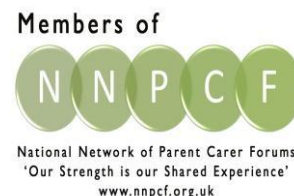




Bexley Voice

Bexley Parent Carer Forum



VOLUNTEER POLICY

A) INTRODUCTION

Bexley Voice is the Parent/Carer Forum for Bexley. It comprises a group of volunteer parents and carers of children and young people (aged 0-25) with disabilities, special or additional needs, who live in Bexley.

The aim of Bexley Voice is to represent families by providing a 'voice' to express parent/carers views and opinions, to help improve the lives of children and young people with additional needs.

Bexley Voice relies on the good will and generosity of volunteers to achieve its aims. Volunteers are valued highly and carry out essential roles in the support of the aims of Bexley Voice.

B) THE ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers work alongside a small team of Bexley Voice employees and fulfil a number of key roles:

- Trustee
- Parent Representative
- Volunteer Co-ordinator
- School Visit Programme Support
- Tea and Talk Parent Group Support
- Facebook Administration

The above is not an exhaustive list and volunteers can perform a variety of roles.

Further details of volunteer roles at Bexley Voice are contained in the **Appendix**.

C) RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

The recruitment process for volunteers reflects the size of Bexley Voice and the resources available.

1. ADVERTISING/SEEKING VOLUNTEERS

Bexley Voice seeks to recruit volunteers that represent the diverse demographic of the London Borough of Bexley. In order to attract potential volunteers, a variety of channels will be used to advertise roles, including:

- Word of mouth – via existing volunteers, staff and parent carers and at Bexley Voice events
- Social Media
- Bexley Voice E-Bulletins
- Bexley Voice Website
- The Local Offer
- Bexley Voluntary Service Council (BVSC)
- Schools in Bexley
- Community Groups in Bexley
- Other voluntary organisations and third-party partners in Bexley

The above is not an exhaustive list.

2. ASSESSMENT OF VOLUNTEERS (excluding Trustees)

The assessment process for volunteers is as follows:

- Anyone who is interested in volunteering with Bexley Voice will be invited to meet informally with the Volunteer Coordinator to discuss the roles available, the anticipated time commitments and candidate availability. Candidates will not be rejected at this stage.
- If the candidate wishes to proceed following this informal meeting, the process is as follows:
 - The candidate will be invited to complete a simple Volunteer Application Form and return it to Bexley Voice
 - The candidate will be invited to attend a meeting with the Operations Coordinator and either the Volunteer Coordinator or a Trustee, or both, depending on the nature of the role, at which the following will be discussed:
 - The candidate's motivation to volunteer
 - The candidate's experience of SEND
 - The candidate's relevant skills and how they might be utilised
 - The specific role(s) available and the candidate's preferences
 - Time commitments and availability
 - Support and supervision and expenses
- Following this meeting, the panel will decide if the candidate is an appropriate match for the role(s) available. If they are, this will be communicated to the candidate and arrangements made for their induction. If they are not considered suitable, this will be communicated to them in a timely fashion.

3. ASSESSMENT OF TRUSTEES

The assessment process for Trustees is as follows:

- Anyone who is interested in a Trustee for Bexley Voice will be invited to meet informally with the Operations Coordinator to discuss the role, the anticipated time commitments and candidate availability. Candidates will not be rejected at this stage.
- If the candidate wishes to proceed following this informal meeting, the process is as follows:
 - The candidate will be invited to complete a Trustee application form and return it to Bexley Voice
 - The candidate will then be invited to meet with 2 members of the Operations Committee (at least one of whom will be a Trustee) at which the following will be discussed:
 - The candidate's motivation to be a Trustee
 - The candidate's experience of SEND
 - The candidate's relevant experience, including other Trustee position held
 - The Charity Commission's – The Essential Trustee – 6 Main Duties
 - Potential areas of interest/Trustee responsibility
 - Time commitments and requirements to attend meetings
 - Support and supervision and expenses
- Following this meeting, if it is agreed that the candidate is suitable to be a Trustee of Bexley Voice, 2 references will be requested (with the candidate's permission)
- If references are unsatisfactory, this will be explained to the candidate and no nomination will be made
- Once satisfactory references are obtained, the candidate will be invited to attend an Operations Committee meeting to better understand how Bexley Voice works
- If all parties are still happy to proceed, then a nomination will be made by The Chair and if seconded by a member of the Operations Committee, a formal nomination will be made at the next Annual General Meeting (AGM)
- The candidate will be asked to complete a Trustee Declaration Form
- If the nomination is approved at the AGM then induction and training can be arranged
- If the nomination is not approved at the AGM, the candidate will be advised and no further action will be taken

D) SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEERS

1. INDUCTION

New volunteers (including Trustees) will be provided with an induction that will include:

- An introduction to Bexley Voice, including:
 - Aims, mission and vision
 - Structure and roles
 - Introduction to staff and volunteers (face to face or virtually)
- Information about the specific role(s) the volunteer is undertaking and the anticipated time commitment
- Information relating to formal meetings they will attend (depending on the assigned role)
- Identification of any training/knowledge requirements
- Safeguarding and safeguarding training
- Expenses and how to claim them
- Supervision and contact
- GDPR and Confidentiality
- Arrangements to shadow experienced volunteers/staff (as appropriate)

Volunteers will also be provided with copies of the following policies:

- Financial, Expenses and Claims Policy and Procedure
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Lone Workers Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- The Bexley Voice Privacy Policy
- A copy of the Public Liability Insurance Certificate

2. SUPERVISION AND COORDINATION OF VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are ultimately responsible to the Chair of Bexley Voice, but day to day supervision will be delegated to a Volunteer Coordinator.

The Volunteer Coordinator will coordinate the activities of the team of volunteers and will meet with them regularly on a one to one or group basis, as appropriate. The Volunteer Coordinator will also identify and organise or signpost required training.

Due to the limited resources of Bexley Voice, supervision will be minimal and volunteers are expected to be self-motivated and self-directed once they are confident in their assigned role. However, they should ensure that the Volunteer Coordinator is aware of their activities and they should not take on any roles/work on behalf of Bexley Voice without prior approval of the Volunteer Coordinator.

3. DEALING WITH ISSUES

If volunteers encounter any issues during the course of their volunteering, they should raise these in the first instance with the Volunteer Coordinator. If appropriate, the Volunteer Coordinator will escalate the issue to the Operations Committee or to the Chair of Bexley Voice, depending upon the nature of the issue.

If volunteers wish to raise a complaint about any aspect of their volunteering with Bexley Voice, including treatment by staff or other volunteers, or any other matter of concern, they should:

- Raise the matter informally in the first instance with the Volunteer Coordinator. If the matter involves the Volunteer Coordinator, then it should be raised informally with the Operations Coordinator.
- If the matter cannot be resolved informally, then it should be raised formally in writing by the volunteer, to the Chair of Bexley Voice. The Chair may escalate to the Board of Trustees or to individual Trustees for resolution, as appropriate.

E) EXPENSES

Volunteers are eligible to claim expenses incurred while undertaking their assigned role. This can include for items such as:

- Stationery
- Travel
- Refreshments

Full details of what expenses can be claimed and how to claim them are contained in the Bexley Voice Financial, Expenses and Claims Policy and Procedure. A copy of the Policy will be provided to volunteers during their induction.

F) EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Bexley Voice has an Equal Opportunities Policy that applies to all volunteers. The Policy is available on the Bexley Voice Website and will be provided to volunteers during their induction.

G) HEALTH AND SAFETY AND LONE WORKERS

1. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Bexley Voice has a Health and Safety Policy that applies to volunteers. A copy of the Policy will be provided to volunteers during their induction.

2. LONE WORKERS POLICY

Bexley Voice has a Lone Workers Policy that applies to volunteers. A copy of the Policy will be provided to volunteers during their induction.

H) SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding is the action taken to promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and protect them from harm.

Whilst recognising that volunteers will have little direct contact with children and young people, working with parent carers means that they may indirectly have contact with children and young people and certainly have contact with parent carers who often live in particularly challenging situations.

Bexley Voice has a Safeguarding Policy in place to provide all members of Bexley Voice and the Bexley Voice Team (including volunteers) with clear guidance about their role and responsibilities with regards to safeguarding. The Policy is available on the Bexley Voice Website and will be provided to volunteers during their induction.

Volunteers will be required to complete on-line safeguarding training as directed by Bexley Voice.

I) INSURANCE

Bexley Voice volunteers are covered by the charity's Public Liability Insurance. A copy of the insurance certificate will be provided to volunteers during their induction.

J) GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR) AND PRIVACY

GDPR was introduced to regulate personal data held either on computer or within a manual filing system. It is the responsibility of Bexley Voice to ensure that the documentation held is relevant, accurate and where necessary, kept up to date. Any data held shall be processed fairly and lawfully and in accordance with the rights of data subjects under GDPR. Volunteers will have the right, upon written request, to be told what personal data about them is being processed. They will also have the right to be informed of the source of the data and to whom it may be disclosed.

Bexley Voice is not obliged to supply this information unless volunteers make a written request and for such requests, a fee will be payable.

The Bexley Voice Privacy Policy applies to volunteers and sets out how the Charity collects and uses personal data. A copy of the Policy will be provided to volunteers during their induction.

K) CONFIDENTIALITY

All information that:

- a) is acquired by volunteers during, or in the course of their volunteering, or is otherwise acquired by them in confidence;
- b) relates particularly to the business of Bexley Voice, or that of other persons or bodies with whom Bexley Voice have dealings of any sort; and
- c) has not been made public by, or with the authority of Bexley Voice;

shall be confidential, and (save in the course of the business of Bexley Voice or as required by law) shall not at any time, whether before or after volunteering ceases, be disclosed to any person without prior written consent from Bexley Voice.

Volunteers are required to exercise reasonable care to keep safe all documentary or other material containing confidential information, and shall at the time of ceasing to volunteer with Bexley Voice, or at any other time upon demand, will return to Bexley Voice any such material in their possession.

Volunteers may not, during or after ceasing to volunteer, disclose to anyone other than in the proper course of volunteering, or where required by law, any information of a confidential nature relating to the Charity or its business or customers.

Appendix – Bexley Voice Volunteer Roles

BV Volunteer	Facebook Administration (including the Ethnically Diverse Facebook page)
Description	<p>BV provides a large amount of information to members via Facebook. This includes information about local and national organisations that can offer support, information and guidance including clubs/ activities/ events etc.</p> <p>The BV member closed Facebook group is also used by members to share information, ask questions and provide support to each other on a wide range of topics.</p>
Role	<p>Volunteers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that Facebook posts are monitored and questions answered • Ensure that all posts and comments adhere to the BV social media policy • Message members who are breaching the policy • Edit or remove posts or comments that are not in line with the policy • Where required, remove posts or comments • Escalate any issues and posts/comments to BV staff/Operations Committee where required • Research and contact other organisations for information that can be shared on the group
Commitment	<p>30 minutes daily working remotely. The role can be undertaken anytime day or evening and will include some monitoring during school holidays.</p> <p>Access to a phone/computer with an internet connection is essential.</p>

BV Volunteer	Trustee
Description	<p>Trustees provide leadership and ensure BV follows its aims of acting as a 'voice' for and supporting parent/carers who have children with special needs or a disability.</p> <p>Trustees are part of the Operating Committee, that includes staff and volunteers, which oversees the running of BV. Trustees are actively involved in the work of the organisation, often having operational roles.</p>
Role	<p>Trustees make strategic decisions about BV collectively, working as a team. Trustees use their skills and experience to ensure the charity runs efficiently, taking advice from external experts if they need to.</p> <p>Trustees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure BV operates within the remit of the governing document known as 'The Constitution'. • Ensure the relevant BV committees carry out the charity's business efficiently. • Follow the law, including preparing reports and accounts to send to the Charity Commission. • Develop, agree and follow the charity's strategic plan, procedures and policies. • Monitor the charity's programme and services

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure BV has adequate financial resources and they are spent on agreed activities. • Ensure the charity's property, assets and other resources are protected and managed effectively. • Ensure sound risk management and adequate insurance is valid. • Ensure new trustees, staff and volunteers are effectively recruited and inducted to the organisation. <p>More details are contained in the Trustee Information Pack available from the Operations Coordinator</p>
Commitment	<p>Trustees are expected to attend at least 2 of the 3 Trustee meetings per year (normally held in the evening) and attend the Annual General Meeting held in September each year.</p> <p>Trustees with an operational role are also expected to attend Operations Committee Meetings which are held monthly during term time.</p>

BV Volunteer	Tea and Talk Parent Group (On-site support)
Description	BV offers a monthly support group at locations in Bexley for parents/carers called 'Tea and Talk'. Various speakers/visitors are invited to attend.
Role	<p>Volunteers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with the BV Tea and Talk Lead regarding the on the day contact details of speakers/visitors attending • Organise refreshments, cups, cards, handouts, leaflets etc in advance • Ensure the room is set up with tables, chairs, refreshments etc. • Greet all attendees/speakers and ensure they complete the sign-in sheet on arrival • Help remind attendees to complete a feedback form for monitoring and collect completed forms • Ensure everything is packed away at the end of the session
Commitment	<p>To attend the monthly (except April and August) Tea and Talk Group at locations within Bexley 2nd Wednesday of each month, 9.15-12.45, term time only.</p> <p>Plus 3 evenings across an academic year, 6pm-9pm term time only.</p> <p>Will need to be confident in speaking to parents and organising the group.</p>

