representative Panel (pictured below) for their time, dedication and input that was so instrumental in supporting the decision-making process of the Board of Trustees.

The panel, made up of both parent and client representatives from across the organisation, designed the questions around what attributes they felt a good CEO should have, focusing on both professional and personal characteristics.

User Representative Panels are used across the organisation for recruitment and allow candidates to demonstrate their ability to actively engage with people who have lived experiences. Panels also support members to gain more confidence and learn new skills that may help in other areas of their lives.

If you would like to find out more about getting involved and having your voice heard, please contact me at user.involvement@bromleymencap.org

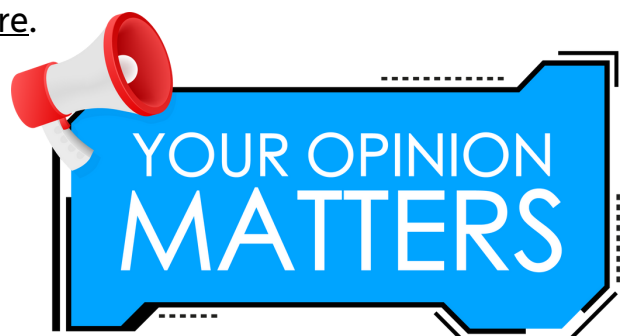


What is user involvement?



User Involvement means Bromley Mencap staff working together with people who use our services, their parents and carers to make sure they have a say in how our services are carried out.

User Involvement is important because it helps people get better services and do the things people want. Download our User Involvement leaflet [here](#).



User Involvement Project



There are a number of ways to get involved:

Bromley Mencap is a user-led organisation committed to ensuring user involvement is both meaningful and successful.

We work together with people who use services, their parents and carers ensuring they have a say in how things are delivered.

User involvement is embedded at all levels within the organisation, from service design and development, monitoring and evaluation, staff recruitment and training.

Additionally, we work with people through consultations and focus groups to feedback on national campaigns and agendas.

Support the recruitment and selection of new staff.

Help to induct new staff to the organisation by helping to develop training packages.

Carry out monitoring and auditing of Bromley Mencap services.

Attend Focus Groups to have your say on important issues that affect disabled people.

Review and support the development of Bromley Mencap's policies.





Obituary

Michael Callaghan

20th November 1964 – 12th March 2024

Michael Callaghan, who attended our day service provision at Cotmandene, sadly passed away on the 12th March after a sudden and short illness.

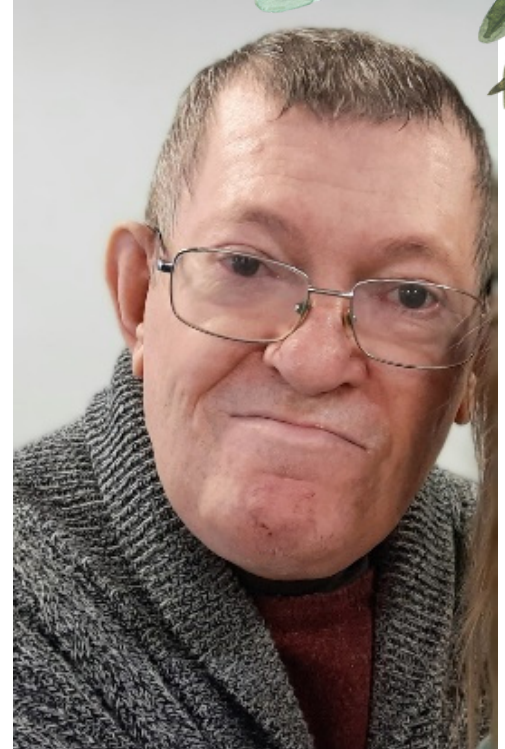
Michael had been known to Bromley Mencap for many years. He had received support from Jobmatch to secure part-time work as a kitchen porter at Nash College, where I would often find him elbow-deep in washing up!

When Cotmandene opened in 2021, Michael enjoyed catching up with his friends. Michael would always be the first to try anything and took up woodwork, pottery, tie-dying, as well as being an amazing skittles player!

Michael's first love was music and he had fantastic musical knowledge. His favourites were Elvis, Blondie and ACDC - he was a rocker at heart and loved a Bromley Mencap disco!

Michael was part of a large and loving family and he lived with his sister and brother-in-law, who all miss him very much as do we all at Bromley Mencap.

Words by Louise Kelly



News Corner

STOP. THINK. CHANGE: Social Media Campaign

Watch out for Bromley's STOP. THINK. CHANGE Reducing Parenting Conflict social media campaign [@TheBromleyChildrenProject](#) on Facebook, Instagram or YouTube.

The [Bromley Parenting Hub](#) offers a range of information for all parents in the borough, whether together, separated or considering separation who want to find ways to improve their relationship and get along better.

