Monthly What’s on Guide for December 2024

Welcome to your monthly update of accessible services and events in Gloucestershire. This update mainly covers December 2024. If you are aware of any events / groups / notices that could be included in this newsletter, we’d love to hear from you so we can ensure this newsletter remains as comprehensive and useful as possible.

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# Insight Gloucestershire Events and Notices

## Announcing Our New Virtual Hubs!

Are you looking to connect with others who understand life with sight loss? We understand that living with sight loss can feel isolating, but finding others who understand can make all the difference. That’s why we’re launching our new virtual hubs to help you connect with people who share similar experiences in a welcoming and supportive environment.

As a partnership of three sight loss charities – Sight Support West of England, Wiltshire Sight, and Insight Gloucestershire – our new hubs are open to people affected by sight loss across all the areas we cover. Each group will meet regularly on Microsoft Teams and be facilitated by volunteers with lived experience of sight loss. Training is available if you’re new to Microsoft Teams.

### Upcoming Groups:

* **Parent Support**: For parents of visually impaired children up to age 25, starting 28th November, meeting fortnightly on Thursdays at 7:30 pm.
* **University Students:** For over-18s (studying at Level 4 or above), starting 15th January, meeting fortnightly on Wednesdays at 7pm.
* **Working Age** (25–65): Starting in January.
* **Young Adults** (18–30): Starting date to be confirmed.

To join, simply let us know which group interests you. Once you’re signed up, there’s no need to book for each session, and attendance is flexible - you’re welcome to attend whenever you wish. It’s an opportunity to meet new people, share, learn, and build connections without pressure or obligation – all from the comfort of your home.

We’re also looking for volunteer facilitators for our Young Adults hubs – could this be you? Contact Becs at volunteering@sightsupportwest.org.uk

## New Nailsworth Community Hub Launching in January

We’re thrilled to announce the launch of a new Nailsworth Community Hub, providing access to our Community Sight Loss Advisor support service.

**Location**: Mortimer Rooms, Old Market, Nailsworth, GL6 0DU
**Launch Date**: Wednesday, 15th January 2025
**Monthly Schedule**: 3rd Wednesday of each month

* **Drop-in Session**: 10am – 11am
* **Social Group**: 10am – 12pm
* **Appointments**: Available for tailored advice

Whether you need guidance, want to connect with others, or simply stop by for a chat, we’d love to welcome you to this new hub. For more details or to book an appointment, please contact us.

## Everyman Theatre Aladdin Trip

In partnership with the Everyman Theatre, Insight Gloucestershire clients can enjoy discounted front-row tickets for the matinee performance of **Aladdin** on Friday, 13th December. The event includes a touch tour and a lunch with peers (both are optional). Tickets are £15, and carers attend free, lunch is paid for separately.

If you're interested, please call us on 01242 221170

## NHS Information Bus

This December, we’ll be travelling across Gloucestershire on the NHS Information Bus. A Community Sight Loss Advisor will be on board, ready to answer your questions about living with sight loss, our services, and how we can support you or someone you know—whether a friend, family member, or neighbour. It’s a great opportunity to learn more about what we offer, or to direct people who might not know about us to the bus for information and support. We encourage you to spread the word to anyone who could benefit from our advice and services.

We look forward to seeing you on board - you will find us at:

* Mon 2nd – Dursley Town Centre
* Mon 9th – Nailsworth Bus Station
* Weds 11th – Asda, Kingsway – Gloucester
* Thurs 12th – Cirencester Market Place
* Mon 16th – Morrisons Tewkesbury

## Seeking Trustees

Insight Gloucestershire is currently looking for interested people to join our Board of Trustees. The Board meet four times a year, either in person or on Zoom, to review progress and finances and ensure the organisation is moving in the right direction. We would welcome any members of the sight loss community who are interested in being part of the team – if you would like a brief chat about what is involved, please do give us a call and ask for Mike Silvey, or email us and we can send you a role description.

# Insight Gloucestershire Community Hubs and Social Groups

Our sight loss advice hubs provide a space for consultations with your local advisor, offering information, guidance, and advice on all things sight loss related. You can explore a selection of helpful aids at the hub and your advisor can suggest what equipment and technology might be useful to help you meet the challenges sight loss can pose. Additionally, some hubs host social groups where you can meet others, share tips and tricks, and enjoy a chat.

