



SOUTH WEST CANN COMMUNICATION
March 2026

INTRODUCTION	2
SOUTH WEST CANN MEETING DATES	2
NATIONAL CANN CONFERENCE	3
CHAIR COMMENTS	3
NEW MEMBERS	4
Bristol Black Carers	4
North Somerset Parent Carers Working Together CIC	4
Gympanzees	5
RESEARCH	5
Online Experiences Project	5
Young people and work report - Call for evidence	6
EVENTS AND INFORMATION - NATIONAL/ONLINE	6
Webinar: Creating Accessible Places and Spaces	6
Supporting Children with a Visible Difference	7
H.I.E. Conference - Thursday 14th May 2026	7
EVENTS AND INFORMATION - REGIONAL	9
'Walk and talk' group for Global Majority Carers	10
How to support your child with transitions session	10
Nordic Walking Taster Session	11
Discover the therapeutic benefits of printmaking – free workshops for carers	12
SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS AND CONTACT DETAILS:	12

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:

South West CANN Relaunch Networking Event

Tuesday 10th March, 5:00pm – 7:00pm

Irwin Mitchell Offices, 2nd Floor, One Castlepark, Tower Hill, Bristol BS2 0JA

Closest parking is NCP or Cabot Circus

Celebrating 10 Years Of Impact: **The CANN National Knowledge Exchange**

Online Webinar

Thursday 30 April 2026
10:00am - 12:30pm



National CANN Conference:

Celebrating 10 Years of Impact: The CANN National Knowledge Exchange

April 30th
10am - 12.30pm

Book here now for free to secure your space

Please do share with other non-profit leaders and statutory service providers that may be interested.

CHAIR COMMENTS

Hello everyone,

We are absolutely delighted to welcome our newest members and are incredibly excited to be resurrecting the South West CANN. Our goal is to bring you a "new and improved" network that feels both familiar and refreshed.

The need for our collective voice has never been greater. With the current government proposals regarding changes to EHCPs, the services and advocacy we provide are becoming even more essential. Only yesterday, a member highlighted the multiple injustices a local family is currently facing, illustrating the frustrating lags in securing proper care and support. It is these real-world challenges that drive us to ensure no family has to navigate these hurdles alone.

To kick things off and get us talking, we would love for you to join us for our relaunch:

South West CANN Relaunch Networking Event

- Date: Tuesday 10th March
- Time: 5:00pm – 7:00pm

South West CANN
www.cann-network.org
southwest@cann-network.org

- Location: Irwin Mitchell Offices, 2nd Floor, One Castlepark, Tower Hill, Bristol BS2 0JA
- Parking: The closest options are NCP or Cabot Circus.

Save the Date: National Online CANN Conference

While we look forward to seeing you in Bristol, please also pop Thursday 30th April (10:00am–12:30pm) into your diaries for our very first national online CANN conference.

We are so excited to bring together charity and statutory leaders alongside professionals for a line-up of inspiring speakers. It's going to be a brilliant opportunity to look at new ways to survive this difficult climate and find ways for us all to flourish into the future.

More details will follow soon, but for now, we're wishing you all safety and warmth.

The CANN Chairs

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

NEW MEMBERS



Bristol Black Carers

Bristol Black Carers (BBC) was established in 1997, multi award winning charity that supports Caribbean, African and Asian carers of all ages across Bristol. The organisation is known for its person centred, holistic, culturally informed support services designed to help carers and their families navigate health, social care, and community systems.

Bristol Black Carers aims to provide relevant services for carers, recognising the unique social and cultural contexts within the Caribbean, African and Asian communities. The charity focuses on ensuring carers feel heard, supported, valued, and able to access services that match their needs.

<http://www.bristolblackcarers.org.uk>
ceo@bristolblackcarers.co.uk

North Somerset Parent Carers Working Together CIC



South West CANN
www.cann-network.org
southwest@cann-network.org

We are a not for profit community interest company and the official independent parent carer forum for North Somerset commissioned by the Department for Education. We support and signpost parent carers of children/young people (aged 0 -25) with additional needs and/or disabilities through regular drop-ins, stay and plays plus wellbeing opportunities. No diagnosis is required. We facilitate free training opportunities for parent carers as well as professionals, plus organise a variety of information events to help families and signpost to appropriate support available. We gather the collective voice of all parent carers in North Somerset to the leaders in local government, service commissioners and providers to influence change.

