Bromley mencap
Celebrating 75 years

BULLETIN

You are Amazing!

75 km for 75 years!

A special ride for a special anniversary!



Our Tour de Bromley and Lewisham cycle event brought together staff, one of our trustees, and family and friends of Bromley Mencap to take on a 75 km challenge marking our 75th anniversary.

Along the way, riders were cheered on by supporters and welcomed at our Day Opportunities centres before returning to The Lodge for the finish.
The ride was part of our 75th Anniversary Appeal, raising funds for Family Futures, our Children and Young People's Wellbeing Service.

Turn to page 9 for the full story and to meet some of the other people who have been fundraising for our 75th anniversary.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE We invest in people Standard
advice quality standard
GOLD MEMBER 2023
disability confident EMPLOYER
London Living Wage Employer
OCN London

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Editor's Note

Welcome to the October/November edition of the Bulletin.

This issue brings together updates from across Bromley and Lewisham Mencap, including our 75th anniversary fundraising, services, activities, Training Centre news and local events. We also look ahead to our Annual General Meeting on 4 November, share news of new local support services, and celebrate some fantastic achievements – from fundraising challenges to learner progress.



You may also notice that Bromley Well now has its own separate newsletter. This will help keep the Bulletin shorter and more focused, while making sure Bromley Well updates remain relevant and easy to find.

It has been a very busy autumn already, and I hope you enjoy catching up on everything that has been happening.

Photograph of some of the wonderful artwork produced by our members attending day opportunities.

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Happy Reading!

Alex Powell

Communications Officer
alex.powell@bromleymencap.org

Bromley mencap
Celebrating 75 years

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



Chief Executive Update

Dear Members,

This edition is a wonderful reflection of the energy, commitment and community spirit that continue to define the charity in our 75th anniversary year.
It is a milestone that gives us the opportunity not only to celebrate our history, but also to recognise the people who are shaping our work today and helping us build an ambitious, inclusive future.



Our anniversary fundraising has brought people together in many inspiring ways.
The Tour de Bromley and Lewisham saw riders take on a 75 km challenge, supported along the route by colleagues, families, friends and people using our services. Alongside the ride, supporters have organised hula-hooping challenges and sponsored walks.

Every contribution, large or small, is helping to support Family Futures, our new Children and Young People's Wellbeing Service. I would like to thank everyone who has taken part, donated, volunteered, sponsored a challenge or cheered people on.



It is equally encouraging to see disabled people continuing to shape our organisation and the wider community. Through the 75 Voices project, the Working Together Team, our facilitation of the Parent Carers Action Group and participation in national research, members are sharing their experiences, influencing decisions and helping us improve services.

The 75 Voices project has already gathered more than 75 messages about what it is like to be a disabled person in the world. These contributions are insightful, honest, creative and sometimes funny, and we look forward to bringing them to life at our Annual General Meeting.

Across our services, there is much to celebrate.
Our Cost of Living Service is helping people reduce household costs, access the benefits to which they are entitled and become more confident with technology. A generous donation of laptops and tablets will make digital learning more accessible, while our Digital Champions continue to share practical skills and offer one-to-one support. Our information and advice work is also extending into Downham, making support with forms, correspondence, health queries and other practical issues easier to access.

There are positive developments throughout our Day Opportunities, leisure and Short Breaks services too. People have been enjoying wellbeing activities, cookery, horticulture, cycling, creative sessions, trips and opportunities to spend time with friends.



Our Saturday Clubs are growing and providing disabled children with a safe and inclusive environment while giving families valuable time to recharge.

At the Training Centre, both Year 1 and Year 2 learners have made an excellent start to the new academic year, developing vocational, digital, communication, independence and employability skills.

Behind every update in this Bulletin are staff, volunteers, trustees, partners, families and supporters whose dedication makes our work possible. I am grateful to everyone who gives their time, expertise, encouragement and resources, and especially to the people who use our services for continuing to tell us what matters and how we can do better.

I hope many of you will join us at our Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 4 November. It will be an opportunity to reflect on our progress, hear directly from our members, celebrate what has been achieved and look ahead together.

Thank you for your continued support of Bromley and Lewisham Mencap.
I hope you enjoy this edition and feel as proud as I do of everything our community is achieving together.

Best wishes,

Steve

Steve Barnes, CEO



To Bromley Mencap Members,

YOU ARE INVITED TO OUR

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Date: Wednesday 4 November 2026

Time: 11am to 2pm

Venue: Whitfield Hall,
Bromley United Reformed Church,
20 Widmore Road, Bromley, Kent, BR1 1RY

