# Monthly What’s On Guide January 2025

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

We’d like to wish you a wonderful Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year! We look forward to welcoming you to one of our events, hubs, or social groups in 2025 and continuing to support you in the year ahead.

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# Sight Support Events and Notices

## Connect online with our Virtual Hubs

Are you looking to meet others who truly understand the challenges and experiences of living with sight loss? Our Virtual Hubs offer a welcoming and supportive space to connect, share, and chat with people who "get it."

These online groups, run in partnership between Sight Support West of England, Wiltshire Sight, and Insight Gloucestershire, are open to anyone affected by sight loss across the regions we serve. Facilitated by volunteers with lived experience, the groups meet regularly on Microsoft Teams – and if you’re new to Teams, don’t worry, training is available to help you get started.

**Groups You Can Join:**

* **Parent Support Group**: For parents of visually impaired children up to age 25. Already running – meets fortnightly on Thursdays at 7:30 pm.
* **University Students Group**: For over-18s studying at Level 4 or above. Starts 15th January – meets fortnightly on Wednesdays at 7 pm.
* **Working Age Group (25–65)**: Starts 16th January – meets the third Thursday of each month at 7 pm.
* **Young Adults Group (18–30)**: *S*tart date to be confirmed – let us know if you’re interested!

Once signed up, there’s no need to book for each session – simply join when it suits you. Whether you want to meet new people, share experiences, or simply have a chat, our Virtual Hubs offer a flexible and friendly way to build connections from the comfort of your home.

**To sign up or find out more**, contact us and let us know which group you’re interested in – we’d love to welcome you!

## New Year, New Skills - Smartphone and Tablet Training

If you want to build your confidence in using a smartphone or tablet, sign up for one of our courses starting in the new year. Designed specifically for people with sight loss, these sessions will help you learn and grow your digital skills in a supportive and accessible environment.

### Beginner Courses – February 2025

Perfect for those new to smartphones or tablets. Learn the basics, including how to:

* Navigate a touch screen
* Use accessibility features
* Send emails and access messages
* Use a digital assistant and explore helpful apps

Locations and Times:

* **Bath**: Tuesdays, 12:15–2:15pm
* **Bristol (Broadmead)**: Wednesdays, 10am–12pm
* **Yate Library**: Thursdays, 10am–12pm

### Improver Courses – March 2025

For those who already use a smartphone or tablet, this course will help boost your skills and confidence while exploring more features and useful tips.

Locations and Times:

* **Bristol (Broadmead)**: Wednesdays, 10am–12pm
* **Yate Library**: Thursdays, 10am–12pm

Booking is essential to secure your place. To find out more or book your place, contact us on 0117 322 4885 or email info@sightsupportwest.org.uk

# Sight Support Hubs and Social Groups

Our sight loss advice hubs provide a space for consultations with your local advisor, offering information, guidance, and advice on equipment and technology. You can explore a selection of helpful aids, and many hubs also offer tech support and training from trained advisors or volunteers. Additionally, most 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 0117 3224885. [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

* **Thornbury Resource Centre**: Closed on 30th December. Reopens on 20th January.
* **Fishpond Resource Centre**: Closed on 26th December. Reopens on 2nd January.
* **Bath Community Hub**: Open as usual in December. Cancelled in January. Next session on 5th February.
* **Midsomer Norton Social**: Cancelled on 28th December.
* **Bradley Stoke Community Hub**: cancelled on 16th January

# 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.

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

South Glos council is inviting residents living with sight loss to come along to their Low Vision Servies Committee to give their views on council services and living with sight loss in the area. The Group meets quarterly and provides an opportunity to hear updates on council plans and the work of local organisations, plus feed in your views on things which could be improved or are working well locally for those with sight loss.

For more information, call Sight Support, or contact the council directly.  The next meeting will be on Wednesday 5th February 2025 at 2pm at the council offices in Badminton road.  Travel expenses to the meeting will be reimbursed by the council.

## Young Creators Launch Audiobook on Life with Vision Impairment

Twenty-one young people with vision impairments have collaborated with the University of Bath and Audiobook Productions to create “Today and Tomorrow; Living with Vision Impairment in the UK.” This inspiring audiobook shares personal stories and practical advice on navigating key life transitions, including education, advocacy, and sport. Designed to support others living with vision loss, it’s available for free on Spotify from 29th November 2024, with further releases on Audible and Amazon.

