# Monthly What’s On Guide February 2025

Welcome to your monthly update of accessible services and events in Bristol, Bath & NE Somerset, and South Gloucestershire covering February 2025.

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# Sight Support Events and Notices

## Connect Online with Virtual Hubs

Our Virtual Hubs provide a welcoming space for those living with sight loss to connect, share experiences and have a chat. Open to anyone affected by sight loss, these online groups are hosted on Microsoft Teams with training available for newcomers.

**Groups Available:**

* **Parent Support Group**: Fortnightly on Thursdays at 7:30 pm.
* **University Students Group**: Fortnightly on Wednesdays at 7 pm.
* **Working Age Group (25–65)**: Third Thursday of each month at 7 pm.
* **Young Adults Group (18–30)**: Start date to be confirmed.

Contact us to sign up – 0117 322 4885 / info@sightsupportwest.org.uk.

## Smartphone and Tablet Training

Our new courses tailored for people living with sight loss start this February:

* **Beginner Courses**: Learn the basics of navigation, accessibility features, and useful apps.
* **Locations**: Bath, Bristol (Broadmead), and Yate Library.
* **Improver Courses**: Start in March. boost your skills and confidence while exploring more features and useful tips.

Booking is essential, so contact us on 0117 322 4885 or info@sightsupportwest.org.uk to book your place.

## Eye Can Salisbury

Our partner charity, Wiltshire Sight, invites you to Eye Can Salisbury. It will be held on Wednesday 2nd April 2025, 10 am–3 pm at Salisbury Guildhall. The exhibitors will have the latest in technology and equipment on display and you will find local and national organisations offering services for blind and partially sighted individuals. Talks will also be held throughout the day. To pre-register either call us or you can book on Eventbrite: [Eye Can Salisbury 2025](https://EyeCanSalisbury2025.eventbrite.co.uk).

# Sight Support Hubs and Social Groups

Our monthly advice hubs offer consultations with local advisors across the region. At a hub you can get tailored information and guidance and explore accessible aids. Most hubs also host social groups where you can meet others living with sight loss. Full listings are available on our website or by calling us on 0117 322 4885.[Click here for our website 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

* **Yate Hub** – the social group will not be running on the 13th February but appointments are available with an advisor.

# Events & Notices From Other Organisations

## Share Your Views: South Glos Low Vision Services Committee

South Glos Council welcomes residents with sight loss to its next Low Vision Services Committee meeting on Wednesday 5th February at 2 pm at Badminton Road Council Offices, Yate. Share your views and hear updates on local services. Travel expenses reimbursed. Contact the council for more information.

## Bath & North East Somerset – Accessible Guides

New Large Print Access Guides for libraries and advice centres are now available online and at main information desks. These guides detail access, services, and layouts, ensuring stress-free visits. Customers can borrow the guides from main information desks at all locations or view them online via the [Bath and North East Somerset Libraries Virtual Librar](https://baneslibraries.co.uk/)y under the ‘Visit’ section.

## Join Access Sport’s 2025 Youth Board and Voice Groups

Applications are now open for young people aged 14–25 to join the **National Youth Board** or **Youth Voice Groups** in London, Bristol, and Manchester. These roles ensure youth voices shape Access Sport’s work, supporting disadvantaged and disabled young people through advocacy, fundraising, and project planning.

Youth Voice Groups focus locally, contributing to events, facilities, and inclusion projects. Participants gain training, development opportunities, and event invitations. Meetings are held quarterly (online / in-person), with travel costs covered.

To learn more or for help applying, contact Sophie at sophie.epsley@accesssport.org.uk or Alex at alex.claydon@accesssport.org.uk

## Guide Dogs’ Policy and Campaigns Advisory Board

Guide Dogs is seeking passionate individuals with lived experience of sight loss to join their new England Policy and Campaigns Advisory Board. Members will provide invaluable insights, sharing perspectives on vision impairment and contributing to campaigns that champion accessibility, safety, and equality for people with sight loss.

