



Joint Authority Support for Children, Families and Schools

Sensory Support Service Newsletter

www.sensorysupportservice.org.uk

Supporting children and young people with hearing loss, vision or multisensory impairment to have the best opportunities to learn, develop and grow.

November 2025

Welcome to the Sensory Support Service Newsletter

We hope you are all well. We have been busy finalising our service report and we will be sharing this with our stakeholders' group later this month. The aim is to improve service provision and work collaboratively with everyone involved. If any parents are interested in being part of this group, please let us know via the helpline and we can give you more information. If your child has transferred to a new setting, we would like to hear your views of how this transition has gone and will send you a request for information later this term.

You can discuss any issues or concerns with your support teacher for Vision Impairment (QTVI), Teacher of Deaf (ToD) or teacher for Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI). You can also email our **service helpline**:

sensorysupportservice@bristol.gov.uk

Facebook page:

Would any parents be interested in running a Friends of Sensory Support Service, Facebook page? This would be run by parents and only used to provide information about events, grants etc that you would find useful. Some parents have said that they would welcome this. Let us know if you are interested in doing this, by emailing sensorysupportservice@bristol.gov.uk or by phone on 0117 9038441/2.

1. Explorers: Sensory Support Service Early Years' group

If you have a young child with vision impairment, join us at Explorers for lots of play in a safe environment, sensory stories, tasting activities, singing and lots of fun. Siblings welcome. Our next session is on **Tuesday 18 November 2025** from 10.30am to Midday, at:

Elmfield House, Greystoke Avenue, Westbury on Trym, BS10 6AY

Call 0117 9038442 for further details.

Further session dates up to December 2025 are:

- Friday 28 November
- Tuesday 9 December

2. VICTA Technology Survey:

VICTA tech week 2026 will focus on children and young people who have a vision impairment, and their experiences with technology as they transition from primary to secondary school. Ahead of their planned sessions, they'd like to hear from you. [Fill in the VICTA technology survey.](#)

3. News from Guide Dogs:

My Time to Play: Puxton Park

Address: Puxton Park, Cowslip Lane, Hewish, Banwell, Weston-Super-Mare BS24 6AH

When: Thursday 4 December 2025

Do you have a child aged 0 to 4 with a vision impairment?

Come and join us for a My Time to Play session at Puxton Park with **free admission**.

My Time to Play is a programme of fun and supportive small group sessions delivered by Guide Dogs Habilitation Specialists that helps children with a vision impairment develop a broad range of skills through play.

- 10am to 1pm: organised activities, sensory story, sensory activities and time to enjoy your own packed lunch (please bring from home)
- 1pm onwards: free time to explore the park

Immediate family and siblings are welcome to attend! Booking is essential as spaces are limited. Please download and complete the [Puxton Park My Time to Play booking form](#) and email it to lizzy.green@guidedogs.org.uk by **Friday 21 November 2025**.

Guide Dogs My Time to Play session:

Are currently running Guide Dogs My Time to Play (Under 5s group) in Radstock fortnightly on Friday mornings. The next group will start on **Friday 19 December 2025** and continue in the New Year. Please email martyn.arthur@guidedogs.org.uk for further information.

You can also access Guide Dogs My Time to Play Virtually, for further information please visit the [Guide Dogs Early years development and habilitation website page](#).

4. Habtastic course:

A 6 week course is going to be running in the Bath area for upper KS2 children on Friday afternoons during the school day starting in November 2025.

If your child attends a mainstream school in Bath and North East Somerset or you are interested in them attending from out of the area, please get in touch.

The course will teach pouring, chopping, spreading, measuring, using technology and dressing skills. The final session will be on a Saturday with parents asked to attend to learn about the skills and techniques and celebrate the learning of the children in a Habtastic Fete.

To register your interest please email martyn.arthur@guidedogs.org.uk

5. VICTA: Play Kindness Bingo

Take part in VICTA's Kindness Bingo Challenge! Simply tick off 5 kindness challenges to receive your community pin badge and certificate. If you manage to complete 10 or more, you will receive a treat from VICTA. **Entries close on 28 November 2025.**

[Find out more and sign up for VICTA's Bingo Challenge.](#)

6. RSBC: Family Support Newsletter for Professionals and Families

RSBC have a new Family Support Newsletter for Professionals and Families where you can find out about exciting updates and upcoming events. [Sign up to receive the RSBC Family Support Newsletter.](#)

Upcoming events:

The next Connecting Families Session will be held on **Tuesday 18 November 2025** and will focus on accessible education. Steve Smith, Head of Education and Qualified Teacher for Vision Impairment (QTVI) at RSBC's Dorton College, will join this session. Steve will be discussing the role of the QTVI and how QTVIs can support children and young people with a vision impairment and their families.

During the session there will be discussion about Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in England and Individual Development Plans (IDPs), as they're known in Wales. Look at how these can play a key role in education for VI children and young people and what parents and carers can do if they're unhappy with how things are going with their child's schooling.'

