# Sight Support West of England Children and Young People What’s On E-Newsletter

Welcome to your monthly update of accessible services and events in Wiltshire, Bristol, Bath & NE Somerset, and South Gloucestershire. This update mainly covers December 2024.

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# Contact Us

For more information on any of the services or events organised by Sight Support, please call 0117 322 4885 / 01380 723682 or email: [info@sightsupportwest.org.uk](mailto:info@sightsupportwest.org.uk)

# Sight Support Events and Notices

**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.

**Christmas Mice Return to Devizes**

Following last year’s success, Wiltshire Sight is excited to launch its Christmas Mice Celebration at the Devizes charity shop! This year’s window display features 15 handmade mice, each dressed as a favourite character to spread festive cheer in the marketplace.

Visitors are invited to take part in a free Christmas competition by identifying who each mouse is dressed as. Entry forms are available in-store, with Giant Print and audio versions of the clues provided upon request. The audio version even includes extra hints for those who may not be able to view the display clearly.

The Christmas window will be unveiled on Saturday, 23rd November, and the competition runs until 12th January.

Lisa Swanston-Smith, Devizes Shop Manager, said:  
“Our Christmas competition is our way of saying thank you to everyone for supporting us throughout the year.”

Don’t miss this magical display – pop in, take part, and celebrate the season with us. Find us at Wiltshire Sight, 36 The Market Place, Devizes, SN10 1JG.

## Could you represent us?

We are receiving more requests for charity representation at events like awareness talks, cheque presentations, and charity engagements. We're also looking to run fundraising stalls at community events like fairs and information days.

We'd love to hear from you if you're interested in helping, whether it's suggesting events, manning a stall, representing us at ceremonies, or becoming a Volunteer Speaker delivering talks to community groups about your personal story as well as increasing audience understanding of visual impairment and the work and impact of Sight Support (training and support are provided).

To learn more, contact Becs at 07849 833 047 or email [volunteering@sightsupportwest.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@sightsupportwest.org.uk)

## Sight Loss Advice Hubs

For a listing of our community sight loss advice hubs coming up this month, please visit our website, a link is provided below. You can drop in for information, guidance, and advice. We can demonstrate a variety of assistive equipment and technology. We have lighting, magnifiers, talking watches, liquid level indicators, and much more, so please do pop by. No appointment is necessary for many of the hubs.

Click this link [Community Sight Loss Hubs](https://www.sightsupportwest.org.uk/events/?tags=6)

## Knowledge Hub

Don’t forget we have lots of resources on our website in our knowledge Hub. We have articles on a wide range of topics related to living with sight loss, from how to avoid scams to coping with the emotional impact of sight loss and much more. We have various articles offering tips and tricks on different areas too. Find out more by following this link [Our Knowledge Hub](https://www.sightsupportwest.org.uk/resources/)

## Keep us updated

Please remember to update us if any of your contact details change so we can keep our records up to date.

# Events & Notices 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.

## Guide Dogs – My Time to Play

Guide Dogs My Time to Play is for children aged 0-4 with a vision impairment and their parents, carers and siblings. It’s a free service delivered by Qualified Habilitation Specialists that helps children with a vision impairment develop a broad range of skills through play.

If your child has a vision impairment, they may need to learn about and explore the world in a slightly different way. Habilitation is a specialist support that recognises those differences. Working with you we can help your child develop confidence and practical skills towards independence from an early age. Please visit the following webpage for further information. [www.guidedogs.org.uk/getting-support/help-for-children-and-families/early-years-development-and-habilitation](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/getting-support/help-for-children-and-families/early-years-development-and-habilitation)

Alternatively, you can call our Guide Line on 0800 781 1444 and a member of the team will take your details.

There are virtual groups running regularly and we have some groups starting in our area in January with one already running in Bristol this half term.

### **Guide Dogs My Time to Play – Weston-Super-Mare**

Vision North Somerset 3 Neva Road, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1YD.

Weekly sessions on Friday mornings: 10th/17th/24th/31st January, 7th/14th/21st February 2025 10:30am - 12pm. Siblings welcome.

To book or enquire further please email: [Lucy.Hill@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:Lucy.Hill@guidedogs.org.uk)

### Guide Dogs My Time to Play – Bath

Bath Central Library, Podium Centre, Bath, BA15AN.