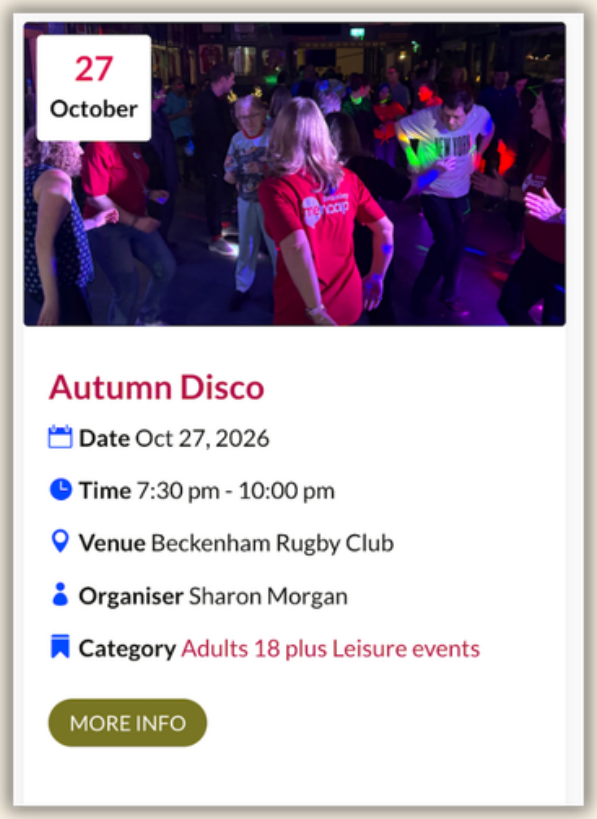
More information to follow.
Please email enquiries@bromleymencap.org to confirm your attendance.

Bromley mencap
Celebrating 75 years

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.

Lewisham Clubs

We now have a dedicated webpage for Lewisham clubs and activities and you can view what's happening here.
Alternatively, please contact Clara Popa.
Mobile: 07932 002317
Email: clara.popa@bromleymencap.org

Bromley Well

Bromley Well offers free health and wellbeing services for people living in the London Borough of Bromley.

Please check the website for details here.

Bromley Mencap delivers several Bromley Well services including employment support workshops, as well as workshops and one-to-one support for people with learning difficulties and physical disabilities, mutual carers, and young carers.

You can self-refer here.

October leisure events calendar

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
			1 Thursday Club – Lewisham: £1	2	3 Cook and Connect 11am-1:30pm (change of time) at Cotmandene: £10 NEW Bake and Connect, 2-4pm at Cotmandene: £10	4 Sunday Social Club – Pottery at Eden Park: £10
5 Monday Club – Lewisham: £1	6 Autistic Collective (18-25) – Pub board games: Free Singing Session at Rutland House: £10 per family Tuesday Club – Lewisham: Free	7 Keep Fit at the Walnuts: £6.75	8 Yoga at Thursday Club – Lewisham: £1 CareDogs Walk – Lewisham: Free	9 Autistic Collective (16-25) – Online Quiz: Free (Contact Martha to book) CANDI Cocktail Akademia Nightclub: Tickets available on the CANDI website.	10 Cook and Connect 11am-1:30pm (change of time) at Cotmandene: £10 NEW Bake and Connect, 2-4pm at Cotmandene: £10 Bognor Regis Coach Trip – Lewisham: £20	11 Sunday Social Club – Pottery at Eden Park: £10
12 Monday Club – Lewisham: £1	13 Autistic Collective (18-25) – Pub board games: Free Singing Session at Rutland House: £10 per family Tuesday Club – Lewisham: Free	14 Keep Fit at the Walnuts: £6.75 Drama Workshop (Lewisham): Free	15 Thursday Club – Lewisham: £1	16	17 Cook and Connect 11am-1:30pm (change of time) at Cotmandene: £10 NEW Bake and Connect, 2-4pm at Cotmandene: £10	18 Sunday Social Club – Pottery at Eden Park: £10
19 Monday Club – Lewisham: £1	20 Autistic Collective (18-25) – Pub board games: Free Live music at Tuesday Club – Lewisham: Free	21 Keep Fit at the Walnuts: £6.75 Autistic Collective (16-25) – Quasar. Cost: TBC (Contact Martha to book)	22 Yoga at Thursday Club – Lewisham: £1	23	24 Cook and Connect 11am-1:30pm (change of time) at Cotmandene: £10 NEW Bake and Connect, 2-4pm at Cotmandene: £10	25 Sunday Social Club – Pottery at Eden Park: £10
26 Monday Club – Lewisham: £1	27 Autistic Collective (18-25) – Pub board games: Free Singing Session at Rutland House: £10 per family Tuesday Club – Lewisham: Free Autumn Disco at Beckenham Rugby Club: £10	28 Keep Fit at the Walnuts: £6.75	29 Spooky Walk at Norman Park: £5 Thursday Club – Lewisham: £1	30	31 Cook and Connect 11am-1:30pm (change of time) at Cotmandene: £10 NEW Bake and Connect, 2-4pm at Cotmandene: £10 Halloween Disco – Lewisham: £5	All places must be booked and paid for in advance unless otherwise stated.

Booking Information

Please book and pay for your place in advance on our website or by completing a paper booking form. To help more people take part, please book one Saturday session only – either Cook and Connect or Bake and Connect. If you book both sessions on the same day, one of your bookings will be cancelled so that the space can be offered to someone else. Thank you for helping us make the sessions available to as many people as possible.