<https://www.nspcwt.org/>
laura@nspcwt.org



Gympanzees

Gympanzees is a Bristol-based charity building the UK's first fully inclusive leisure, play and exercise centre for disabled children and young people aged 0–25.

Founded by Stephanie When, Gympanzees was created to tackle the severe lack of accessible spaces where disabled children can play, exercise and socialise alongside their families. After years of running successful pop-up events and a Lending Library of specialist equipment, the charity is now developing a permanent, purpose-built centre opening in 2026.

<https://www.gympanzees.org/>
emily@gympanzees.org

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

Online Experiences Project

A PhD student from the Centre for Neurodiversity and Development at Durham University is seeking participants for a research study on the online experiences of children and young people with Down syndrome (aged 9-25) who have not attended university.

Parents and carers are asked to complete a short survey (around 20 min) about their child/young person's online experiences, including online vulnerability.

South West CANN
www.cann-network.org
southwest@cann-network.org

If you're able to help, please complete the survey here.

https://durhamuniversity.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1OkArEDipRjUWQ6

Young people and work report - Call for evidence

In November 2025 the government commissioned a Young people and work report that seeks to understand drivers of the increase in the number of young people who are NOT in Education Employment or Training (NEET).

This call for evidence invites feedback from anyone with relevant lived experience, knowledge and expertise as to what the root cause of this rise in economic inactivity might be driven by. It is vital that the experiences of young people who have Down's syndrome are included.

Sunshine and Smiles are registered with the [DSA WorkFit programme](#) and it is evident that, with the right support, people who have Down's syndrome can and do thrive in paid, meaningful employment. WorkFit shows what's possible when employers understand strengths, remove barriers, and commit to genuine inclusion.

[Share your experiences and help shape future policy.](#)

Make sure your voice is heard. Your evidence of the opportunities and barriers to employment can help shape future policy and ensure that employment support for young people with Down syndrome and other learning disabilities is strengthened.

The Milburn Review is inviting evidence until 30 January 2026.

Parents/carers, disabled young people and employers can share their experiences by emailing youngpeopleandwork.report@dwp.gov.uk by Friday 30 January.

EVENTS AND INFORMATION - NATIONAL/ONLINE

Webinar: Creating Accessible Places and Spaces

Summary: Join Activity Alliance for a one-hour online event focused on removing the societal, physical, and psychological barriers that prevent disabled people from being active. This session introduces the "Access for All" guide, co-produced with accessibility experts and partners like the Nene Park Trust and The Wave Project.

Who is it for? Ideal for anyone in our network who organises events, manages a space, or supports disabled children and adults in staying active.

How to join: Sign up as a "supporter" on the Activity Alliance website (it's free!) to receive the booking link and access to the webinar.

Link: [Activity Alliance Event Page](#)

Supporting Children with a Visible Difference

We are pleased to share an upcoming online workshop from our partners at Changing Faces, UK.

Is your child or young person living with a scar, mark, or condition that makes them look different? This "Supporting Your Child" workshop is designed specifically for parents and carers to provide practical tips and a supportive community.

What to expect:

- Strategies for handling staring and awkward social situations.
- Advice on building confidence for both you and your child.
- The chance to hear from guest speakers with lived experience of visible difference.

The Details:

 Date: Tuesday 17th March 2026

 Time: 7.15pm – 9.00pm

 Location: Zoom (Online)

 Who: Parents and carers (partners and co-parents are also welcome to attend together!)

To make sure everyone feels comfortable, attendance is capped at around 22 people. After registering, a member of the Changing Faces Wellbeing Team will get in touch for a short, informal pre-workshop call to meet you.

Find out more and register here:

 <https://www.changingfaces.org.uk/services-support/workshops-for-children-families>

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

Join us for our first H.I.E. Conference
14th May 2026, The Lowry, Salford Quays

We're bringing the community together for a very special day, our first H.I.E. Conference. It's something we've wanted to do for such a long time: creating a space where families, professionals and organisations can come together to listen, learn and support one another.
Why come along?

- Hear from families about their experiences following an H.I.E. event, sharing honest and powerful stories.
- Be informed by researchers and healthcare professionals on efforts to reduce instances of H.I.E., improve outcomes and enhance support.
- Feel empowered to contribute to meaningful change.
- Explore exhibitor stands with helpful information from charities, professionals and organisations.
- Connect with others who understand fully what life after H.I.E. means, and the importance of compassionate, collaborative care and support.

Who is it for?

