

X by X Bromley

Strategic Plan

2018 - 2021

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Introduction from the Board

“I am happy to introduce this Three-Year plan for Bromley Experts by Experience. I hope the 9 pages will give a clear view of where we are at and where we intend to go over the coming years. You will see how much we are involved with promoting the interests of Deaf and Disabled people and their Carers, and how our Trustees have attended a number of events to that end. We shall continue to speak up on relevant issues whenever we can, and we welcome more people joining as members of X by X and, indeed joining our Board of Trustees. Have a good read.”

- Stewart Tight, Director

Summary from the Board

Our Strategic plan, launched in October 2018, represents the strategic direction of X by X, as shaped by the Board of Trustees, staff and members from December 2017 to September 2018.

This Strategic Plan:

- sets the context for this Plan
- sets out our vision
- sets out the strategic direction of X by X to 2021
- sets out our vision and values in four key aims which will inform our work between 2018 – 2021
- identifies seven objectives which we hope will help us achieve our vision

How we developed this Plan

We wanted to give our staff, members, other local disabled people and Carers, as well as local stakeholders a chance to contribute to our plans for the next three years. We asked for people's views in several ways:

- We held a joint Board and staff session in December 2017 to agree how the Plan should be set out and how we consult local people about our plans.
- We held a joint Board and staff session in February 2018 and a joint Board and service user session in April 2018, to talk about our strengths, weaknesses and opportunities, to think about the environment we are working in and to find out what things people felt were important for us to work on in the next three years.
- We also gathered feedback by email over January – June 2018.
- We sent out a survey in August 2018.

Who we work for

X by X is run by local Disabled people and Carers, for all local disabled people and Carers. We represent people of all impairments,

Our Vision and Values

Our Vision and values are the principles that shape our key aims and objectives:

- To support Deaf and Disabled people and Carers to get their voices heard in policy and planning
- To provide accessible information about their rights and entitlements
- To campaign for an inclusive and accessible society
- To promote the equality, diversity, the Social Model of Disability and independent living for Disabled people.

What makes X by X unique?

- We are the recognised Deaf and Disabled People's User Led Organisation for Bromley – the only organisation that represents ALL Deaf and disabled people and Carers in Bromley, with a Board and staff who are all Deaf and Disabled people.
- We stay true to the Social Model of Disability and we lead by example, striving to make our services, employment and volunteering opportunities fully accessible, actively promoting the Social Model across the Borough.

What we offer

For a full range of services provided by X by X, visit our website at www.xbyxbromley.com

A sample of services we offer is:

Lewis House

We have been re-awarded the contract (now for seven years) to manage Lewis House as a Centre for Independent Living. In partnership with London Borough of Bromley we maintain a venue providing information, meeting space, a hub of various projects and a place where local disabled people can meet Occupational Therapists.

Opportunities for influencing local services

We work in partnership with local service providers such as Bromley Council, Kings College and Oxleas, as well as being part of pan-London Deaf and Disability networks. We support local Deaf and Disabled people and Carers to get their views heard.

The need for our work

Research shows that Deaf and Disabled people and Carers are more likely to be disadvantaged in most areas of their lives:

- They are less likely to get paid employment, and if they do, they are less likely to work in senior positions.
- They are more likely to feel isolated and to experience barriers to accessing local services and leisure opportunities.
- They face limited opportunities in education and may struggle to get the support they need to enable them to reach their potential.
- They suffer the cumulative effects of a wide range of cuts to welfare benefits.
- They are more likely to experience abuse and harassment.
- They find it harder to use public transport.

