



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.

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 email 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

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/carers 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 has 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.

3. 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 **Friday 18 September**. We run sessions on Fridays (last Friday for term 1 will be 16th October) from 10.30am to Midday, at:

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

Call 0117 9038442 for further details.

4. 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

5. Sunday Jam at Bristol Beacon

Young people up to age 25 with additional needs are invited to join Sunday Jam, a fun monthly music session at Bristol Beacon. Sessions start at 10.30am, with the first session starting on Sunday 13 September. Tickets are £8 for young people, with free entry for adults and siblings. Find out more and book a place via www.bristolbeacon.org

6. Guide Dogs News:

There is a new weekly **Guide Dogs My Time to Play Group** starting in Bath and North East Somerset in Radstock on Friday mornings from **Friday 11 September to Friday 23 October**. Contact martyn.arthur@guidedogs.org.uk for further information or to request a space. They would love to see you there if you have a child below school age.

Looking ahead:

Get set for the Guide Dogs family event **Saturday 6th December 2026** at **We The Curious**, Bristol. To find out more information and to apply for a space, please visit: www.guidedogs.org.uk/getting-support/help-for-children-and-families/living-well/family-events/

There will be a Key Stage 2 pupils independent living skills group in Bristol starting at the end of January 2027 - details to follow soon (6-8 sessions)

There will be a post 16 Habilitation group (4 weekly sessions) taking place in North Somerset towards the end of February 2027. Further details to follow soon.

7. VICTA Travel offer to Explore Your Paralympic Potential!

Young females aged 10 to 25 with a vision impairment can take part in ParalympicsGB's *Explore your Paralympic Potential* event to try a range of sports with expert coaching. VICTA is offering 350 towards travel costs for eligible participants. An event is taking place on Saturday 3 October 2026 at Rivermead Leisure Centre, Reading.

[For more information and to register, click here](#)

This event is for summer sports, and **for females only**. You will receive expert coaching and input from GB coaches who will support you to establish if you are suited to any of the sports. From there you will be supported with appropriate signposting and next steps.

Any questions, please email paralympicpotential@paralympics.org.uk

8. 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 during **September 2026**. [Sign up to receive the RSBC Family Support Newsletter](#)

Royal Society for Blind Children also offer family support, information, online sessions, fun days, connect families and more. Visit the [RSBC website](#)

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