



Visually Impaired Boccia

A Guide for Supporting Visually Impaired Adults and Children in Boccia.



A Visible Difference Through Sport

Introduction

Welcome to the Visually Impaired Boccia guide, produced in partnership between Boccia England and British Blind Sport. This resource aims to offer support, ideas and guidance on how to include blind and partially sighted people in boccia and enable coaches and leaders to deliver VI boccia confidently in club, school and community settings.

Boccia is a tactical target ball sport which tests both muscle control and accuracy. From a seated position, players propel balls to land as close as possible to a white marker ball, known as the Jack. Two sides compete as individuals, pairs or a team over a set number of ends.

Balls can be rolled down a ramp, thrown or kicked. If a player is unable to release the ball with their hands, they can use assistive devices, such as a head pointer.

Visually impaired boccia (VI boccia) is an adapted version of the sport played by blind and partially sighted athletes, who use a tactile grid or other modified playing methods. Visit www.bocciaengland.org.uk to find out more about boccia or attend a Boccia Leaders Award workshop to further build your skills on playing and delivering the game.





"Boccia England are committed to our vision of 'changing lives through boccia.' We pride ourselves in

being a totally inclusive sport and whilst boccia was originally designed for individuals with severe physical disabilities, we have widened our participation initiatives to include anyone regardless of age, gender, ability or disability.

We hope that this educational resource will enable more blind and partially sighted players across the country to engage socially or competitively with boccia, and give increased confidence and knowledge to the volunteers delivering our sport."

Chris Ratcliffe, Chief Executive Officer Boccia England



"British Blind Sport is committed to providing sport and recreational opportunities for all blind and

partially sighted adults and children across Great Britain from grassroots to elite level. The positive effects of participation in sport for a visually impaired person cannot be underestimated and we are aware that skilled coaches and teachers make all the difference to helping others achieve their goals. This resource is a fantastic tool for those who are committed to making a visible difference through sport."

Alaina MacGregor, Chief Executive Officer, British Blind Sport

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Section 1: Understanding Sight Loss

1.1 What is Sight Loss?

Sight loss can be broadly defined as 'a limitation in one or more functions of the eye or visual system'. It can be congenital (someone is born with the impairment) or acquired and can range from blind to partially sighted. Sight is classified on more than one measure. The main measures are 'Visual acuity' and 'Visual field'.

Visual Acuity

A person's ability to see fine detail. For example, reading text is often tested by reading down an eye chart.

Visual Field

The boundaries of what a person can see in one instant; the entire area which can be seen without moving the eyes.

Sight loss is on a broad spectrum and people's sight will vary greatly depending on the cause of the impairment and where it occurs in the eyes or brain. Sight loss can range from the total loss of sight to a disturbance within the field of vision. The age or stage of onset that sight loss occurs will have an effect on the individual's physical, psychological and emotional development.



1.2 Understanding Impairments

The common conditions below are all types of ocular impairments. This means the condition has affected a part of the eye.

There are also cortical sight conditions, which occur when the processing of information received from the eye is at fault, and not the eye itself.

Albinism

This condition occurs due to a lack of pigmentation in the skin or eyes causing a reduced visual acuity. Bright light will cause discomfort to people with this condition.

This is important to consider when holding a session in a brightly lit venue or in direct sunlight. If sunlight or floodlights are shining into an environment, it may alter a person's vision.

Nystagmus

Nystagmus is the involuntary movement of the eye, with the person's eyes appearing to shake or oscillate. This condition is often a factor in other visual impairments such as albinism. People with nystagmus may find it difficult to follow a moving ball, due to the movement of the eye. There may also be an angle of sight that the nystagmus affects the least. This means that the visually impaired participant may look indirectly at the point of interest.

Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP)

This condition affects both the visual acuity and visual field, often resulting in tunnel vision. It will take time for a participant to adjust to new light levels when transitioning from poorly-lit to well-lit environments. If the change is very significant, it may leave the participant temporarily blind. Some forms of RP are progressive and may result in individuals losing all their sight over time.

Retinoblastoma

Retinoblastoma is cancer of the eye. The resulting visual impairment will vary depending on the size and location of the tumour and whether it affects one or both eyes.

Conclusion

There are some sight loss conditions that occur as part of a syndrome. These conditions affect more than one part of the body. For example, Usher's Syndrome affects both hearing and sight.

There are many different eye conditions that result in sight loss. If you need to know about specific eye conditions, please visit the RNIB website: <https://www.rnib.org.uk/>



Case Study: Roy McGee & "The Blind Believers"



Norfolk based Roy is the VI boccia coach for the Blind Believers. He has been involved in all areas of boccia since 2009 and is a qualified Level 1 Coach and Referee.

In 2015, he was approached by the Norwich Association for the Blind to introduce them to boccia and loved it so much he now leads sessions twice monthly with the VI group and their 4 members – 3 partially sighted and 1 blind player.