(For full details visit the Inclusion London website at www.inclusionlondon.org.uk)

At the same time, there is growing awareness of Disability issues and the value of having an inclusive society. We have opportunities to help things continue to change for the better:

- More organisations are interested in involving local disabled people.
- The recent political debates and elections create opportunities to get our voices heard.
- Deaf and Disabled People's organisations are getting more support to do joint work.
- There is a growing feeling of unity among disabled people. Disability cuts across class, gender and background, helping to bring people together.
- Key local organisations such as unions, students and NHS staff are keen to support inclusion of Deaf and Disabled people and Carers.
- Bromley Council is increasingly keen to involve local Deaf, Disabled people and Carers in their policy and planning and has been helped to develop Lewis House as a centre for local Disabled people.
- The Bromley Well service has brought together a range of services to support local Deaf and Disabled people and Carers.
- Young adult Deaf and Disabled people and Carers are more aware of issues and interested in getting involved with their community.
- Local service providers are seeking our input to increase access to useful, affordable housing and transport.
- There has been more awareness of Mental Health issues recently.
- There is local support for celebrating Disability through events like Disability Pride.

Priorities for Deaf and Disabled people and Carers

The main issues that people are concerned about are:

Social Care:

- Having enough choice of good quality Personal Assistants
- Having a social care package that supports independence and equality
- Accessible services in Social Services and NHS departments
- Having support at annual reviews

Local services:

- Being involved when local services are changed or reduced
- Being able to access local services and shops, including lack public and accessible toilets
- Having accessible housing
- Having enough support services, especially for people with Mental Health issues
- Getting a consistent, 'joined-up' service across different public services departments

Welfare Benefits support and advocacy to help with:

- Bureaucracy around assessments for benefits
- Sanctions
- Benefit cuts

Employment/volunteering:

- Difficulty both in getting and retaining work
- Access to Work changes and difficulty in getting/retaining a support package
- No Access to Work for volunteers

Social isolation:

- Not enough peer led activities led by small user groups
- Difficulty in finding ways to communicate with other disabled people
- Need for more safe meeting places

Transport:

- Lack of supported transport
- Issues getting Taxi cards

Our key aims and objectives – what we plan to do

To help address these issues, people wanted X by X to focus on these priorities over the next three years:

Celebration/awareness raising:

- Being loud and proud
- Increasing our media coverage
- Looking for opportunities

Campaigning:

- Challenge inequality and discrimination consistently
- Work to increase the influence of local people

The Next Generation:

- Strengthen partnership work with schools/colleges and young people's organisation such as Magpie and CASPA
- Volunteering opportunities and apprenticeships (being on the local offer)
- Educate the next generation – disabled and non-disabled
- Upskilling younger members to represent gaps in impairment groups on the PDS Committee
- Communicate in ways that are accessible to young disabled people

Increasing our reach:

- Invite members to submit ideas/survey them on what they want
- More focus on Carers
- More focus on elderly disabled people
- Promote empowerment for all
- Build relationships and recruit people – get engagement in projects more systematically
- Widen our representation
- Advertise opportunities sooner
- Recruit more members
- Be more present in the community

Partnership:

- Invest time in keeping up relations with key Disability and local organisations

Income/sustainability:

- Work proactively rather than respond to issues (we do this more than many)
- Don't chase funding unless it is in line with our true aims and values
- Invest time in developing income-generating work
- Approach businesses and services to scope out consultation possibilities

Centre for Independent Living:

- Develop into more of a local hub for disabled people to meet and plan activities
- Provide a peer support forum for direct payments
- Develop a volunteer network
- Support to access social media networks

Why do we need a user led organisation?

Lack of awareness of the reality of being a Deaf, Disabled person or a Carer means that services provided by people with no lived experience of this reality struggle to provide the support that people need. Many people who use our services have tried to access support from mainstream providers, but they have been unable to get what they need. Peer support is incredibly powerful – to have someone who has experience what you are experiencing, who has developed skills and personal strength to enable independent living – this is the only way to have real, long-term positive impact on people's lives. A uniquely user-led organisation like X by X provides a service planned, led and delivered by Deaf and Disabled People and Carers.

Summary

X by X is more than an organisation – we are a community. We support each other and work hard to promote inclusion, and to celebrate diversity. We have established an authentic partnership between local Deaf and Disabled people and Carers and local service providers. We are looking to the future and we want you to help us build a better life in Bromley for all local Deaf and Disabled people and Carers, as well as a stronger, more inclusive and connected community for all local people.