Watch out for Bromley's
STOP.THINK.CHANGE
Reducing Parenting Conflict
social media campaign.
1 June to 13 July
@The Bromley Children Project

[CLICK HERE](#)

www.bromleyparentinghub.info

Co-op Local Community Fund: Prize Draw

Be part of the [Co-op](#) Prize Draw! If you win, Bromley Mencap wins too! Choose us as your Local Community Fund cause, shop and swipe your membership card at [Co-op](#) and you'll be entered into the prize draw. Sign up and find out more on the [Co-op website](#).

By Emma Andrew Senior Information & Support Officer

We support people who have a learning disability or learning difficulty through one-to-one appointments, assisting in meetings and contacting organisations. Our approach is to run a person-centred service giving information, guidance and support. The Learning Difficulty Pathway has recently offered support with welfare benefits, grant applications and day-to-day finances at our weekly correspondence drop-in sessions. We also arrange monthly workshops and run a life admin course for people with ADHD.

MONTHLY WORKSHOPS

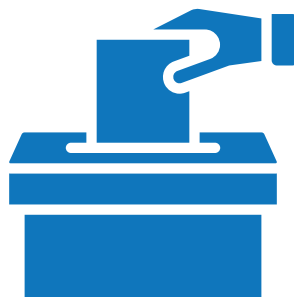
March was Free Wills Month (for people aged 55 and over) so we held a workshop on will writing.

We were joined by guest speaker Jeremy Wilson from the Solicitor's firm, Clarkson Wright and Jakes Ltd. Jeremy explained the importance of having a will in place and answered questions on probate, life insurance and making a will.



Our April workshop focused on the new rules regarding voter ID.

Voters in England now need to show photo ID to vote at polling stations and we discussed the accepted forms of photo ID and how to apply for a free voter ID document, which is known as a Voter Authority Certificate.



UPCOMING WORKSHOP

Deaf Awareness Workshop
Monday 13th May from 10am-12pm at the Bromley Scout Hut.

In aid of Deaf Awareness Week, we will be joined by guest speaker and NHS nurse, Michelle Little, who will discuss hearing loss and more.

Phone 020 8466 0790 or email emma.andrew@bromleywell.org.uk to book your place.

CORRESPONDENCE DROP-IN

Every Friday from 10am-12pm or 1-3pm at our Station Road Training Centre. Download the flyer [here](#).

Supporting people with Learning Difficulties

Correspondence Drop-ins

Do you need some help with reading and responding to letters? Attend our FREE drop-in on Fridays!

Pop into our office on Fridays from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm or 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm.

Please note: the drop-in is closed from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm.

You will find us at:
Bromley Mencap office,
Station Road,
Bromley North,
BR1 3LP.

For more information and to book, please contact Bromley Well
FREEPHONE 0808 278 7898 **EMAIL spa@bromleywell.org.uk**

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In the News

LIAM FOX PUSHES FOR AMENDMENT ON LATE ABORTION FOR DOWN'S SYNDROME

Sir Liam Fox, the MP behind the [Down Syndrome Act 2022](#), has tabled an amendment to the Government's Criminal Justice Bill intended to specifically exclude a diagnosis of Down's syndrome as a reason for late abortion.

The former NHS Doctor and GP says he wants to address discriminatory practices associated with [Down's syndrome](#), which would introduce an upper gestational limit for abortions of fetuses with Down's syndrome equal to the upper gestational limit for most other abortions.

Current legislation generally restricts abortion after 24 weeks gestation unless the baby has a disability such as Down's syndrome or another congenital condition in which case abortion is legal up to birth. [Read more here.](#)

THE CARER POVERTY COALITION CALLS FOR FULL REVIEW OF CARER'S ALLOWANCE

The threshold for receiving Carer's Allowance has failed to keep pace with the National Living Wage for the fifth consecutive year so carers with part-time jobs will have to decrease their working hours. In April, the earnings threshold for claiming Carer's Allowance increased by 8.6% to £151 per week. However, the National Living Wage rose by 9.8% to £11.44 per hour.

Over the last five years, the number of hours carers have been able to work earning the National Living Wage, while also receiving Carer's Allowance, has shrunk from just under 15 hours a week in 2019 to just over 13 hours and 12 minutes.



The Carer Poverty Coalition has published a manifesto calling on all political parties to commit to a full review of Carer's Allowance and other means-tested benefits available to carers. [Read more here.](#)

WASTE OF LIVES, WASTE OF MONEY – WHERE'S THE PLAN?

Over 2000 people with a learning disability and autistic people are currently being held in mental health inpatient units – despite many of them not having a mental health condition – at a cost of around £534 million a year. According to an NHS report published last year, 41% of people with learning disability and/or autistic people should not even be locked in mental health hospitals, as their needs could be met in the community.

