

# Sensory Inclusion Service Visual Impairment Newsletter

Issue  
**18**  
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Sensory Inclusion Service, Floor 7, Darby House, Lawn Central, Telford, TF3 4JA

## Creativity in COVID 19 Lockdown

It's been a strange time for us all and one that will make history but it has also given us time to try something new, progress in a hobby or be creative. Here are some of the things you have been up to;

'Ellie has been gardening, learning life skills (washing up), and looking after her dogs.'



'Freya was determined to do it before they did bike-ability at school, she practised and practised every spare minute she got and fell off a lot but finally got there. She is very happy that she no longer needs stabilisers like her younger brother.'



My disability

I have a disability, but  
it doesn't matter, you see,  
I can still walk  
I can still talk  
I can still laugh  
I can still play

Even though I look different,  
I'm still the same as you!

I have friends  
I have a home  
I have a family  
I have dreams  
Sometimes people stop and stare,  
which makes me feel quite sad  
so don't judge me, as I might  
just be the best friend  
you ever had -

by Archie, aged 10

'Archie has been writing poems and this is his submission to hopefully win a Blue Peter badge.'

'He rolled over for the first time on Sunday, he's a year old this Sunday. Also he cut his first tooth on Monday so it looks like it's all systems go for him now they seem to have got his meds right. He is noticing us more and is actually looking at us.'



'Amy has been growing her own vegetables. She's sown from seed a runner bean plant, re-potted the seedling and is taking care of it daily, feeding, watering etc, and hoping to have batch of beans by the end of summer.'



Shropshire  
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Telford & Wrekin  
COUNCIL

## Opportunity to win a Blue Peter badge

Blue Peter are giving away free badges to children between 6-15 years. There are instructions on how to apply on this website and the child needs to send in a poem, letter, rhyme, recipe, model or even a suggestion for the show.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/findoutmore/blue-peter-apply-for-a-blue-badge>

The badge gains free entry to over 200 attractions across the UK.



## SAVE THE DATE

We are still hopeful that this year's pantomime will go ahead. Further details will follow in due course.



**Family trip – Pantomime - Aladdin**

**Saturday 19th December 2020**

(with an opportunity to meet and greet the cast before the show) Oakengates Theatre, Telford.

## Amazon Smile



Please can I make you aware that the OneVISION charity has signed up to Amazon Smile. If you use Amazon to order goods please could I ask you to consider using this Amazon Smile link and selecting OneVISION when placing your order so that a small percentage of the purchase price is donated to the charity. Thank you.

**AmazonSmile** is a website operated by **Amazon** with the same products, prices and shopping features as **Amazon.co.uk** The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, **Amazon** will donate 0.5% of the net purchase price (excluding VAT, returns and shipping fees) from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases.

## OneVISION AGM

### Next AGM

This year's OneVISION AGM is set for Tuesday 15th September, 6.00pm.

Given the current climate the meeting will take place virtually using Microsoft Teams.

This year's AGM will also be used for the purpose of formalising the new committee and completing the commission change.

If you would like to help support the OneVISION charity please contact Jo Adcock on [jo.adcock@telford.gov.uk](mailto:jo.adcock@telford.gov.uk) who will send you an invite to the meeting.

Thank you.



Registered Charity No. 1043896

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For children with a visual impairment and their families in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin



## Video call with QTVI



Some families have benefitted from the support of a QTVI during lockdown. Iris is usually visited in school once a fortnight by her QTVI. Some of those sessions involve the QTVI working one to one with Iris, to complete her work practically. During the lockdown period Iris has received lessons from her QTVI through video calls. Iris has looked forward to these sessions. Her dad informed me that Iris said, "Oh I'm so excited that I'm going to video chat with Gill again, she helped me a lot." He continued "We know this too, because as parents we tried to help her with the online "Dojo class" but we didn't quite manage as well as we wanted to. I believe that parents are not teachers, when we are talking about school, parents are parents and our duty is to protect and teach them about life. As parents of a child with a degree of visual impairment

we always found that the help of a qualified teacher like Gill Dorricott essential for our daughter. The new online sessions that she is working on with Iris is helping her to better understand."

Iris's father, Nicolae, wants the reader to gain a greater understanding of Iris's eye condition, to appreciate why this support was valuable for her.

