

Policy Committee Decision Report

Title of Report:	Sensory Strategy Development report
Date of Decision:	11 th December 2024
Report To:	Adults Health and Social Care Policy Committee
Report Of:	Alexis Chappell, Strategic Director for Adult Care and Wellbeing
Report Author:	Sharon Hirshman: Adult Experienced Social Worker, Liam Toner: Team Manager, Sensory Impairment and Tony Middleton: Service Manager, Provider Services/Sensory Impairment
Executive Summary:	To seek approval to co-design and develop a sensory impairment strategy for people with care and support needs and to update on plans to design an adults sensory impairment service.

Council Plan outcomes: [List the relevant outcomes as set out in section 3]

A place where all children belong and all young people can build a successful future

Great neighbourhoods that people are happy to call home

People live in caring, engaged communities that value diversity and support wellbeing

A creative and prosperous city full of culture, learning, and innovation

A city on the move – growing, connected and sustainable

Policy Committee remit:

Include the following: “This report is to be considered by the Adult Health and Social Care Policy Committee as its remit includes [add relevant part of committee remit: Part 3C - 3.3 Matters Delegated to Committees May 2024.pdf (sheffield.gov.uk)]”



Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? No

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Adult Health and AHSC Committee:

1. Note and Endorse the co-design and development of a Sheffield Adults Sensory Impairment Strategy.
2. Note the planned design of an adult's sensory impairment service.
3. Note and Endorse that the commissioning of equipment for people with a sensory impairment will be considered as part of the redesign of a joint equipment service.

Financial Implications: Yes - Approved by: Kay Simpson 2.12.24

Legal Implications: Yes - Approved by: Patrick Chisholm 2.12.24

Equality and Inclusion Implications: Yes - Approved by: Ed Sexton

Equalities Impact Assessment completed with EIA number: 2892

Climate Change Implications: [No] [Approved by: Sustainability Officer name]

Background Papers:

Signhealth's *Sick of It* report (2014) (<http://signhealth.org.uk/resources/report-sick-of-it>)

HealthWatch's *Not Equal* report (2016)

Appendices:

1. Background to the issue

- 1.1 Sensory loss can have an enormous personal, social and economic impact throughout a person's life. Sensory loss includes varying degrees of hearing loss, sight loss and loss of both senses including those at risk of sensory loss and those who may be living with hidden and untreated loss which may be present in people with learning disabilities or conditions such as dementia or stroke.
- 1.2 Estimates suggest that around 2 million people in the UK are living with sight loss that has a significant impact on their daily lives and around 11 million people in the UK have hearing loss (source: hearinglink.org) – that's around 1 in 6 of the whole population. Levels of hearing loss – mild, moderate, severe or profound – are defined according to the quietest sound that you can hear.
- 1.3 Age is the key factor in the prevalence of sight and hearing loss. Areas that have a larger proportion of older people will have a higher estimated prevalence of sight loss when compared to an area with a younger age profile
- 1.4 The focus on developing a strategy is located in the Care Act 2014 and British Sign Language Act 2022: -
 - The Care Act aims enshrines the principle of individual wellbeing, placing this at the heart of the care and support system. It promotes independence and cites the importance of partnership working, with a drive towards greater integration between different services to improve people's outcomes.
 - The British Sign Language Act 2022 recognised British Sign Language as a language of England, Wales and Scotland and with that the issue of guidance to ensure implementation. With this, it's important that people can access services in their first language
- 1.5 The Care Act 2014 also made it a statutory requirement for all local authorities to keep a register of people who are sight impaired and severely sight impaired to ensure their needs are assessed and met. A register is in place in Sheffield.
- 1.6 Through discussion with our workforce, individuals in need of care and support and reference to local initiatives and learning from the [Healthwatch 2016 'Not Equal' report](#) and [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment focused on Sight Loss](#), it's been identified a need to improve accessibility of health and care services so that the voices of Deaf people and people with a sight loss are heard.

