



**SOUTH WEST CANN COMMUNICATION**  
**April 2026**

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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:**

9th June 2026

15th Sept 2026

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.

<https://celebrating10yearsofimpactthec.splashthat.com/>

**CHAIR COMMENTS**

I would like to start by extending a huge thank you to everyone who attended the **SW CANN Relaunch** event. The energy in the room was fantastic, and it was clear that there is a real appetite across the region for deeper collaboration and partnership working.

Looking ahead, we are already starting to plan our next in-person event for later this year. A key focus for that meeting will be the launch of our new complementary document, "**Now You Are Ready**".

This resource is specifically designed to support the **Transition to Adulthood**, serving as a vital companion to the existing "**When You Are Ready**" document. If you haven't had a chance to see the "When You Are Ready" guide yet, I have attached it to this update for context. We believe these resources will be instrumental in helping our families navigate the complexities of transition with confidence.

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

We are excited to see how we can utilise these tools together to improve outcomes for young people across the South West.

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

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## NEW MEMBERS

### Thomas Pocklington Trust



Thomas Pocklington Trust Education Advice Service provides free, confidential and impartial advice and guidance to blind and partially sighted students aged 7+, their parents/carers and the professionals that support them. We provide expert information, advice and guidance on navigating primary and secondary school, college and university.

<https://www.pocklington.org.uk/education/>

*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*

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## RESEARCH

### INSPIRE MSK study - Investigating Self-management of Musculoskeletal Pain in Real Life

Do you have a young person with musculoskeletal chronic pain? The University of Stirling are looking for young people aged 12-24 to take part in an interview about their self-management practices.

The study aims to understand more about how different financial environments can impact MSK.

#### Take Part

Find out more about the study at: <https://inspiremsk.stir.ac.uk/>

The study has ethical approval from the University of Stirling's Research Ethics Committee.

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## EVENTS AND INFORMATION - NATIONAL/ONLINE

### **Black Maternal Health Week - the Lived Experience from Down Syndrome UK**

Wednesday 15th April | 12.00 pm

This webinar coincides with Black Maternal Health Week and we are pleased to be joined by three of the founders of Black Child Down Syndrome. The Black Child Down Syndrome (BCDS) Project is a groundbreaking advocacy initiative dedicated to increasing awareness, representation, and support for Black children with Down syndrome and their families. As parents of children with Down syndrome, Oneness, Tonye and Danise will be sharing their maternity experiences in order to promote best practice for black parents.

Note: To sign up, please ensure you tick the box of the upcoming webinar before completing and submitting your details.

[Register for the April Webinar here](#)

### **Family Fund - Free virtual workshops to support your digital skills and boost your finances**

This month we're offering support with a range of topics for parents and carers, including learning about the accessibility features on an iPad to finding out how to check your benefits entitlements. Here's what's available:

- Canva skills for parents and carers – Make a star chart
- Completing an online grant search
- Checking your benefits online
- Make it work for you (iPads)
- Supporting your young person into adulthood
- Finding grants as a parent/ carer

For children and young people, our next workshop is the Coding club programme. We'll be using the free VEXCode website (available on all devices) to create a castle crushing game, using sensors and loop functions. Then, during the Easter holidays we have more creative digital workshops but this time with a seasonal theme!




All workshops are free, easy to join from home, and designed to help families to get the most out of devices and being online.

Find out more and book now: <https://www.familyfund.org.uk/support/discover-digital/workshops>

## **A Sensory Theatre Experience Delivered to Your Door with Oily Cart!**




Looking for a way to bring the magic of theatre into your own home? InSideWays is a first-of-its-kind, accessible sensory show designed specifically for disabled young people (ages 0-25) and their families who find it difficult to attend live performances.

Instead of a stage, you receive a colourful chest of drawers filled with:

-  Sensory objects created by experts and artists.
-  A Sensory Storybook for your family to keep.
-  Soundtracks and instructions to lead your own adventure.

There's no right or wrong way to play—just YOUR way. At a value of over £1250 per experience, this is a high-quality, professional production brought directly to your living room.