His group use a combination of techniques to play boccia including using a brightly coloured jack ball and an assistant describing the distances in walking paces.

They hope to progress to utilising the specialist grids soon. Roy leads this group alongside 2 other weekly boccia sessions, his refereeing commitments at competitions, as well as acting as Head Boccia Coach for Special Olympics Norfolk.

Roy is a truly dedicated boccia volunteer. Roy's highlight to date was seeing the Blind Believers win silver at their first Norfolk Boccia Open event.

Roy has this advice for any other leaders looking to start out in VI boccia:

"Treat the VI athlete as you would a sighted athlete and get them to learn the basic rules of boccia - the size of the court and how to achieve a basic standard of play."





Section Two: Making Boccia Accessible for Blind and Partially Sighted People

2.1 What is VI Boccia?

Visually impaired boccia players aim to propel the red or blue balls close to the jack ball target. Players interpret the position of the balls on court by reading a tactile grid, or through other adapted playing methods.

2.2 Classification

Classification is a universal method of grouping players into levels of impairment, to ensure athletes are competing equally.

- Boccia follows the World Boccia rules for BC1-4 classifications. In the English pathway, classification categories are expanded to include regional and national opportunities for BC1-8 players. Within this range, VI boccia players are grouped into Boccia Classification 7 (BC7) – a single classification where all players preferably wear black out eye shades to ensure fair and equal competition.
- If a player has multiple disabilities e.g. a learning and visual impairment, they choose which disability they wish to be classified by. To play competitively in organised VI boccia competitions, players may be required to provide evidence of their visual impairment or obtain a formal British Blind Sport Classification.

- For more information on a BBS Classification please visit: <https://britishblindsport.org.uk/>

2.3 Playing Methods & Equipment

VI Boccia Grid

The use of a specialist VI Boccia Grid is the method players should strive for when competing in formally recognised events with Boccia England and other competition providers.

- The grid is a fully tactile, handheld, and accurately scaled down version of the boccia court and each square on the grid represents 1m². Each side (player or team) has a 25cm x 40cm tactile grid during their game.
- Each grid has a set of 15-19 plastic pegs which act as tactile markers. The pegs have different shapes and textures to correspond to red balls, blue balls and the white Jack (1 white jack, 6 red balls, 6 blue balls, up to 3 red players and up to 3 blue players).



- Each player or side is supported by a sports assistant who stands behind the player and plots the positions of each ball on the court, onto the grid. Following each shot, the assistant adjusts the pegs on the grid.
- The player requests the grid by raising their hand to signal to the sports assistant. The sports assistant will then come forward and pass the grid to the player who will feel the grid to read the game and where the balls are positioned.
- The assistant does not verbally communicate with the player(s).
- The grid is manufactured and sold by Handi Life Sport and Boccia England:
<https://www.bocciaengland.org.uk/shop/vi-grid>

2.4 Recreational Adaption Methods

In recreational settings where players may not have access to the specialist VI boccia grid, there are various other adaptations that can be used to help support players to take their first steps into VI boccia.

Verbal and Audible Adaptions

- A coach or assistant can give clear verbal instructions to describe distances and locations
- A coach or assistant can clap or tap the floor whilst standing directly behind the jack ball.

- Audible balls could be used to help the player hear the location of ball that has been thrown.

Visual Adaption

- If players have some useful vision, ensuring high contrast between the balls and playing area will help the player identify the targets. If players have some useful vision, you can also place high contrast cones spaced at 1 metre intervals along the side of the court to provide player information about distances.
- The referee or coach can stand behind the jack ball to provide a larger target for players to aim towards.
- Similar to VI bowls, you can use the 'clock method' to explain the location of the targets. Present the 'jack ball' as the centre of the clock, six o'clock being in front and twelve o'clock behind and all other positions relative to the clock. Ask a sighted player, coach or referee to guide the player around the court, locating the jack ball and the start position.





3.1 Boccia Rules

VI boccia has strived to maintain the core principles of boccia and make as few alterations to the mainstream game as possible. However, to facilitate a fair and equal competition, some suitable adaptations have been made to the rules as follows. These rules should be followed within formal competition where the use of the VI Boccia Grid playing method is encouraged.

Timing

- Individuals – 5 minutes per athlete per end and 4 ends.
- Teams / pairs – 6 minutes per team or pair and 6 ends.

Equipment

- The court and dimensions remain unchanged.
- The VI Boccia Grid is recommended for competition use.
- Players in formal competition should wear black out eye shades to provide an equal playing field. Eye shades can be removed following completion of each end upon invitation from the referee.
- A ball holder positioned near the player's chair can be useful to ensure boccia balls are contained in one location.