Parents and carers can [book a space on Connecting Families.](#)

Connecting Families Early Years Online Group: All Things Habilitation

When: 7.30pm to 8.30pm on 26 November 2025

[Sign up to the Early Years Online Group on All Things Habilitation.](#)

Join RSBC's Habilitation Specialist, Rosie, at this virtual session focused on all things habilitation! The floor is open to ask anything that would help your child. This could be around teaching independence skills, supporting development, mobility, play and sensory development.

7. RSBC Families First: Family Practitioner Support

Providing emotional and practical support for the whole family.

When your child (aged 0 to 25 years) is diagnosed as blind or partially sighted, you, your child and your family might need some extra support to help manage

your feelings. Based across England and Wales, RSBC Family Practitioners offer emotional wellbeing and practical support to anyone who might be affected by a blind or partially sighted diagnosis.

For more information about how this service works, please visit the [RSBC website](#).

Blind in Business Career Workshops

What is Building Prospects

Building Prospects is a dynamic, peer-led programme made up of weekly, hour-long sessions aimed at blind and partially sighted young people aged 13 to 18. These workshops provide a supportive and confidence-building space to explore career ideas, develop key employment skills, and take the next steps towards your dream job.

Workshop times and dates

Sessions take place from 5pm to 6pm on:

- Wednesday 12 November 2025
- Wednesday 19 November 2025
- Wednesday 26 November 2025
- Wednesday 3 December 2025
- Wednesday 10 December 2025

These workshops will take place online on Microsoft Teams.

What you can expect

Each session focuses on essential skills for getting into work, including:

- CV writing tips
- job searching strategies
- a practical interview masterclass
- the chance to take part in mock interviews with top employers from a range of sectors

[Sign up to the Blind in Business career workshops.](#)

If you have any questions, please email Joe at joe@blindinbusiness.org.uk or call 020 7382 4606.

8. Parents Virtual Hub: Sight Support West

Our Parents Virtual Hub takes place on the third **Thursday** of every month from **7.30pm to 8.30pm** and is specifically for parents of visually impaired children and young people up to the age of 25.

It provides a supportive environment where parents can share experiences, exchange tips, and connect with others who understand the unique challenges and joys of raising a child with a visual impairment.

The group is open to parents who live in our three areas of responsibility: Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Swindon.

Led by Volunteers

Our hubs are run by dedicated volunteers who ensure you feel right at home. Meet your host of this virtual hub, Becky, who will guide the sessions and create a friendly and inclusive atmosphere.



“Hi, I’m Becky, Mum to two boys. My eldest was first diagnosed with a vision impairment (VI) 8 years ago and we are in the early stages of having another VI confirmed! I’m very excited to be supporting the three partner charities in hosting the parent forum. I am looking forward to (virtually) meeting other parents and carers of children with a VI to share knowledge and experiences.”

Upcoming dates, all from 7.30pm to 8.30pm:

Thursdays:

- 13 November 2025

Then every month thereafter.

How to join:

If you're interested in joining this fortnightly virtual hub, simply get in touch with us to register. You can:

- Use our [contact form](#)
- Call us on [0117 322 4885](tel:01173224885)
- Email info@sightsupportwest.org.uk

Once you've registered, we'll send you all the details you need to join the sessions via Teams. If you're unfamiliar with Teams, don't worry, we're happy to help you get set up and confident in using it. There's no need to book each time, and you're welcome to attend as often or as little as you like, there's no pressure or obligation.

If you have young people interested in any of our other groups, including Sisterhood, Boys' Crew, Audio Book Club and more, head over to the [RSBC website](#) to find out more.

Royal Society for Blind Children also offer family support, information, online sessions, fun days, connect families and more. For more details and to catch up with their latest newsletter, go to the RSBC newsletter webpage.

If you do not want to receive information, please let us know by emailing our generic email and telling us the name of your child sensorysupportservice@bristol.gov.uk

Want more information on special educational needs and disability for the under 25s?

Find a link to the Local Offer for your area by following the link below

- [Bristol](#)
- [South Gloucestershire](#)
- [Bath and North East Somerset](#)
- [North Somerset](#)

General Data Protection Regulations as of 25/05/2018

The Local Authority (LA) uses data to carry out specific functions for which it is responsible, such as the assessment of special educational needs and/ or disabilities, home to school transport requirements, admissions, children/ young people's welfare, children looked after, exclusions and early years support. Anonymised information is used to derive statistics, to inform decisions on (for example) the funding of education settings, to assess educational performance and track Service provision.

The Sensory Support Service keeps information about your child so that we can provide services and to keep a record of these services. This information may include information that supports your child's development, monitor progress, specialist assessments and advice/support given to settings to enable them to meet your child's needs. This information will also include contact details, attendance information, characteristics such as ethnicity, special educational needs and any relevant medical information.

We will only request and share data with people already involved you're your child, people relevant to statutory duties and individual circumstances.

For information regarding data sharing, including retention periods, please visit [Bristol City Council's privacy webpage](#).

If you wish to access the personal data held about you or a young person you are responsible for, please contact Bristol City Council in writing:

Data Protection Officer
Bristol City Council
PO Box 3176
Bristol
BS3 9FS