Details:

-  Cost: £25 per family (Financial support available if price is a barrier).
-  Where: Your home! (Currently touring specific areas including East Yorkshire, Cheshire, and the West Midlands).
-  Duration: You get to keep and explore the chest for 12–14 days.

Book your family's spot here:



[https://www.tickettailor.com/events/oilycart/1938283?mc\\_cid=49eb6575ef&mc\\_eid=a0b52dc6da](https://www.tickettailor.com/events/oilycart/1938283?mc_cid=49eb6575ef&mc_eid=a0b52dc6da)

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## **Webinar from Astor Bannerman: Accessible Equipment in Heritage Buildings - Challenges & Practical Solutions**

Date: 16 April 2026

Time: 12:30pm (UK)

Specifying accessible equipment in heritage buildings comes with a unique set of challenges.

From listed homes and period school buildings to historic public spaces introducing Changing Places facilities, balancing preservation with compliance and usability requires careful thought.

How do you protect the character of a building while ensuring it is inclusive, safe, and fully functional?

This focused 30-minute webinar explores the practical considerations of installing accessible hygiene and changing equipment within heritage and listed environments — and how to overcome common design and installation barriers.

BOOK NOW:

[https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/9217730552522/WN\\_kRJNIRLfRgitoRyacl-Smw#/registration](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/9217730552522/WN_kRJNIRLfRgitoRyacl-Smw#/registration)

**Join WheelPower and Luiz Faye for a FREE Online Adaptive Box-Fit Class from the comfort of your homes LIVE on Zoom.**

If you're looking for a home workout that increases your strength, core stability, and mobility, then look no further! From the comfort of your own home, join Luiz Faye for functional and friendly sessions that can be performed from a seated position, and to suit all levels and abilities.

<https://www.wheelpower.org.uk/activities/online-adaptive-boxfit-class>

# FREE ONLINE ADAPTIVE BOX-FIT CLASS

**MONDAYS  
11AM**



[wheelpower.org.uk/classes](https://www.wheelpower.org.uk/classes)

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

Join us for our first H.I.E. Conference  
14<sup>th</sup> 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.

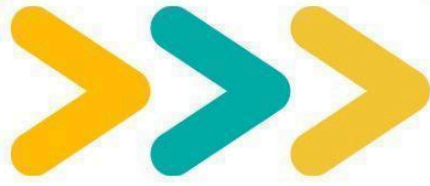
We've a wonderful line up of speakers; lived (living!) experience stories, research insights, workshops and legal clinics. There's a dedicated parent / carer room with peer support available, so as well as having the opportunity to network, there's also space to pause and reflect. We're here to make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

14<sup>th</sup> May 2026

The Lowry, Salford Quays

Kindly supported by:



**BoltBurdonKemp**



## EVENTS AND INFORMATION - REGIONAL

### 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](mailto:walk@carersbsg.org.uk)

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### Join Our Walk & Talk for Carer Wellbeing

As part of this year's Bristol Walk Festival, we're hosting a gentle Walk & Talk session especially for carers.

The walk also takes place during Mental Health Awareness Week ( 11–17 May 2026), making it a great opportunity to focus on your wellbeing.

This easy, relaxed walk is open to all carers and offers a chance to spend time outdoors, connect with others who understand the caring role, and enjoy a friendly, supportive space to chat. Afterwards, you're welcome to join us back at the Vassall Centre for a free tea or coffee.

If you'd like some fresh air, company, and time for yourself, we'd love you to join us.

👉 Find out more and sign up: <https://www.carersbsg.org.uk/our-support-services/walk-and-talk>

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### Start planning your first visit to Gympanzees centre

Would you like to understand what visiting the new Gympanzees centre will look like when it opens later this year?

Our Visitor Information Sessions are designed to give families the practical information they need to start planning their first visit.

Our first session at ICC Wales on Friday 28 March is almost sold out, so we're really pleased to share that a second session in Bristol has now been confirmed.

 We The Curious, Bristol

 Friday 18 April

During these relaxed sessions we'll share practical information about:

- how visits to the centre will work
- what activities and equipment will be available
- what facilities the centre will include
- what to expect when you arrive
- how to plan your first visit

There will also be time to ask questions, meet members of the team and connect with other families.

