



Joint Authority Support for Children, Families and Schools

Sensory Support Service Newsletter

[Sensory Support Service website](#)

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

June 2025

Our best wishes for all children and young people (CYP) who are going through exams or transitioning into school, between schools, into college, higher education, other training or work. In this newsletter we give you a summary of our annual survey and what we are doing to address some of your comments, also look out for the audio book on transitions based on real lives of young people with vision impairment and a range of events for CYP with vision impairment, support group for parents with children with complex needs, a reminder of Deafblind Week, etc.

1. Sensory Support Service Annual Survey

Settings:

We are happy to report that the response from educational settings was very positive with 100% of responses rating the overall quality of service provision as good or better and 96% rating the quality of written information provided as good or better. There were only 54 responses received.

Parent/carers:

We had 2 surveys, one for parent/carers of children and young people supported at level 1 (see more information below about levels of support) and another survey for parent/carers of children and young people supported at level 2 and 3. Once again, number of responses was low, 45 for level 2 and 3 and 16 for level 1.

Overall, the rating was below 80% good or better which is what we aim for. For parent/carers of CYP at level 2 and 3, the rating was close to 80% but for

parent/carers of CYP supported at level 1 this was between 60 and 70%, however we only had 16 replies for level 1.

Many responses were very positive with parents mentioning how much difference our support has had and how invaluable the service is. But other responses were not so positive and these included comments outside of our service provision, such as other professionals. Still, we are trying to understand what could be better.

The main issues for some parent/carers were:

- Communication – not knowing whether the service is involved, not getting feedback after visits, not knowing who to contact
- Other professionals/services not giving enough support and long waiting times such as therapists, respite, social care etc
- Not getting newsletters or concerned that newsletters do not replace face to face visits
- More opportunities to meet families
- More BSL support

What are we doing:

- We will add more information to our compliment slips for additional support and advice
- We will ask schools to let you know we are visiting
- We will also publish newsletters on our website from next year, so if our emails go to spam, you can still access these
- Please be assured that newsletters do not impact on the level of support your child receives, it will never replace our support. Newsletters have been introduced to improve communication and make you aware of developments, events, etc
- We are working with our partners to provide opportunities for families to meet, share experiences
- We are working with our charity partners such as NDCS and FCDC to find a solution to providing free BSL for families in the local area, including on-line options
- We are considering how to improve our surveys and response rates

One concern we have is that many of the negative comments referred to lack of social care, respite, occupational therapy input, and not necessarily our service provision. We do understand that there are frustrations around some services, and we are considering how to give you an opportunity to make comments about these whilst also provide feedback specific to Sensory Support Service provision.

2. Service Helpline

Just a reminder that you can always contact our service, preferable via email on sensorysupportservice@bristol.gov.uk or by phone on 0117 9038441/2

3. Information about levels of service provision

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 or 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 change.

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.

4. 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 1 July** from 10.30am to midday
- at Elmfield House, Greystoke Ave, Westbury on Trym BS10 6AY

Call 0117 9038442 for further details.

5. Guide Dogs: My Time to Play Sessions

If you are interested in joining the My time to Play group in the South Glos area, please email Becky.Tarling@guidedogs.org.uk and she will then contact you with the details.

Find out more about [Guide Dogs: My Time to Play sessions](#).

6. “Infinite World of Vision” Audiobook has launched!

‘Life Transitions for Young People with Vision Impairments’

This exciting audiobook brings together a diverse group of young individuals from across the UK, sharing their powerful personal stories of navigating life transitions.

‘Their experiences serve as a beacon of hope, demonstrating that with the right support and tools, challenges can be overcome.’

[Listen to Infinite World of Vision: Life Transitions for Young People with Vision Impairments for free on Spotify \(UK\)](#).

7. Navigation and Nurture: Support Group for parents of children with complex disabilities

Murmuration Community Therapy are running monthly gatherings, for parents of medically complex/profoundly disabled children. It's particularly aimed at parents of pre-schoolers, but there's no strict rules, it's for any parent that has

a child with complex disability that needs support, connection, navigation and nurture.

When: Thursday 3 July 2025

Time: 10am to midday

Where: St Anne's House Community and Creative Hub, Bristol BS4 3AB

[Find out more and book your free tickets to Navigation and Nurture Support Group.](#)

8. Paddle taster session for Visually Impaired children

All Aboard Watersports are offering the chance to try paddle sports at Bristol Harbourside, Baltic Wharf, Underfall Yard, Cumberland Road, Bristol, BS1 6XG on **Sunday 13 July** between **10am and midday**.

Spaces available are limited to 5.

[Register your interest in the paddle taster session.](#) You will then be contacted to advise if you have a place.

9. Surfing sessions for Blind and Visually impaired people (aged 8+)

Surfing England are offering you the chance to try surfing if you are visually impaired or blind. These sessions have been made possible by the fantastic support from The Primary Club who are funding this initiative.

Each session will be led by Team England para coaches and supported by trained coaches, volunteers and para-athletes. Everyone volunteering on these sessions will be fully trained by Surfing England and led by coaches with experience coaching visually impaired and blind surfers. We will also be joined by Melissa Reid, 3 times world champion in the visually impaired classification. Melissa will be on hand to give advice and share her coaching knowledge.

No previous experience required, and all equipment (including wetsuits) will be provided.

[Sign up to the surfing sessions](#). Please DO NOT contact the surf centres directly.

Locations and dates:

1 July, The Wave, Bristol

14 to 15 August, Croyde

26 and 28 September, South Shields

10. Deafblind UK: Celebrating Deafblind Awareness Week 23 to 29 June 2025

'Shining a light on support for children and young people'

At Deafblind UK, Deafblind Awareness Week is a significant moment in their calendar. It's a time to spotlight the experiences of those living with deafblindness and to encourage greater understanding across society. This year, the focus is on Children and Young People Services.

Find out more on the [Deafblind UK website](#).

11. RNIB Braille 200 Celebration

You're Invited to the RNIB's Braille 200 celebration event.

Bath Central Library, Thursday 12 June, 10:45am to 3pm

Join for a day of talks and networking, including a Braille 200 presentation. Braille books, equipment and technology will be shown and talked about, celebrating the value of braille in day-to-day life and how it's just as important now as it was 200 years ago.

10:45am: Meet and greet with refreshments

11am: Opening presentation

Midday: Lunch

1pm: Workshops, stalls and networking

3pm: Finish

12. Royal Society for Blind Children (RSBC)

RSBC have lots of fun and interesting activities and sessions planned until the end of this year. You can find more information and how to sign up for anything on interest for your young person on the [RSBC website](#).

Royal Society for Blind Children also offer family support, connect families, information, online sessions, fun days, etc. Please find attached a joining form for support from family practitioners if you are interested. For more details go 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 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 the [Bristol City Council website privacy page](#).

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**