Keep Fit

Payment is by card on the night. To book, please email sharon.morgan@bromleymencap.org or emma.andrew@bromleymencap.org or telephone 020 8466 0790

Autistic Collective

Autistic Collective events are for autistic young people aged 16–25 and activities should be booked in advance. The exception is Board Games at the Bricklayers Arms, which is for young people aged 18+. It is free to attend and you do not need to book – just bring money if you would like to buy a drink. Please contact Martha Agyei for more information.
Email martha.agyei@bromleymencap.org or telephone: 020 8466 0790

Lewisham events

Please contact Clara Popa, Lewisham Clubs and Co-production Manager, to register your interest.
Telephone 07932 002317 or email: clara.popa@bromleymencap.org

Do you need help completing the online forms?

Please attend the Correspondence Drop-in at Bromley Mencap, Rutland House on a Friday between 10am - 4pm or telephone 020 8466 0790. We can accept card and cash payments.



New Information and Advice Service in Downham

Hannah offers pre-booked information and advice appointments every Thursday from 10am–3pm, at St Mark's Church, Baudwin Road, Downham, SE6 1RN.

She can support with various topics including correspondence, form filling, applications and other practical issues.

Pre-booked appointments only: To book, call Hannah on 07889 934 969 on Monday or Friday, or email hannah.blake-williams@bromleymencap.org.

Getting there: Bus 124 stops outside the church. Bus 284 also serves the area. The nearest train station is Grove Park.

Bromley mencap
In Lewisham

Information and Advice
St. Mark's Church, Downham



Join Hannah on Thursdays at St Mark's Church for information and advice.

Hannah can guide and support you on a range of topics: health, correspondence, form filling, applications and more.

THU

Every Thursday

Opening Time: 10am

Closing Time: 3pm



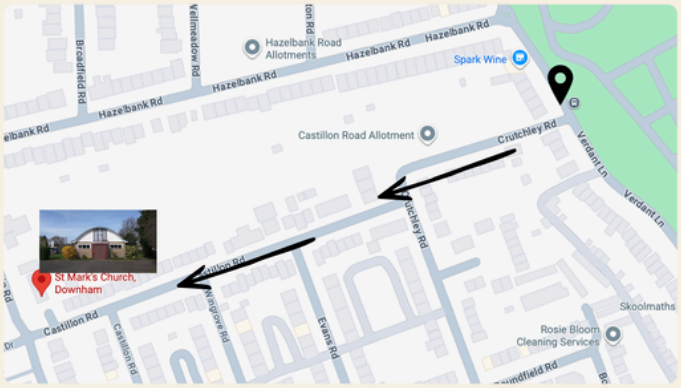
Where: St Mark's Church, Baudwin Rd, Downham, SE6 1RN

CONTACT US

Book an appointment:
Call Hannah on Monday or Friday on 07889 934 969 or email hannah.blake-williams@bromleymencap.org

Map and directions

Address: St. Mark's Church, Downham, Baudwin Rd, SE6 1RN.



By Bus

Bus 124 from Catford stops right outside of the church on Baudwin Rd.

Bus 284 to Hther Green Cemetery Bus Stop and walk down Crutchley Rd and then to the end of Castillon Road and you will find the church.

By Train

The nearest train station is Grove Park and then 124 or 284 to St Mark's.



Community fundraising: Celebrating 75 years

Our 75th anniversary has inspired people to get active, take on challenges and find their own ways to support Bromley Mencap.
From cycling 75 km to hula-hooping for 75 days, people have been getting involved to help raise awareness and funds for Family Futures, our Children and Young People's Wellbeing Service.

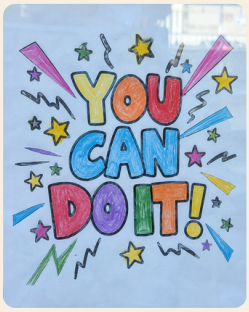
Tour de Bromley and Lewisham

The sun was shining on Thursday 1 October as our riders gathered at The Lodge in Norman Park, ready to take on the 75 km challenge.
Supporters gathered to wave them off before they headed towards the quieter countryside on the Kent borders.



Cheered on along the way





The riders' first stop was our Cotmandene Day Opportunities Centre, where the windows had been decorated with posters, drawings of cyclists and motivational messages including "You can do it!"
After a chance to refuel, the cyclists continued through the rural lanes around Cudham and Downe, before heading back towards London.



At Eden Park Day Opportunities, another warm welcome was waiting. People had made flags and came outside to wave and cheer the cyclists on as they continued their journey.



The final stretch took the riders through Crystal Palace Park, Lewisham and along the Greenwich riverfront, where they stopped for a well-earned lunch at a riverside pub, before heading back through Bromley and returning to The Lodge at Norman Park.

After 75 kilometres in the saddle, reaching the finish line was certainly something to celebrate. The riders were greeted by supporters and people who use our services before enjoying some well-earned homemade goodies and refreshments in The Lodge garden.

A huge thank you to everyone who rode, volunteered, donated, sponsored a cyclist or helped make the day possible.