Fortnightly sessions on Friday Mornings: 10th / 24th Jan, 7th/21st Feb, 7th/21st March & 4th April 2025. 10am-12.00pm. Siblings welcome.

To book or enquire further please email: [Rachel.scammell@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:Rachel.scammell@guidedogs.org.uk)

## VICTA and Swim England

Accessible VI Swimming Session for 5 to 17 years

Join VICTA Sport and Swim England at this free session in Clevedon!

• When: Sunday 15 December 2024

• Who: 5 – 17 years old

• Location: Strode Leisure Centre, Strode Way, Clevedon, North Somerset, BS21 6QG

• Cost: Free

Do you want to try VI swimming?

Come along and have a go at a free VI swimming session led by swimming coaches at Strode Leisure Centre. All levels of swimming experience are welcome however please answer the questions in the application form about your child’s swimming ability accurately so that the swimming coaches can best meet their needs.

N.B depending on ability, parents/carers may be required to join their child in the pool. If you have any questions, please get in touch sports@victa.org.uk

To find out more and apply to join us, please visit [here](https://www.victa.org.uk/victa-calendar/vi-swimming-taster-day/)

## Strawberry Line Cycles

The Strawberry Line Cycle Project have started up group rides for people with additional needs.

Sessions are free of charge and riders can use our bikes or trikes. Find out more or book on by emailing [Strawberrylineprojects@gmail.com](mailto:Strawberrylineprojects@gmail.com)

[INCLUSIVE CYCLING | Strawberry Cycles](https://accesssport.us4.list-manage.com/track/click?u=01c05c95704dd40a6e36e4770&id=f7543681af&e=47e16734b2)

## Free cricket sessions

We are super excited to let you know about Golden Hill Cricket club's inclusivity sessions

* When - Sundays 10am -11am
* Who - Aimed at and inclusive to disabled and/or neurodivergent children and young people
* Where -Shine Sports Hall, Henleaze, BS9 4DT

The Golden Hill coaches are experienced at supporting disabled and neurodivergent children and young people so will adapt the session to ensure everyone is supported and is having fun!

For more information please contact Russ [russ.fry@goldenhillsports.com](mailto:russ.fry@goldenhillsports.com)

## VICTA – Christmas Experience

Get festive in your local area with the support of VICTA! Visit a Christmas experience near you and get your VI child's ticket reimbursed.

• When: December 2024

• Who: Families

• Location: Across the UK

• Cost: VI child ticket offer (up to the value of £20)

• Please note: One Christmas event offer per family

• Offer closing date: 2 January 2025

VICTA is offering to reimburse the cost of your VI child’s ticket (up to 17 years) when you visit a Christmas Experience near to you as a family. This can include a Christmas light show or Christmas experience; the visit must take place on or before Thursday 2 January. VICTA will reimburse up to a maximum of £20 per VI child. To apply, please visit [Visit a Christmas Experience Near You! - Child Ticket Offer - VICTA](https://www.victa.org.uk/victa-calendar/christmas-tickets-2024/)

## 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/>

## VICTA

VICTA Want to find out more about Sailing Vision Week, The Sailing Vision Trust and Visa Sailing?

• When: Thursday 9 January 2025, 7-7.30pm

• Who: Sailing Vision Week (28 June – 5 July 2025) is open to VI participants aged 18+

• Location: Virtual (Zoom)

• Cost: Free

• Closing date: Friday 3 January 2025

Find out about how you get can involved in sailing opportunities in 2025 with the Sailing Vision Trust and VISA Sailing.

Sailing Vision Week is run annually by the Sailing Vision Trust and open to participants with a vision impairment from 18+. In 2024, VICTA supported several new sailors take part in Sailing Vision Week with a contribution towards their entry and registration fee.

Listen to their experiences as well as representatives from the Sailing Vison Trust and VISA Sailing to find out why you should get involved in 2025!

## New Tennis Sessions - David Lloyd Long Ashton

For d/Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent children and young people

* Ages 5-16 years
* Weekly Thursdays (term time)
* 4:15-5pm (ages 5-8 years) / 5:15-6pm (ages 9-16 years)
* David Lloyd, Long Ashton, Ashton Road, Bristol BS3 2HB

Sign-up to the sessions here:[http://bit.ly/DavidLloydterm1](https://accesssport.us4.list-manage.com/track/click?u=01c05c95704dd40a6e36e4770&id=2b161030ab&e=47e16734b2)

## Super 1s - Free Inclusive Cricket Session

All disabilities welcome age 12-25

**Bath**

WHEN: Wednesdays, 5.30pm - 6.30pm (September – May)

WHERE: Hayesfield School, Broughman Hayes Campus, Bath BA2 3QX.

