# Monthly What’s On E-Newsletter September 2025

Welcome to your monthly update of accessible services and events in Wiltshire and Swindon, covering September 2025.

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# Wiltshire Sight Events and Notices

## There’s still time to enter our Summer Raffle!

Don’t miss your chance to win up to £500 in our Summer Raffle. Tickets are just £1 each or £10 for a book of 10, with all proceeds supporting the work of Sight Support West of England, Wiltshire Sight, and Insight Gloucestershire.

Prizes include £500, £100, £25, and £10. The closing date is Friday 3 October, so get your tickets now before it’s too late.

Buy tickets here: [Raffle tickets webpage](https://buy.stripe.com/fZe5mCbbLgKc9na6os)

Full details and terms: [Our Summer Raffle webpage](https://www.sightsupportwest.org.uk/get-involved/raffle/)

## Eye Can Bath – 16 October

If you’re based near Bath, don’t miss Eye Can Bath – a free exhibition organised by our partner charity Sight Support West of England.

It takes place on Thursday 16 October, from 10am to 3pm at Bath Pavilion, and is open to anyone living with sight loss, along with family and friends.

There’ll be technology, equipment, services, and support on display, plus talks and advice from Sight Loss Advisors.

* **10.30am – What Digital Technology Can Do For You**
Discover how smartphones, voice commands, and online tools can make everyday tasks easier. Learn about our digital skills support service available at hubs across the region.
* **11.45am – Ask the Expert: Amar Shah**
Amar Shah, Sight Support West Trustee and leading optometrist, will answer your questions, challenge myths, and explain support and treatment options.
* **1.00pm – Fraud Protect Talk**
Claire Bounds from Avon and Somerset Police will explain common fraud tactics and share tips on how to keep yourself and loved ones safe.
* **2.00pm – The Digital Switchover**
Sodhi Dhillon from BT will outline what the landline switchover means, how it’s happening, and the support available to customers.

Pre-registration helps us plan and is quick and easy to do. Book your free ticket at Eventbrite: <https://eye-can-bath-2025.eventbrite.co.uk> or call us on 01380 723682.

## New Swindon hub and social

We have a new community hub launching this month in Swindon at the Pilgrim Centre, Regent Circus, Swindon, SN1 1PX. The community hub will take place on the third Thursday each month. there will be a social group running from 10am to 12:30pm, and appointments are available to speak with your advisor. The first community hub is on 18th September, if you are local, we would love to see you there.

## Interested in tandem cycling?

Would you like to experience the joy of tandem cycling in and around Salisbury and Amesbury? We’re exploring the possibility of setting up a new group, with trained pilot riders on hand to help.

Tandem cycling is a great way to enjoy the outdoors, get active, and connect with others. If this is something you’d like to try, we’d love to hear from you.

Call us on 01380 723682 and leave a message for Lucy Brown.

## Parents Virtual Hub

With the new school year so close, this is a great time for parents of children and young people with a vision impairment to connect with others who understand their journey. Our friendly Parents Virtual Hub next meets on Thursday 18 September, 7.30–8.30pm via Microsoft Teams.

Hosted by Becky, a parent with lived experience, the group provides a supportive space to share experiences, exchange tips, and talk about the unique challenges and joys of parenting a child with sight loss.

The Parents Hub meets on the third Thursday of each month via Microsoft Teams. Our Virtual Hubs are open to anyone across Bristol, Bath, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, and Swindon, and are free to join.

We also run regular hubs for young adults, university students and working age adults.

To register, contact us on 01380 723682 or email info@wiltshiresight.org

## Your voice matters – help shape services for people with sight loss

Are you living with sight loss in Wiltshire? We’re looking for people who want to use their experience to make a difference.

Join our Lived Experience Advisory Panel (LEAP). LEAP brings together people with lived experience of sight loss to help guide and improve our services.

As a member of the panel, you’ll meet four times a year to:

* Share feedback and suggestions
* Help shape new initiatives
* Advise on accessibility, communication, outreach and more

You don’t need any formal qualifications, just your experience and a willingness to speak up on behalf of others living with sight loss.

If you’d like to get involved or find out more, we’d love to hear from you, contact Glenda Prall, our Head of Services, at glenda.prall@sightsupportwest.org.uk

# Wiltshire Sight Community Hubs & Socials

[Click here for our website hub and social group listings.](https://www.sightsupportwest.org.uk/events/)

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 (linked above) or by calling us on 01380 723682.

## Hub updates to note

### Swindon – new social group

New social group and hub at Swindon Pilgrim Centre third Thursday each month. social group from 10am to 12.30pm, and appointments available to speak with your advisor, call us to book.

