

Welcome to Birmingham Vision Support Team Newsletter!

CELEBRATIONS – We are now in the summer term and a lot of students are preparing to move forward to a new stage of their lives. It is good to reflect upon what is needed to help our children and young people have successful transitions.



We are going to see what may be helpful in moving forward into one of the next stages of life for one of our young people in preparation to being an adult. Once again we hope you make use of the inspirational news from a former student, Yusuf, who is now at university and feedback from students at Y9-Y11. In addition to the support available to enable moving forward in our events and links section.

A first-hand account of starting University as a student with vision impairment

Yusuf Huraire is a 22-year-old young man who has been blind since birth. Yusuf was educated at a specialist vision impairment school and attended a mainstream school for lessons when studying for his A-Levels. Following the successful completion of his A-Levels Yusuf decided to study for a Business Management degree. He began the course in September 2019 at the University of Wolverhampton. Yusuf explained how he found this experience to be a difficult one as he did not feel fully submerged in University life and, as a result, during lockdown in March 2020 Yusuf made the brave decision to transfer his studies to Birmingham City University.

Yusuf is now fully submerged in University life, is enjoying his studies, has lots of friends, attends extra-curricular activities, provides representation for the University and is a happy student.



What advice and support would Yusuf recommend to anyone who is considering University?

One of the most important things that he recommends is applying for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) as soon as possible. As Yusuf was unsure what degree to choose, he left his application late and due to the fairly lengthy process he wishes he had done this sooner. As a result of the DSA Yusuf is provided with support in the form of note takers for lectures, sighted guides, and travel assistance. The DSA can also help with the costs of specialist equipment and other disability-related study support. See [Help if you're a student with a learning difficulty, health problem or disability: Disabled Students' Allowance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-if-youre-a-student-with-a-learning-difficulty-health-problem-or-disability-disabled-students-allowance) for further information. Yusuf also spoke about the importance of his habilitation officer in ensuring that he was confident to travel independently to University before his course began. Yusuf further highlighted the importance of the University Disability or Inclusion Team who offer support and advice. Information about any impairment of condition should be specified on your UCAS application form. For further information visit: [Disabled Students | Advice And Financial Support | UCAS](#)

What is next for Yusuf?

After completing his degree Yusuf hopes to secure a graduate scheme within Human Resources Management.

Thank you for sharing your story Yusuf and good luck for your future!

Top Tips from Anna Roche (QTVI), who is our Preparation for Adulthood Lead, on how to make your transition to a Further Education college EASY:

1. **E**xplore your options on the Birmingham Careers Service website
2. **A**pply in good time and declare your vision loss and vision support needs to the college
3. **S**ecure details of the support and equipment the college will give you for your vision needs before enrolling
4. **Y**ou should tell the college you want support from your visiting Qualified Teacher of the Vision Impaired (QTVI)!

CONTACT US:

Vision Support Team is part of the Sensory Support and Physical Difficulties Support Service

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Feedback from our Year 7's who have transitioned into Secondary School

"It was obviously very different as you need to be a lot more independent and there were more things to worry about e.g., bigger building, more teachers.

Positives – the transition meeting to find out more about the school and the teachers and I knew some teachers before I started. All teachers are emailing me before lessons, which is a positive as I am more independent. I also had habilitation support to learn the new route to school and find my way around the new building.' *Muskan, Y7*

"Moving forward" Feedback that our Children and Young People with Vision Impairment are finding about choosing a secondary school and Further Education college

The following is making our choice hard:

- Hard because I can't make up my mind
- Not done research yet
- My parents want me to do something different to what I want
- Grades for entry are higher than my grades
- Teachers helping to support my choices in what I want to do
- Too many options to choose from
- The thing is that I like almost every subject here and I'm really good at almost everything I'm doing at the moment, making it harder for me to decide.
- Difficult choice because there are lots of things to do

Children and Young People with vision impairment wanted support to explore the following options below. Including planning for their additional needs to be supported when they leave Year 11.

- Perhaps see as many more colleges or sixth forms that help to support my needs.
- Have mobility referral and transition with someone I know
- keep in touch with my QTVI about my vision and stuff like that
- Use IT – iPad skills
- Have larger font for paper copies

<https://www.birminghamcareersservice.co.uk/>

<https://acesstoeducation.birmingham.gov.uk/sensory-support/>

<https://www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk/>

Upcoming events

- **Sight Village is taking place on Tuesday 28th & Wednesday 29th June at Queen Alexandra College, Birmingham. Sight Village Central - 2022 - Queen Alexandra College (qac.ac.uk)**
- **RSBC are hosting a range of activities; including a Cycling session, Music Quiz, Assistive Technology Sessions and Audio Book Clubs. Calendar of Activities - RSBC**

VICTA Sunflower Race, British Blind Sports Have A Go Day, VICTA Summer Camp Activity calendar – VICTA

Events- Disability swimming every Saturday at Ladywood Leisure Centre. Just turn up, no booking needed. £3.15 per person, carers free, fully accessible facility.

Space Hoppers in West Bromwich offer great fun for all ages. Entrance is free of charge for children with disabilities attending with their families. Space Hoppers Tel: 0121 580 4914.

PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN WHO HAVE VISION IMPAIRMENT- DRESS UP, SENSORY STORY, SONGS, GAMES. Please contact Karen Barguss

for further information on 07730 281 769

Or Email: Karen.barguss@birmingham.gov.uk



USEFUL WEBSITE ADDRESSES	
https://blindinbusiness.org.uk/	Blind in Business
https://www.birminghamcareersservice.co.uk/open-days/	Career advice Service and open days in Birmingham
https://www.focusbirmingham.org.uk/pages/category/sight-loss-support	Sight loss support charity offering services to Birmingham residents.
https://www.victa.org.uk/	Empowering children and young people with vision loss.
Guide Dogs UK Charity For The Blind And Partially Sighted	For help and support with living actively, independently and well with sight loss.
Welcome to Visionary - Visionary	Offering support for access to locally delivered services for those living with sight loss.
https://www.pocklington-trust.org.uk/news/new-student-support-service/	A new support service for students with vision impairment.