



SOUTH WEST CANN COMMUNICATION
December 2025

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INTRODUCTION

Hello and welcome to the latest South West CANN Update.

South West Children's Additional Needs Network shares information and helps to increase the reach of your services for children and young people in the region.

Regarding updates and information, if you have material or information that you would like forwarded to the members of the Network, or any updates, please ensure that you email it to Miriam on **southwest@cann-network.org**, before the end of the month.

Thanks to everyone who shared the information below for our latest update, which contains information and sessions for children and young people with additional needs and their parent carers.

You can find these Communications on the SWCANN Website at:
<https://www.cann-network.org/blog/>

SOUTH WEST CANN MEETING DATES

Please let us know if you need any support accessing the meetings

Future dates:
TBC

CHAIR COMMENTS

Welcome to the latest South West CANN Update!

Our network exists to share information and increase the reach of services for children and young people with additional needs across the region. This edition brings together valuable updates, resources, and opportunities for families and professionals, including upcoming events, support services, and ways to get involved.

If you have news or resources to share in future updates, please email southwest@cann-network.org by the end of the month.

You can also find all communications on our website: www.cann-network.org/blog.

Co-Chairs: Sarah Okoro and Chereka Carty
South West CANN

NEW MEMBERS

JIGSAW Thornbury



JIGSAW Thornbury is a charity that works in the heart of Thornbury with children and young people aged 0-25 with additional needs or disabilities, and their families. Everyone can join in, with or without a diagnosis.

JIGSAW's innovative and inclusive services for children and young people, parents and carers and youth empowerment, changes lives and enhances community inclusion.

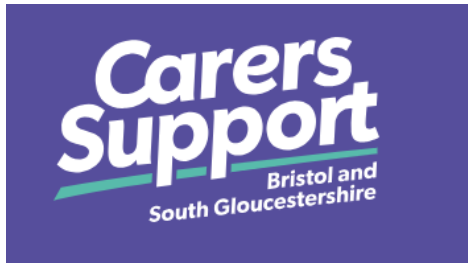
It's free to join online as a member online at

<http://www.jigsawthornbury.org.uk> and we welcome the

community to visit us in our welcoming, accessible space in St Mary Centre, Thornbury BS35 2AB, usually on the 3rd Saturday of each month at our Community Café.

admin@jigsawthornbury.org.uk

<https://www.jigsawthornbury.org.uk/>



Carers Bristol & South Gloucestershire

Carers Support offers free support to carers in the Bristol and South Gloucestershire areas. Our vision is to create a better life for carers of all ages where they are recognised, valued and supported in their caring role and empowered to fulfil their own aspirations.

info@carersbsg.org.uk

<https://www.carersbsg.org.uk/>

If you know of any groups that may be interested, please get them in touch!

Please only use contact details that are for public use

RESEARCH

No new research this month

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - NATIONAL/ONLINE

Child Brain Injury and Early Years Education Conference

Guiding those who support children with birth and brain injuries through the early years' SEN and EHCP process.

Open to parents, families, and professionals. Free to attend.

Date:

Thursday, 29 January 2026

Venue:

Stewarts

5 New Street Square

London, EC4A 3BF

Schedule:

- Lunch: 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM
- Presentations & Questions: 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM
- Drinks & Discussions: 5:00 PM onwards

Additional Info:

- CPD points available
- Opportunity to network and gain expert insights

Speakers include:

- Dr Ruth Kent – Consultant in Neurological Rehabilitation
- Dr Angela Simcox – Consultant Neuropsychologist
- Emily Neal – Special Education Advisor
- Jennifer Wright – Solicitor from Roeb Irwin Sweeney
- Launa Randles – Headteacher, The Children's Trust

Registration:

[https://sites-stewartslaw.vuturevx.com/25/1542/landing-pages/rsvp-\(blank\).asp?sid=blankform](https://sites-stewartslaw.vuturevx.com/25/1542/landing-pages/rsvp-(blank).asp?sid=blankform)

STEWARTS

Child Brain Injury and Early Years Education Conference

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Presentations and questions: 1pm – 5pm

Drinks and discussions: 5pm onwards

CPD points available.



Free guide to Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for parents and carers of autistic and neurodivergent children.

Free guide to Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for parents and carers of autistic and neurodivergent children. The guide looks in detail at each question to help you effectively identify your child's needs.

<https://www.theautismpage.com/dla-guide/>

Over The Wall Camp Referrals Needed

Hello!

It's hard to believe a month has already passed since we opened applications for our 2026 Residential Camps!

We are now seeking referrals for our Residential Camps. We've caught up with the initial rush of applications, and with us offering more camps, we'd really appreciate receiving referrals as early as possible.

It only takes two minutes to complete our [Referral Form 2026](#). Once it's submitted, our team will contact the family directly, talk everything through, and support them with their application if needed. You don't need to provide any additional information. Better yet—there's no limit to how many families you can refer!

The dates for our Camps can be found here [Camp Calendar 2026 - Over The Wall Camp - A UK Children's Charity](#).