- 1.7 To do this, a need for a dedicated Sensory Impairment Strategy and an accompanying delivery plan was identified to make a shared commitment across the City towards enabling adults with a visual and/or hearing impairment, and their families and carers to live the life they want to live.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 Our vision set out in the Adult Social Care Strategy Living the Life You Want to Live is that *“everyone in Sheffield lives in a place they can call home, in communities that care, doing things that matter to them, and when they need it, they receive care and support that prioritises independence, choice, and recovery”*,
- 2.2 Delivery upon the strategy is set out in our high level plan and partnerships, noted at Committee on 11th December 2024.
- 2.3 To enable adults with a visual and/or hearing impairment, and their families and carers to live the life they want to live there are three main workstreams: -
- Co-designing a strategy and improving governance
 - Improving understanding, accessibility and awareness
 - Redesign of Adult Care Sensory Impairment Service
- 2.4 Co-Designing a Strategy and Improving Governance
- 2.4.1 As part of the delivery on the Adult Social Care Strategy Living the Life you want to live, key strategies, commissioning and delivery plans have been co-produced: -
- City Wide Dementia Strategy
 - Carers Delivery Plan
 - Learning Disability Strategy
 - Changing Futures Tackling Multiple Disadvantage.
 - Safeguarding Strategic Plan
 - Personalisation and Direct Payments
 - Care Homes Transformation Programme
 - Care and Wellbeing Transformation Programme
- 2.4.2 As part of these strategies, delivery on our equality duties are considered and its planned to embed a focus on sensory impairment within each so that there is a systemic and partnership approach across the City.
- 2.4.3 In particular, the Carers Delivery Plan emphasises increased identification of unpaid carers and the City-wide Dementia Strategy focuses on sensory loss as part of its nine commitments. The personalisation strategy focuses on our approach to personalisation

and with that how we implement greater self directed care, choice and control.

- 2.4.4 In September 2024, an update on the equipment contract was provided to Committee. As part of this, it was noted that the provision of sensory equipment would be included as part of the redevelopment of the equipment contract and our approach to provision of equipment and adaptations to enable people to live independently. This will be progressed during 2025 to 2026.
- 2.4.5 To ensure a dedicated focus on listening to Deaf people and people with sight loss, its proposed to have a dedicated Sensory Impairment Strategy and an accompanying delivery plan to make a shared commitment across the City towards enabling adults to live the life they want to live. Committee are asked to endorse this approach.
- 2.4.6 To support development of a Strategy, a Sensory Strategic Partnership made up of deaf people, people with sight loss, unpaid carers and city-wide partners has been established. This will oversee development of the strategy and its implementation and will be co-chaired by people with a sensory impairment in line with our
- 2.4.7 To support the market development needed for effective delivery of the strategy we will co-produce a market position statement. Finally, we will hold an annual event to support the engagement of the whole system to review progress and refresh the delivery plan.
- 2.4.8 The Director of Quality, Strategy Delivery and Partnerships will be responsible for supporting development of the strategy, linkage with each of the strategies and commissioning plans which support delivery on living the life you want to live as well as connections and opportunities for partnership working across the Council and City.
- 2.4.9 In particular, this includes linking to the Council's Target Operating Model and Future Sheffield Programme, to ensure the experiences of people with a sensory impairment are considered and embedded as part of the wider Council.
- 2.5 Improving understanding, accessibility and awareness across health and care.
- 2.5.1 The follow up workshop to Healthwatch Not Equal in 2018, highlighted five recommendations to commissioners and providers of NHS and Social Care services as follows: -
- Providers of NHS and Social Care should recognise the legal requirement to meet the Accessible Information Standard and ensure that it is consistently applied within their organisations.
 - Commissioners should consider the use of measures and/or incentives to ensure the Standard is being implemented by providers.

- Contract monitoring of LanguageLine Solutions should include the experiences and views of Deaf people.
- Providers should ensure health and social care staff have at least a basic understanding of the needs of, and the problems experienced by, Deaf people and are aware of their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.
- Local providers should act to ensure information about their complaints and concerns process is accessible and available in BSL, including information about NHS complaints advocacy.

2.5.2 To respond to these recommendations and to also consider the needs of people with sight loss, the Strategic Director has written to Chairs of the Health and Social Care Partnership, Safeguarding Board, Health and Wellbeing Board and Health Scrutiny to understand current position and support a system wide response.

2.5.3 To support a response within social care, accessibility of our services is included in new care and assessment procedures and its planned to: -

- undertake a review of our contracts of commissioned provision to ensure the accessibility of commissioned provision.
- establish workforce development initiatives that support practitioners to work in partnership with people regarding their support and reflect best practice
- establish dedicated trainers in British Sign Language.

2.6 Social Work Support

2.6.1 In November 2022, the future design of adult social care was approved. This led to the development of a dedicated Adult Future Options Team and included the support to people with a sensory impairment.

2.6.2 As the Adult Future Option Service has embedded, it was identified that a further review of a model of service delivery to support people with sensory loss is required. This is since it was identified that there were backlogs, and the team did not benchmark in relation to other core cities in relation to size. To ensure, that the service can support individuals, the Service has been asked to put forwards recruit to vacancies in the service as an immediate risk mitigation.

2.6.3 The Director of Operations and Assistant Director Adults Future Options will be responsible for undertaking a review of the service model in partnership with individuals, carers and workforce to agree a long-term sustainable model.