An adjacent sensory room will be available as a quiet breakout space, with a small selection of equipment from our Lending Library for anyone who may need a calm environment during the event.

We'll be running additional sessions in Gloucestershire and an online option soon.

Reserve your FREE spot ICC Wales March 28th -

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/visitor-information-session-tickets-1983264373128>

Reserve your FREE spot We The Curious April 18th

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/visitor-information-session-tickets-1984481288956>

## When you are Ready information

Greater Bristol Children With  
Additional Needs Network

# When You Are Ready

We are a network of Parent Carers. We have been in your shoes and know this is a difficult time. These are some services we recommend you look at *when you are ready*.

Please note: long web addresses have been shortened to clickable 'bit.ly/' links for your convenience.

## Short Breaks, Play & Family support

### Bristol Integrated Carer's Team

Bristol City Council and NHS Bristol have come together as partners to continue and improve their support for carers. They've pooled the money available, and set up the Integrated Carers Team to respond to your needs. If you live in Bristol or have a Bristol GP we may be able to provide you with a personal budget – this is money you can spend on the support you need, to give you time out from your caring role.

T: 0117 352 1668  
W: [bit.ly/47vL8QA](https://bit.ly/47vL8QA)

### Carer Support Centre

Carer Support Officers can provide support to parent carers in Bristol, and to carers of adults in Bristol and South Gloucestershire.

T: 0117 965 2200  
W: [bit.ly/3f6islp](https://bit.ly/3f6islp)

### Network of Parent Carers

Parent Carer forums work in partnership with their local authorities to shape the services provided. They support families with children and young adults with disability and special needs.

### National Network of Parent Carer Forums:

W: [bit.ly/3Cqlywv](https://bit.ly/3Cqlywv)

### North Somerset Parent Carers:

W: [bit.ly/3Ne68Uf](https://bit.ly/3Ne68Uf)

### South Gloucester Parent Carers:

W: [bit.ly/3nAF66z](https://bit.ly/3nAF66z)

### Bristol Parent Carers:

W: [bit.ly/3Kcm3Lf](https://bit.ly/3Kcm3Lf)

We know that having fun and having places that are accessible for all your children is as important as anything else. As there are multiple options to choose from, we would advise you to visit your Local Offer website to get a list of providers and activities available to you.

Bristol: [bit.ly/3wnS2qa](https://bit.ly/3wnS2qa)

South Gloucestershire:

[bit.ly/3frIX88](https://bit.ly/3frIX88)

North Somerset: [bit.ly/3wke6z8](https://bit.ly/3wke6z8)

BANES: [bit.ly/3TTDU52](https://bit.ly/3TTDU52)

Another organisation that can help signpost you is:

### Contact

National charity for families with disabled children, whatever the condition. Information, advice and support on any aspect of raising a disabled child.

T: 0800 808 3555  
W: [bit.ly/3vdPOBJ](https://bit.ly/3vdPOBJ)

### WECIL & Out and About

WECIL (The West of England Centre for Inclusive Living) & Out and About support disabled children and young people from birth through to adulthood. Their services are designed to ensure your child can build and develop the skills, relationships, friendships and confidence needed to live the life they chose. The benefits often go well beyond the time spent in sessions, and their short breaks also give parents well deserved time away from caring responsibilities. They also offer specialist services to support disabled adults.

T: 0117 947 9911  
W: [bit.ly/3xWJNSM](https://bit.ly/3xWJNSM)  
E: [outandabout@wecil.co.uk](mailto:outandabout@wecil.co.uk)

### Bristol Black Carers

Provides support and assistance to carers (young, adult & parents), the cared-for and their family/friends according to their needs. This includes advice, information, housing, benefits, support group sessions, etc. Our focus is on the Caribbean, African, and Asian communities, but not exclusive. We work towards making their journey better in the health and social care pathways.

T: 0117 379 0084  
W: [bit.ly/43OhQTP](https://bit.ly/43OhQTP)



## Benefits and entitlements

It can be confusing knowing what you are entitled to, so these organisations are here to help.

### Carer's Allowance

Carer's Allowance is a weekly benefit to help you look after someone with substantial caring needs. You don't have to be related to or live with the person you care for, but you must be 16 or over and spend at least 35 hours a week caring for them.

