



Support Inform Signpost Empower

CHAIR'S REPORT – September 2026:

I want to **thank** the Trustees who are staying for another year and for all your contributions to Bexley Voice over the past year. We also had **two new Trustees** joining us this year who have been working with us to get to know us and what we do, we are extremely pleased as they have great skills and knowledge that will complement the team brilliantly. So, I would like to welcome **Madeleine Harris and Carole Walker**.

I also want to give a special **thanks to our small team of staff** who have been amazing at keeping everything together with all the changes and challenges over the past year and to Jacqueline, who has stepped into such a big role within BV and done an incredible job. The team has grown over the last year, with **Cecilia Wilmott joining us as our Volunteer and Admin Support**. She has settled in brilliantly and is a great asset to the team.

As the parent carer forum for Bexley, we continue to be a parent-led organisation which is made up mainly of **volunteers** and a few part-time staff who put in an immense amount of time and effort to support parents and carers in Bexley.

Our vision and mission stay the same and continue to be what drives us – these can be found on our website, and these remain at the heart of everything we do.

Here is a summary of our achievements, challenges and plans for the year going forwards.

A comprehensive monitoring report is available on request. Today, I will pull out some of the highlights from the past year and about our plans for the coming year. Please remember we are reporting on the year **July 2025 to July 2026**.

Highlights:

Main achievements:

1. **Overall satisfaction levels:** 4.8 out of 5
2. **Our Reach:** We have increased our reach again across all areas this year.

Bexley Voice engagement:	2025 - 26	Increase since 24-25
Membership	2033	+715
Members Facebook Group	1332	+167
Public Facebook page	1700	+200
Whatsapp Channel:	418	+383

3. **Secured a 3-year MOU** (yet to be written) from ICB for a series of **Health workshops**
4. Secured **funding** from the LA for a series of **education workshops**, focussed on EHCPs and Annual Reviews
5. Secured additional **funding** from LA for **core costs** to help cover shortfall
6. Further development of our **financial systems**, leading to a transition to an online system such as Quick Books in 26-27
7. Secured 3 new **trustees**
8. Revised the **Constitution** to bring it up to date and fit for purpose
9. **Commendations** from DfE, Ofsted and the local authority regarding our contribution to the PAP
10. Developed the **Hot Topics** data capture reports for the LAP. The document provides evidence of the priority issues that SEND parent carers are currently dealing with. This evidence is then shared with the SEND IAB and is used to help develop and deliver better SEND services.
11. Jointly set up the **Participation and Engagement Group** in response to increasing the voice of SEND parent carers with LA
12. **Official recognition from the DfE and Ofsted**, following the SEND Monitoring Inspection, on the positive contribution that Bexley Voice has made to improving the lives of SEND families.
13. Bexley Voice won a **Recognition of Devoted Service given to the Community** award (London Borough of Bexley)

Challenges

1. **Funding** remains a challenge, with the funding from the DfE and the local authority falling short of the operating costs of the organisation
2. Further increase in number of parents with **complex issues and burn out**
3. **SEN Reforms:** The London Region NNPCF and Contact are to be commended for their invaluable support to local parent carer forums. However, the Government could have saved a lot of time and stress for parents and PCFs and other supporting SEND parents, if the information was in a more accessible, simple format. Too much time has had to be spent 'translating' what the Government proposals are.
4. **Limited IASS provision.** The local IASS is excellent, but very under resourced, leading to pressure on us. We secured funding from NLCF to run 121 info and support sessions, which act as a 'hold' for parents whilst waiting for advice and support from IASS, but it is far from ideal.
5. We enjoy a **very good working relationship** with the LA and ICB and other partners on the LAP board. However, there is **increasing pressure** on us to be involved with numerous areas of work, including more and more offers to co-produce. Frustratingly, we are not able to meet demand with current resources

and sometimes the requests are too late for us to be able to engage our parents and respond meaningfully.

6. We want our parents, carers and professionals to know about our work and we do amazing work, but as we do so much, there is a **perception** that we are bigger than we are and we need to work to manage expectations on how much we can do with the small size of the team and our resources.

Activities to support parent carers:

1. Record attendance: 14 **Tea and Talk** support groups (400 attendance)
2. Obtained **increased funding** to greatly enhance our **Health and Education Workshops** offer:
 - a. 20 Health series of workshops (ADHD, ASD and Pre-diagnosis neurodiversity) (152 attended) *
 - b. 8 Education series of workshops (SEN support; EHCPNA; EHCP and outcomes; Annual Reviews) (112 attended) *
3. Obtained funding from **National Community Lottery Fund** to run 168 **121 information and support sessions**. Successful pilot, now being rolled out

Plans for 2026 – 27: Including:

1. Continue to **amplify the voice** of parent carers in Bexley through active attendance at strategic meetings; presentation of the Hot Topics themes and co-chairing the Participation and Engagement Group.
2. Bexley Voice will continue to work with the **NNPCF, Regional NNPCF** and SEND IAB partners to interpret the SEN Reforms and present them in a parent friendly, accessible format, so that parent carers can engage and feedback their views
3. Continue to **collaborate** with the SEND IAG partners to ensure that parent carers are an integral part of **developing SEND services**
4. Introduction of Quick Books **financial online management system**
5. Continue to develop the NCLF **121 information and support sessions** project
6. Continue to develop our range of health, education and topic specific **parent carer workshops**
7. Continue to develop our flagship **Tea and Talk** support group
8. Develop a Bexley Voice **training programme** to further upskill staff, volunteers and trustees
9. Embed the Joint **Partnership and Engagement Group** as a Task and Finish Group for the SEND board.