



BUCKS INTEGRATED SENSORY SERVICE NEWSLETTER

October 2022, Issue 16

BISS Update

As you may recall from our previous newsletter, on 23rd June 2022, BISS staff transferred over from RNID to BucksVision, who are now the new service provider of Buckinghamshire Sensory Service. The BISS team have all now moved across to BucksVision and are permanently based at their office at 143 Meadowcroft, Aylesbury. BISS continues to operate in the same way as before and we remain committed and focused on helping and supporting anyone with a sensory loss in Buckinghamshire. We are very much looking forward to working with BucksVision and you can read more about Bucks Vision further on in this newsletter.

You can still contact BISS on the same phone numbers **01296 479 970** and **07918 904 664 (SMS)** but please note we have a new email address biss@bucksvision.co.uk.

Staff goodbye

The BISS team were sad to say goodbye to Lucy Burnham, our Sensory Support Officer, in September who has left us to take up a new role working for her husband's business.

Lucy has been working in the field for sixteen years and throughout that time has provided helpful advice, support and specialist equipment to many hearing impaired and profoundly Deaf people in Buckinghamshire.

We wish Lucy all the very best for the future and we will update you on news for her replacement as soon as we can.

BucksVision

BucksVision was officially founded on 31 October 1911 as Buckinghamshire Association for the Blind and celebrated their 110th anniversary last October. They are a local vision impairment charity supporting people with sight loss across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. They offer a wide range of services including social and sporting activities, support at home, eye clinic patient transport, free courses to help people with sight loss and also have a large team of volunteers working on their behalf. They have a wide variety of equipment for demonstration in their Resource Centre in Aylesbury ranging from daily living aids, to magnification aids and digital technology. If you would like to make an appointment to visit their Resource Centre, please give them a call on **01296 487 556**.

RNIB Support with Cost of Living Crisis

The RNIB are offering free practical and emotional support to help people with sight loss deal with increasing financial pressures. People with sight loss are entitled to financial support to help them with the extra costs associated with their disability. The RNIB have produced a cost of living factsheet to inform and advise people with sight loss about the financial assistance, tax allowances and concessions they may be entitled to and the information they need in order to apply. The factsheet is available to download on the [RNIB's website](#). Alternatively, you can call them on **0303 123 999** or email them on helpline@rnib.org.uk.

Winslow Hard of Hearing Group

On Thursday 4th August staff from BISS Hearing Impairment Team delivered a talk to Winslow Hard Of Hearing Group at Winslow Library. This was an opportunity for people to find out more about the assistive equipment and support that BISS can provide those with a hearing impairment; and share experiences about living with hearing loss. This group is for anyone who has problems with their hearing or an interest in matters to do with hearing loss and it is anticipated that this event will be run on the first Thursday of every month at 2.30pm. If you would like further details about this or are interested in attending, please contact Diana on **07803 174 583**.

Travel Support

If you have a vision or hearing impairment, you are eligible to apply for a Disabled Person's Bus Pass or Railcard. This will entitle you to free or discounted bus and train travel. For a bus pass, you need to contact BCC or apply online [Buckscc.gov.uk/Concessionary Bus Pass](http://Buckscc.gov.uk/Concessionary%20Bus%20Pass). For a rail card, you need to complete the form on the Disabled Persons Railcard website.

When applying for a Disabled Persons Bus Pass, it is advisable to apply for a companion one, then whoever you are travelling with goes for free too. With the Disabled Persons Rail Card, a named companion will also get the same discount on rail fare (usually 30%). There are also discounts available on Oyster cards to use on the underground.

Travel assistance is also widely available. For train travel you can book assisted travel when purchasing your ticket or up to two hours before you travel. This means that arrangements can be put in place to ensure that staff are available to assist you on and off the train. They can also provide support on a turn up and go basis, where staff are available. Assistance can be booked online, by phone **0800 0223720**, or via an app.

Airlines will also support you. Always ask for help when booking the tickets. If you require additional assistance either at the airport or on the flight or both, notify your travel agent or the airline direct ahead of the date of your journey. The more notice you give them the better but at least 48 hours before departure is preferable to ensure that someone is able to assist you.

Aylesbury Signing Café

Aylesbury Signing Café is being held on the following dates:

Saturday 22nd October and Saturday 26th November, Time: 2-4pm

It will be held at Aylesbury Starbucks Coffee Shop within Sainsburys, 90 Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury HP19 8EH

This is an opportunity for anyone with or without a hearing impairment to come along for a chat and improve and practise their BSL skills in a relaxed and welcoming environment and enjoy coffee and cake at the same time. All levels of British Sign Language abilities are welcome. BSL leaflet with the alphabet, basic greetings and more will be available at this event. No pre booking is required.

Aylesbury Macular Group

We are pleased to advise you that the Aylesbury Macular Group is once again meeting in person. The group meets on the last Wednesday of the month from 1 to 3pm at Room 2 in The Aylesbury Methodist Church, Buckingham Street, HP20 2NQ and is open to anyone experiencing sight loss, not just those with a macular condition. Friends and family members are also welcome to attend. The group organises a programme for the year including a mixture of talks and activities.

If you would like to attend just drop in on the day, no pre booking is required.

Deafblind Unite!

BISS and BucksVision are looking to start up a Deafblind group, Deafblind Unite! in the new year.

The group will start by providing six weeks of Deafblind communication lessons which are open to anyone with dual sensory loss and their family/friends.

Once established the group will offer a chance for people to meet with others and keep up their Deafblind communication skills.

If you are interested in joining Deafblind Unite! please get in touch.

01296 487 556, 07918 904 664 (SMS) or reception@bucksvision.co.uk

Please note we would require a commitment from you to attend the six weeks of lessons.

How to contact us:

Phone: 01296 479 970

Text (SMS): 07918 904 664

Email: biss@bucksvision.co.uk

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