



Bath & North East Somerset Council



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.

May 2026

Welcome to the Sensory Support Service Newsletter

Contents

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities consultation.....	1
Service helpline	2
Acorns Support Group.....	3
Glue Ear talk for parents and carers	4
Buckley Court Supported Living Accommodation.....	4
Deafblind UK	5
[HoSSForum] Research Opportunity: Deaf Infant Cognitive Development Study..	6
Bristol Deaf Children’s Society (BDCS) events	6
NDCS and Family Fund	6
Bristol Deaf Children’s Society: park meet ups for families.....	7
Want more information on special educational needs and disability for the under 25s?.....	7

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities consultation

As you probably know there is a SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) consultation going on now, which is proposing significant changes to SEND and which will shape the future of support for children with SEND. This consultation is open until **18 May 2026**.

We want to reassure you that nothing has changed yet and there are several organisations and professionals engaged in the process of consultation. We would like to encourage as many people as possible to respond to this consultation. We



Bath & North East
Somerset Council



Joint Authority Support for Children, Families and Schools

are giving you the opportunity to learn more about this – we are running the following online sessions where we will do a brief presentation about key changes and then discuss the main issues for Sensory Impairment.

Online session 1

- 6 May 2026 at 7pm
- [Join session 1](#)
- Meeting ID: 341 732 128 281 58
- Passcode: 7ix2HR7K

Online session 2

- 7 May 2026 at 9.30am
- [Join session 2](#)
- Meeting ID: 356 454 709 578 105
- Passcode: kf9B4Rb3

Online session 3

- 7 May 2026 at 7pm
- [Join session 3](#)
- Meeting ID: 390 254 724 343 098
- Passcode: uh7Lu6ke

You can:

- find out more about the [changes to the SEND system on the Education Hub](#)
- access the [SEND consultation and other documents](#)

The consultation closes on 18 May 2026.

Service helpline

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 contact us on sensorysupportservice@bristol.gov.uk



Bath & North East
Somerset Council



Joint Authority Support for Children, Families and Schools

Acorns Support Group

We know that many parents find it useful to meet other families with children who have had a diagnosis of hearing loss. Acorns is a support group for families in Bristol, South Glos, BANES and North Somerset.

We have a creche run by our lovely staff team and a group of wonderful volunteers. If children are happy to be left in the creche, we have a parent room where parents can grab a hot drink and take part in our programme of information and support.

When: Wednesdays during term time

Time: 10.30am to midday

Where: Elmfield House, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol, BS10 6AY

Who: Babies and pre-school children with a hearing loss, their siblings, and parents and carers.

We're delighted that our Little Acorns groups are now running further afield in Bath, Weston-super-Mare, and Easton in Bristol. These stay-and-play sessions bring together families with young children who have a hearing loss, offering a welcoming space to connect, play, and share experiences.

If you're nearby, you're warmly invited to come along to your local group — we'd love to see you there! For more information, visit the [Sensory Support Service website](#).

Bath Acorns

- Address: First Steps, Woodhouse Road, Twerton, Bath, BA2 1SY
- Time: 10:15am to 11:45am
- Dates: **Thursday 21 May, Thursday 18 June and Thursday 9 July**

For more information email julian.shepard@bristol.gov.uk

Easton Acorns

- Address: Bannerman Road Community Academy, All Hallows Road, BS5 0HR
- Time: 10.30am to midday
- Dates: **Monday 18 May and Monday 22 June**

For more information email lucy.blatchford@bristol.gov.uk



Bath & North East
Somerset Council



Joint Authority Support for Children, Families and Schools

Weston-Super-Mare Acorns

- Address: Mendip Green Primary School, Greenwood Road, Worle, Weston-Super-Mare BS22 6EX
- Time: 10:15am to 11:45am
- Dates: **Tuesday 5 May 2026, Tuesday 2 June 2026 and Tuesday 7 July 2026**

For more information email lydia.johnston@bristol.gov.uk

Hartcliffe Acorns

- Address: Hartcliffe Children's Centre, Hareclive Road, Bristol, BS13 0JW
- Time: 10.30am to midday
- Dates: **Monday 18 May 2026, Monday 15 June 2026**

For more information email lydia.johnston@bristol.gov.uk

Glue Ear talk for parents and carers

We are running a few sessions supported by Glue Ear Together, about finding out what glue ear is and why it is so common, understand signs and symptoms and learn about different interventions available. These sessions take place at Elmfield House.