[Sign Mencap's petition](#) calling on the Government to make the right community support and housing an urgent priority, to prevent admission and to enable people to be discharged successfully.

**By Chetan Raval
Information & Support Officer**

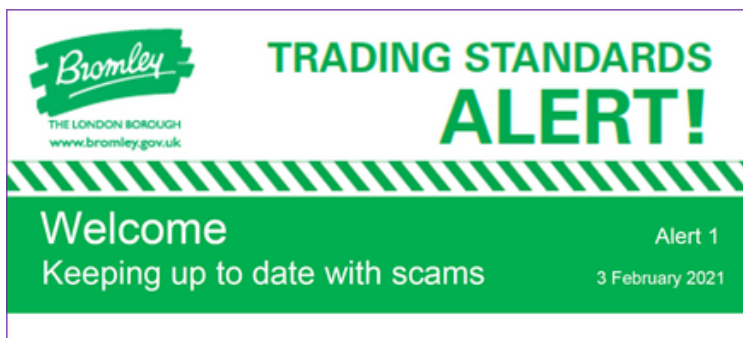
We support adults with physical disabilities by providing information, advice and guidance on a range of issues. We work closely with clients in person, via the telephone and by email offering emotional support and practical help to complete paperwork, forms and grant applications, as well as accompanying clients to medical appointments. We hold workshops and drop-ins and provide outreach at venues around the borough.

MONTHLY WORKSHOPS**Beverley Nicklin from Bromley Trading Standards visited us in March.**

Beverley spoke about cost-of-living scams. These scams are designed to make people believe they will save money.

Examples include:

- Energy bill rebates: UK households do not need to apply for the Energy Bill Support Scheme – it's automatic
- Cost of living payments: if you are eligible, you do not need to apply – payment is automatic from the Department of Work and Pensions
- Special offers: fuel vouchers, phone bill discounts, and supermarket offers – Be wary of questions asked to harvest personal information
- Celebrity endorsements: when a celebrity appears to be promoting an opportunity
- Fake investment opportunities: high returns with apparently little or no risk



Sign up to receive email alerts from Bromley Trading Standards [here](#).

Our most recent workshop topic was meditation for wellness.

Caroline Hackett spoke about the benefits of meditation. The meditation practice lasted 10-15 minutes and started with grounding and settling, followed by relaxation techniques beginning at the feet and working up towards the head, using visualisation and creative imagery. She explained the relevance of chakras and tapping. With input from those attending, the workshop demonstrated how easily we can use this practice to feel better in ourselves.

**UPCOMING WORKSHOPS AND DROP-IN DATES**

Time: 11am-1pm

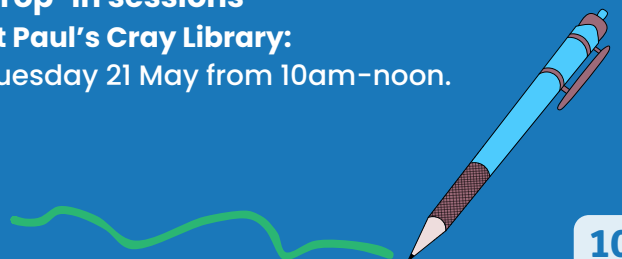
**Venue: Bromley United Reformed Church
Widmore Road Bromley BR1 1RY.**

Monday 13 May, Monday 17 June,
Monday 22 July, Monday 19 August

Drop-in sessions

St Paul's Cray Library:

Tuesday 21 May from 10am-noon.



IN THE NEWS

DOCTORS SAID I MIGHT NEVER WALK, BUT I'VE RUN THE SIX MAJOR MARATHONS

A difficult birth left Andrew Tomlinson with a brain injury which made his chances of ever walking slim. But more than 30 years later, he believes he is the first runner with cerebral palsy to complete all six of the world's major marathons. The 40-year-old from Glasgow crossed the London Marathon finish line in under four hours. He has previously completed races in New York, Chicago, Tokyo, Boston and Berlin. [Read more here.](#)

NEWS



NEW FOOTBALL SHIRTS HELP DEAF FANS FEEL ATMOSPHERE

New "haptic" kits will help Newcastle United fans who are deaf or have hearing loss to better experience the atmosphere at St James' Park. The shirts use sensors which vibrate when action takes place on the pitch.

The kits were created with a partnership between of Newcastle United's kit sponsor Sela and the Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID). It is part of an initiative called Unsilence the Crowd.

Ibrahim Mohtaseb, senior vice president of Sela, said: "St James' Park is renowned for its noise and passion. "Through this initiative we hope to enable deaf fans and fans with hearing loss to feel a part of this." [Read more here.](#)



Contact Us

Chetan Raval: Telephone 07421106922
or email chetan.raval@bromleywell.org.uk

Sue Charles: Telephone 07484 673090
or email sue.charles@bromleywell.org.uk

Caroline Hackett: Telephone 07938 740361
or email caroline.hackett@bromleywell.org.uk

Alternatively, you can call the office on 020 8466 0790.