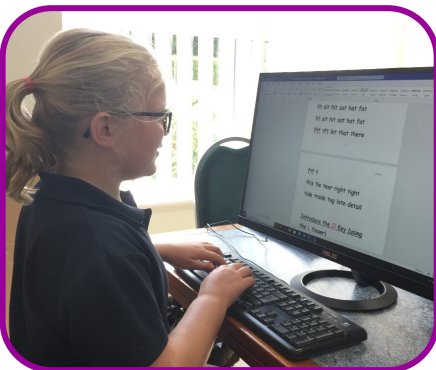
"Iris was born prematurely in Romania, as result she developed a condition called 'Retinopathy of Prematurity', this condition has five stages and Iris's condition evolved very fast. In only one week she already reached stage 5 and this meant that both of her retinas became detached and as a result Iris became blind. At the age of 7 months, we managed to reach a clinic in USA and she was offered a surgery called "Vitrectomy" on both of her eyes but unfortunately she regained a 20% vision only on her left eye."

The on-line sessions using Microsoft teams were at first a learning curve for all involved, however they have certainly helped connect with families and students over this difficult time, due to the pandemic Covid-19 crisis.

Nicolae describes the challenge; "When we started to use the Microsoft Teams platform that some "Special Teachers" use, we had problems as it was something new and it presented a challenge for us, but with all the connection problems and the technical challenges, we managed to establish not only an online connection but a teacher and a pupil connection too, Thank you, Gill Dorricott!"

Iris is now back in school attending school full time and coping very well with the changes in place, she is so happy to be with her friends again. The support through video chat is still being offered after school once a fortnight until her QTVI Gill is able to visit her in school again.

## My Virtual Touch Typing Lessons



By Grace Downes

At first, I was a bit uncertain about doing touch typing virtually, but because I have been doing my school lessons online via Microsoft Teams, I soon got to grips with it. After the first session it felt very normal as Claire still does the same fun warm up and routine. The time whizzes by and we have lots of fun! I think it is great that we are still able to do touch typing and I am very grateful.

## General update from Joint Team Leaders

As we come to the end of the school year, we wanted to update you on a few things. It has been quite a school year ending with the Covid -19 situation far from over. We recognise, as a service, that this has been a challenging time for all our families and young people. As you are aware, the team has been working hard to maintain contact with children and families over this period. We have also been working closely with schools to support both the children who are back in, as well as those who are still at home. The team thanks you all for your support in making this possible.

### Future working patterns

There is still much that is unclear about what the future looks like. Over the school summer break, we will run our usual emergency contact service. We will give you details of that before the end of the school year. At the moment, we are still not able to visit schools and homes but are hopeful that we are beginning to gain more detail on how things might work in September. Both local authorities are working hard to set up systems so we can begin our work again and will keep you up to date with any developments. We are keen to get back to face-to-face contact with CYP. This period of time has, however, allowed us to develop new ways of working that we are sure we may continue to use in some way.



### Hearing and Vision Issues

In terms of clinics for both HI and VI children, the situation is largely unchanged from our previous updates. The audiology department is contacting all hearing aid wearers and is working hard to ensure that any issues can be resolved. Mark, our technician, is also in contact with families to trouble-shoot any issues that develop. We continue to have weekly virtual meetings with Audiology as well as ENT staff. We have been able to support a number of families whose children have been fitted with hearing aids over this time and to support a number of visually impaired children who have been diagnosed recently. If you do have any concerns around your child's hearing and vision, please do not hesitate to contact the team and we will endeavour to support you or direct you to the appropriate clinic or agency.

### Reports and Annual Reviews

If we hold an email address for you, all SIS reports are currently being sent to that address. Families are asked to respond to the email so they can be sent a password. You may need to check this has not arrived in your SPAM box. If you contact us to say you have not received a report, it is either because the email address we have is incorrect or you have not been able to respond to the original email. If necessary, reports can be re-sent if requested. If receiving reports in this way is problematic please let your SIS support worker know. If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) they should be reviewed regularly by the school in consultation with families. Schools have now had new guidance on this in relation to timeframes. If you have any concerns in this area, please contact your child's school in the first instance.