Date: Tuesday 19 May 2026 from 10.30am to midday

Where: Elmfield House, Greystoke Avenue, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol, BS10 6AY

Book your FREE place: sensorysupportservice@bristol.gov.uk

Have a chat with your Hearing Support Teacher to find out if this would be helpful for you.

Buckley Court Supported Living Accommodation

Buckley Court is a supported living accommodation for Deaf and Deafblind adults based in Henbury, Bristol. Our aim is to support adults to develop their daily living skills so they can move on to live independently.

To be eligible for a placement at Buckley Court, you will need to be between 18 and 64 years old and have a connection to Bristol. This connection could be:

- your birthplace



Bath & North East
Somerset Council



Joint Authority Support for Children, Families and Schools

- the area where you grew up or lived
- where you received education
- where you or your family currently lives

You will also need to have an ongoing support need to develop daily living skills to move on independently. This may include learning how to manage your finances, maintain a tenancy, cook, or develop other essential life skills, as well as being committed to meeting with support workers every week.

If you are unsure whether you meet the criteria, you can:

- email buckley.court@bristol.gov.uk
- call 0117 3533322 or text on 07584 270086
- video-call us or send a video message on 07584 270086

Visit the [Buckley Court Facebook page](#).

Deafblind UK

Deafblind UK's Children and Young People's Service supports young people with any level of multi-sensory impairment, along with their families and support networks. It offers an online peer group for young people to connect, share tips, and reduce isolation, and a virtual Parents Support Group for shared support and guest speakers.

The service also includes:

- emotional support for individuals aged 16 and over
- an accessible holiday home in Norfolk
- a year-round helpline
- an accessible places map on their website

All services are free, and anyone with a sight and hearing loss, plus their support network, is welcome to join.

The service helpline is available all year round to answer questions and provide advice or signpost people to the right place where a query is more in-depth.

Call 0800 132320 or email info@deafblind.org.uk



Bath & North East
Somerset Council



Joint Authority Support for Children, Families and Schools

[HoSSForum] Research Opportunity: Deaf Infant Cognitive Development Study

Keele University researchers are recruiting families with babies who have hearing loss for a study exploring **early brain and cognitive development in deaf infants**.

Using **EEG**, the project examines how infants process visual information before cochlear implantation, if applicable. The research aims to highlight strengths and adaptations in deaf infants and provide valuable insights for parents, clinicians, and teachers. Families may be able to take part locally or at home.

You can visit the [Keele interdisciplinary Developmental Science Facebook page](#) to read about the research set up.

Any further questions, email Ellie-Mae at psychology.kids@keele.ac.uk

Bristol Deaf Children's Society (BDCS) events

Come along and meet your BDCS community! Save the dates and join us for our relaxed family friendly events.

Next events:

- Sunday 5 July 2026 from 10am at Bridge House Light Railway, Frampton Cotterell, BS36 2BN
- Sunday 27 September 2026 from 2pm at Oldbury Court Play Park, Fishponds, BS16 2JN

To find out more, email bristoldcs@gmail.com

Visit the [BDCS Facebook page](#).

NDCS and Family Fund

The **National Deaf Children's Society** and **Family Fund** have partnered to launch a brand-new UK-wide funding programme for families raising deaf children aged **0 to 11**, or those still in primary school.

This programme offers support with accessing **assistive technology**, **specialist equipment**, and **British Sign Language (BSL) learning** — all designed to help children communicate, learn, and take part fully in everyday life.

Please go to the [main information page](#) for more details.



Bath & North East
Somerset Council



Joint Authority Support for Children, Families and Schools

You can access the [application form](#) here.

Bristol Deaf Children's Society: park meet ups for families

Bristol Deaf Children's Society is a parent-led group which aims to provide a support network for parents of children with all types and levels of hearing loss and deafness. They are currently organising some local park meet ups for families. Details of these can be found by visiting the [Bristol Deaf Children's Society Facebook page](#).

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](#)

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



Joint Authority Support for Children, Families and Schools

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