Assistants

- Each player or side is allowed 1 sport assistant.
- Only the sport assistant may plot boccia balls on the VI Boccia Grid.
- Plotting can be done on the opposition's playing time.
- Sport assistants may help players to position their chair when requested during their turn.

- Sport assistants must stand off court behind the player box unless presenting the grid to the player when requested.
- When all balls have been played, the sport assistant will be invited by the referee to demonstrate the ball placement via the grid and agree the score with the players.



Movement on Court

- A player may request to enter the field of play in their own playing time. The referee will guide the player to the requested point on court and support the player to sense the positions of the balls.
- When the score is agreed at the end of an end, players can be guided by the referee onto the court to physically feel the ball placement.

Communication

- A player may ask the referee about the play and the referee should answer objectively and factually in relation to distance or positioning and should not provide advice or tactical suggestions.
- The sports assistant may not communicate with the athlete in any way.

3.2 Refereeing VI Boccia

Verbal Prompts

In addition to the conventional signal and hand gestures used, the referee should also verbally announce elements such as scores, winner, play to commence, playing turn and violations.

Positioning

The referee's positioning should be adapted to ensure verbal communication with the players is always possible. Be aware that whilst assistants should be

located off court behind the player boxes, there may be some movement by assistants so that they can view the ball positions.

Guiding

If requested, players can be guided out onto court by the referee who will hold the players hand out over the balls at waist height to help gain an understanding of the positioning of the balls. For more information on guiding, refer to section 6.5.

Communication

Players may decide to use one hand to summon the assistant and the other to summon the referee. The referee is the only person that can communicate with the player. All questions should be answered in a factually, concisely and objectively, avoiding advice on tactical play. Answers to both sides must be standardised. Some example questions and answers are included in the table below.

| Example Question | Example Response |
|---|--|
| What is the Score? | 2 to blue. |
| Which was the last ball I played? | Referee to ask permission to take their hand and show them on grid. |
| How far is the nearest blue ball from the jack? | Referee can give the best estimate in cm. |
| Are there red balls on my line to the jack? | Referee cannot answer - this is tactical. |
| How many balls do I have left? | Referee to answer with the number. |
| Can you guide me to my last thrown ball? | Referee to guide the player and hover their hand over the ball waist height. |
| Can you show me the last thrown ball on the grid? | Referee to ask to take their hand and show them on the grid. |



Section Four: Get Involved with Boccia

4.1 Play Locally

- Boccia Classifications BC1-4 are recognised internationally but BC7 is recognised through Boccia England at a regional and national level. Whilst boccia can be played in single, team and pairs, the recommended format for VI boccia is individuals.
- Be mindful that varying equipment options and adaptations may be in use at the different levels you wish to play and compete at. We encourage clubs and groups to experiment with a range of playing adaptations to find what works best for individuals. Formal competitions may strive to use the VI boccia grid method and all players, even those using alternative methods may be requested to wear eyeshades for standardisation.
- Find your nearest club, group, school, community session and local competition at:
<https://www.bocciaengland.org.uk/find-a-club>
- You can also use British Blind Sport's Activity finder to search for inclusive sport and activities in your area:
<https://britishblindsport.org.uk/activity-finder/>

4.2 Participating in Competition

Boccia England host regional Heathcoat Cup competitions around the country. For more information, visit:
<https://www.bocciaengland.org.uk/pages/events/category/events>



Case Study: Spotlight on Scarboccia



Coach Tony Mollica, leads VI boccia at his club Scarboccia, where they operate from 7 local hubs and have strong links with groups like Coastline Sight and Hearing Community.

They use a variety of playing techniques and focus on adapting to the needs of the members, along with using the STEP and Activity Inclusion Model processes. They also have the VI Boccia Grid but acknowledge that this is not always appropriate or the right method for everyone with a visual impairment.

Scarboccia have around 14 players and the club is going from strength to strength, their team are constantly developing their knowledge and awareness which allows them to adapt better to the players' needs.

Tony offers this advice for new VI coaches.

“Every person who experiences sight loss is different and the degree of shadow, light or blurriness that they see may vary depending on their diagnosed condition. It is best to describe to a visually impaired person when for instance they enter a room or hall, what is around them, the obstacles, such as chairs etc and the surroundings.”



Spotlight on Scarboccia Members



Christine - Player

Christine has Retina Pigmentosa meaning she has no peripheral vision and experiences a disturbed picture all around the edge, so the nearer things are to her the more difficult they are to see clearly. Christine plays VI boccia once a week and is ambitious to compete at competitions. Christine plays sitting down with the jack mid-way. She uses a yellow and black target to indicate where the jack is. Christine loves boccia because the balls move slowly enough for her to follow the game. "It is fun and exciting being part of it and I feel accepted into a sport that I can do and enjoy. The highlight for me is the joy and passion of playing boccia which supports my wellbeing"



Michel - Player

Michel was born blind and has autism – he got involved in boccia through SEN schools and has been playing for 3 years. In Michel's case, volunteers describe his surroundings and he has developed a walking step system so that he can work out how many steps he hears from his seat to the jack. He also uses a rattle or sound ball as he uses mostly his sense of hearing. Michel plays Kurling too but loves boccia as he excels in it. He has blossomed over the years and the joy is evident when he is playing.