### Working Age Virtual Hub – cancelled for September

Please note that the Working Age Virtual Hub will not take place in September. The next session will be held on Thursday 16 October at 7pm via Microsoft Teams. We look forward to seeing you then**.**

# Events & Notices from Local Organisations

## A Place at the Table – Inclusion for All

Bath Spa University is hosting A Place at the Table, a free two-day symposium exploring how to put inclusion at the heart of communities, councils, and institutions.

When: Wednesday 3 – Thursday 4 September 2025, 9.00am–5.00pm
Where: The Pound Arts Centre, Corsham (with some sessions also online)

Expect presentations, discussions, and workshops on topics such as Disability Justice, resilience with Bath Welcomes Refugees, cross-cultural trauma, and the power of collaboration. The event will work towards co-creating a Manifesto for Inclusion for Wiltshire and beyond. Lunch is included.

Find out more and book your free place:
Event info: <https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/.../2025/a-place-at-the-table/>

## Swindon Borough Council Vision Services

Swindon Borough Council Hearing and Vision team are organizing the following event on 5 September.

Familiarisation of new Bus Boulevard

Friday 5th September 10am

Meeting outside H&M

# Leisure and Sporting Activities

## Wiltshire Sight Audio Book group

Do you enjoy listening to books and chatting about what you’ve read? Join our Audio Book Group, which meets on the second Tuesday of each month at Swindon Central Library (first floor).

The next meeting is on Tuesday 9 September, 10.15–11.30am. This month’s book is The Secret Lives of Booksellers and Librarians by James Patterson and Matt Eversmann – available to borrow on BorrowBox.

We choose a title together each month, then meet to share thoughts and have a good discussion. If you can’t attend, you’re welcome to email your comments to our volunteer facilitator, Ali Fulton.

Contact: audiobookgroupvolunteer@wiltshiresight.org.uk

## Reach Inclusive Arts - Right Time for Art group

Join a friendly weekly art group at the Wyvern Theatre, Swindon, every Tuesday from 10.30am–12.30pm. Run by Reach Inclusive Arts, the sessions are open to people of all ages affected by disability, illness, disadvantage, or social isolation.

Led by professional artist Billy Beaumont with support from staff and volunteers, the group provides a welcoming space to get creative – no experience needed. All materials are provided, with refreshments available. Cost: £5 per session.

To find out more, email info@reachinclusivearts.org.uk

## Enjoy audiobooks? Join Wiltshire Libraries online / telephone book group

Wiltshire Libraries run a small and friendly audio book group for people who are blind or partially sighted.

The group meets via Microsoft Teams on the second Friday of each month at 3pm. You don’t need a computer – just a phone is enough to join the call.

Each month a different member chooses the book. There's no set genre – the group enjoys everything from crime fiction to non-fiction and beyond.

To find out more or to join, call Wiltshire Libraries on 01672 512663 or email libraryenquiries@wiltshire.gov.uk

## Bowls in Pewsey

Are you curious about bowls or looking for a new way to get active and socialise? These sessions are relaxed and friendly and specifically for people living with sight loss.

The last session of the season is on 16th September, 10.30am – 12.30pm.
Venue: Pewsey Vale Bowls Club, The Recreation Ground, High Street, Pewsey, SN9 5AQ

The session will be supported by volunteer Ian alongside club members, and no previous experience is needed. All equipment will be provided. You can just turn up to the session, no booking required.

## Visually Impaired Sailing

The [Visually Impaired Sailing Association](https://visa-gb.org.uk/get-on-the-water/) (VISA) has published its schedule for 2025,

## Fitness and Friendship Clubs – Age UK Wiltshire

Friendly, sight-loss aware sessions for older adults, offering gentle chair-based exercise, social time with tea and biscuits, and relaxing tai chi.

**More info**: Tracey – 07754 612 569 or fitnessandfriendship@ageukwiltshire.org.uk

## Swindon Blind Craft Club

Swindon Blind Craft Club meets every Tuesday between 10 am and 1 pm and is run by Lou Curtis at Swindon Blind Association, Craven House, 145 Victoria Road, Swindon, SN1 3BU. Parking available and bus stop opposite. Bring your own lunch. Carers welcome. Get in touch with Lou if you want to come along and find out more: 07703 306 403.

