

BRENT SEND NEWS

FOR PARENTS, CARERS AND PROFESSIONALS



WELCOME

I'm delighted to introduce our new newsletter for parents, carers and professionals in Brent. As the Head of Service for Inclusion and the Virtual School Headteacher, I cannot express enough how amazing our children, young people and young adults in Brent are, and I am constantly amazed by their incredible achievements.

I hope this newsletter is one that we can use to give an update on all that is new on the Local Offer and the work we are building together. This first edition provides an update from service areas. However, I want to also alert you to two large pieces of work that are underway that we need you to shape and own with us:

- Firstly, the new **SEND Strategy**. We need your views, and the views of our children, young people and young adults, about what we can do to help them be the very best they can be, now and in the future. There is a [quick survey](#) for young people and another one for [parents, carers and facilitators](#). We will work with you to build the strategy from the consultation. Please contact [Brent Parent Carer Forum](#) to get involved.
- Secondly, we are just about to develop an **All-Age Autism Strategy**. Again, we shall be calling for views from children, young people

and young adults, as well as parents, carers and professionals, about the priorities and actions we need to build into that strategy. Please look out for further details in our next edition.

Hearing the squeals of delight as children returned to school and the laughter and joy in teachers voices must be the defining image for Spring 2021 for me. I now look forward to greeting our supported interns as they come back into the Civic Centre.

Here's to a wonderful spring and summer.
Sharon Buckby



STAFF NEWS

There are three service managers who support the Head of Inclusion.

Louise Bartos

Service Manager – Service Manager, SEND Specialist Services

I joined Brent Council in December 2020 to take up this new role. The teams I manage are the Special Educational Needs Assessment Service (SENAS) and the Educational Psychology (EP) Team. I have been busy reviewing the [education, health and care \(EHC\) needs assessment](#) and [annual review process](#) and changes have come in to effect from 1 March

2021. I also oversee Brent's [Local Offer](#) and am working to ensure information is up-to-date and accessible to you. Please let us know if there is anything you would like to see by filling in our [feedback form](#).

Michaela Richards

Deputy Head Teacher, Brent Virtual School/Service Manager

My service works with looked after children and previously looked after children living in Brent. We work closely with educational settings,

carers and social care to ensure that looked after children have the best opportunities to attain and achieve. We hold Pupil Premium Plus funding for them and through the Personal Education Plan (PEP) process ensure that this is allocated appropriately to support educational outcomes. Additionally, we offer training to schools, carers, social care colleagues and anyone else involved in supporting Brent's looked after children whilst also co-ordinating a broad enrichment ☺

programme for our young people. Our role is varied and exciting but at the heart of it all is the achievement and wellbeing of our young people.

Natasha Jones
SEND Outreach Service Manager
My service works with Brent's early years settings and

mainstream schools, enabling them to provide high quality provision and support for families of children and young people with SEND. The six outreach teams follow the Graduated Approach framework and provide Quality First Teaching (QFT) that is expected of all settings and

schools. As a service we are privileged to do the work we do, and we are passionate about the support we provide and the impact of our direct involvement with children and young people with SEND. We truly believe that all children have the right to an inclusive and aspirational education.

| Team | Role | Team leader |
|--|---|-------------------|
| SEND Advisory Team | Provides statutory advice and guidance to nurseries and school leaders that have responsibility for SEND provision. The team will quality assure the provision made for children with SEND and provide training and support at a whole setting/school level. | Gillian Edwards |
| Early Years Inclusion Support Team | Works with all early years settings in Brent, including schools, private, voluntary, independent nurseries and childminders, to support the inclusion of young children who have a range of SEND that may be affecting their learning and progress. This is a multi-disciplinary team that includes advisory teachers, early years specialist practitioners and health professionals. | Hatty Besley |
| Inclusion Support Team | A multi-disciplinary team providing support for children and young people aged four to 16, who are at risk of exclusion. The team provides a range of core services for Brent schools, supporting them and families to reduce exclusions, improve mental health, attendance, engagement in education and attainment. | Patrick Marshall |
| Brent Outreach Autism Team | Supports children and young people with a diagnosis of autism who attend Brent mainstream schools and pre-school educational settings. | Clare Henshaw |
| Hearing Impairment Team | A statutory team working with children and young people from birth to 25, who are deaf or hearing impaired, with or without additional needs, to ensure they have the full range of support and opportunities available to them. | Milly Mastroianni |
| Vision Impairment Team | A statutory team working with children and young people from birth to 25, who are blind and partially sighted, with or without additional needs, to ensure they have the full range of support and opportunities available to them. | Paul Fielding |

Updates from our SEND services Brent Early Years Inclusion Support Team

The [EYIST](#) has continued to support private, voluntary and independent early years settings, childminders and some school nursery classes throughout the most recent lockdown. The team offered telephone support, virtual meetings and onsite visits for new referrals where required.

We also provided virtual outreach support to The Willow Nursery, one of our settings with the highest proportion of specialist SEND places. The team has helped to roll out two [parenting programmes](#) - Cygnet (for parents of children with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder) and Solihull (for

families in need). Please email parentingprogramme@brent.gov.uk if you would like to attend. Our monthly parent support group for early years children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder is continuing virtually, with positive attendance levels. We have also increased ➡

direct contact with our families, offering guidance and support and a listening ear.