For full details of our sight loss advice hubs and social groups, see our website which has the latest information, or you can call our office on 01242 221170. See our [hub and social group listings.](https://www.sightsupportwest.org.uk/events/) You can put your postcode in the search bar to find your nearest hub.

## Changes to Note for Upcoming Hubs

Our offices will be closed from 1.30pm on the 24th December and will reopen 2nd January 2025.

* **Dursley Community Hub**: Please note that the hub is cancelled for **November and December**.
* **Christmas Closures**: The following hubs will be closed during the Christmas period (**24th December – 1st January**): Gloucester, Stroud, Cheltenham, Chipping Campden, Bishops Cleeve, and Bourton on the Water.
* **New Hub in Nailsworth**: Mortimer Rooms, Old Market, Nailsworth, GL6 0DU. 3rd Wednesday of each month. Drop in between 10am to 11am. Social group runs from 10am to 12pm. Appointments Available

# Events From Other Organisations

These events and notices are from other organisations. Please check with the contact given that the event is going ahead as planned. Sometimes changes need to be made to dates and times at short notice, so it is best to check with the organisation before the event takes place.

## RNIB Autumn Survey

RNIB is seeking feedback from adults with sight loss on a range of important topics, including getting around, personal safety, employment, family, and relationships.

This feedback will help RNIB improve the support available to blind and partially sighted people across the UK and ensure it focuses on what matters most.

To take part, complete the Autumn 2024 survey by visiting the link below before the closing date on 20 December 2024:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LWJFYHP>

For those unable to complete the survey online and who have not yet registered to participate, RNIB invites you to call their Helpline on 0303 123 9999. Advisors will assist by completing a registration form and arranging a follow-up call to ask survey questions on future topics.

## Shape the Future of Assistive Technology with Hope Tech Plus

Hope Tech Plus is an assistive technology company dedicated to creating innovative solutions that empower blind and partially sighted individuals. Their products are designed with input from real users through research and testing – and they need your voice to make a difference.

By taking part in a **short, confidential survey**, you can share your experiences of accessing assistive technology. Your feedback will help improve access to these tools and provide greater support for the visually impaired community.

**Take the survey here:** Hope Tech survey

Would you like to contribute even further? Hope Tech Plus is also inviting individuals to share their personal stories and experiences with assistive technology. If you’re interested in helping shape the future of these vital tools, contact Laura directly at **Laura@HopeTech.Vision**.

Your input is invaluable, and Hope Tech Plus will share the survey results soon – thank you for supporting this important work!

## Free Alexa Device from British Wireless for the Blind Fund

People living with sight loss can apply for a free Echo Show or Echo Dot device from the British Wireless for the Blind Fund. To qualify, they need to receive certain disability or income-related benefits and have an internet connection at home. Apply for a free Alexa device here: [Referrals - British Wireless for the Blind Fund](https://blind.org.uk/referrals/)

# Local Leisure and Sporting Activities / Events

## Hook and Loop Collective VI Women Creative Get-Together

A creative get-together with women who are blind, partially sighted or experiencing sight loss. Walk, chat, get creative, share stories & ideas, and enjoy a coffee together.

Date & time: Thursday 5th December, 1-4pm

Location: Blackfriars Priory, Gloucester

Access: travel support and sighted guides available

We’ll be joined by VI artists Holly Thomas and Sarah Goddard. There will be some outdoor inspired creativity before we sit down for a coffee and chat. Following this first get-together, we will scope ideas for future events!

Interested in joining? Email us at Hello@HookAndLoop.org.uk

Follow the [Hook and Loop Collective event on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/events/1733983487335631/?active_tab=discussion) for updates.

## Hook and Loop Collective VI family Winter Social Walk

For families with a visually impaired child and / or parent.

Date & time: Sunday 19 January, 10am-12pm

Gloucester location TBC

Access: travel support available

A relaxed and fun walk to keep everyone connected in the winter months. We will end with a hot chocolate – marshmallows and cream included!

If you haven’t joined us before, this is a great way to connect with other families, meet our team and find out more about the events we offer. Recommended age for children is 7-14 years but events are for the whole family to enjoy, so younger and older siblings are welcome too!

Find out about our other family events here: <https://hookandloop.org.uk/vifamilyevents/>

## Gloucestershire Growlers

The group aim to give visually impaired people in and around the county the opportunity to take part in sport and create an environment where they can socialise with people who truly understand the daily impact of having a visual impairment. Although the group aim play to win, team spirit is more important than results and the group pride themselves on their unique “Growler camaraderie!

