CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

1. The strategy outlines a care pathway (page 10).

(a) If you are a service user and/or carer, please tell us what difference you believe the implementation of the pathway will make to the services you experience.

(b) How can we best ensure that services and support meet your needs?

(c) If you are a care provider, what changes will you need to make to implement the pathway?

(d) How will you make these changes?

2. The strategy identifies key factors that need to be in place to ensure the pathway is successful (Page 11 para 6.7).

(a) Which of the key factors are most important for a successful pathway?

The single most important factor is awareness training for front-line staff.

At the moment there is often a poor level of deaf awareness at all levels within health and care services. This causes frustration and annoyance for the deaf and reduces the effectiveness of care staff.

Deaf awareness training is readily available today and existing courses will probably need only minor tailoring to meet the See Hear requirements. There will need to be a range of courses on offer, each will its own level of detail. In many cases a half-day "taster" might be sufficient. For more specialised roles, in-depth training lasting 3 or or 4 days might be required.

(b) Which are the most challenging to put in place?

Information about the care pathways will need to be not only *available* but actually *imparted* to deaf people. In other words, it's not sufficient simply to put information on a website or to put posters up in GP surgeries and audiology departments. Many deaf folk – especially if elderly – are isolated and withdrawn. They seldom get out and do not use the internet. Information needs to be "pushed" at these people, rather than relying on them to "pull" it.

Conversely, you will need to be very sensitive when providing advice to those who are in the Deaf Community. Such people do not consider themselves disabled or even disadvantaged and are likely to resent having advice thrust at them by "hearies".

The final point I'd make is that you need to rise to the challenge of "telling" the Local Authorities and other local organisations. The new pathways will be effective only if they are cohesive, seamless and consistent. Therefore the Scottish government needs to find a way of ensuring the local organisations toe the line.

(c) Do you think that any key factors have been missed?

It's disappointing that you've focused purely on health and social care services. Although improved deaf awareness and integrated services provided by the NHS, Social Services and other related organisations will be a big step in the right direction, a much more significant step would be to put pressure on shops, banks, cinemas, restaurants, transport companies etc to improve their deaf awareness. For most deaf people, improvements by organisations like these would do more to help them lead a so-called "normal" life than the improvements that you've proposed.

A relatively easy but effective way of persuading private organisations to become deaf aware would be to introduce some sort of certification or accreditation. Some years ago companies were keen to gain Quality certification, typically BS5750 or ISO9000. Then came the "Investors in People" standard. I would like to see something along similar lines for deaf awareness.

3. The strategy identifies areas for action that should be addressed going forward (Page 13-16)

(a) Which of the areas for action will be the most challenging to implement?

(b) Which of the areas for action will make the biggest difference and why?

(c) Are there any other areas for action that you would like to see included within the strategy?

4. Please comment on the current provision of sensory impairment services as either a service provider or service user. If you have any experience of sensory impairment services, please let us know what you think of them: this should include any experience of one-stop shops.

5. What difference will the implementation of the strategy make to your life?

6. Does this strategy properly reflect the current climate and developments in policy and practice for children and young people particularly in relation to the Getting it Right for Every Child approach and the Doran Review?

7. Do you have anything you wish to add to the Sensory Impairment Strategy or any other general comments that have not been covered by the questions?

The timescales for implementation look too long.

I would like to see quick wins identified and implemented at a very early stage – ie improvements like deaf awareness training that are low-cost and low-risk but which would provide significant benefit.

You also need to identify scope for overlap amongst the various improvements. In other words, you don't necessarily need to put a particular subproject on hold while you wait for all the other subprojects to reach a major milestone.

Finally, you need to identify opportunities to run pilot schemes of specific improvements in specific geographies. This would be an excellent way of demonstrating to the public that you're achieving results while at the same time testing out your deliverables in a controlled environment.