By Tina Penn Mutual Carers Support Worker

The Mutual Carers Pathway provides specialist support to families where one of the carers is aged 55+ with a disabled son, daughter or sibling living at home.

Tina Penn, the Mutual Carers Support Worker, can be contacted on 07719426680 or via email tina.penn@bromleywell.org.uk

MONTHLY OLDER CARERS WORKSHOP & LUNCH

It's been a fun-packed time for the carers on the Mutual Carers Pathway.

In March, we welcomed the Pearly King for Bromley, Chris Conlan. He was a wonderful character who gave a fascinating talk about the history of the pearly Kings and Queens as well as sharing stories of the various events he has attended. There was also an opportunity for everyone to have their photos taken with Chris in his attire. Feedback was very positive and Chris has been invited back to attend the December Christmas lunch.



In April clients were joined by Helayna Jenkins, the Principal Loneliness Champion for Bromley. Helayna's talk was very informative and she handed out leaflets on what to do if feeling lonely, highlighting the services available.

During the lunch we celebrated a special event: Mr & Mrs Bell's 65th Wedding Anniversary with a glass of bubbles and cake.



HAPPY Anniversary

MONTHLY LEARNING DISABILITY (LD) COOKERY CLASS

The cookery clients are continuing their culinary travels around the world.

In March we travelled to Sri Lanka and the class cooked chicken curry with rice and nut toffee to finish. The class enjoyed the curry with some very empty plates to prove it.



The class in April was slightly different with the British Red Cross attending to give a lesson on First Aid. This was a fun-packed session with clients learning important life-saving skills.



We followed this by making sandwiches with a choice of fillings and fresh fruit for dessert.

We also celebrated a client's birthday together with chocolate cake and a round of happy birthday.



The next Older Carers Workshop & Lunch dates are Friday 17th May and 14th June

The next LD Cookery Class will be Friday 7th June

Our services provide support for disabled children, young people, and young carers through to their transition into adulthood. Whether it is advice and information, signposting, opportunities for peer support, support with short breaks, or leisure activities, our services work with disabled children and young people and their families in order to make lives better.



During the Easter Holidays, we were supported by a friend of Bromley Mencap, Louise, to hold three craft events. Children with SEN and their siblings had the opportunity to make keychains, pipe-cleaner superheroes and quite a bit of mess! It was great fun and nice to be able to chat with some parents to offer guidance and a cup of tea. Children and their grown-ups also enjoyed some delicious cakes donated by local charity, Free Cakes for Kids Bromley.

Save the Date

Please look out for our events later in the year, and save the date for our **Family Fun Afternoon on Saturday 29th June!**

Admission tickets include free entry into our raffle and some light refreshments. We also have an Early Bird discount if you book before the 22/05/24. Promo Code: SUMMERFUN24
Book via [Eventbrite here](#).



Incorporating Bromley Scope

SUMMER FAMILY FEST

This event is suitable for families with children aged 7 to 14 with special educational needs (SEN), but all ages are welcome to attend.

SAT 29TH JUNE 2-4PM

Bromley Arts Trust, 24 Sundridge Avenue, Bromley, BR1 2PX

Activities Include:

- Penalty shoot-out
- Crazy art
- Sensory fun
- Face painting
- Zumba fun
- Raffle
- Bake sale
- and more!

TICKETS FROM £6 FOR MEMBERS

One adult admission ticket includes one free child ticket, entry into our raffle and some light refreshments.

EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT

Book before the 22/05/24!
Promo Code: SUMMERFUN24



Booking essential
Scan QR Code or search
[Eventbrite/Bromley Mencap](#)

Telephone: 020 8466 0790

Supported by BBC Children in Need



Short Breaks Update



Being a carer can be physically and emotionally challenging. Bromley Mencap offers three Short Break Services that aim to provide positive experiences for disabled children and young people away from their primary carers. The services contribute to their social inclusion and personal development, whilst allowing the carer to have a 'short break.'

Our three services consist of Community Support Workers, Childminding and Buddying.