Would you like to hear more about our FREE camps?

Our team are happy to chat on the phone, Teams or Zoom or in person - just let us know when you're available.

Don't forget to refer a family today: [Short online referral form](#).

We hope to welcome some of the young people you support at camp soon.

Warm regards,
The Camper Recruitment Team
Email: campers@otw.org.uk
Tel: 01332 977589 Option 1

Enter our Christmas card competition

As we prepare to deck the halls, we're inviting your child to capture the Christmas spirit by entering our card competition.

The lucky winner's design will feature on our e-Christmas card, and will also receive a new 128GB iPad Air. Two runners-up will each receive a £100 Amazon voucher.

We welcome entries from all children with additional needs. Please encourage them to get involved and to create their design on an A4 piece of paper, showing what Christmas means to them.

Next, take a picture of their drawing and email it to us at christmascomp@irwinmitchell.com. Please include their name, age, where they're from, and what inspired their design.

Entries must be submitted by midnight on Sunday 7 December. The competition is only open to those aged 19 and under. One entry per child. Full Terms & Conditions are available here:

<https://www.irwinmitchell.com/terms-conditions>

We can't wait to see what they come up with.

Meet Grandad Wheels

Brian Abram is '*Grandad Wheels*'

I'm 68, retired and from Halifax. After a serious cycling accident in 2013, I was left paraplegic and a full-time wheelchair user. I started writing stories to amuse my Grandson Charles, but I was encouraged to share them with a wider audience. I have now self-published six books in the series '*The Adventures of Grandad Wheels!*' – exciting tales of the crazy things I get up to with my grandson Charles (Charlie in the stories). Each story gives the reader some appreciation of the challenges that face wheelchair users. But the main objective is to show that a Grandad in a wheelchair (or anyone in a wheelchair for that matter) can still have a whole lot of fun!

All the proceeds from my books are donated to charity, divided equally between the **Spinal Injuries Association** and **Back Up**. Both these charities work to improve the lives of people like me who have suffered a spinal injury. I've now raised **£90,000**.

As at September 2025, I've visited **200 schools** and met almost **40,000 children**. I raise awareness of the challenges disabled people face whilst entertaining the children and encouraging them to interact with me in a fun way.

Grandad Wheels is available to visit schools and charities in South and West Yorkshire, and can offer **online sessions** for groups further afield. If you're interested in booking a visit, please get in touch!

Brian Abram
brianabram@btinternet.com
07770 643562
www.grandadwheels.com

H.I.E. Conference - Thursday 14th May 2026

Tickets are on sale for our first H.I.E. Conference, taking place on Thursday 14th May 2026 at The Lowry, Manchester.



The theme is "Hear, Inform, Empower."

Our first announced speakers are Nicholas Hamilton & Paula Abramson.

"Nicolas is a disability ambassador and hugely inspiring speaker. Born with Cerebral Palsy, following an H.I.E. event at birth, Nicolas and his parents were told that he would never walk, or talk, but this did not stop him for achieving his dream of becoming a successful racing driver."

Paula Abramson will be joining us on the 14th May 2026, and we hope you will too. Paula is a psychotherapist and training facilitator, specialising in providing bereavement support to families and training for professionals, following the death of a baby or child.

Conference tickets here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/hie-conference-tickets-1434277846649>

Wheelpower Sports Festival



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - REGIONAL

Your Holiday Hub – Winter Activities for Families

If you care for a child who receives benefits-related free school meals, Your Holiday Hub is here to make the winter holidays brighter.

From 22 December to 2 January, fully funded sessions across Bristol offer fun activities like sports, crafts, cooking, and forest school—plus a healthy meal included.

It's a great way for children to stay active, make friends, and enjoy new experiences during the school break.

Why it matters: School holidays can be a challenging time for families, especially when budgets are tight. These sessions provide not only fun and learning but also nutritious meals, helping to ease some of the pressure and give children a positive, memorable experience.

<https://eequ.org/bristolyourholidayhub>

Celebrate the International Day of Disabled People in Bristol

On Friday, 6 December, join a vibrant and inclusive celebration at M Shed, Wapping Wharf, from 10:30 am to 4:00 pm.

The day will feature:

- Q&A sessions with locally-based disabled leaders
- Workshops and stalls showcasing campaigns and resources
- Accessible facilities, including step-free access, accessible toilets, and a quiet/low-stim room
- BSL interpretation available on request

This is a fantastic opportunity to come together, celebrate achievements, and explore ways to make Bristol more inclusive. If you plan to attend, please do so only if you are feeling well.

SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS AND CONTACT DETAILS:

Website:	https://www.cann-network.org
Email:	southwest@cann-network.org
X:	https://x.com/CannSouthWest
Bluesky:	https://bsky.app/profile/cannsouthwest.bsky.social
LinkedIn:	https://www.linkedin.com/company/south-west-cann
Facebook:	https://www.facebook.com/southwestcann

Please share South West CANN links with your followers and encourage them to follow too. Please add **southwest@cann-network.org** to your Contact list to stop it going into junk.