Parents / carers and family members, healthcare professionals, researchers, charities, community organisations, legal and advocacy professionals – in fact there really is something for everyone!

What can you expect?

A day of sharing and learning, as well as being supported and feeling heard.

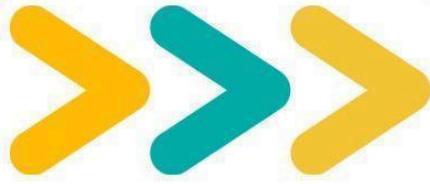
We've a wonderful line up of speakers; lived (living!) experience stories, research insights, workshops and legal clinics. There's a dedicated parent / carer room with peer support available, so as well as having the opportunity to network, there's also space to pause and reflect. We're here to make the day as safe and enjoyable as possible, for everyone.

For those who might find events like this a little overwhelming, please do get in touch. We can arrange to meet people on arrival if preferred, or help facilitate introductions with others. The Peeps team will be on hand throughout the day to answer any questions and ensure everything goes smoothly.

We would love you to join us if you can, to really put H.I.E. on the map, doing even more to raise awareness and offer support.

Tickets are available on [Eventbrite](#), or you can email info@peeps-hie.org if you'd like to make a group booking or pay by invoice.

Please share with your friends and networks too – the more people we reach, the bigger the difference we can make.



H.I.E. CONFERENCE

14th May 2026

The Lowry, Salford Quays

Kindly supported by:



BoltBurdonKemp



EVENTS AND INFORMATION - REGIONAL

'Walk and talk' group for Global Majority Carers

Starting Wednesday 18th March (series of 6 sessions)
10:30am to 12pm in Stoke Park (BS16)

Our walk & talk groups give carers the opportunity to take some time for themselves, enjoy gentle exercise outdoors in nature and chat with other carers who maybe experiencing similar challenges.

Stoke Park is a great area to walk with spectacular views, a trail through the woods and interesting wood carvings.

The sessions are led by our friendly support worker who will offer a listening ear and provide information to support you in your caring role.

Whatever your walking ability, come and join us for some gentle exercise and appreciating nature outdoors.

To find out more or to book, please click the button below:

How to support your child with transitions session

NSPCWT would like to invite parent carers from North Somerset to a fully funded training session with Bev Robson from our team on how to support your child with transitions.

Neurodivergent children can often find transitions challenging. For example, they may find going to new places anxiety provoking, leaving places that they are enjoying, school transitions such a break times, changes of routines in their days and much much more. But why is this? and what as parents or professionals can we do to try and support them though these to make their lives calmer and our lives easier?

We hope to help you answer some of these questions, and give you tips and strategies you can try to implement to help your child's anxiety and transitions.

To book your ticket, please click on the link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/north-somerset-parent-carers-working-together-31392569443>

How to support your child with transitions

With Bev Robson



Monday 2nd March

10am -12pm

Locking Castle Church



Nordic Walking Taster Session

Carers are invited to try Nordic walking in partnership with Let's Walk Bristol. Led by Vicky, the organisation's founder, who will provide all equipment and guidance. Nordic walking offers physical and mental health benefits and suits all fitness levels.

- Where: Eastville Park
- When: Thursday 23 April
- Time: 11:00 am – 12:15 pm

Book on here: walk@carersbsg.org.uk

South West CANN
www.cann-network.org
southwest@cann-network.org

Discover the therapeutic benefits of printmaking – free workshops for carers

Take some time for yourself and explore the calming, creative world of printmaking. These free workshops are designed specifically for carers and offer a friendly, supportive space to relax, try something new and connect with others who understand the challenges of caring.

No experience is needed and all materials are provided. Each session is led by an experienced printmaker, with refreshments available.

Upcoming workshops at the Vassall Centre, Gill Ave, Fishponds:

Lino cutting: 23 March, 29 April — 9:15–12:15

Gelli printing: 4 March, 30 March, 6 May — 9:15–12:15

Screen printing: 16 March, 20 April — 9:15–12:15

Take a well-deserved break, rediscover your creative spark and leave feeling inspired.

Email to book your place: artintro.workshops@gmail.com

SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS AND CONTACT DETAILS:

Website:	https://www.cann-network.org
Email:	southwest@cann-network.org
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.

To ensure our digital presence remains a safe and inclusive space that reflects our core values, the CANN Network has made the decision to step away from X (formerly Twitter) and will now be focusing our community engagement on our other social media platforms.