Nadine – Player and Coach

Nadine found boccia at a local Community Centre showcase event in 2019 and has been playing ever since. She has an eye condition that was caused by a brain injury following a stroke so the part of the brain that interprets what she can see is damaged. She can however see colours so playing boccia is perfect for her as she can identify the balls and make out where they are but cannot judge distance. Nadine has also been coaching for over 2 years and she mentors in 3 of the hubs. She is very confident in explaining and adapting to help members with or without sight loss. Nadine uses the clock system or yards, which is similar to bowls and she sometimes uses yellow and black string with black tape markers to assist our members. These colours are used as they are contrast colours that help people with a visual impairment. Boccia gives her something she can do without being assisted, giving her independence. She has blossomed from being shy and reserved to now becoming very confident and determined to do better every time and her passion for boccia is shown throughout her sessions.

Ability



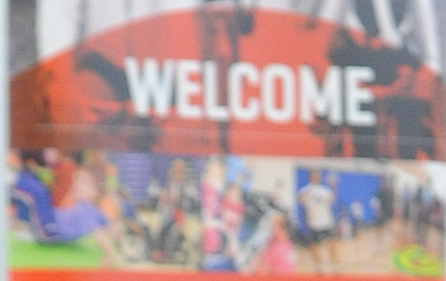
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Section Five: Coaching VI Boccia

5.1 Coaching VI Participants



It is important that coaches and volunteers are knowledgeable about working with blind and partially sighted participants. Like any interaction between people, it is about assessing a situation and behaving appropriately.

- Remember that we are all different and each blind and partially sighted person will be different too. Their sight levels, ability and fitness levels will vary. It is important not to generalise sight loss across participants, but to understand how much the person can see and how to maximise the use of any sight they have.



5.2 Coaching STEP principals

The principles of STEP provide a framework to assist coaches to make adaptations to specific elements of coaching and activity sessions. These elements are: space, task, equipment, and people.

Adaptions can be made to the whole group or for just an individual. It is important to remember that not all blind and partially sighted people will require the same adaptations, just as not every participant will have the same abilities and needs.

Listed are some examples of what you will need to consider to ensure the inclusion of visually impaired participants.

Space

- Make sure the playing space is clear of obstacles, such as spare balls or cones on the side.
- Use tactile markers to identify boundaries.
- Guiding a player around the perimeter of the boccia court will help orientate them to the size and shape of the playing area. As a coach you can highlight the key areas of the court - playing boxes, throwing line, v-line and penalty box.
- Allow enough time for participants to orientate themselves properly in the environment. This is important for new or experienced players, even in facilities that they have used before.
- Always walk around the playing area, highlighting key elements.

- Always highlight potential dangers such as doorways or slippery areas to blind and partially sighted participants. Do this at the start of every event, as changes may occur in the venue from session to session.
- Remove noise distractions as they will have an adverse effect on orientation and communication.

Task

- Draw on the palms of hands to demonstrate movements.
- Use key words and avoid long, complicated sentences.
- Give precise instructions to help blind and partially sighted participants find their way.
- Do not be afraid to move or manipulate the participant to demonstrate the correct body position, but always ask first.
- What information can you provide before they arrive? E.g. audio descriptive session plan.
- Add in additional rules to ensure blind and partially sighted participants have a chance to experience play.

Equipment

- Consider colour contrast during the sessions. E.g. white or bright yellow cones on blue flooring in an indoor sports hall.
- Consider using larger and/or brighter equipment.
- Allow players to use their hands and fingers to explore the boccia balls, the grid and any other equipment.
- Ensure players are familiar with the tactile differences between the red, blue and white pegs and the size of the squares on the grid.

- The player's chair should be lined up facing straight down the court, ensuring enough for space for the player's feet to sit behind the throwing line.
- Boccia balls should be lined up in a readily accessible position like the inside chair leg, or in a ball holder.
- If using eye shades, players with sight should be encouraged to review the outcome of their play by removing eye shades in the training environment.

People

- Always address the participant by name.
- Enlist the help of a family member or friend of a new blind or partially sighted player to assist with guiding.
- Every participant will have differing levels of spatial awareness, light perception and hearing. Don't be afraid to ask individuals about the level of their eye condition.
- Involve assistants in the coaching practice by encouraging them to plot a match on the grid and cross reference their peg placement with other assistants.

5.3 What Makes a Great Coach?

- Clear/accurate feedback
- Patience
- Ability to paint a picture with words
- Knowledgeable
- Asking questions is crucial for the players
- Accurate verbal feedback will form the basis of skill development whilst training.