W: [bit.ly/3wqcPJW](https://bit.ly/3wqcPJW)

### Carer's Assessment

A Carer's Assessment is carried out by your local authority. Based on the outcome of your assessment, they may be able to help you with a grant or other financial benefit.

The parent carer assessment can be done as part of a child's social care needs assessment with the Local Authority.

### Bristol – Contact First Response

T: 0117 903 6444

### South Gloucestershire – Contact Access and Response Team

T: 01454 866 000

For information about Carer's Assessments in North Somerset, please contact the Council

T: 01275 888 801

W: [bit.ly/3hGbpEx](https://bit.ly/3hGbpEx)

For parent carers in Bristol, there's a Carer's Wellbeing Grant administered by the Disabled Children's Service. It can be applied for once every 12 months, and can be used to purchase something that'll benefit the carer's wellbeing or let them have a break from their role.

T: 0117 903 8250

### Contact

The charity offers a benefits advice line and information about benefits on their website

T: 0808 808 3555

W: [bit.ly/3yrdQgH](https://bit.ly/3yrdQgH)

### Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

DLA is a non-means-tested benefit that may help with the extra costs of looking after a child with additional needs. You do not need a diagnosis for your child to apply for DLA and you don't have to face it alone - the Local Benefits Specialist, Contact and the citizen's advice bureau (CAB) can all help.

W: [bit.ly/2SWBGpQ](https://bit.ly/2SWBGpQ)

### Family Fund

Provides grants to families raising disabled children aged 17 and under for a wide range of items such as washing machines, sensory toys, family breaks, clothing and bedding, outdoor play equipment, computers and tablets. The charity also runs a separate grant programme for young people aged 18-24 years old.

T: 01904 621115

W: [bit.ly/3oFCXeP](https://bit.ly/3oFCXeP)

### Irwin Mitchell

Irwin Mitchell's Public Law and Human Rights team can help you challenge organisations if they treat you unfairly. They have a wealth of experience across all fields of public law, with the knowledge and skills to make sure that your rights are respected.

W: [bit.ly/3ydytyv](https://bit.ly/3ydytyv)

## Education

These are some great services that can help you navigate what support your child is entitled to at school.

### SEND and You – SENDIAS (Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support) Service for Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire

We offer a free, confidential and impartial service through telephone or face-to-face for children, young people (aged 0-25 years) and their parents/carers regarding all aspects of special educational needs and disability; including providing information to manage earliest concerns through to Education, Health and Care (EHC) processes and appeals.

T: 0117 989 7725

W: [bit.ly/3FzTUTW](https://bit.ly/3FzTUTW)

## Health and Social Care

### Local Authority Disabled Children Services

Provide a range of services for children with disabilities. They can help with assessments, support, occupation therapy assessments, short breaks, accessible play areas and advice and info on services in your community.

### Bristol

T: 0117 903 8250

W: [bit.ly/3hCMLEY](https://bit.ly/3hCMLEY)

### South Gloucestershire

T: 01454 866000

W: [bit.ly/3F3TnKG](https://bit.ly/3F3TnKG)

### Bath and North East Somerset Disabled Children's Team

T: 01225 396967

W: [bit.ly/2SX1pMU](https://bit.ly/2SX1pMU)

### North Somerset

T: 01275 888 808

W: [bit.ly/3y5LjnC](https://bit.ly/3y5LjnC)

### Other support for you

### LIAISE – (Listening Information Advice Involving Support Experiences)

A dedicated patient and family support service for Bristol Royal Hospital for Children and for womens and childrens services based at St Michaels Hospital which includes maternity, gynaecology, neonatal care and children's audiology.

T: 0117 342 8065

E: [bchinfo@uhbw.nhs.uk](mailto:bchinfo@uhbw.nhs.uk)

Produced by

 irwinmitchell

This leaflet is a joint production by the members of the Greater Bristol Children with Additional Needs Network

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## SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS AND CONTACT DETAILS:

Website: <https://www.cann-network.org>  
Email: [southwest@cann-network.org](mailto: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](mailto: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.*