BV Volunteer	School Visit Programme
Description	<p>BV runs a school visit programme for parents/carers. Visits are organised to infant, primary, secondary and further education venues in the Borough of Bexley.</p> <p>Approximately 10 parents/carers attend each event and BV provides information about what support can be offered, other local/national organisations, Bexley's Local Offer, EHC Plans and more.</p> <p>They are informal events and provide an opportunity to support parents/carers face to face.</p>

Role	<p>Volunteers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend the school • Assist in setting up the room – laying out leaflets, feedback forms, toolkits and pens. • Ensure every attendee completes their details on the sign-in sheet. • Give out and help parent/carers complete feedback forms. Signpost to the website for memberships <p>Volunteers are provided with basic training and will shadow experienced volunteers or staff on visits until they are confident. They will not have to speak until they feel more able/confident to do so.</p>
Commitment	<p>Visit and travel time - approximately 3 hours per month.</p> <p>To attend 1 school visit per month (normally 9.15-12.15, term time only) as a support volunteer to a BV Parent Rep or staff member who will take the lead.</p> <p>Dates and locations will be arranged in advance. Volunteers would be expected to travel to the school location by their own means, although it may be possible to arrange shared transport.</p>

BV Volunteer	Parent Representative (Various Roles)
Description	<p>A key role of BV is to provide a voice for SEND Parents/Carers. BV has a very small team of Parent Reps who attend a range of meetings with the Local Authority, voluntary organisations and service providers.</p> <p>There are a wide range of opportunities available at BV and it works well if Parent Reps are involved in areas they either currently use or have recently experienced. Areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Years • Preparing for Adulthood • SEN Support • Health Therapies • Transport • Short Breaks and Leisure • Diversity and Inclusion <p>These are just some examples, there may be other areas volunteers are keen to get involved with.</p> <p>Parent Reps receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An induction session with a BV staff member • A meeting with the Operations Coordinator to discuss experience, strengths, interests, availability, time commitments, expectations of reps and areas where support is required • The opportunity to attend meetings with more experienced Parent Reps or BV staff before they take on the role at specific area/meeting

Role	<p>The role of a Parent Rep will vary, depending on their chosen area of involvement. Broadly, a Parent Rep does the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commits to attending a series of meetings with the Local Authority and other third parties • Acts as the named contact for the Local Authority in their area of responsibility • Receives and reviews the minutes and attachments for meetings • Prepares for meetings (sharing where, appropriate with the BV team beforehand to identify areas of concern/issues to raise) • Attends the meetings and if not able to attend, ensures that they organise another BV Rep to cover and advise the meeting organiser. • Writes up notes after the meeting (there is a form) for the Committee and circulates any formal minutes where appropriate.
Commitment	Commitment will vary depending on the regularity of meetings and the complexity of the Rep role taken on.

BV Volunteer	Volunteer Coordinator
Description	<p>BV comprises a group of volunteer parents and carers who undertake a variety of roles and are essential to the success of the charity.</p> <p>The Volunteer Coordinator oversees and supports the team of volunteers.</p>
Role	<p>The role will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the recruitment of volunteers • Organising and conducting the induction of new volunteers • Coordinating the activities volunteers • Meeting with volunteers regularly to ensure that they are able to operate effectively
Commitment	<p>Time commitment will vary according to activities required each month. However, it is not anticipated that this role will require more than 8-10 hours per month potentially spread as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment - 2 hours • Induction – 2 hours. • Supervision – 2 hours • Check-in with volunteers – 2 hours (30 minutes per week)

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Reviewed Date:	
Next Review Date:	<p>December 2024</p> <p>The Bexley Voice Management Committee reserve the right to update or amend this policy at any time without notice.</p>

Together we can make a difference...

Bexley Voice are a voluntary group of parent/carers of children and young people (age 0-25) with special/additional needs and disabilities (SEND) living in the London Borough of Bexley. We provide an opportunity for parent/carers to express their views and input into the planning and delivering of SEND services. We signpost, support and empower families to obtain the best possible care and services.

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