Best Wishes to you all - Stay safe and well

*Graham and Theresa* (Joint Team Leaders)

## Sports for Vision-Impaired People in Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin



Hello, my name is Chris Styles and I am a vision-impaired sportsman from Shropshire, when I was growing up, I had no opportunities in my county to participate in any sport for vision-impaired people. I am lucky that my family were willing to drive to other counties to access sport. I have observed that there is still a lack of sport provision for people with a vision-impairment in the county.

This is something I would like to change.

I have compete in a variety of vision-impaired sports, playing vision-impaired rugby for England in Japan, blind cricket for regional champions Worcestershire

Elizabethans, partially-sighted football for North West

Scorpions and long jump at Gloucester Athletic Club.

In order to establish the interest in vision-impaired sports in the area, I would appreciate if you could get in touch with me at:

**[chris@blindingperformance.co.uk](mailto:chris@blindingperformance.co.uk)**

to complete a brief survey; outlining your current level of physical activity and what vision-impaired sports you would be interested in participating in.

Let's hope we can get all of this started in 2021!

Blinding Performance is a small non-profit organisation that aims to promote, facilitate and develop the physical wellbeing of vision-impaired people to improve mental health and social inclusion.



## BLIND IN BUSINESS

*helping blind & partially sighted people into work*

Blind in Business is a national charity which supports young visually impaired people into employment. We have helped over 800 people into work and have supported over 6,000 young people with specialised careers advice and guidance.

If you are thinking of going to college or doing an apprenticeship, BiB can help you along the way. From helping source the best apprenticeships to helping with applications and interview preparation, we provide tailored support. If you are interested in going to college, we are also on hand to provide guidance around technology and the different qualifications on offer.

If you are interested in heading to university, BiB can help talk you through the process. From Disabled Students' Allowance to putting you in touch with students who have studied your course, we can offer support every step of the way.

If you would like to get in touch to find out how BiB can support you, contact **[info@blindinbusiness.org.uk](mailto:info@blindinbusiness.org.uk)** and we will get right back to you.

Sensory Inclusion Service, Floor 7, Darby House, Lawn Central, Telford. TF3 4JA

## Farewell Fiona Davidson



Goodbye ... & thank you all for your lovely emails and kind wishes re my forthcoming retirement. I feel very proud to have had the opportunity to work with such a dedicated & caring team of expert professionals. I am now really looking forward to new opportunities, even in these strange Covid times. I wish you all well – your children are amazing! Stay safe & be kind. Fiona

At the end of this term we will sadly be saying goodbye to Fiona as she will be retiring after 27 years with the Sensory Inclusion Service as a Qualified Teacher for the Visually Impaired.

Fiona has a wealth of experience in providing advice and support to meet visual needs and promote positive outcomes for children and young people. She has a particular interest in working with secondary and FE students and she has constantly 'gone the extra mile' for these students and their families. Fiona has exceptional expertise in the teaching of braille which has been highly valued by the team over the years. She has also had a pivotal role in promoting close working relationships with NHS professionals for example through low vision aid clinics and visual assessment clinics.

Fiona is a very kind and caring person and she has always taken a personal interest in the wellbeing of her colleagues which we have all greatly appreciated.

We wish you all the best Fiona and we will miss you!



### Local Offer for Special Educational Needs and Disability

Discover everything you need to know about education, health and care services in your local area for children and young people with SEND 0-25yrs at...

[www.telfordsend.org.uk](http://www.telfordsend.org.uk)



#### Key features...

- Search for clear and accessible information, advice and sources of support.
- Explore leisure, fun and short breaks activities.
- Find out about specialist services and education health and care plans.
- Learn how schools support special educational needs.
- Use the interactive map showing what is available near to where you live.
- Have your say through our online feedback form.



[www.telfordsend.org.uk](http://www.telfordsend.org.uk)

## Need this in large print or Braille?

If you would like to receive this newsletter in Large Print or Braille, please email

**sendandinclusion  
@telford.gov.uk**



**Shropshire's SEND Local Offer** is a single place for information and services for children and young people with special education needs and/or disabilities, their families and the practitioners who support them.

Take a look at the [SEND Family directory](#) for local events, groups and things to do. For news and updates please like and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Email: [Local.Offer@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:Local.Offer@shropshire.gov.uk) Telephone: 0345 678 9063

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