## Swindon Chat group

Last Tuesday of the month 5.15pm

Contact communityconnectionsouthwest@rnib.org.uk

## **Swindon Bats Sports & Social Club**

Swindon Bats have a fantastic variety of groups and events taking place including Ten Pin Bowling, Showdown, Coffee & Chat, Walk and Talk and more. Contact them at: info@swindonbats.org or call their Secretary Sue Mead on 07788150487. You can check their website for details of all their upcoming events and groups  [Swindon Bats Website](https://www.swindonbats.org/activities)

## Bowls Club in Chippenham

The Bowls Club in Chippenham are running a weekly indoor bowls club for people with sight loss and other disabilities.  Taking place at North Wilts Bowls Club in Chippenham (near Sainsburys) each Friday 4-5pm, September - Easter.  Coaching is given.  The contact for this club is Maureen on 01249 657228.

## Devizes PHAB Group

(Physically disabled and Able bodied) an organisation which brings people with and without disabilities together. See their program of events at [Devizes PHAB meetings and events](https://www.devizesphab.co.uk/uploads/1/2/3/4/123478387/phabprogramme16apr2023.pdf)

# Support Groups and Courses

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

## Royal National College – Get Workplace Ready Course

RNB are offering a Get Workplace Ready, a free three-month course for ages 18–29, starting 27 October.
Details and booking: [www.rnc.ac.uk](https://www.rnc.ac.uk/event-item.aspx?id=127)

## RNIB Telephone course, ‘Focus on Friends and Family’

RNIB is running a [telephone course, ‘Focus on Friends and Family’](https://www.rnib.org.uk/events-and-courses/living-well-with-sight-loss-course-focus-on-friends-and-family-phone-group-september-2025/) starting on 3rd September.

# Audio Described Arts Events

### Salisbury Playhouse

Wiltshire Creative presents *Little Women* at Salisbury Playhouse this September, with an audio described performance on Thursday 11 September at 7.30pm. A pre-show Touch Tour is also available and can be booked when reserving tickets.

Inspired by Louisa May Alcott’s own journey into womanhood, Little Women is as relevant today as when it was first published – showing that women can be bold, persistent, self-assured, and the heroes of their own story.

More info and tickets: <https://www.wiltshirecreative.co.uk/>

# Children and Young People

## FA Para Football - England Talent Days

Do you know a young person with a visual impairment, cerebral palsy, or hearing impairment who loves football? The FA’s England Talent Days are the first step on the Para Football pathway.

Open to players aged 7–16, these days give young people the chance to be assessed and directed to the right environment for their development, while continuing any football they already play.

Upcoming dates are Saturday 18 October 2025 and Wednesday 1 April 2026 at St George’s Park, DE13 9PD.

For more information and to register, visit: <https://forms.office.com/e/RqFfguz20V>

## Guide Dogs Children’s Services

Guide Dogs offer a range of services for children with vision impairment and their families, from building independent living skills to family events.

**My Time to Play** is a free service for children aged 0–4, delivered by Qualified Habilitation Specialists. Through play, children develop a broad range of skills while parents, carers, and siblings join in the fun.

Programmes are running in Bath & North East Somerset, with new groups starting in South Gloucestershire (September) and North Somerset (October).

Find out more: [www.guidedogs.org.uk/getting-support/help-for-children-and-families/](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/getting-support/help-for-children-and-families/)

## RNC events for young people

The Royal National College for the Blind (RNC) is running three events:

* Open Day (19 September) for prospective students and families.
* Have a Go Weekend (25–26 October) for ages 13–17: free accommodation, sports, music, and cooking.
* They also offer Get Workplace Ready, a free three-month course for ages 18–29, starting 27 October.
Details and booking: [www.rnc.ac.uk](https://www.rnc.ac.uk)

## Fun 2 Move with Bristol Bears

Starting this September, Bristol Bears Community Foundation is launching two inclusive multi-sport sessions at Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust, designed for SEND and physically disabled participants.

Led by specialist coaches, the sessions provide a fun, welcoming space to get active and build confidence.

When: Tuesdays from 9 September
Where: Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust, BS7 9FB
Ages 13–17: 4.00–5.00pm | Ages 18+: 5.00–6.00pm
Register: kpassfield@bristolbearsrugby.com

## The Outlook Trust

The Outlook Trust organises outdoor activity and residential breaks for blind and partially sighted children and young people with additional disabilities.
Find out more: [About The Outlook Trust Charity](https://www.outlooktrust.org/about-us/)

## Super 1s girls’ cricket

Free inclusive cricket sessions for girls aged 12–25 with SEND.