A special achievement for Alan

One of our riders, Alan, graduated from our Training Centre this summer after completing his two-year programme and achieving his OCN London Skills for Vocational Training Certificate.

A keen cyclist, Alan trained hard for the challenge and went on to complete the full 75 km route. His parents came along to support him and were very proud to see him cross the finish line.

Asked about his favourite part of the ride, Alan said it was going downhill because you could pick up speed!

Well done, Alan!



Going the extra 75 km!



Our organised ride wasn't the only 75 km challenge.
Bromley Mencap supporter Mark made a last-minute decision to take part, setting off at around 6.15am and fitting his cycling around a busy day of work and inspection meetings.

He joined the main group for part of the route and at the finish before carrying on to complete the full 75 km independently (can you spot him in our finisher photo on page 10?).

A huge thank you to Mark for going the extra mile, quite literally, to support Bromley Mencap's 75th anniversary fundraising.

It's not too late to donate:
https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/75cycleride

75 days of hula-hooping

Cycling wasn't the only way people marked 75 years.
Staff members Clara and Michelle set themselves a very different challenge – completing 75 hula-hoop spins in 75 seconds every day for 75 days.

Fittingly, their challenge came to an end just before our cyclists took to the road on 1 October.
That's a lot of hula-hooping! A huge well done to them both for their dedication and fundraising.

Support Michelle and Clara's hula-hooping extravaganza here:
https://www.justgiving.com/page/michelle-contini



Rebecca from The Lodge (pictured above) even joined in with the hula-hooping!

Aksel's 75 in Action challenge

Bromley Mencap member Aksel completed his own sponsored London bridges walk in support of our 75th anniversary fundraising.

What was planned as a 7.5-mile walk ended up being closer to 10 miles, with a small detour to Battersea for a well-earned pub lunch along the way.
Debbie told us the weather was ideal and Aksel was in good spirits for most of the walk.

His challenge was a brilliant example of 75 in Action – finding his own way to support Bromley Mencap.

Thank you, Aksel and Debbie for your support!



Supporting Family Futures

Money raised through our 75th Anniversary Appeal will support Family Futures, our Children and Young People's Wellbeing Service.

Fundraising is still coming in, with further donations and potential match funding yet to be confirmed. We'll share the final total once everything has been counted.

Thank you for helping us celebrate 75 years by supporting the next generation of families.



Make your donation go further with Gift Aid

October is Gift Aid Awareness Month. If you are a UK taxpayer and eligible for Gift Aid, Bromley Mencap can claim an extra 25p from HMRC for every £1 you donate, at no extra cost to you. That means a £20 donation could be worth £25 to Bromley Mencap.

If you are thinking of supporting our 75th Anniversary Appeal, please remember to Gift Aid your donation if you can.

#TickTheBox



You can find out more about Gift Aid on our website or you can telephone 020 8466 0790.

Can you Gift Aid your donation?

You can Gift Aid your membership payments or donations if:

- You are a UK taxpayer and pay enough Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax to cover the Gift Aid we claim.
- This can include Income Tax paid on your pension if you are retired.
- You must let us know if you stop paying enough tax to qualify for Gift Aid.

Already completed a Gift Aid declaration?
If you're unsure whether we still have a valid declaration for you, you can complete a new one.

Working Together to Make a Difference

It has been another busy and productive period for Bromley Mencap's co-production work, with disabled people continuing to shape services, influence decisions and share their experiences across a wide range of projects



75 Voices Project

The 75 Voices project has really taken off over the past couple of months.
Our Working Together team has been visiting services across Bromley Mencap and Bromley Well, collecting short and simple messages about what it is like to be a disabled person in the world.

We now have well over 75 insightful, funny and beautiful messages to share with the Bromley and Lewisham Mencap community and beyond.

The Working Together team and learners at the Training Centre are now developing creative ways to bring those voices to life at our AGM on 4 November.

Join us to see what they come up with!

Working Together Team (WTT)

The Working Together Team has remained active across the 75 Voices Project, supporting Alex Best with ideas for next steps after the Grounds4Growth coffee stall pilot ends and planning for the Bromley and Lewisham Mencap AGM in November. Team members are really taking ownership of the project, with Tina doing the refreshments, Gavin leading on the 75 Voices ideas and Tom and Jo giving valuable input on the Grounds4Growth follow-on project.

WTT representatives have also continued to contribute to the Strategy Delivery Group, helping Bromley Mencap monitor progress against its strategic priorities. Their involvement ensures that co-production remains central to the organisation's direction and future planning.

Working Together Team – next meeting
Friday 30 October from 10:30am–2:30pm
The group will be planning for the AGM, where members will help with presenting and host a 75 Voices stand.

Royal Mencap Artificial Intelligence (AI) Survey



Members have taken part in the Royal Mencap Society AI Survey, exploring how artificial intelligence may affect people with a learning disability. We held a competition across services and are happy to announce that the Cost of Living Service and the Mutual Carers Cookery course will each have a budget boost for supporting members to complete over 10 surveys between them! This has enabled more people to participate and make sure their perspectives are included in national discussions.