Before all children returned to school, home learning sessions on Zoom were carried out fortnightly in partnership with Brent's [Children and Families and Information Service](#) and early years quality improvement colleagues. These activity sessions were an opportunity for us to model positive early language and interaction support strategies and fun play-based activities. They also gave parents, including those who have children with SEND, the opportunity to learn more about the importance of accessing early education.

A varied [training programme](#) for early years professionals is continuing. This includes sessions on social, emotional and mental health needs, introductory level SENCO training, Level 3 accredited early years SENCO training, early years SENCO network sessions and Early Talk Boost.

Brent Outreach Autism Team (BOAT)

The service has put together a

wide range of [Covid-19 related resources](#) to help support families who have children and young people with autism. There is also a dedicated [Coronavirus resources and information for SEND](#) section on our Local Offer and a general [advice, information and support hub](#) for residents and businesses in Brent.

Brent Vision Impairment Service (BVIS)

[BVIS](#) is now working back in settings and once the lockdown is lifted further, we will commence with face-to-face home visits. Over the lockdown periods there have been a number of positives that have come out of this very challenging time. One example has been our remote home visits, looking at how children and young people we support access lessons when at home. All families that have taken up this offer have given us positive feedback, and it is something we will be aiming to carry forward when things return to normal. Speak to your child's specialist vision impairment teacher if you think a remote home visit is something that could help you.

Earlier this month, we hosted a webcast version of our Vision Impairment Awareness Day that was postponed at the start of the first lockdown. The event was introduced by Councillor Eleanor Southwood, ex-chair of the [RNIB](#), who shared her experiences of the educational system as a young person with a vision impairment. We also had talks from the [Royal Society for Blind Children](#) (RSBC), [Metro Blind Sport](#) and [Blind in Business](#). The highlight was the evening session, where four ex-Brent students shared their experiences of everything from engaging with vision impairment charities and the impact of mobility training on independence, to life at university and the world of work. The event link will soon be available on the [Brent webcast library](#).

Brent Deaf and Hearing Impaired Service (BDHIS)

The [service](#) is currently offering British Sign Language (BSL) classes to both parents and professionals. For further information about dates and times please contact our deaf instructor, Manjula Shah, on Manjula.shah@brent.gov.uk

SEND NEWS



Covid-19 vaccinations

The Wembley Vaccination Centre is now offering a Covid vaccine to carers of the clinically vulnerable, disabled and those with health needs. Any adult who is a carer for someone with disabilities can [book an appointment](#) for the vaccine. For further information about the vaccination programme in North West London and how to access local emergency services during the pandemic, [visit Brent CCG's website](#).

Supported internships

Project SEARCH is a year-long

supported internship programme for young adults with SEND aged between 16 and 24. Over 400 people now take part every year in 30 schemes supported by west London boroughs, including Brent. Have a look at the [West London Guide to Supported Internships 2021](#) and find out more on our Local Offer about [supported internship programmes in Brent](#).

Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme

Brent Council has been awarded funding from the Department for Education to deliver a Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) scheme in 2021, as part of a national plan.

The programme will offer free places at holiday clubs in the Easter, Summer and Christmas school

holidays in 2021 for school-aged children in Brent aged four to 16 who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals. If you are interested in accessing it during the school holidays please check Brent's website, which will have information about activities, locations and sign-up details as soon as these have been confirmed. Find out more about the HAF on the [Department for Education's website](#).

Early Help Assessments

Professionals who work with families can now complete an [Early Help Assessment \(EHA\) online](#). Brent's new e-Portal helps speed up the processing time for assessments and ensures referrals are assigned to teams in a timely manner.



EVENTS AND TRAINING

Psychological first aid training

People that care for or work with children and young people that have been affected by Covid-19 (or other emergencies or individual crises) can access a [new online Psychological First Aid \(PFA\) training course](#). This is a free course, developed by Public Health England (PHE), which offers training on how to provide practical and emotional support to children and young people aged 0 to 25 affected by emergencies or crisis situations. It is available for parents, caregivers, frontline workers such as teachers, health and social workers, charity and community volunteers and anyone who cares for or is

regularly in contact with children and young people.

Join Brent's SEND parent forum

[Brent Parent Carer Forum](#) is an independent, parent-led organisation that helps bring together local parents and carers of children and young people with SEND aged 0 to 25. Set up in 2017, the group is run by volunteers who are all parent carers themselves and understand the issues and challenges that looking after a child with SEND can bring. The group runs a SEND support helpline, holds monthly meetings (currently held remotely) and organises a range

of information events and training opportunities. Do get in touch if you are a parent/carer who needs support or would like to find out how to join.

Online Journey of Learning event

Would you like to know more about how your son or daughter's school supports your child to access learning in a way that meets their individual needs? Then join Brent Parent Carer Forum for an [online workshop](#) on Tuesday 27 April to hear more about the processes that schools use to ensure that children and young people with SEND learn and have fun.