

NEWS RELEASE

18/02/08

For immediate release

It's a goal! New sports club for Bristol's blind kids

From Saturday 1 March, visually impaired children from Bristol and the surrounding area will have their very own free sports club run by national charity, Action for Blind People. The club, known as the Bristol Actionnaires, is the charity's 29th Actionnaires club across England and Wales.

***** **PHOTO CALL** *****

WHO: Visually impaired children of the Bristol Actionnaires and Kerry McCarthy MP

WHAT: The launch of the Bristol Actionnaires

WHERE: City Academy Bristol, Russell Town Avenue, Bristol BS5 9JH

WHEN: Saturday 1 March, 10.30am – 12.30pm

At the launch, blind and partially sighted children, along with their siblings and friends, will be learning to play goalball – a sport originally created to rehabilitate soldiers blinded in warfare. In the coming months the Bristol Actionnaires club will offer a range of sports including football, basketball, athletics and trampolining. Although the club is aimed at children aged eight to 16, younger children may attend if accompanied by an adult. Rebecca Frost, Action for Blind People's Sports Development Officer for the South West, explains more:

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“Across the UK many children who are visually impaired are missing out on sport. Sport encourages fitness, self-confidence and interaction, and our Actionnaires clubs give children the chance to develop all of these, and make friends with other blind and partially sighted children at the same time. We are very excited about bringing this opportunity to children in Bristol, and we are particularly grateful to the South Gloucester Bus & Coach Company for their support.”

Olympic swimmer, Darren Mew, sent the club the following message: "I would like to wish the Bristol Actionnaires the very best of luck. Swimming is my passion and I think the opportunity to take part in sport should be available to all children, regardless of whether or not they have a disability. Who knows, we may be looking at the Paralympic champions of the future!"

At the launch, the children will be joined by Kerry McCarthy MP for Bristol East, who comments: “I am delighted that Action for Blind People is to open its latest sports club in my constituency. I enjoy sport myself and strongly believe everyone should have the opportunity to partake in all aspects of society, and that disability should not be a barrier to becoming fully involved in the local community. I therefore congratulate Action for Blind People and wish this club every success.”

The Bristol Actionnaires will meet every Saturday, 10.30am – 12.30pm at the City Academy Bristol. Parents and children wanting more information should contact Action for Blind People’s Sports Development Officer, Rebecca Frost, on 07894 390 288 or email Rebecca.frost@actionforblindpeople.org.uk There is also information available on the charity’s website at www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk

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For further media information please contact name, press office on 020 7635 4898 or 07739 819954 or email: zoe.patel@actionforblindpeople.org.uk

Notes to editors:

- Action for Blind People currently runs 29 sports clubs for visually impaired children in: Ashford, Birmingham, Blackburn, Bradford, Bristol, Carlisle, Coventry, Dorset, Essex, Gwent, Huddersfield, Hull, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool (2), Manchester, Middlesbrough, Nottingham, Oxford, Peterborough, Portsmouth, Scarborough, Sheffield, South London, Southampton, Sunderland, Swindon and West London.
- Action for Blind People is an expert national organisation, ensuring blind and partially sighted people get practical support in all aspects of their lives. Contact Action for Blind People's National Freephone Helpline on 0800 915 4666 or www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk
- Action for Blind People is breaking down barriers that prevent visually impaired people from achieving the same opportunities as sighted people.
- If abbreviating "Action for Blind People", please use "Action" rather than AFBP or ABP.