The Parent Carers Action Group (PCAG)

The Parent Carers Action Group (PCAG) has continued its important work, with the last meeting very well attended. Andrew Royle, Strategic Commissioner for People, spoke about the closure of 118 Widmore Road (overnight respite care) and what can be put in place next. Members also heard from and put questions to Sarah Denson, Head of Safeguarding and Carers, regarding support for carers and the carers' charter. They also spoke with Vickie Yelding from Blue Sky Brokers, regarding Direct Payments.

The meeting had an immediate impact.
Professionals will receive better training, and both parents and carers and professionals will receive a fact sheet explaining Direct Payments and how they can be used, helping to make sure everyone has the same information.

PCAG – next meeting
Thursday 5 November from 10-11:30am

- Channelle Ghania-Ali, Integrated Strategic Commissioner. She is asking about Preparing for Adulthood
- Sarah Denson, Head of Safeguarding and Carers. She will discuss how to better support carers of adults with a learning disability.

Thank you to everyone who has taken part.
Your ideas, experiences and commitment continue to make a real difference and demonstrate the value of working together to create positive change.

COMMUNITY FUND

COST OF LIVING UPDATES

As ever, it's been a very busy few months for the Cost of Living Service. Allison, our Cost of Living Coordinator, and Digital Champions Martin and Lee have been busy supporting people in lots of different ways.

Our aim is to help you reduce your household costs, make sure you are receiving the benefits you are entitled to, and build your confidence and independence with technology. The Cost of Living Service offers one-to-one appointments, a weekly Friday drop-in at Rutland House, and regular monthly workshops based on topics suggested by you.

Steering Group

Thank you to everyone who attended our Steering Group in September. We hope you enjoyed your time with us. Your feedback and ideas are invaluable to the planning and development of the Cost of Living Service.



After an update on the service, what we have been doing over the past few months and how we have supported you, we spent time looking at your digital needs and how we can support you with them going forward.



We are currently planning our digital skills course, due to start in October, and will make sure we cover as much of what you need as possible.

Thank you to the Working Together team, Perdie and Sushma, for their support with the workshop!

New equipment for our Digital Course

A huge thank you to Our Tech and James Broomfield for generously donating six laptops and three tablets to our Cost of Living Service.

The equipment arrived on Friday 2 October and will be used as part of our Digital Course, helping disabled people build their confidence using technology and develop useful IT and digital skills.

James has been impressed by the work our team is doing to support people with technology and is keen to support Bromley Mencap with future projects too.

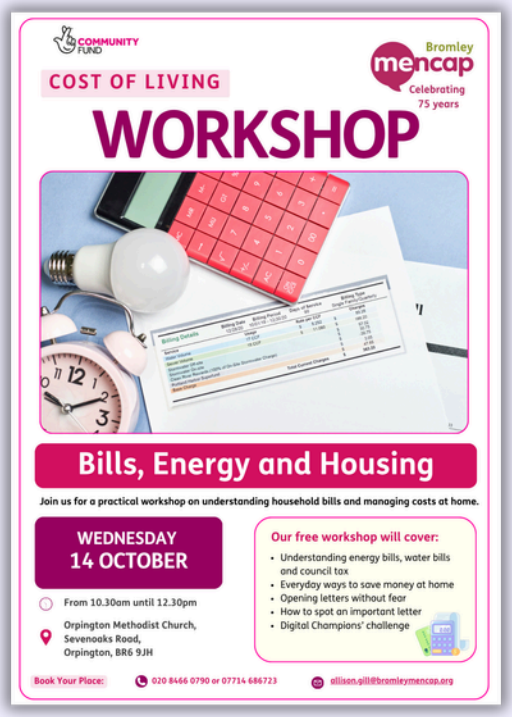


Thank you, James, for helping us make digital learning more accessible.

Workshops

Our Digital Champions, Martin Kelly and Lee McPherson, recently helped at a Bromley Well workshop for mutual carers, which focused on using the NHS App. Martin and Lee provided one-to-one support to help people access and navigate the app on their mobile phones. Allison also attended the Bromley Well Learning Difficulties workshop to talk about budgeting.

We will also be making our first trip to Lewisham Mencap in October to deliver a workshop. Look out for photos and updates in the next Bulletin.



Our October Cost of Living workshop on Wednesday 14 October will focus on understanding energy bills.

We know that energy bills and letters can sometimes feel confusing or worrying, so the session will help explain what the information means and what to look out for.

Save the date: November Workshop

Join us in November where we will look at phone contracts, internet plans, subscriptions, online safety and scams, and how to ask for help before agreeing to anything.

The free workshop takes place on Wednesday 11 November, 10.30am–12.30pm, at Orpington Methodist Church.
Email allison.gill@bromleymencap.org or telephone 020 8466 0790 or 07714 686723.

Podcasts

Our Digital Champions, Lee and Martin, have been sharing their podcasting skills with Bexley Mencap. They have met with members to talk through their experiences, answer questions and offer advice on podcast editing and software.



