



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.

September 2026

Welcome to the Sensory Support Service Newsletter

We hope everyone is having a good start to the 2026-2027 academic year. The Sensory Support Service provides advice and support (including direct teaching) to make sure that all children and young people (CYP) with sensory impairment have the best opportunities to learn, develop and grow. Find out more about our levels of support below and visit our website for more information.

www.bristol.gov.uk/sensory-support-service

For any children and young people who we do not see on a weekly basis, we will send a compliment slip home, so do check your child's bag or with them, if they were given one.

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 via our **Service Helpline**:

sensorysupportservice@bristol.gov.uk

1. Parent representatives for our steering group

We need more parent representatives to be part of our steering group. This is a group that meets 3 times per year online.

The Steering Group meets to:

- Provide strategic direction to the running of the service
- Discuss updates and developments with the service
- Share information across services and partner organisations
- Make decisions about changes to the service
- Review the performance of the service



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See what parents thought of their experience below and please let us know if you are interested in joining the group, by emailing:

sensorysupportservice@bristol.gov.uk

Parent: "I have held a place as a parent/carer rep for several years which has been very enlightening. You get the chance to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by children and families, as well as the support they need and can put things into perspective from a family point of view. It's been quite rewarding to have some input on things that the service is aiming to achieve. I would encourage anyone that is thinking of applying, to do it! It is a small-time commitment that has some real impact and can help you to have a great understanding of the services that our children rely on."

2. Sensory Support Service matrix of support

Just a reminder that children and young people (CYP) are allocated a level of support depending on their needs. This level of support can change over time. Find out more [here](#).

Level 1

Many CYP are allocated level 1, which means that we will not necessarily see your child regularly. We may carry out or have done an initial assessment in the past, we will also signpost, provide information / training; and then check how things are going at transfer between settings/schools. Parent/carers, teachers or SENDCOs can contact us if they have any queries or there have been any changes.

Level 2

On this level, CYP receive 3 inputs (this could be a visit, meeting, training etc), plus targeted interventions as required (these may change year on year).

Level 3

Only a few children are allocated level 3 which means fortnight or weekly input. These children are often learning through alternative means of communication such as braille or require high level direct teaching of specialist skills.

Please do contact us if you need further information or have any queries.



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3. Acorns Support Group

Acorns Early Years group is a specialist pre-school group that supports children 0 to 5 with hearing loss and their families, and is offered to those living in, Bristol, South Gloucester, North Somerset, Bath and North-East Somerset.

Timings: Wednesday mornings during term time from 10.30am to midday.

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

The main Acorns group at Elmfield house includes:

- a children's creche for young children and babies with a hearing loss and their siblings, run by Specialist Teaching assistants and Sign Language Communication Advisers, who organise a range of activities and play experiences,
- a parents discussion group with visiting speakers including Speech and Language therapists, audiologists, Teachers of the Deaf and local charities as well as more relaxed coffee mornings,
- a buddy system, to welcome you to Acorns.

We also run some smaller groups (Little Acorns) once a month in Bath, Easton and Weston-Super-Mare. We hope to be able to reach more families in their local areas. These sessions are stay and play sessions and are open to all our families.

We work closely with the Family Centre for Deaf Children (FCDC) in all our Acorns activities and dates for Little Acorns can also be found on their events page.

[Events for September 2026 – The Family Centre \(Deaf Children\)](#)

[Events for October 2026 - The Family Centre \(Deaf Children\)](#)

The FCDC also work with the service in providing support and funding for small groups of older children who are deaf or have hearing loss. This enables them to attend activities where they can meet and engage with new peers.

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, please see our website:

www.sensorysupportservice.org.uk



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Bath Acorns

Address: **Bath City Farm, BA2 1NW**

- Date: **17 September 2026**
- Time: 10.30am to midday

Address: **First Steps, Woodhouse Road, Twerton, Bath, BA2 1SY**

- Dates: **22 October 2026 10.30am to midday, 19 November 2026 and 10 December 2026**
- Time: 10.30am to midday

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 21 September 2026**

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

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 15 September 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: **Thursday 24 September 2026**

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



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4. 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 6 October 2026 Time: 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.

5. Family Day ideas needed!

We are planning a Family Day event and would love to hear your ideas!

We'd really appreciate your suggestions to help make the day enjoyable for everyone. Whether it's activities, games, entertainment, food or anything else you'd like to see.

Please share your ideas by email, to sensorysupportservice@bristol.gov.uk

6. SSS Autism Parents Program 2026

We will be working alongside Bristol Autism Team and National Deaf CAMHS to provide a course for parents of children who are deaf and autistic, or for deaf parents of autistic children. Please see the attached information flyer and contact details.

Sarah is happy to answer any questions you may have.



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7. Bristol Deaf Children's Society: Meet Up Event 27th September 2026 @ 2pm

Please see the attached information flyer about the next local family meet up at Oldbury Court Play Park, Bristol BS16 2JN.

8. Family Festival: Stories, Sign and Shine

Families of deaf children are invited to a free fun-filled day at the **British Library in London** on **Saturday 17 October 2026, from 12pm to 4pm**. Inspired by books and storytelling, **Family Festival: Stories, Sign and Shine** will feature interactive activities, performances and workshops where families can make, move, sign and explore together.

More information on the plans for the programme for the Family Festival will be available on the British Library's website www.bl.uk nearer the time.

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



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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