The role involves quarterly meetings (approximately three hours each) and no prior experience with Guide Dogs services or campaigning is required. Applicants must be 18 or over, live in England, and be enthusiastic about advocating for the rights of vision-impaired individuals.

For more details, contact livedexperience@guidedogs.org.uk

## Have Your Say on Accessibility – Bristol Old Vic

Bristol Old Vic is undertaking an accessibility review and is inviting individuals to share their views. By providing feedback, participants will help shape a more inclusive experience for all – and will be entered into a draw to win £100.

The survey can be completed online via the following link:
[Accessibility Review Survey](https://arts-mail.co.uk/c/AQjcvQQQrsCJBxiProuEAyDzppGjAaN9YjcjS6jJgOwdTYAv3yIfObydaa62H_g_MMc_klYL)

For those who would prefer, an Easy Read version of the survey [Easy Read version](https://arts-mail.co.uk/c/AQjcvQQQrsCJBxiProuEAyDlqpGjAZcnCrv-hQKxTAdWkMpvIkMKsD2hlU410wubMRWllfgu) . For more information contact Bristol Old Vic at **access@bristololdvic.org.uk**.

Feedback is greatly valued and will play a key role in improving accessibility. Contributions from the community are warmly encouraged.

# Local Leisure and Sporting Activities / Events

## Regular Groups

For a list of regular sport and leisure groups that don’t change each month and offered by other organisations, please see our [Regular sport and leisure groups webpage](https://www.sightsupportwest.org.uk/sport-and-leisure-groups/)

## Goalball Taster Session

Goalball UK are holding a free taster session in Bristol!

Come along to have some fun and learn all about this exciting Paralympic sport!

Sighted family and friends are also welcome.

Sunday 26th January, to 3pm, at Fairfield High School, Allfoxton Road, Horfield, Bristol, BS7 9NL

For more information contact Kathryn Fielding

Tel 07795 263642 Email Kathryn.Fielding@goalballuk.com

## Free Drama Workshops

Kilter Theatre is offering six free creative drama workshops in Bath, designed for people living with sight loss and their friends, families, and carers.

**Dates:** Mondays, 2pm–3.30pm, from 3rd March to 7th April 2025
**Venue:** The Egg, Theatre Royal Bath

Participants will explore themes of hope and new beginnings through drama games, spoken word, and sonic experiments, culminating in a collaborative audio performance. Sessions are led by Kilter’s Caroline Garland and sound artist Dinah Mullen.

Booking is essential. Contact **kiltercaroline@gmail.com** for details or to reserve your place. Spaces are limited!

## VIP Reading Group – Bristol Central Library, College Green

It takes place on the last Thursday of every month from 10.30 till 12pm. New members welcome. Audio books are chosenfrom RNIB’s talking book service so it’s helpful to signed up before joining. The next books are:

* 30 January - The Glass Rainbow by James Lee Burke. One of a series of novels set in Louisiana about detective Dave Robicheaux.
* 27 February - Black Butterflies by Priscilla Morris
* 27 March - Annie Bot by Sierra Greer. A tale of what happens when a female robot rebels against her male, human owner.
* 24 April - Prima Facie by Suzie Miller. Drawn from the play about a barrister who specialises in defending men accused of sexual assault.

Further information email vibookgroup.bristol@gmail.com or Katharine Seymour, Central Library on 07880 069877

## Bowling for visually impaired people

**Bowling Trials and Coffee Mornings for Visually Impaired Individuals**

The City and County of Bristol Indoor Bowling Club, in partnership with the Blind Veterans Association, is hosting coffee mornings and bowling trials on Friday 14th February and Friday 14th March. These events provide an opportunity to try bowling with the guidance of qualified coaches and meet representatives from Visually Impaired Bowls England, who may bring along an international player.

For more details or to express interest, please contact Danny Kite on **0117 922 3571**.