Bexley Mencap now feel ready to develop their own podcast – making Lee and Martin our very own Podcast Pioneers!
Look out for our Halloween Quiz and catch up with our previous podcasts on our website.

Lee and Martin are always looking for topics that matter to you. If there is something you would like covered, or you would like to take part in a future podcast, please get in touch! If you need help accessing the podcasts, Lee and Martin can support you at our Friday drop-in.

Out and About

Martin recently attended a Digital Support Session at Penge East Community Centre with Healthwatch Bromley, offering advice on accessing digital health and social care services, including the NHS App and MyChart.



Allison also joined our Information and Support team at Glebe School's Transitions Event, meeting families and sharing information about the support available from Bromley Mencap.

Martin will also be at the SEND Local Offer Live event at Bishop Justus School on 29 October, offering advice and support.



Adult Day Services

As we settle into autumn, people at our Day Opportunities services have been focusing on their wellbeing.

They have enjoyed nature walks, tai chi – including a session led by one of the people we support – a visit from CareDogs, fabric art, and relaxing abstract and pastel art activities.







Cookery is always popular but especially so in the autumn months. Catering students at The Lodge made an impressive pineapple upside down cake and some homemade bagels made with cottage cheese to add protein.

Find out more

If you are starting to consider post-college options, contact Caroline Stone to find out more about our Day Services and current availability:

Email: caroline.stone@bromleymencap.org
Telephone: 020 8466 0790





Cotmandene have been busy with cookery projects too, trying lots of new recipes. Pictured are the Nigerian Chin Chin snacks that they made.



Horticulture students have been working hard on the garden at The Lodge after a very dry summer.

The bike hire scheme remains very popular following a busy summer, with several groups, including the Autistic Collective, using the project and enjoying our selection of bikes and trikes around the park. Others have simply enjoyed the fresh air, spending time outdoors and catching up with friends.

Our out of hours clubs are continuing with plenty of activities to sign up for and get involved with over the autumn.

Please contact our Out of Hours Coordinator, Martha, for more information.





Telephone: 020 8466 0790
Email: martha.agyei@bromleymencap.org



OUT-OF-HOURS LEISURE ACTIVITIES: EVENINGS AND WEEKENDS

It has been another busy couple of months for our evening and weekend activities, with walks, coach trips, cooking, creative sessions and plenty of opportunities to spend time with friends across Bromley and Lewisham.

Summer adventures

Our summer coach trips took us to Folkestone, Southend and Brighton, giving members from Bromley and Lewisham the chance to enjoy the seaside, explore new places and spend time together.

A huge thank you to our staff, carers and volunteers who helped make the trips possible, and to PJ Ellis Coaches for helping everyone enjoy a safe and successful day out.





"The coach trips were really good. If I didn't attend any of the trips, I would be stuck in my flat watching TV."





Getting out and about

On 13 September, our Bromley group enjoyed a lovely walk around Keston Ponds, taking in the scenery before finishing with a pub lunch.

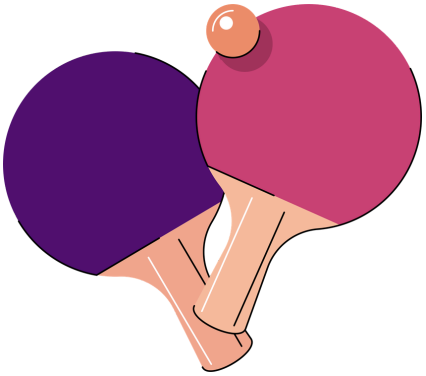
A special well done to Laura and Sanjay, who collected sponsorship money for the walk. The money raised will help fund our children and families' wellbeing service, Family Futures. Thank you both for your fantastic support!

THANK YOU

Members from our Lewisham clubs have also been getting out and about, enjoying a walk at Crystal Palace Park.

It was another great chance to spend time together, enjoy the outdoors and catch up with friends.





Sundays together

Our Sunday Social has been keeping everyone busy.

Over the summer at The Lodge, we brushed up on our table tennis and games skills, with plenty of friendly competition. A special mention goes to Hannah, our table tennis champion!



The group has now moved to Eden Park Day Opportunities, where we have been getting creative with activities including pottery.

As always, the Sunday Social is as much about spending time together, having a laugh and making friends as it is about trying new activities and learning new skills.

Cooking up something special

Our Saturday cookery sessions have been full of new flavours, from Jamaican fried dumplings and plantain to homemade soups, healthy dishes and baking.



The sessions are a chance to learn new skills, try different foods and cook together in a relaxed and friendly environment.

There is something else cooking too – the group is working on its very own cookbook, bringing together some of the favourite recipes members have made.



Mary Berry and Jamie Oliver, watch out!

Dancing the night away

Members also had a fantastic time at the Lewisham Harvest Disco, with music, dancing, food, a tombola and the chance to catch up with old friends and make new ones.



It was lovely to see members from Bromley and Lewisham enjoying the evening together, and we look forward to many more shared activities.



Keep Fit

Our Keep Fit sessions are proving very popular, with a new, more accessible venue at the Walnuts Leisure Centre in Orpington. The sessions are fun and active, and the instructor has been a huge hit with the group.