To ensure our services are the best they can be, we regularly seek feedback and recently sent out a survey to all our families. Here are the key findings:

- **83% said their Short Breaks Worker was extremely reliable.**
- **92% said they were extremely happy with their Short Breaks Worker.**
- **100% said they felt the worker had formed a good relationship with their child and were comfortable discussing concerns with Bromley Mencap staff.**



"Our support worker is brilliant. No concerns at all. The service is great and really benefits us"

"Bromley Mencap has always been an amazing support for me and my children. All the staff I've been in contact with have always gone above and beyond what I have hoped for"

"Thank you to Bromley Mencap for all your dedication and hard work finding the perfect match for my family"

"My family are very grateful for the service you provide: our two children always look forward to going out with their carers"

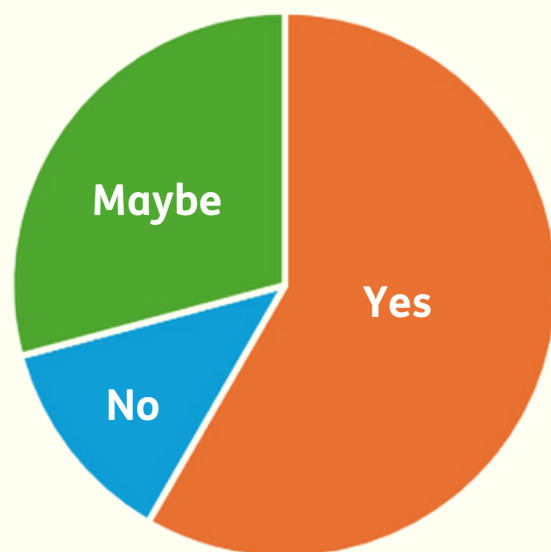


92% of people rated us 5 stars

100% of people would recommend Bromley Mencap to friends and family

When asked if families would be interested in attending events where they could meet others in similar situations, **88% of respondents said yes or maybe.**

With this information, we will be exploring how we can facilitate this.



Pictured: Annabelle Skelton being supported by Jemima Smith, her Community Support Worker, at an Easter-themed craft activity organised by the Children's Team.



All our short breaks services can be accessed through social care if you and your child qualify for Short Breaks, or by self-funding. Please contact us to find out more. Details below.



shortbreaks@bromleymencap.org.uk



020 8466 0790

Specialist Autism Family Support Service

By Sarah Clark, Family Support Worker

Our Family Support Service receives referrals via the Bromley Children Project. Your child does not have to have received a formal diagnosis of autism or social and communication difficulties to access our service.



We offer short-term intensive support to families and a clear action plan written in conjunction with the family to note key issues and goals, and timescales for resolution.



It's Mental Health Awareness Week from 13 to 19 May.

Here are our top tips for looking after your mental health when supporting a child or young person with additional needs.

Give yourself time and acknowledge your feelings

Relief, guilt and grief are just a few of the feelings you may experience after receiving your child's diagnosis.

Take time to acknowledge them: there is no right or wrong way to be feeling.

If necessary, approach your GP to discuss how you feel and get some additional support.

Know that you are not alone

Having a child or young person with additional needs can be isolating. It's important to acknowledge you're not alone. Look at your [Local Offer](#) for support services and leisure activities available to you and your family.

You may want to request a carer's assessment. More information about this can be found on the [Carers UK website](#).



Stop catastrophising the future

When your child or young person receives a diagnosis, it's hard to imagine what the future will look like. Will they talk? Will they manage school? What happens when I'm no longer around to care for them? Although practical plans can be made, try not to imagine their future. They may surprise you!

Ask for help

This is the hardest thing to do by far, but it's OK to ask for help. Remember, we all need help from time to time.



Recognise your own triggers and needs

This will make you more aware of what support you need as a parent/carers and help you become more emotionally resilient. A balanced diet, sleep, exercise, time out (even if it's in another room for 10 minutes) or practising mindfulness can all positively impact your mental health.

Don't lose yourself

Caring for a child or young person with additional needs can mean it's easy to forget who you are. Remember you can have other interests and hobbies without feeling guilty.

Upcoming Carers' Pamper Day

Organised by M.A Centre. [Book free tickets here.](#)



Useful resources

- [Bromley Mencap Support Services](#)
- [NHS Guide: Carer's assessments](#)
- [Bromley Council's Local Offer](#)
- [Young Minds: Parents' guide to looking after yourself](#)
- [Mind: Looking after yourself](#)
- [Happiful: How to look after your own mental health as a parent of a child with additional needs](#)
- [Scope: Managing your stress when caring for a disabled child](#)
- [Contact: Listening Ear service for parent carers looking for emotional support](#)



Bromley Well Young Carers support young carers aged 4-19 to manage their caring relationships whilst still enjoying their childhood.

We have had a busy few months with visits to local schools, some fun activities, meeting new young carers and welcoming them to the service!



During the Easter holidays, young carers practised first aid with St John's Ambulance and learnt life-saving skills including CPR. They also had the opportunity to attend a cookery workshop with Naani Maa's Kitchen. The food looked delicious and we received some great feedback.

We have exciting events planned for the May half term from Tai Chi in the woods to a Journalism Workshop. Please check the BWYC app for details, phone 0208 466 0790 or email youngcarers@bromleywell.org.uk.

Find out more about our new staff members on page 26. You can read our [Spring newsletter here](#).