## Make, Play, Create Workshop

Pervasive Media Studio, Watershed, 1 Canon's Rd, Bristol BS1 5TX

14 February – 2.30– 5pm - Make, Play, Create

A fun, informative, accessible workshop on Crafts & Virtual Reality. There will be a talk, crafts, refreshments. But importantly a chance for individuals to design how they’d like their experience of technology to be - using tactile materials.

You may bring a companion and there will a support worker.

Please email carolinemcgloneprofessional@gmail.com for bookings and more information.

## All Aboard Watersports

This summer All Aboard Watersports will be running a Rowing Taster Day at their centre in Baltic Wharf, Bristol. It’s designed for 12 – 29 yar olds looking to try a new sport. Sessions are fully supported by professional instructors. We are holding a coffee morning in March for anyone interested to meet the instructors and find out more. Get in touch with Jemma on 01173 018 158 or email centremanager@allaboardwatersports.co.uk to learn more.

## Track Day Opportunities at Llandow Circuit

Llandow Circuit in the Vale of Glamorgan offers accessible driving experiences for individuals of all abilities, including those with sight loss. Speed of Sight provides the opportunity to drive custom-built, dual-controlled cars on this well-known track.

Places are still available for the 3rd and 4th of June.

For more details or to book, visit [Speed of Sight’s website](https://speedofsight.org/book-now) or contact them at info@speedofsight.org.

# Support Groups and Courses

## Regular Support Groups

For a list of regular support groups offered by other organisations that take place locally and online, see our website: [Webpage for regular support groups and services](https://www.sightsupportwest.org.uk/support-groups-and-services/)

## Bath Macular Group

The next meeting for the Bath Macular Support Group which is held in Good Living Centre( The Bubble) at St John's Foundation will be on Wednesday 19th February at 2.0pm. Tom Brown will be talking on his involvement with Drama. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be served . There is a charge o f£2 for the session. All very welcome.

Contact Jo Fishwick on 07947 373 244 or Jo.Fishwick@macularsociety.org to find out more information or find other local groups.

## Living Well with Sight Loss Phone Group

Living Well With Sight Loss - February

Session 1: Monday 3rd February

Session 2: Wednesday 5th February

Session 3: Monday 10th February

Session 4: Wednesday 12th February

**Times** 11am

**Money Matters Focus Group**

Session 1: Tuesday 4th February

Session 2: Thursday 6th February

Session 3: Tuesday 11th February

Session 4: Thursday 13th February.

**Times**: 11am

Email: communityconnectionsouthwest@rnib.org.uk

Call Trish Sail 07843 979975 / George Hinton 07711 188292 / Bernice Cocking 07761 328571

## Deafblind UK Talk Tech webinar

Deafblind UK has scheduled some more free 'Talk Tech' webinars, intended to provide practical tech advice to people with sight and hearing loss. Details are:

Thursday 20th February - Find out about RealSAM voice-controlled smartphones for people who are blind, visually impaired, or who would simply find it easier to operate technology by voice.

Thursday 17th April - A demonstration of VisionAid’s most interesting products.

You can find out more and book a place [DeafBlind UK Website](https://deafblind.org.uk/calendar/)

# Local Audio Described Arts Events

## Galleries and Museums

### Arnolfini Gallery

Two VI Tours of the upcoming Exhibition featuring British artist, Barbara Walker, are scheduled for 19 April and 10 May. Further details to follow.

To book email community@arnolfini.org.uk and say if you need a sighted guide.

### Bristol Museum: When Planets Collide

Monday 3rd March, 10.00–12.00
Queen’s Road, BS8 1RL

Feel the impact! How collisions between planets shaped our world.  What happens when worlds collide, and how might that affect our world? At this session you will explore the fascinating science of interplanetary collisions and discover how extra-terrestrial rocks have influenced Earth. You will have the opportunity to handle and engage with 3D printed models designed to illustrate the processes of interplanetary collisions. Geological specimens from the Museum’s collection will be available to handle at this session. They will help bring to life how our planet, and what lies beyond, have interacted over millions of years.