> "I wasn't going to miss Keep Fit as we always have a great time and I love it"







The Autistic Collective

The Autistic Collective continues to grow, and it has been lovely to welcome more young people to our activities and see friendships developing.

Members had a fantastic time at the Inclusivity Festival in the summer, enjoying the music, dancing and spending time together in the sunshine.

There is also something new at our Tuesday evening meet-ups at The Bricklayers Arms – darts!



The group meets from 7pm–9pm, and there is no pressure to play. You can come along for darts, have a chat or simply spend some time with the group.



We have lots more planned for October and November, so keep an eye on our events calendar here for what's coming up.



SHORT BREAKS SERVICE UPDATE

For disabled children, young people and their families

The Short Breaks Service provides much-needed respite for parents and carers of disabled children.

As well as support via our Community Support Workers, Buddies and Childminders, our Saturday Clubs provide fortnightly support for disabled children and young people and have continued to grow and attract new families.

Our Saturday Clubs now offer a morning and afternoon session every fortnight and are held at The Lodge, Norman Park.
The clubs offer children a fun, safe, and inclusive environment while giving families valuable time to recharge.

For enquiries about accessing Short Breaks, please contact Sarah Garner, Short Breaks Coordinator:

07892 728643 or 020 8466 0790

sarah.garner@bromleymencap.org



Thank you to CLIP Theatre



A huge thank you to CLIP Theatre and its founder, Mhairi Grealis, for their generous donation of sensory equipment, including light-up boxes. The equipment will be used across our sensory rooms and will make a real difference to the children and families who use them.

CLIP has also supported Bromley Mencap over the years by providing a welcoming venue for events for children with SEND and their families.

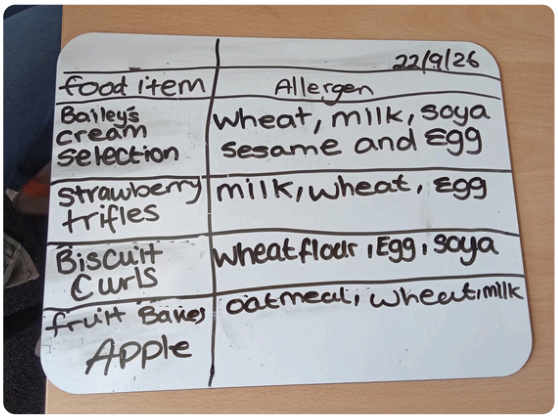
Although the CLIP pop-up has now closed, Mhairi continues her inclusive community work through Bring Baby Drag Bingo.
Thank you, Mhairi, for your support and generosity, and we wish you all the best for the future. You can find out more on Instagram: @bringbabydragbingo

Training Centre News

It has been a busy and positive first half term at the Bromley Mencap Training Centre, with both Year 1 and Year 2 learners settling well into their programmes and making a fantastic start to the year.

Year 1 learners have adapted exceptionally well to life at the Training Centre.
They are currently working on “Using Domestic Appliances and Health and Safety”, while also developing their wider independence and practical skills. In Digital Skills, learners have completed their “Using a Computer” unit and are now beginning to explore how Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be used safely and effectively.

Year 2 learners are continuing to build their vocational and employability skills. They are working towards their “Allergen and Intolerance Awareness” qualification and have begun practical cooking sessions linked directly to their coursework. Their first session saw learners follow recipes to make milkshakes and smoothies, which were shared with Bromley Mencap staff and received fantastic feedback!





Year 2 learners have also been developing their skills in following instructions and teamwork through practical barista activities, including learning how to prepare hot chocolate.

In Digital Skills, they are working on word processing using Microsoft Word, exploring formatting and how to make documents clear and easy to read.

Alongside their accredited learning, both year groups have been developing their English, maths, communication, independence and employability skills, as well as taking part in enrichment activities.

We are very proud of how well our learners have settled in and of everything they have achieved during their first half term. We are looking forward to building on this great start after the half-term break!

Local Events and Campaigns



Have your say on the future of the Poverest Centre

Bromley Council is consulting on a proposal to close the Poverest Centre in Orpington and move adult education courses to other locations across the borough. The Centre provides adult education, including courses for disabled adults.

The Council is now carrying out a new consultation following a Court of Appeal ruling that learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, and their carers, should be consulted before any final decision is made.
The consultation is open until Sunday 18 October 2026.

Complete the online survey and find out more:
https://www.bromley.gov.uk/adult-community-education/consultation-proposal-close-poverest-centre-building

If you use the Poverest Centre, have used it in the past, or think the proposed changes could affect you or someone you support, please have your say.

New Touch Base Project

Bigger voices Better lives
Advocacy for All

Advocacy for All has launched a new free service for adults in Bromley with a learning disability and mental health needs.