Supporting People with Autism (aged 16 plus)

By **Fay Hicks, Autism
Information and Support Officer**

We support people aged 16 and over who have an Autism diagnosis, or believe they have Autism and are seeking a diagnosis. To be eligible for our service, you must not be receiving any other services from Bromley Council.

We offer support with finding social and leisure activities, health matters, money management, applying for grants and benefits, housing, managing communication, employment and training, life skills and signposting to other services.

If you would like to find out more, please contact Fay Hicks.

Email fay.hicks@bromleymencap.org or telephone 020 8466 0790 / 0759 7048674.



Important Notice

If you were previously receiving support from the Bromley Well Autism service, please contact Fay to sign up to the Bromley Mencap Autism service.

Monthly Workshops

Our most recent workshops have been very well received. Our March workshop was about welfare benefits and featured the amazing Allison Gill who has recently been appointed as the All Age Autism Welfare Benefits Officer. The talk was very informative and helpful for anyone struggling to cope with the benefits system. The Emotional Wellbeing workshop on 15th April was so positive that attendees asked for it to be continued.



Support for People with Autism aged 16+

We offer monthly workshops, peer support activities, a life admin course and weekly drop-in sessions.

We can help with:

- Social and leisure activities
- Health matters
- Managing your money, grants and benefits
- Support with employment
- Life skills training
- Signposting to further services
- Housing
- Support with transition into adulthood
- Managing correspondence



Contact Us

020 8466 0790
enquiries@bromleymencap.org
www.bromleymencap.org.uk



We have arranged for part two to take place on 20th May.

Our guest speaker is Brian Bird who was diagnosed autistic at the age of fifty. He is a writer and blogger, autistic self-advocate, and anti-bullying campaigner. You can follow him on Instagram [here](#).



Brian has many tips and tales about his life, as well as advice on how to change your life for the better if you are feeling anxious or insecure about the future.

Supporting People with Autism (aged 16 plus)

Autism Drop-in

Every Tuesday from 10am to 12pm and 1pm to 3pm.

Venue: Rhiannon's Café,
United Reformed Church, Widmore Road, Bromley.

Come along and talk to an Autism Specialist and learn more about the services, benefits and support on offer.

Just drop in and see us. There is no need to book!

Course Update

Our Social Opportunities course will be starting in May. It runs for 6 weeks and we have had lots of interest.

If you would like to join the waiting list or hear more, please contact Fay. Phone 07597048674 / 0208 466 0790 or email fay.hicks@bromleymencap.org

Outreach



The team has been out in the community visiting services, community venues and have met with the Gateway Club, Bromley Trading Standards, Bromley Council's Loneliness team, and the SEND team. We also attended the CASPA Autism Show and family day and chatted with some amazing families about the support we offer. Fay also attended some workshops on neurodivergence awareness within the community and picked up some information about diversity and how we can help to integrate our community within the borough. We will be using this information to help us support you in the future.

Events of interest

The Autism Show: 14-15 June, ExCeL London

If you're looking for information and direction pre or post-diagnosis, are facing daily challenges, or approaching significant transition points, then The Autism Show can help you.

At the show, you can pick and choose from over 100 hours of talks, clinics and workshops, plus hundreds of specialist products and services. To buy tickets, visit [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-autism-show-tickets-7044444444444444444).



London South East Colleges, Bromley Campus - Open Event

The Open Event is on Wednesday 26th June, 5.00 - 7.30pm. Come along and talk to their friendly staff, meet students, and tour the amazing facilities. If you need advice and guidance, career advisors will be on hand to answer any questions and help to find the perfect course for you. Bromley Campus has a huge range of courses on offer including vocational courses, apprenticeships, access to Higher Education and SEND. [Register here](#).

Adult Leisure Services Update

By Sharon Morgan, Adult Services Manager

Bromley Mencap provides a wide range of social and leisure services for disabled adults to try new activities, meet with friends and have fun. From our always popular discos through to opportunities to try out new physical activities, there are many ways to enjoy yourself and learn new skills.

Walking and Cycling group

In April, we held our first walk of the year and visited Scadbury Country Park. The event was well attended with over 30 clients and carers joining. The walk was led by Ian Breslin and Phil Branch, taking in the wonderful scenery and nature. Clients enjoyed a stop at the moated manor and some time with the horses. We finished our walk at The Sydney Arms and enjoyed some lunch and drinks.



Keep Fit Classes

Keep Fit started in April and the sessions are led by Louise Jamshidi. Following client feedback, we have introduced an exciting new programme including circuit training, cheerleading, Zumba and aerobic exercise to music from musicals. The last session will include a review of the cheerleading sessions, followed by a celebration! The sessions have seen the highest number of attendees, and all are embracing the changes.