Coaching People with a Visual Impairment e-Learning

British Blind Sport and UK Coaching have created a new eLearning course 'Coaching People with a Visual Impairment'.

The course raises awareness of the crucial role coaches' play in helping blind and partially sighted people overcome barriers to participation in sport and physical activity.

This course will enable coaches to feel more confident including BPSP within their sessions.

For more information and to complete the course, head over to the British Blind Sport website: <https://britishblindsport.org.uk/coaching-people-with-a-visual-impairment/>

5.4 Delivering VI Boccia

- To develop familiarity and understanding, choose a number 1-10 metres, let the player count and feel this number / position on the grid then guide them to the same position on the physical court. Repeat process when throwing the ball.
- Let the player throw a ball. The assistant places a peg into the grid in the relevant position, and then let the

player feel the peg and count the squares. Then walk with the player to the ball and return to the seat. This will help give the player an understanding of how much power is needed to throw at different distances.

- Practice how to throw the ball at different angles and directions by throwing to a noise anywhere on the court e.g. the coach's voice or clapping. This helps give the player an idea of the size and positions on court and gains practice in chair positioning.
- Place a skittle at a set distance on the court. Players take it in turns to throw at the skittle to knock it over. Instant audible feedback from the skittle falling is beneficial for player development.
- Players can throw towards the coach's feet at a set distance e.g. 'throw the ball to finish at my feet, I am 5 metres away from you'. The coach should provide accurate verbal feedback.
- As players progress, you could introduce elastic bands hooked between pegs on the grid to help determine the position of blocking balls.
- Involve assistants in the coaching practice by encouraging them to plot a match on the grid and cross reference their peg placement with other assistants.

General Boccia Activities

- Here are examples of drills. Be creative – any boccia activity can be adapted by adding auditory cues: <https://www.bocciaengland.org.uk/information-and-resources>



6.1 Planning Activities

This section will outline key factors to consider when planning and delivering activities for people with a visual impairment, which will help ensure a quality experience for both providers and participants.



Advertising

The promotion and marketing of your sessions, training events, and activities ensures that people are aware of what your centre offers, where you are located, and that you are accessible.

To ensure that your advertising is accessible to blind and partially sighted people, consider the following:

- Provide information in alternative formats if required (e.g. braille, plain text without images, or suitable electronic version for a screen reader). For help finding a suitable brailist, please contact British Blind Sport.
- Advertise your sessions with local and national visually impaired organisations such as British Blind Sport, RNIB, or your local sight loss association.
- Many county councils or local authorities provide a sight support service.

This can be an excellent method to promote your club or sessions and engage with blind and partially sighted people. British Blind Sport can advise on your local contacts.

- Use social media to promote your services as this is a very accessible for blind and partially sighted people.
- Consider using images of blind and partially sighted people in your marketing material. A lack of diverse and inclusive images in marketing material can be a barrier to participating in activities.

Travel

Travel has been highlighted as a key barrier to participation. Many blind and partially sighted people rely heavily on public transport, it is advisable to check public transport options and promote the nearest train station or bus route in any promotional or marketing material.

Additionally, there may be community transport options available: local sight support services can provide information on available services. Some participants may rely on a sighted guide or support worker to assist with transport to and from your activity. To find local sight support services please contact British Blind Sport.



Participant Information

- Provide a named contact, email and phone number on your event literature.
- Provide information about the nearest public transport options and provide a meet and greet service from there to the venue.
- Encourage participants to contact you in advance to discuss any additional support they need.
- Ask for disability information on pre- activity questionnaires or membership forms. This allows you to be aware of blind or partially sighted people prior to the session.
- Contact the participant (or their parents or guardians) before a session to identify the level and type of sight loss, whether they have had any sight previously and whether they require any further support or guidance.

6.2 Venue Considerations

Session Venue and Time

- Consider the impact of daylight on some eye conditions and organise sessions in good light where possible.
- Partially sighted sessions are best played in an indoor environment. This allows for better contrast and lighting.



6.3 Health and Safety

If you follow correct health and safety procedures, people with sight loss will be able to enjoy your sessions. Health and safety must never be a reason to exclude blind and partially sighted participants from activities.

Safety Considerations:

- Regularly reflect on your health and safety practices.
- Remember to treat participants individually; not everyone is the same.
- Plan and adapt your coaching sessions to work effectively with blind and partially sighted participants.
- Allow time for players to orientate themselves.
- Regularly check any changes to the environment such as opened doors or new equipment in the playing area.
- Check that the playing surface is suitable with decent colour contrast.
- For new participants, mobility could be a challenge. This is because their muscles might not be used to vigorous activity.
- Have regular water breaks as some participants might have other conditions, such as diabetes.
- Make sure there is a procedure to support blind and partially sighted people in a fire evacuation. It's important that they understand the procedure, and who is assigned as their evacuation guide.
- If other groups are using a nearby activity area, make their participants aware that you are coaching blind and partially sighted people.

