



NEWSLETTER

December 2024

Brent Parent Carer Forum CIC

The latest news, views, and announcements

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The Workshop

BPCF CIC Elevate Grant working together with Brent Youth Foundation

Events - November 24

Complex Needs & Early Years Support Group
Open Parent Carer Forum Meeting

Upcoming Events in December

End of The Year event and celebration



'What matters to me' Workshop

In April 2024, the Brent Parent Carer Forum (BPCF) were successful in a grant application from the Elevate Grant at Brent Youth Foundation to hire a time limited part-time consultant. This consultant's job has been to gather the opinions of young people with SEND (ages 13-25), especially those who find it harder to participate or be heard.

The 'Steppingstones to Success' project connect young people's voices with decision-makers in Brent. The projects' role was to discuss challenges and think about solutions to be better at involving disabled young people in making important decisions about their lives. On August 28th and 29th, ten young people took part in a series of creative workshops 'to make a difference', the topics covered, build confidence, make friends, and have fun. These workshops helped them prepare for a 'youth voice' event later in the year. The Kids organisation and Brent Council's Inclusion Service facilitated the workshops with support from parents and carers.

Following these workshops, a wider participation event called 'What Matters to You' was planned for early November, seventeen young people with SEND and their families attended the event at Chalk Hill Community Centre. They discussed important topics like friendships, mental health, employment, and their future. Everyone who participated received an Amazon gift card as a thank you. The event was a success, and we are now evaluating the results and planning to share a report.

What's Matters to Me!



Evening Forum Meeting

We continued the meeting with Laurence Coaker (Director of Housing Needs and Support) in the evening, followed by a session with Nigel Chapman (Operational Director of Integration & Improved Outcomes). Laurence explained the different housing options: social housing, temporary accommodation, private renting, and homeownership. Social housing provides long-term tenancies, temporary accommodation is for the homeless, private renting involves agreements with landlords, and homeownership can be with or without a mortgage. Laurence highlighted a big gap between Brent's housing supply and demand, with 34,800 households waiting for housing and only 650 properties available each year, resulting in long waiting times, up to 24 years for a 4-bedroom property.

Parents were worried about the transition from children to adult social care for complex needs. Nigel explained that assessments are done, and support continues until age 25. He also discussed issues at the Ade Adepitan Short Break Centre and holiday activities with Angela. Nigel mentioned a new post-16 centre at Welsh Harp in two years and stressed the need for more recreational opportunities and special school places. Nigel agreed to consider these ideas and learn from other boroughs. We emphasised the need for inclusivity and support for families with disabled children.

Forum & Support Group Meetings

In November we were joined by Shirley Parks (Director, Education, Partnerships & Strategy Children and Young People) and Laurence Coaker (Director of Housing Needs & Support). Parents asked questions along with sharing their lived experiences of living in Brent, both positive and the challenges. We gained a better understanding of the housing systems and challenges in Brent. Shirley listened to parent's feedback and worries. Overall, the forum meeting aims to foster a collaborative and informative environment where parents can engage with senior officials, gain a better understanding of key issues affecting their lives, and contribute to ongoing discussions about improvements in Brent.

Our first Support Group meetings for both Medical Complex Needs Children and Early Years were well attended. Parents will meet monthly with different well-being activities and topics. Early Years parents want more affordable and safer places for children during holidays. They also find the EHCP process stressful due to limited time for reviewing documents. We will continue to provide signposting to parents each month. More support groups are coming in January 2025 for Post 14, preparing for adulthood, and neurodiversity.

COMING UP:

End Of the Year Celebration Forum Meeting on Thursday 12th December 2024, 10-12.30 pm at BPCF Office

Your Brent Your Health BPCF Meeting on Thursday 30th January 2025, 10-12pm at BPCF Office

Here we are!



We are here to support and listen to you!

Antoinette Johnson, Director and Lead for Post 14 & Preparing for Adulthood

Amytia Puspawresti, Director and Lead for Complex Needs

Angela Mayers, Director and Lead for Early Years

Carol Foyle, Director and Parent participation & Parent Champion Coordinator

Mirela Costea, Director, Administrator and Lead for Neurodiversity BPCF

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