3. How does this decision contribute to the Council Plan?

3.1 Council Plan outcome

- 3.1.1 A place where all children belong and all young people can build a successful future – Improved access to and Adult Social Care Offer services will make for a smoother transition for children with a sensory impairment, or with parents who have a sensory impairment.
- 3.1.2 Great neighbourhoods that people are happy to call home – The development of a dedicated strategy will support and enable people living with a sensory impairment to be able to communicate with people and services in their own community and so feel an integrated part of their community and that all services are available to them.
- 3.1.3 People live in caring, engaged communities that value diversity and support wellbeing – The development of a dedicated strategy and redesign of the social work offer will aim to enable delivery of high quality services and contribute to the development of a disability friendly city. By working with health and care partnership board, health and wellbeing board this will aim to raise awareness and promotion inclusion of people with a sensory impairment.
- 3.1.4 A creative and prosperous city full of culture, learning, and innovation – The strategy will aim to enable people with a sensory impairment to live a fulfilled life which includes being able to access events, contribute and be involved in learning, education and employment and for the City to utilise their skills and creative input.
- 3.1.5 A city on the move – growing, connected and sustainable – Easily accessible services will connect people to their community and, by extension, their City. Increased involvement and participation will benefit all parties.

3.2 People – Prosperity – Planet

- 3.2.1 Improved accessibility to mainstream services increases people's life chances and so increases their and the City's prosperity.

4 **What community or partner engagement has been undertaken and how has it informed the proposal?**

4.1 Development of a Strategy and new social care offer will be co-designed and developed with people with a sensory impairment, unpaid carers and partners to ensure its reflective of their views and experiences. The outcomes of the engagement will be shared with Committee when submitted for approval.

4.2 The proposal to develop a dedicated strategy has been informed by views from our workforce, individuals and carers as well as learning from Healthwatch report.

5 **What alternative options did we consider?**

5.1 Alternative Option 1: Do Not Develop A Strategy and redesign of services -

The need for a dedicated Sensory Impairment Strategy and an accompanying delivery plan was identified through discussion with our workforce, individuals and carers to make a shared commitment across the City towards enabling adults with a visual and/or hearing impairment, and their families and carers to live the life they want to live. To not develop a dedicated strategy and redesign of services would result in unmet need.

6 How has equality, diversity and inclusion been actively considered?

6.1 A full equalities impact assessment has been completed. **2892**

6.2 As a Public Authority, we have legal requirements under the Equality Act 2010, collectively referred to as the 'general duties to promote equality'.

6.3 Section 149(1) contains the Public Sector Equality Duty, under which public authorities must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is connected to protected characteristics and prohibited by or under this Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- The proposal described in this report is consistent with those requirements.

6.4 It aims to develop a more person-centred approach ensure citizens' voices and experiences help to inform and develop the future models. A full EIA will be undertaken in response to each development so that the EIA informs the future models. Engagement will ensure that any impacts to any protected characteristic groups are fully understood and carefully considered before any decisions are made.

7 Financial and Commercial Implications

7.1 The development of a dedicated strategy for adults with a sensory impairment and linkage to aligned strategies will be undertaken within current resources. The remodelling of social work services will be undertaken within current business planning arrangements.

8 Legal Implications

8.1 The core purpose of adult health and social care support is to help people to achieve the outcomes that matter to them in their life. The Care Act 2014 sets the Council's statutory power to direct the provision that:

- promotes wellbeing.

- prevents the need for care and support.
- protects adults from abuse and neglect (safeguarding)
- promotes health and care integration.
- provides information and advice.
- promotes diversity and quality.

8.2 The Care Act Statutory Guidance requires at para 4.52 that “... Local authorities should have in place published strategies that include plans that show how their legislative duties, corporate plans, analysis of local needs and requirements (integrated with the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy), thorough engagement with people, carers and families, market and supply analysis, market structuring and interventions, resource allocations and procurement and contract management activities translate (now and in future) into appropriate high quality services that deliver identified outcomes for the people in their area and address any identified gaps.

8.3 The British Sign Language Act 2022 recognised British Sign Language as a language of England, Wales and Scotland and with that the issue of guidance to ensure implementation. With this, it’s important that people can access services in their first language.

9. Climate and Environmental Implications

9.1 There is minimal impact on the Climate as a direct impact of actions set out in this Report.

9.2 The Care Act, as set out earlier in the report social care should work in a person-centred way and in partnership with other statutory and voluntary organisations. It is noted that people who are being supported may be adversely impacted by the effects of Climate Change as set out in the Adults Climate Statement approved at Committee in January 2024.

10 Reasons for decision

10.1 The recommendations in this paper are being made to make services accessible to City residents with a sensory impairment. As well as the positive equalities implications, this will aim to take a prevention approach with a particular focus on enabling people to live independently with improved access to mainstream services.

10.2. By involving system wide partners across the Health and Social Care Partnership, Safeguarding Board, Health and Wellbeing Board and Health Scrutiny this will promote greater understanding and support a system wide approach to the inclusion and wellbeing of people with a sensory impairment.

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