6.4 Communication

It is important to understand the needs of each individual participant. Do not be afraid to ask questions to obtain information that will aid coaching and delivery.

- Remember to always introduce yourself by name to a blind and partially sighted participant, even if you have already met before.
- Do not be afraid to ask about a new participant's level of vision.
- Find out whether the visual impairment is acquired or congenital, as this may affect their knowledge about the sport and what to expect from sessions with you.
- Speak directly to the participant, rather than to a carer or anyone else.
- Try to establish if there is a preferred situation or environment that promotes better vision, for example if someone has better vision in their left eye making a small change to where you stand to explain a task may make a huge difference.
- Think about the acoustics of the area you are in and whether you can be clearly heard.
- Remember that someone who is blind and partially sighted may not be able to see visual cues, e.g. a smile, and if so, ensure that you replace these cues with verbal feedback.
- A two-way radio can be a useful communication aid, particularly in large sports halls or large/mixed groups.

Correct Terminology

It is important to use the correct terminology when referring to people who are blind or partially sighted and when discussing visual impairments in general.

While it is important to use correct language, do not over think every sentence you say. For example, saying the term 'See you later' will not be offensive to the vast majority of blind and partially sighted people.

Words to use:

- Blind and partially sighted people
- Person with a visual impairment
- Person with sight loss
- Visually impaired person
- Has an impairment

Words to avoid:

- The blind
- The handicapped
- The disabled
- Suffers from



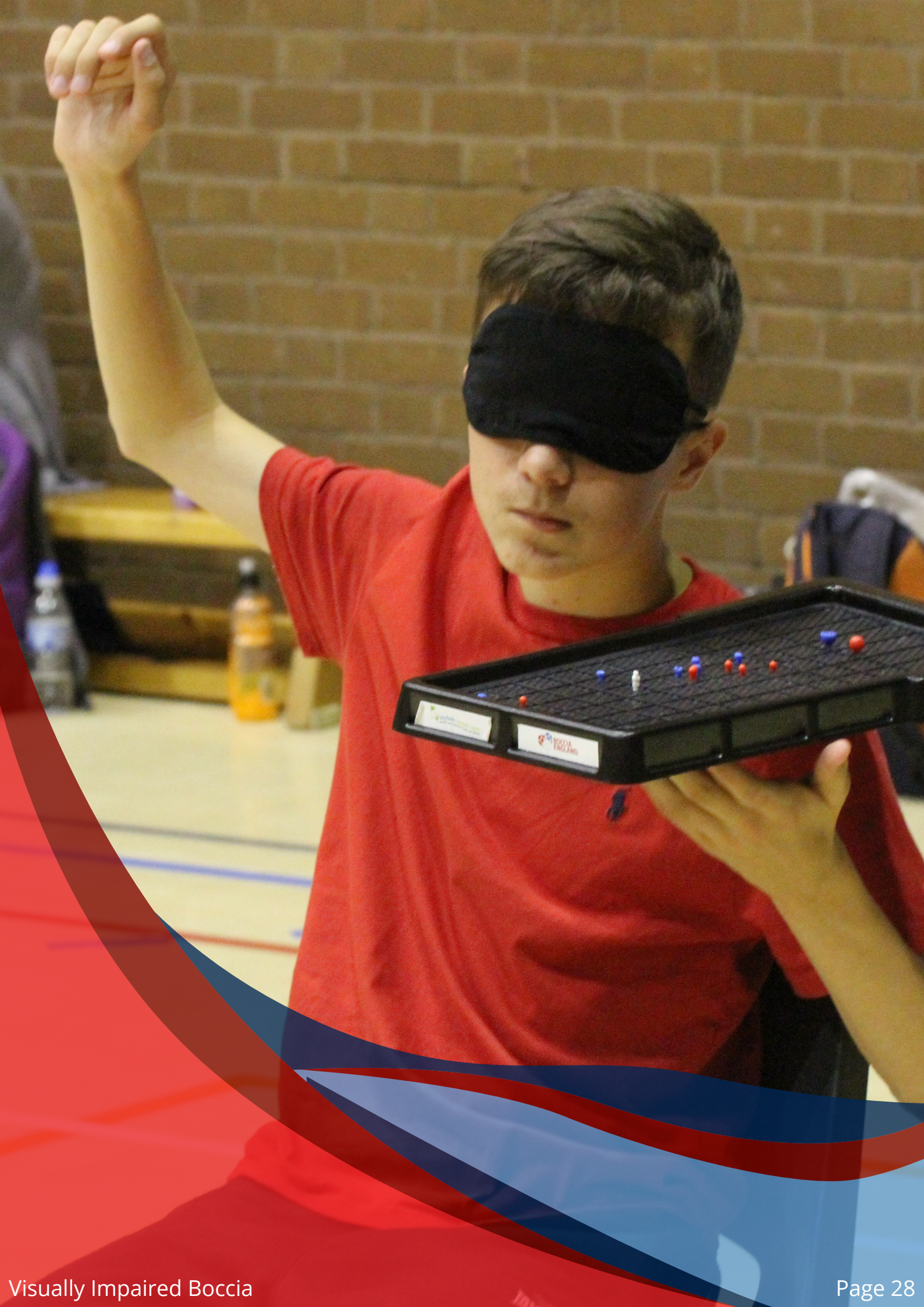
6.5 Guiding Techniques

For some people, a sighted guide may be required to assist with moving around your centre. Below are some key points and tips for best practice when providing sighted guiding. If you would like to develop your skills further, a number of organisations (e.g. Guide Dogs) offer training in sighted guiding techniques.

- Introduce yourself and ask if help is needed; not everyone needs or wants assistance.
- If assistance is required, then ask whether you should guide from the left or right hand side.
- Offer your elbow or shoulder for the participant to take hold of. If guiding a child, it is suggested they hold your wrist or just two fingers, depending on their height.
- Do not link arms with the person you are guiding. This presents a safety risk, as if one person falls the other person will too.
- Ensure you are always one step in front of the person that you are guiding, try not to walk too fast or too slowly, ask if the pace is ok.
- Communicate when there are changes in the ground surface, if there are steps (up or down), if and where there are handrails, and explain any unusual or loud noises.
- When guiding to a seat, place your hand on the back of the chair/bench so the person can follow your guide and find the chair themselves. Do not try to place people into the seat.



- When going through a narrow door or passage, move your guiding arm backward toward the small of your back, so the person being guided can step in single file behind you.
- When coming to a door, say whether the door opens toward or away from you, and whether it opens to the right or the left. Allow the person you are guiding to step behind you and take the weight of the door from you once you have passed through. Be mindful that the door does not swing back sharply or catch anyone's fingers.
- Keep your guiding arm still and relaxed. Do not wave it around or point at things.
- Remember to give the person you are guiding adequate space around obstacles.



7.1 Further Information

About British Blind Sport

British Blind Sport helps blind and partially sighted people get active and play sport. Sport and recreational activities can enhance the lives of blind and partially sighted people by improving their health and increasing their social interaction. We encourage adults and children to participate in activities at all levels, from grassroots to the Paralympic Games.

What does British Blind Sport do?

- Organise sporting competitions for blind and partially sighted people.
- Support blind and partially sighted people within the sports world.
- Provide sight classifications to blind and partially sighted athletes to ensure a fair and equal competition.
- Support the education of teachers to ensure no child with visual impairment is denied the opportunity to play.
- Provide advice to clubs and coaches to enable more blind and partially sighted people to participate in sport.

About Boccia England

We are a registered Charity and the National Governing Body (NGB) for boccia in England. We are responsible for all aspects of the sport in England from beginner to expert, providing for all levels of participation and are dedicated to improving the physical and emotional well-being of children and adults with disabilities through boccia.

We are proud to have widened the reach of boccia in England, from just those with severe physical disabilities, including Cerebral Palsy, to any individual with a disability including learning and visual impairments.

The full World Boccia rules can be found here:

<https://www.worldboccia.com/about-boccia/rules/>

7.2 Education and Training

Boccia Leaders Award:

The Boccia Leaders Award is a 3 hour workshop to introduce the fundamental skills and knowledge required to deliver boccia within the community (not VI specific).

<https://www.bocciaengland.org.uk/leaders-award>

Boccia Coaching and Officiating Awards:

Boccia England also provides formal qualifications in boccia coaching and officiating to take your skills to the next level:

<https://www.bocciaengland.org.uk/Pages/Category/courses>

Online Learning:

British Blind Sport and UK Coaching have created a eLearning course 'Coaching People with a Visual Impairment'. For more information, visit:

<https://britishblindsport.org.uk/coaching-people-with-a-visual-impairment/>

Boccia England also deliver regular webinars covering a range of content including 'Introduction to VI Boccia':

<https://www.bocciaengland.org.uk/online-learning>

7.3 Boccia Shop

Boccia England stock a range of ball sets, ramps, ball cases, tape, referees kit, merchandise and assistive devices including VI Boccia Grids. You can view and order online at <https://www.bocciaengland.org.uk/pages/shop/>