The event features two parts:

* **Planets Collide** – Led by Dr Simon Lock and Dr Kirill Vlasov (University of Bristol).
* **Here on Earth** – Led by Deborah Hutchinson, Geology Curator, and museum colleagues.

Refreshments will be provided; inform the museum of dietary requirements or any other needs. Sighted companions are welcome, and volunteers will be arranged as needed.

For details or to book, contact Debbie.hutchinson@bristol.gov.uk call 0117 922 3571, or book online at the Bristol Museums website.

### Bristol Museum & Art Gallery: Wildlife Photographer

19 February – from 6–8.45 pm - Wildlife Photographer of the Year

An exclusive tour of the 60th anniversary edition of this world-renowned exhibition, on loan from the Natural History Museum.

Featuring audio description, refreshments and snacks, plus the chance to get up close and personal with objects from their natural sciences collection.

Information on the exhibition can be found at [Bristol Museums Website](https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/whats-on/bristol-museum-and-art-gallery/wildlife-photographer-of-the-year/) Access information for the venue can be found here: [Bristol Museums Venue Information](https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/bristol-museum-and-art-gallery/plan-your-visit/access/)

For details and to book email: Gruff Kennedy gruff.kennedy@bristol.gov.uk or Steven Bradley steven.bradley@bristol.gov.uk You can also call the general Museum voicemail on 0117 922 3571.

### Royal West of England Academy

Royal West of England Academy, Queens Rd, Bristol BS8 1PX

Saturday 1 March - 10:30 to 12:00 - Described tour of work by modernist artist Paule Vézelay together with others in the Paper Works exhibition. As always, there will be an opportunity to handle some of the exhibits. The session concludes with refreshments.

If you would like to join, please email Connie Ngan connie.ngan@rwa.org.uk and say whether you will bring a sighted companion or need a volunteer guide.

### Bath, Victoria Art Gallery

Art on Mondays talks for VI Visitors

* 27 January – Nixon and Rowlandson 18th century caricaturists
* 24 February – Mirror of Mirth: Satire in Georgian Bath featuring Rowlandson and Nixon
* 24 March – Perry Harris, Artist – Essence of Bath: Cartoons and Watercolours

Sessions run from 10–11.30 am. But as the gallery is closed to the public on those days ring 01225 477232 for access information or email Kersti Haabjoern - Kersti\_Haabjoern@bathnes.gov.uk

## Theatres - Upcoming Audio Described Shows

### Bristol Hippodrome

* 6 February – Only Fools and Horses
* 8 March – Matthew Bourne’s Swan Lake
* 12 June – War Horse
* 16 July - Moulin Rouge

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

### Bristol Old Vic

* 1 March - A Good House – a new comedic work by South African writer Amy Jephta about a couple who discover the limits of good neighbourliness and what is required to fit in.
* 29 March – Romeo & Juliet
* 31 May – The Beautiful Future is Coming - a fast-paced, inventive look at 250 years of history through the eyes of three couples.

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

### Tobacco Factory Theatre

Raleigh Road, Southville, Bristol, BS3 1TF

Hansel and Gretel

* 3 January – 7pm
* 4 January – 2pm

The classic fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm with a modern twist – the theatre will be transformed into a magical and mythical land in this tale by the Brothers Grimm.

Tickets can be bought online at [Tobacco Factory Website](https://tobaccofactorytheatres.com/shows/hansel-and-gretel/)

by phone on 0117 902 0344 or by email at tickets@tobaccofactorytheatres.com

### Bath - Theatre Royal

**The Midnight Bell** - 21 May – Performed by Matthew Bourne’s dance company. It’s set in the pubs and fog-bound streets of Soho and Fitzrovia during the 1930s

Tickets and information on 01225 448844. Make sure you subscribe to the Theatre’s Access List. Bookers for AD performances will receive a link emailed, beforehand, with pre-show audio 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.

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Tel 0117 322 4885, Email info@sightsupportwest.org.uk

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