Spring Disco

Over 85 clients and carers attended Crofton Halls in April and enjoyed dancing to the music played by our regular DJ, Steve. It was lovely to see so many new faces all enjoying meeting new friends and having fun!

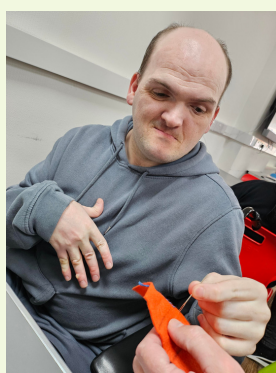
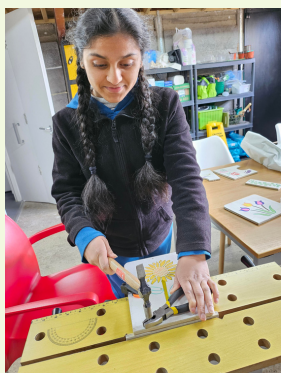




Adult Day Services

Eden Park

Hello from Day Services! Eden Park has been busy with springtime activities. They have enjoyed some Easter-themed baking, sewing skills and working on bird boxes during their woodwork project sessions. They have also been developing their pottery skills and learning more about their new on-site kiln to fire their pottery creations.



Cotmandene

Clients at Cotmandene have also been continuing to develop their hands-on skills in their pottery sessions having their pieces fired over at Eden Park too. The dance movement psychotherapy sessions are now coming to an end and been hugely popular - A special thanks goes to Giovanna for her work on the sessions! Our clients also had a productive shopping trip for seeds to plant in their outdoor space. Their produce is really starting to flourish now.



Find out more

If you are interested in finding out more about our Day Services, please do contact us to discuss your requirements.

For The Lodge:
Caroline Stone
caroline.stone@bromleymencap.org

For Day Opps Eden Park and Cotmandene:
Louise Kelly
louise.kelly@bromleymencap.org

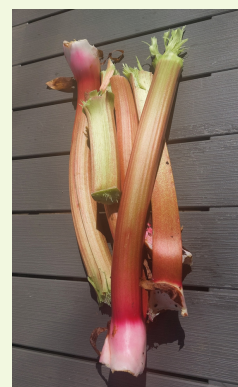
Telephone: [020 8466 0790](tel:02084660790)

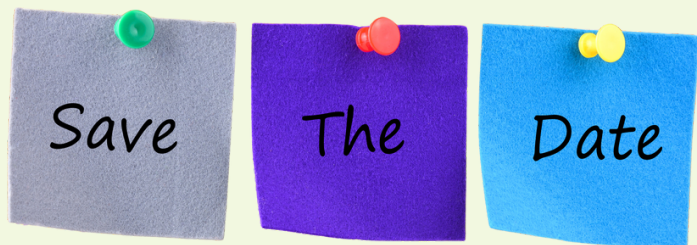
The Lodge

The Catering team have been focussing on allergens and intolerances in their lessons and made some delicious hot cross buns for their Easter baking.



The Horticulture team have been working the garden and are starting to see some great produce, including an impressive crop of rhubarb. A thank you to the team at Good Gym who helped us move 12 sleepers, ready to build some new raised beds in the peace garden - it was hard work, and we would have struggled without their help. The team in the Bike workshop have been working hard to facilitate visiting groups to access our bike hire project as the weather improves.





Following the success of our first ever Choir, Mencap Rocks, we are now running another 10-week course which will culminate in a performance at our **Summer Fair at the Lodge on Saturday 6th July!**

Please put the date of the fair in your diary. More information to follow.



Adult Day Services continued

Some of our staff attended a workshop at the Greener and Cleaner Hub in The Glades, Bromley where we learnt the skill of Japanese Kumihimo braiding! The technique really helps to practice mindfulness and is quite calming, so we have scheduled some sessions into our programmes to teach at Day Services.

Thank You

A special thanks must go to Alex Jones from Interstuhl who has once again made a generous donation of bespoke furniture pieces to our Day Services. The pieces have been distributed across all three locations and have definitely smartened them up!

Quality Checker's Visit

The Lodge team recently welcomed a visit from the London Borough Of Bromley's Quality Checker Team - Quality Checkers have lived experience and volunteer for the local authority. They review services around Bromley for disabled people and visited us to find out more about the Lodge and how our students felt about the service. Here is an extract from the report.

Feedback from people using the service: -

From observations, it appeared that all the students were enjoying their experience at the Lodge. During the Horticulture session, one student said 'this is really good, I'm enjoying this'. All of the students we spoke to were very positive about their experiences.

Feedback from the Quality Checker: -

I really enjoyed my visit today. It was interesting talking to everyone about what they were learning. The students were engaged in the sessions and seemed to be interested. The kiosk was great, and we were able to try the drinks which were excellent.

