

## BROMLEY WELCARE HISTORY

Welcare in Bromley began life in 1983 as an independent charity called Bromley Welcare. It was founded to work with Bromley children for their benefit – in other words, a genuine local charity sponsored by local parishes.

The charity – Bromley Welcare – was therefore set up under a trust deed which placed the responsibility for governance with the three deanery synods of Beckenham, Bromley and Orpington.

Initially the main source of financial support was the parishes. Additional assistance was given by the Friends group which came into being in the 1990s. The focus of work was on the under 5-s, but it was always Welcare policy to work with the whole family. Gradually their caseload increased with referrals from Bromley Social Services which were financed by the Council, so more social workers were employed. In 2010 after a lengthy period of negotiation, a merger was agreed between Bromley Welcare and SDW, and Welcare ceased to be an independent charity.

Welcare were able once again to offer a valuable (but more limited) service to families in the borough who were having a difficult time. They slightly changed their focus: now they help children aged 8 to 13 years – the difficult transition period between primary and secondary school – although as always they work with the whole family. Anna Khan is currently CEO of the larger Southwark Diocesan Welcare (SDW) and many decisions about, and support for, Bromley Welcare come from the Head Office based in Lambeth.

Welcare have faced some challenges in their history, but have been able to respond with flexibility and total commitment to their aim of strengthening families in the borough. Hence the importance of all the parishes in the borough maintaining their prayerful, practical and financial support for these families.

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