**Weston-Super-Mare**

WHEN: Thursdays 6pm - 7pm (September - May)

WHERE: Health & Active Living Skills Centre, Loxton Road,

Weston-Super-Mare, BS23 4PD

CONTACT: Steve Gass [steve.gass@somersetcricketfoundation.org](mailto:steve.gass@somersetcricketfoundation.org)

<https://www.lordstaverners.org/how-we-help/>

## RSBC (Royal Society for Blind Children)

**Calendar of activities**

You can join a range of different activities and there are even some your whole families can get involved in too! We have something for everyone to get involved in! Click on the link to find out more [rsbc.org.uk](https://www.rsbc.org.uk/calendar-of-activities/?_gl=1*1cy8lkh*_up*MQ..&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIzJjn2_y3hgMVCphQBh3iKAPmEAAYAiAAEgLPwvD_BwE)

## Redcatch Park Tennis

For d/Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent children, young people and adults.

* All Ages
* Weekly Saturdays
* 12.30pm -1.30pm
* Redcatch Park Tennis Courts, Bristol, BS4 2RF

Sign-up to the sessions here: [https://tinyurl.com/redcatch](https://accesssport.us4.list-manage.com/track/click?u=01c05c95704dd40a6e36e4770&id=4fd3009920&e=47e16734b2)

## The Royal National Collage for the Blind (RNC) - Have a go weekend

For young people aged 13 to 17 with a visual impairment and their families with FREE accommodation for everyone!

Families spend two days at RNC with young people attending sessions led by staff. They can try sports like goalball and cricket, or showing their creativity with music and cooking workshops. While parents receive a guided campus tour and receive funding and EHCP advice and information from our Placement Caseworker. Everyone gets provided with free food and on-site accommodation for overnight. For more information please visit <https://www.rnc.ac.uk/form/9>

### RNC – Activity Week

For young people aged 14 to 17 with a visual impairment.

This residential is designed to encourage young people to socialise and develop independence skills alongside having fun! There will be range of different activities on offer such as, VI Sport, a trip out to local activity centre, bowling and a pizza evening. For more information please visit here [rnc.ac.uk/form/14](https://www.rnc.ac.uk/form/14)

# Local Audio Described Arts Events

## Bristol Hippodrome

* 2 January – Goldilocks and the 3 Bears
* 24 January - & Juliet. A musical show featuring songs by pop divas like Britney Spears and Ariana Grande
* 6 February – Only Fools and Horses (Age 8+)

Book touch tours separately. Contact Access for All service - email [bristoladmin@theambassadors.com](mailto:bristoladmin@theambassadors.com) or call the access booking line 0333 009 5399 for tickets

## Bristol Old Vic

* 21 December – The Little Mermaid

For more details and to book - ring the Box office – 0117 987 7877

## Bath - Theatre Royal

**Snow White:**18 December - 2pm and 11 January – 7pm

Tickets and information on 01225 448844. Make sure you are subscribed to the Theatre’s Access List.

Note: Bookers for AD performances will receive a link emailed, beforehand, with audible pre-show notes. Hearing devices can be collected from all bars when the house opens - half an hour before the show. Demonstration models available to practice with.

# Online Support Groups and Course

## Royal Society For Blind Children (RSBC)

RSBC runs [Connecting Families groups](https://wcb-ccd.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=25c133fb85be32275b8e9d18d&id=2d9b959ea9&e=f52967d25d) for parents and carers of children with a vision impairment.

## Nystagmus Network

Nystagmus Network runs a [virtual support group for parents/carers](https://wcb-ccd.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=25c133fb85be32275b8e9d18d&id=dda60750c1&e=f52967d25d) and their next meeting will be on Thursday 28th November.

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Tel 0117 322 4885, Email [info@sightsupportwest.org.uk](mailto:info@sightsupportwest.org.uk)

Sight Support is a registered charity no 1178384. Registered Office: St Lucy’s Sight Centre, Browfort, Bath Road, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 2AT