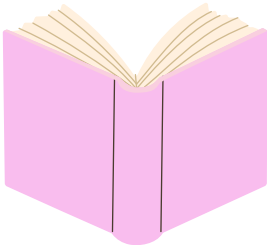
The Touch Base Project offers:

- up to six weeks of 1-to-1 advocacy to help people identify a goal and work towards it
- wellbeing groups to learn coping strategies and wellbeing exercises
- fortnightly drop-ins for a drink, a chat and information
- self-advocacy groups focused on making friends and speaking up about things that matter

It aims to support people early, before they reach crisis point.
Self-referrals are welcome.

To find out more or make a referral, visit www.advocacyforall.org.uk, select Make a referral, then Bromley Touchbase, or contact 0345 310 1812 option 1 / groups@advocacyforall.org.uk

Mottingham Library reopens



Mottingham Library has reopened following a major refurbishment, with new facilities including a Cubbie sensory pod providing a calm and supportive space for autistic and other neurodivergent visitors.
The library also has a new accessible toilet, as well as a podcasting studio, 3D printer, VR headset and improved outdoor space.

Find out more on the Bromley Council website

News Corner

SEND Local Offer Live!

Bromley's SEND Local Offer Live! is a free event for children and young people aged 0–25 with SEND, along with their parents, carers and siblings.

Date: Thursday 29 October
Time: 10am–2pm
Venue: Bishop Justus School, Magpie Hall Lane, Bromley, BR2 8HZ

Families can meet local SEND services and support organisations, ask questions and find out what help is available across Bromley.

There will also be free inclusive activities including arts and crafts, music, dance, drama and indoor sports.
Find out more on the Bromley Council website.



Public health message: Stoptober

October is Stoptober, the NHS-backed annual campaign encouraging people who smoke to make a quit attempt. We have been asked to share this important health message with our members and supporters. The service is free for residents of the London Borough of Bromley.

Change Grow Live | Smoke Free Bromley

SmokeFree Bromley is a free local stop smoking service for people of any age living in Bromley who want to stop smoking.

- One-to-one support for up to 12 weeks with a trained advisor.
- Free stop smoking aids, such as nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) and/or starter kits for vaping (adults only).
- Support by phone, in person, or online video.
- Local drop-in clinics – see SmokeFree Bromley website for opening times and locations.

Contact Information
Website: www.changegrowlive.org/service/smoke-free-bromley
Telephone: 0808 281 5933
Email: smokefreebromley@cgl.org.uk

Bromley Experts by Experience

Local Deaf and Disabled People's Organisation

News Corner

Bromley X by X events in October and November

Bromley Accessibility Forum



The forum will discuss local healthcare services, exploring how accessible they are and how they could be improved. Come and share your views and experiences.

Date: Thursday 22 October 2026
Time: 1pm to 2.30pm
Venue: Online (Zoom)

Booking required.
To register, please visit our website or contact us.
Email: info@xbyxbromley.org.uk
Phone: 020 8650 2102
Text/WhatsApp only: 07454 288762
Website: https://www.xbyxbromley.org.uk/event/accessibility-forum-oct26/

Coffee and Chat

This is a relaxed and inclusive social session for Deaf and Disabled people.

Date: Wednesday 28 October 2026
Time: 11:00am–1:00pm
Venue: Rhiannon's Café,
Bromley United Reformed Church,
20 Widmore Road, Bromley BR1 1RY



No booking required, but please tell X by X about any access needs or dietary requirements before the event.

British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation provided. Venue is wheelchair accessible. Support with transport can be arranged in advance.

To tell X by X about your access needs, please contact them.
Email: info@xbyxbromley.org.uk
Phone: 020 8650 2102
Text/WhatsApp only: 07454 288762

News Corner

Disability Pride 2026



The annual Disability Pride event showcases Disabled talent, encouraging Disabled people to express their identity positively, develop collective pride and help break down stigma around disability.

Date: Saturday 21 November 2026
Time: 1:00–3:00pm
Venue: Bromley United Reformed Church, 20 Widmore Road, Bromley BR1 1RY

Register for this FREE event.
This helps us plan. You can still come even if you do not register. If you have any access needs or dietary requirements, you need to let us know before the event.

British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation provided. Captions provided. Venue is wheelchair accessible. Support with transport can be arranged in advance

To register, please visit our website or contact us.
Website: https://www.xbyxbromley.org.uk/event/disability-pride-2026/
Email: info@xbyxbromley.org.uk
Phone: 020 8650 2102
Text/WhatsApp only: 07454 288762

Bromley Mental Health Forum



Iain Diamond, Chief Operating Officer at Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust, will be attending for a Question and Answer (Q&A) session on mental health services.

Date: Thursday 26 November 2026
Time: 2:00–4:00pm
Venue: Community House, South Street, Bromley, BR1 1RH
Booking preferred.

British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation provided. Captions provided. Venue is wheelchair accessible. Support with transport can be arranged in advance

To register, please visit our website or contact us.
Email: info@xbyxbromley.org.uk
Phone: 020 8650 2102 Text/WhatsApp only: 07454 288762
Website: https://www.xbyxbromley.org.uk/event/mental-health-forum-nov26/

Bromley mencap

Celebrating 75 years

Copy deadline for the December/January Bulletin is 1 December 2026.

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