

# DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION OF BEXLEY BROMLEY GREENWICH & LEWISHAM



## TRUSTEES' REPORT 1<sup>st</sup> JANUARY – 31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2022



*"The meeting was very useful and my daughter enjoyed it. She recognised a lot of what was being discussed and enjoyed her chat with your volunteer afterwards. Thank you for your time and advice"*

# DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION OF BEXLEY BROMLEY GREENWICH & LEWISHAM

## ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Our mission is:

**To help dyslexic people of all ages by providing information and support, and to promote the positive aspects of specific learning difficulties.**

As ever, our two main areas of work have been:

- ❖ Direct Services to our Membership and the General Public
- ❖ Changing policy and promoting Best Practice across the whole dyslexia community

Post-pandemic, it has been good to be able to get back to supporting people face-to-face again, though many events we attended were still on-line. We have received much grateful feedback from our dyslexic community this year, which has been the outcome of prolific activity by our excellent volunteers, who express their great passion for their rewarding and fulfilling work.

**Our major achievements for this period have been:**

### **Direct Services to our Membership and the General Public**

- A busy and informative helpline run by volunteers, providing vital support for parents/carers, grandparents, dyslexic adults, teachers, medical professionals, employers, probation support and other voluntary and statutory agencies etc.
- Provision of virtual and face-to-face meetings to inform the public and give them an opportunity to network with each other.
- Information-giving at various events, both actual and virtual.
- A Dyslexia Screening Service for children
- A constantly up-dated website and FaceBook page
- Published interviews with dyslexic adults

### **Changing Policy and Promoting Best Practice**

- Close working with Bromley Local Authority
- Membership of the Voluntary Sector Groups in Greenwich, Bexley and Bromley
- Participation in on-line events with Voluntary Sector Groups which included participation by Education Authority personnel

We have a good mix and range of skills among our committee members, including typical dyslexic creativity and problem-solving skills, and organisation and clerical skills. We have a mix of parents, teachers and individuals with business and fundraising skills.

We retain a large membership base and were delighted to add even more new members this year.

## **Direct Services to our Membership and the General Public.**

### **Helpline and Befriending (Advocacy) Service**

Our helpline continued to be very busy this year with many parents /carers, after having their children at home doing their schoolwork for so long, realising how much of a struggle their child was having with school work. This has resulted in extra-long calls and extra expertise required from us. We were very fortunate to be joined by Nadani Chandramohan as an excellent new helpliner. Sue Netscher became our very able Helpline Co-ordinator. Lindy Springett joined them in taking the general calls, with Helen Buckley on the email enquiries and Catrin Cox as an enormous information resource behind the scenes. Diana Edmonds continued to handle the Adult helpline calls. Together a wide variety of calls and emails from all our boroughs and far beyond were successfully handled. Very many thanks to all the volunteers involved.

The calls received covered a wide range of enquiries, covering Assessments, Screening, Tutoring, Education in general, Employment, University and College, Mental Health difficulties, other Neurodiverse Conditions, Support for Educational Tribunal Appeals.

The enquiries we received were broken down as follows:

- 229 from Parents/carers
- 155 from Adult callers
- 20 from Professionals
- 8 from Employers

70% of enquiries were by phone, 23% by email, and 6% face-to-face at meetings and outside events.

We were able to give specialist help and advice to parents looking for greater support for their children in the school setting, and to accompany some parents to meetings at their schools.

***“Thank you all for your positive thinking and encouragement. I hope other mums will take heart from our son’s success and not feel despondent that their offspring will not succeed in their own way”*** *Mother of a 17 year-old boy*

Our Adult Dyslexia helpline deals with calls from all over London and beyond. All callers have kept their dyslexia secret in one way or another from family, friends or work and spend everyday of their lives hiding it until they can no longer do so and need help. They also suffer from extremely low self-esteem and struggle to survive in the everyday world of work - whether that be getting a job in the first place, keeping their job or working towards a promotion.

Often the callers want someone to talk to, to air their fears and daily struggles; the helpline serves as much an outlet for someone to talk to as for advice given.

***“Thank you so much for listening to me. Your information and advice has been invaluable”*** *An Adult caller*

### **Essential Administration**

Immense thanks go to Helen Buckley for the lion’s share of our general administration. Also to Kim Davie who not only operates our database so well and keeps our website up-to-date, but has continued to develop new state-of-the-art IT systems and processes as part of our GDPR (Data Protection) compliancy work; and to Fatima Conteh for her sterling work as our Treasurer. Indeed our very grateful

thanks go to all our superb volunteers who work so very hard for the benefit of all our community.

Sadly we made the decision to give up our office in Community House this year, due to increasing costs. However, we have been able to convert to becoming virtual tenants, meaning that we have permanent storage room and workspace if we need it. Most importantly it remains our registered address and all our post is sent there. Thus we have been able to safeguard our financial position, whilst maintaining our valuable links of many years with this volunteer centre and other organisations within it.

### **Dyslexia Screening**

Catrin Cox has been doing the Dyslexia Screening for children, the results of which show the probability of dyslexia in each individual case. Our screening sessions are always combined with information-giving and advice, and due to Catrin selflessly giving of her time, we are able to charge a very low fee which merely defrays the expenses for the Association.