Although finished for the season, they are organising two indoor sessions at Gloucestershire’s Nevil Road ground in January and March of next year.  If you would like any more information contact Phil Gingell at bristolbluephil@googlemail.com

## Find a Sensory Walk near you

Sensory walks allow you to use your senses to connect with your surroundings and Sense have partnered with [**Ordnance Survey**](https://updates-sense.org.uk/6RW-8AFYT-A1ZIP7-559AJL-1/c.aspx) to help you find and follow an accessible route, as you go. The walks are designed for people with complex disabilities but can be enjoyed by anyone. You can go alone or in a group, you don’t need any specialist equipment and the walks can be any length you like.

You can go on foot, use a wheelchair or walker – sensory walks are inclusive for all. [Find a sensory walk near you - Sense](https://www.sense.org.uk/our-services/arts-sports-activities-for-disabled-people/sensory-walks/find-a-sensory-walk-near-you/?utm_campaign=13924181_Sense%20Active%20Newsletter%20-%20May%202023&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Sense&dm_i=6RW,8AFYT,A1ZIP7,Y339I,1)

# Support Groups and Courses

## See Differently Support Group

An 18+ support group for the blind and visually impaired, along with their family members and / or carers. Come along to chat, socialise and maybe play a few games or two.

Takes place every other Tuesday, 1-2.30pm

Location: The Redwell Centre, Matson, GL4 6JG

Email Harvey on: seedifferently@hotmail.com

## Stroud Visually Impaired Club

Meets on the first Thursday morning of the month in Sherborne House, Stonehouse.  Members come from the Stroud area and Cam and Dursley. Transport maybe available.

Please contact Celia on:

07770 146536 / 01452 864645 or email: celiakelly1961 for more information.

## Macular Groups

See list below, but please contact before attending, as groups may have an alternate venue or an outing planned.

Call **0300 30 30 111**

### Gloucester Macular Group

Meet on the first Wednesday of each month, 10am to 12pm at Gloucester Deaf Association, Colin Road, Barnwood, GL4 3JL

### Cheltenham Macular Group

Meet on the third Wednesday of each month 2pm to 4pm at Christ Church, Malvern Road, Cheltenham, GL50 2JH

### Stroud Macular Group

Meet quarterly, 10am to 12pm in March, June, September and December

At Stroud Hospital, Trinity Road, Stroud, GL5 2HY

## RNIB Living Well with Sight Loss Courses

These RNIB courses cover a range of topics related to sight loss, including daily living tips, eye health, magnification, lighting, technology, and wellbeing.

**December Courses:**

* **Course 1:** Mon 2nd Dec, Wed 4th Dec, Mon 9th Dec and Wed 11th Dec. **Time:** 11am
* **Course 2:** Thurs 5th Dec, Fri 6th Dec, Thurs 12th Dec and Fri 13th Dec. **Time:** 11am

**Contact Information:**

Email: communityconnectionsouthwest@rnib.org.uk

Call: Trish Sail (07843 979975), George Hinton (07711 188292), Bernice Cocking (07761 328571)

# Local Audio Described Arts Events

## The Everyman Theatre in Cheltenham

* **Aladdin** – Friday 13th December, 2.00pm
* **Chicago** – Thursday 23rd January, 2.00pm
* **The Girl on the Train** – Thursday 27th March, 2.00pm

All performances include a Touch Tour on stage at 11.30am.

Insight Gloucestershire is currently taking bookings for the Aladdin performance only. This includes the show, a touch tour, and a group lunch. If you’d like to attend, please contact us directly to reserve your place.

For Chicago and The Girl on the Train, bookings must be made directly with the theatre. To secure your tickets or for further details, contact Sally-ann at 01242 695574 or sally-ann.rhodes@everymantheatre.org.uk

Would you like to stay updated about future theatre trips? Join our Insight Gloucestershire mailing list to be notified of upcoming events – call us to be added.

# Online Notices / Support Groups / Webinars

We have some information about online support groups / webinars / social groups / resources and events that might be of use or interest for anyone living with sight loss.

[Online Resources From Other Organisations - Insight Gloucestershire](https://www.sightsupportwest.org.uk/resources/online-resources/)

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