People being able to borrow the bikes is an excellent idea as it helps people to keep fit. I thought the atmosphere was really calm; I was very impressed with everything.





Summary: -

From our observations, the Lodge appears to be an excellent service. Apart from developing practical skills and subject knowledge, students learn the skills needed for the workplace such as punctuality, customer service, maintaining a safe working environment and teamwork. The checker was very impressed with the service and said how much she had enjoyed her visit.

Bromley Mencap would like to thank all the students and staff who met with the Quality Checkers on the day for their input.

Everyone at the Lodge should be very proud of the amazing service they have worked so hard to develop.

It is great that this is recognised by an external organisation.

Monday Afternooners

Join our monthly recreation club supporting people with cerebral palsy to live a more independent life.

Back in March, the Monday Afternooners enjoyed a cream tea supplied by the Soroptimists. The Soroptimist Bromley branch supports local charities and projects through fundraising. It was delicious.

Following the tea, everyone participated in a fun quiz.



At the end of April, we had some fun with a decoupage workshop delivered by our volunteers Viki and Nicky. A wonderful chance for everyone to try a new skill and get creative.



Two great afternoon events where fun was had by all.

Employment, Training and Volunteering News

Station Road Training Centre Update

March and April have gone by in a flash here at the Training Centre and it is hard to believe we are now in our last academic term.

Lots of progress has been made by our learners and the calendar has been filled with events, trips and guest speakers. We have hosted workshops from the British Red Cross and had legal visits from a local Judge and solicitors.



The learners have been working hard to improve the outside space at the Training Centre. This coincided with World Earth Day 2024, which takes place on 22nd April each year. This year's theme was Planet vs Plastics and the learners enjoyed litter picking around the building and planting out the flowers and vegetables we have grown from seed. We look forward to having a bumper crop this year!



Upcoming Trip

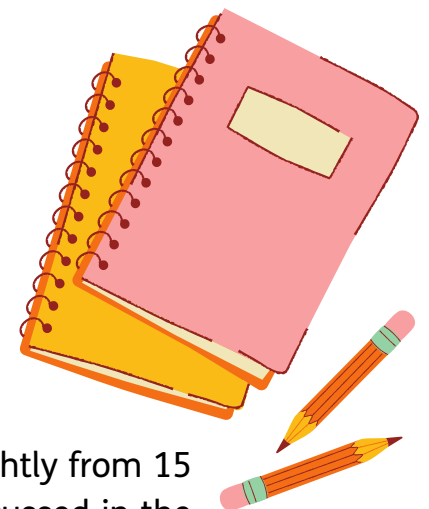
We are all very excited about our visit to the Houses of Parliament which will take place on 14th May. A separate email with all the information needed has been sent out.

If you have not received this information, please contact us. Don't forget your packed lunches and walking shoes!

The new academic year

We will shortly be sending out 2024/2025 term dates for the next academic year. From next year, we will have lessons timetabled on Wednesdays until midday in addition to Mondays and Tuesdays. The start of the day will also be brought forward to 9:30am but will still finish at 3:00pm.

The number of learners on roll and attending will also increase slightly from 15 to 18 learners. Progression to the next academic year is being discussed in the EHCP Annual Reviews and subject to meeting the progression criteria.



If you are interested in joining us in September, please phone 020 4558 8779 or email Station.road@bromleymencap.org to discuss. You can download the [Station Road Training brochure here](#).

WELCOME TO OUR

NEW STAFF

Allison Gill: All Age Autism Welfare Benefits Office

Hello! My name is Allison and I am the All Age Autism Welfare Benefits Officer. My role is to support clients with applying for benefits such as Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Personal Independence Payments (PIP), Universal Credit, and Carers Allowance among others.

I have an autistic son myself and have been through these benefit form processes in my personal life so understand just how confusing and overwhelming it can be. I also appreciate just how difficult it can be to share the details of your life with a stranger.

My background is in education having been a teaching assistant and a tutor/assessor previously.

I really look forward to supporting everyone and getting you the benefits you deserve.



Benedict Lawrence: Short Breaks Support Officer

Hi everyone, I'm Benedict and I have worked with Bromley Mencap for many years, originally as a part of the buddying scheme and then later as a community support worker, and on occasion in the Day Opps service. I am excited to be able to continue working for Bromley Mencap in this new position assisting with the vital short breaks service.

As well as working for Bromley Mencap, I have worked with disabled children and young people as both a Personal Assistant and as a Play Support Worker for a children's charity in Kent whilst I was at university.

I am truly passionate about social equality and am thrilled to be part of a team here which values diversity and strives to do its best to empower and support disabled people within Bromley and their families.

Outside of work I love to dive into fantasy worlds (be it in books, movies, TV, comic books or video games) and I really enjoy cooking and baking with whatever I can find at the back of my kitchen cupboards.







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