



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.

June 2026

Welcome to the Sensory Support Service Newsletter

We hope you all had a lovely May half-term break.

We know some of the children and young people we support are currently sitting exams, and we wish them all the very best.

This term, we will continue supporting children and young people who are moving between educational settings, as well as planning ahead for the next academic year. If you have any questions or need support, please do get in touch.

We are also awaiting further updates on the proposed SEND reforms. While there may be changes ahead, we will continue to support your child and work with educational settings to promote inclusion for all learners.

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. 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 16 June** from 10.30am to Midday, at:

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

Call 0117 9038442 for further details.

Further session dates for **July 2026** are:

- **Friday 3 July**
- **Tuesday 7 July**

2. The Thomas Pocklington Trust- Parent Virtual Hub

Parents and carers are invited to a friendly online session exploring how technology can support children and young people with vision impairment in school.

Delivered by the Thomas Pocklington Trust education team, the session will share practical tips, introduce useful tools, and offer guidance to help you feel more confident supporting your child's learning. There will also be time to ask questions and connect with other parents. The virtual hubs are run in partnership by Sight Support West of England, Wiltshire Sight and Insight Gloucestershire, and are open to anyone across our regions.

The Parents Virtual Hub is hosted by Becky, a parent with lived experience, who creates a warm and welcoming space for conversation and support.

Thursday 18 June

7.30pm to 8.30pm

 **Online via Microsoft Teams**

How to join the session:

Use [contact form](#)

Call the team: 0117 3224885

Email: info@sightsupportwest.org.uk

3. Guide Dogs My Time to Play:

The Under 5's group in Radstock had its last session of the block at the end of May. Thank you to the 7 families who attended over the course of the sessions. A practitioner from The Amber Trust was funded through the programme for a special music session.

Guide Dogs currently offer a virtual programme that may be of interest to you until groups restart again. Please see the [Guide Dogs website](#) for further information.

The team are busy planning future Guide Dogs My Time to Play groups for the next academic year. If you are interested in attending future groups in Banes, Bristol, South Glos or North Somerset please register your interest by emailing martyn.arthur@guidedogs.org.uk stating 'Guide Dogs my Time to Play' and the area/areas you are interested in. You will be contacted directly, with further information.

4. Guide Dogs Parents/carers feedback

The team are keen to connect with parents and carers to get feedback on their services and help shape them for the future. They will be hosting some drop-in sessions for parents/carers and children and young people. Please look out for further information in the next newsletter and Sight Support West's Newsletter. If you would like to be involved, please email Rachel.graham@guidedogs.org.uk stating 'parent drop-in' within your email.

Check out the Guide Dogs website for useful information around events, grants and support for your child/young person.

All at Guide Dogs wish those changing schools, a smooth transition and everyone a good summer break.

5. VICTA Family Day- Bristol

Families are invited to join VICTA this summer for a nature-filled day with **Grow Wilder**, a learning centre and wildflower nursery, based at **181 Frenchay Park Road, Bristol, BS16 1EL** on **5 August 2026**. Enjoy a guided explore of the site, learn about local wildlife projects, and take part in a creative, sensory plant pot decorating activity. Each family will receive wildflower seeds to take home. **Places cost £5 per person (under 5's are free).**

Closing date: 1 July 2026 [Apply now!](#)

6. Guide Dogs: Travel training event

Guide Dogs will be running an event on **Monday 6th July** for young people aged 14+ introducing using technology (Google Maps and First Bus app) to help with orientation and navigation. This event will be divided into 2 parts on the day – a classroom session learning how to setup and use the apps and a practical session where the young people get to practice the skills they have learned with a bus journey to a café. Young people wishing to take part in this event will need to be familiar with their mobile phone and be competent in its use, i.e. Navigating menus and inputting text (either verbally or physically). Further information about this event will be circulated nearer the time.

7. Train familiarisation event

Is your young person working towards more independent train travel? This event will give your young person experience of:

- Familiarising with the features of stations and platforms
- Learning how to access and use passenger assist
- Learning how to buy train tickets
- Boarding and alighting a train
- Train travel between Bristol Temple Meads and Bath

Who: Young people aged 14 + who have a vision impairment

Where: This event will begin and end at Temple Meads Railway Station

When: Monday 13 July 2026 10:45am until approximately 4:00pm

For this event, your young person will also need to bring a packed lunch and some money to get themselves a drink in a café in Bath. The train travel will be free of charge, courtesy of First Great Western.

Places for the experience are limited so please get in touch ASAP to request a booking form.

Please email martyn.arthur@guidedogs.org.uk for a booking form. Alternatively, if you would prefer a call to gather the information, please indicate this in an email and include your phone number and a member of the team will contact you. Please note, places will be prioritised for those finishing GCSE's / A Levels and are for those who are looking to develop independent travel skills.

8. Banes Phab Inclusive Youth group

(You don't have to live in Banes to join)

The open day on Saturday 6th June was a great success!

There will be a monthly club for young people aged 8 to 18 years, their siblings and friends (in this age range) at the **Hive in Peasedown St John** on **Friday evenings from 6.15pm to 8.15pm**. The first evening will be on **Friday 3 July 2026**.

Whilst the team grow their volunteer numbers, a parent / carer / personal assistant needs to attend. **Voluntary contribution of £2 per young person**.

Please visit the Facebook page (Banes Phab) for further information or email banesphab@gmail.com for a membership form / further information.

9. 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 **June 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](#).

10. VICTA: Family Wilderness Challenge Residential

VICTA is hosting a brand-new **Wilderness Challenge Residential**, a fun-filled outdoor weekend for young people aged **10 to 17 years and their parents/carers**. Taking place from **Saturday 26 to Sunday 27 September 2026 at Scout Adventures, Gilwell Park, London, E4 7QW**.

The event will offer shared outdoor challenges, teamwork and opportunities for families to connect with others in a supportive environment. Families will stay in **dormitory-style accommodation**, with exclusive use by VICTA. The cost is **£20 per person**. Applications close on **Friday 24 July 2026**.

[Find out more and apply](#).

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