***"Just wanted to thank you so much for screening S today and spending the time talking to her and not dismissing our concerns. You were so helpful and patient"*** parents of 9 year-old girl

### **Technology**

Our constantly up-dated and informative website received over 5,000 hits during the year, whilst our General group FaceBook page proved a useful resource for many people and now has nearly 700 members. We also have a smaller dedicated private FaceBook page for adults with dyslexia. Holly Royal's fascinating and inspiring interviews with local adults with dyslexia have been posted on our website.

### **Meetings & Events**

#### **Meetings**

Our determination to hold physical meetings, rather than resort to Zoom, was very welcomed by our community and attendance at the meetings was high. People commented how wonderful it was to be in a room of like-minded, sympathetic people which gave them courage to ask questions. There is always a tremendously positive buzz at the meetings as people chat to each other and gain ideas and strength from each other. Many thanks to Holly and Otis for baking the lovely cakes too!

Meeting topics this year covered: Occupational Therapy and Dyslexia, Memory Magic, How to Survive at School when you're Dyslexic and Exam Access Arrangements.

***".....the PowerPoint Presentation is very helpful for supporting the parents of the pupils I teach. "*** A local school teacher

***" What an engaging and enthusiastic speaker you had last night - well done!"***  
Father of two dyslexic children



*One of our meetings*



*Our refreshments*

#### **Adult Group**

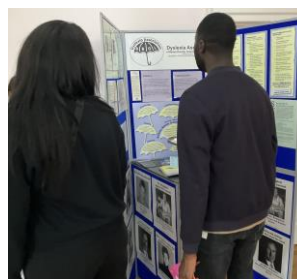
We were delighted to obtain funding to restart our Adult Group again, after the pandemic closure. This has been enormously well-received by a growing number of

participants. Many thanks to the tireless efforts of Peter Stanton, Catrin Cox, Anthony Yates, Fatima Conteh, Nadani Chandramohan, Lindy Springett with admin help from Sue Netscher and Helen Buckley.

***“It’s so wonderful to be in a roomful of people who understand me”.***

## **Events**

In September we were invited by Bell House in Dulwich to exhibit at their impressive Dyslexia Fair. We were able to exhibit a large number of resources, and were incredibly busy all day long giving out information to a high number of visitors.



*Bell House Dyslexia Fair*

Catrin Cox gave a talk about dyslexia for parents at Bexley Voice meetings.

Together with Bromley Parent Voice, we attended Coffee mornings in various schools, giving a presentation and information to parents.

We had a stall at the London Borough of Bromley Transition Day, where we were able to give help and information to many parents/carers and teachers too.



*One of the many punters at Transition Day*

***“Your help and advice has been brilliant!”*** Parent at an information-giving event

## **Changing Policy and Promoting Best Practice**

We consider the changing of policy and promoting best practice to be of overwhelming importance in our work. We are acutely aware that only a small proportion of dyslexic people and parents/carers will have the benefit of contacting us and getting our help and advice. By far the most effective way forward is to endeavour to ensure that society at large (and especially in schools) is a productive and understanding place for dyslexic people.

We were particularly delighted that Bromley Local Authority’s first year of dyslexia training to classroom teachers was a great success, and has continued into a second year. We were asked to give a presentation about dyslexia and our work at their Senco Conference.

***“Thank you so much for your contribution to our SEND Conference. A positive outcome is that it may lead to some work with the Bromley Collegiate which is instrumental in the delivery of teacher training”***

We have managed to keep up contacts with a whole range of other organisations and voluntary groups this year, including:

1. Parent Voice Groups
2. Independent Information and Advice Services
3. Local Councils for Voluntary Services
4. Support Teachers and Classroom Assistants
5. Other Dyslexia Groups around the country
6. Bell House, Dulwich
7. British Dyslexia Association

## **Training and Support**

### **Training for our Volunteers**

As an advice-giving organisation, it is vital that our skills and knowledge are kept updated. Helpliners and Befrienders have attended high-powered webinars with the Educational Law Association, PATTOSS (Professional Association of Teachers of students with Specific Learning Difficulties) and had multiple zoom training sessions and nation-wide discussions through the British Dyslexia Association during the year.

### **National Involvement**

Our involvement with the British Dyslexia Association (BDA) remains high. We are often consulted by them, and in turn helped them by feeding back local information. We are also very active on the national BDA internet forum. Our committee members attended the on-line BDA AGM.

We also constantly feed information into the national BDA Board for Local Associations (LAB).

### **Into the Future**

After 48 years, we are proud that we remain a vibrant and enthusiastic group, consistently attracting new members and volunteers. The Association will continue to support dyslexics of all ages to the best of its ability, while it continues to secure funding for invaluable events for the whole community.

**Dyslexia Association of Bexley Bromley Greenwich & Lewisham,  
Charity No: 1114382, Company Registration No: 5725573.**

**Registered Office: Community House, South Street, Bromley, Kent. BR1 1RH**

**Tel. Nos: 0300 999 1800 (helpline) 07762 265 827 (Adult helpline)**

**Bankers: Lloyds Bank PLC, 9 Market Square, Bromley, Kent BR1 1ND**

**The Objects of the Charity are to help children and adults to overcome the problems of dyslexia and associated learning difficulties by such means as the Charity shall decide and will, whether directly or indirectly, promote those ends: provided that any activity carried on shall be charitable.**

**The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees Report.**

**Signed on the Trustees' behalf: Lindy Springett  
Lindy Springett, Chair.  
20<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