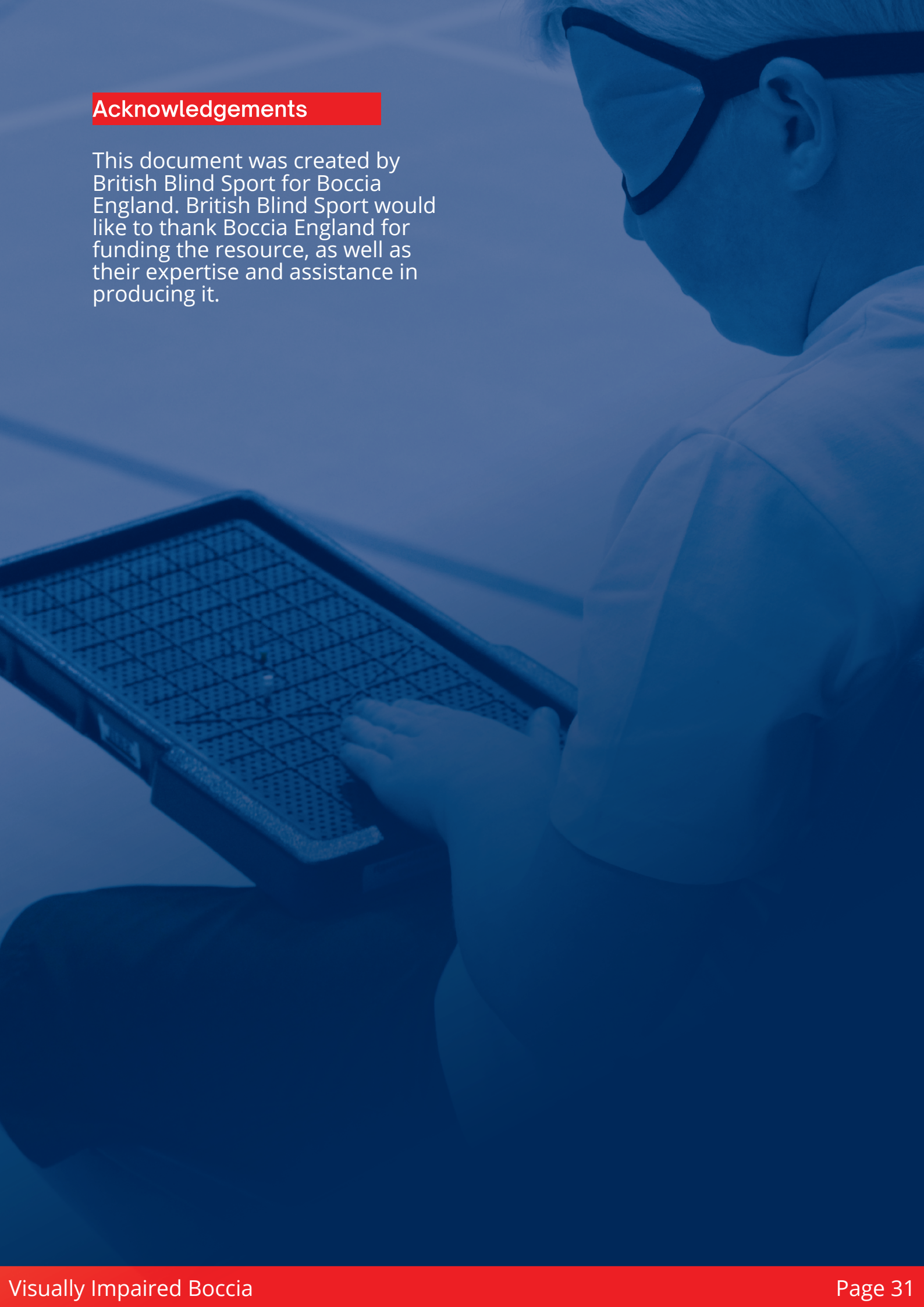
7.4 Useful Contacts

- **British Blind Sport**
01926 424247
info@britishblindsport.org.uk
www.britishblindsport.org.uk
- **Boccia England**
0115 967 8455
info@bocciaengland.org.uk
www.bocciaengland.org.uk
- **Activity Alliance**
01509 227750
www.activityalliance.org.uk
- **Guide Dogs**
0118 983 5555
www.guidedogs.org.uk
- **Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)**
0303 123 999
www.rnib.org.uk
- **Sport England**
0118 983 5555
www.sportengland.org
- **UK Coaching**
0113 274 4802
www.ukcoaching.org
- **Handi Life Sport**
+4547526022
www.handilifesport.com



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British Blind Sport is the leading voice for blind and partially sighted people in sport and recreation in the United Kingdom.

Telephone: 01926 424247

Email: info@britishblindsport.org.uk

Website: <https://britishblindsport.org.uk>

British Blind Sport is a registered charity, No. 271500.

Boccia England is the National Governing Body (NGB) for boccia and is responsible for all aspects of the sport in England from beginner to expert.

Telephone: 01926 424247

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Website: www.bocciaengland.org.uk

Boccia England is a registered charity, No. 1139174.

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