**Link to Audiobook**: [Transitions for Young People with Vision Impairments](https://open.spotify.com/show/4zbZatSInal85jmRqQse6f)

## HOPE: Helping Others Progress in Employment

HOPE, a part-time programme by South Gloucestershire and Stroud College (SGS), supports adults (19+) with learning difficulties, disabilities, or mental health conditions to find and retain stable, long-term employment with inclusive companies. Whether self-referred or through other sources, HOPE helps individuals secure roles that match their skills and overcome employment barriers.

Find out more here: SGS College Website.

## Bath & North East Somerset – Accessible Guides

Bath & North East Somerset Council has recently published new Large Print Access Guides for all core Library and Information Advice Services locations. These guides provide detailed descriptions of access, including travel options, entrances, internal layouts, and available services. They are designed to support visitors, particularly disabled people and carers, by reducing the stress of planning 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. By offering clear and practical information, these guides aim to make visits to libraries and advice centres more accessible for everyone.

## 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

## 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](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeczuzRDLv5yWHjYCrnUS99CBieCxOsEHzhtPy4WbClNasjew/viewform?usp=sf_link)

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.

# 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/)

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

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:

* 3 January – Mudlarking: Lost and Found on the River Thames by Lara Maiklem
* 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

## Keynsham & District Talking Newspaper

For those living with sight loss, staying informed about local news and events can make a big difference. The Keynsham & District Talking Newspaper offers a free, weekly audio news and magazine service for people who are registered blind or partially sighted.

This service provides:

* Local news from Keynsham, Bristol, Bath, and surrounding areas.
* Magazine features, including recipes, poems, profiles of local personalities, and light-hearted topics.
* An easy-to-use USB stick delivered weekly through the Royal Mail’s Articles for the Blind Scheme.
* An optional, user-friendly box to play the USB stick.

To sign up or learn more about this service, visit the [Keynsham Talking Newspaper Website](http://www.ktn.org.uk/) or Telephone 0117 299 3021

## Next Gen Circle: New Year Basketball Sessions Announced

Next Gen Circle will be running its first block of regular basketball sessions in the new year, starting on Sunday, 5th January 2025.

**Dates**: Sunday 5th January – Sunday 23rd February 2025

**Time**: 10–11am

**Location**: St Paul's Sports Centre, Sports Hall

**Audience**: Inclusive sessions for d / Deaf, disabled, and / or neurodivergent children and young people

These sessions provide a supportive and inclusive environment to learn new skills, play games, and have fun.

## Upcoming Event: When Planets Collide

Paul Sullivan is helping to organise an exciting event for visually impaired people at Bristol Museum in collaboration with staff from the museum and the University of Bristol. Taking place on a Monday morning in mid to late February (date to be confirmed), the event will explore what happens when planets collide.

Attendees will have the opportunity to handle 3D-printed models, meteorites, and other fascinating materials from the museum's collection.

Full details will be available in February's What's On E-Newsletter. To express interest in attending, please contact Paul directly at pdsullivan@blueyonder.co.uk

# 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 Bath Macular Support group will meet for their AGM on Wednesday 15th January at 2pm  at The Good Living Centre ( was called The Bubble) at St Johns Foundation, situated behind The Cross Bath. All Welcome! The group are also looking for anyone interested in becoming their secretary and treasurer.

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

# Local Audio Described Arts Events

## Galleries and Museums

### Arnolfini Gallery

**Rinko Kawauchi: At the edge of the everyday world.** There will be 2 described tours. Celebrating over twenty years of work by this acclaimed Japanese photographer’s poetic images.

Tours will be on:

* Saturday 25th January 2025 – 10am to 11am.

Coffee and cake provided in the café afterwards.

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

### Bristol Museum & Art Gallery

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.

### Bath, Victoria Art Gallery

Art on Mondays talks for VI Visitors

* 27 January – Nixon and Rowlandson 18th century caricaturists
* 24 February – Subject to be confirmed

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

* 2 January – Goldilocks and the 3 Bears
* 24 January – Romeo & Juliet. A musical show featuring songs by pop divas like Britney Spears and Ariana Grande
* 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

* 21 December – The Little Mermaid
* 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

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

**Snow White:** 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 are available to practice with.

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Tel 0117 322 4885, Email 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