* Mondays, 6–7pm
* Hanham Cricket Club, Bristol BS15 3NP
Contact Jeanette Tate: 07432 728926 or jeanette.tate@glosccc.co.uk

## City of Bristol Para Swimming Trials

For confident swimmers aged 7+ with basic stroke ability and a can-do attitude. Trials are flexible to individual needs.
Enquiries: cobscpara@gmail.com (Coach Keira)

## Inclusive tennis sessions in Winterbourne

Starting this September, young people aged 8–18 who are disabled, d / Deaf, or neurodivergent are invited to join inclusive tennis sessions at Winterbourne Tennis Club.

Sessions run every Thursday from 5.00–5.45pm, with the first session free.

Where: Winterbourne Tennis Club, Parkside Avenue, Bristol
Sign up: [Winterbourne Tennis Club booking link](https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/WinterbourneTennisClub/Coaching/Course/15de1228-ba13-49fe-a3d1-16ed3a458786)

## Online Groups / Events / Socials

* LOOK will be running Healthy Parent Carer Programmes for families with a vision impaired child.  The twelve-week online courses will run in Spring 2026 (apply by 3rd November).
<https://www.look-uk.org/healthy-parent-carer-programme-spring-2026/>
* Retina UK runs an online [Peer Support Group for the parents and carers](https://retinauk.org.uk/event/parents-carers-group/) of children with an inherited retinal dystrophy.

# Research Opportunities

## Research opportunity – Preimplantation Genetic Testing

A research team at the University of Sheffield, led by Dr Alisdair McNeil, is inviting people with inherited retinal conditions to take part in an online Patient and Public Involvement group.

The discussion will focus on Preimplantation Genetic Testing (PGT), a family planning option. Participants will read a short background document (10–20 minutes) before joining a 2-hour online group discussion. A gift voucher is offered for your time.

To find out more or take part, email Dr Alisdair McNeil: a.mcneill@sheffield.ac.uk

## Survey – Employment support for disabled people

The Commons Work and Pensions Committee has launched a new inquiry, ['Employment support for disabled people](https://committees.parliament.uk/work/9270/employment-support-for-disabled-people/news/208345/mps-launch-new-inquiry-to-address-disability-employment-gap/)', on how to improve the job prospects of disabled people and is calling for the views of disabled people, employers, and experts (the closing date for submissions is 29th September).

## Have your say: Girls-only sport in Bristol

Access Sport and the Ignite network want to hear from female and non-binary young people in Bristol about how to make sport more welcoming and inclusive.

Recent research from the University of Bristol found that many neurodivergent girls feel excluded from mainstream activities. To address this, a girls-only Expression of Interest is open to share what’s missing and what support is needed.

Complete the form here: <https://forms.office.com/e/XsaAWCCVHY>

## Writing and sight loss – share your experience

Anglia Ruskin University is exploring the challenges people with sight loss face when writing or typing. The aim is to better understand these difficulties and find practical solutions.

They’re looking for adults (18+) who experienced sight loss in both eyes after learning to read and write.

You can take part by completing a short 10–15 minute online survey, or by arranging a phone call with Rukaiya (15–30 mins) on 07460 445124.
**Take the survey:** [A.R.U Survey Link](https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/angliaruskin/through-their-eyes-a-survey-on-writing-challenges-with-acquired)

# Online Events / Notices / Groups / Socials

Looking for online groups, events or peer support?
You can find many of our regular online listings, including national social groups, webinars and condition-specific support, on our website. Visit our [Online Resources From Other Organisations webpage](https://www.sightsupportwest.org.uk/resources/online-resources/)

* The Marfan Trust is holding its annual [Marfan Information Day](https://www.marfantrust.org/events/marfan-information-day-saturday-11-october) on Saturday 11th October, via Zoom.
* The Macular Society runs monthly ‘[My Macular and Me’ webinars](https://www.macularsociety.org/support/events/webinars/). The next one is on 19th August, and the subject is genetic counselling for macular disease.
* During September, RNIB will run its [Living Well with Sight Loss online course](https://www.rnib.org.uk/events-and-courses/living-well-with-sight-loss-sight-loss-shropshire-sep/). The course is open to people with sight loss across the UK.
* RNIB is also running the following UK-wide telephone course: [‘Focus on Friends and Family’](https://www.rnib.org.uk/events-and-courses/living-well-with-sight-loss-course-focus-on-friends-and-family-phone-group-september-2025/) starting on 3rd September.
* This year's [Macular Disease Conference](https://www.macularsociety.org/support/events/conference/) will be held online on Saturday 13th September and registration is open.

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Wiltshire Sight is a registered charity no 1119462. Registered Office: St Lucy’s Sight Centre, Browfort, Bath Road, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 2AT