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.

I found the pathway diagram interesting and informative, illustrating a complex subject.
I believe the implementation of the strategy will improve the experience of both service users and providers.

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

In the case of the deafblind, the providers of services and support need to be aware of the special communication needs of this group.
Without a communicator a deafblind person is totally isolated.
Service providers need information and training.

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

N. A.

(d) How will you make these changes?

N. A.

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?

1. Training: Staff must know what to do when dealing with the disabled.
2. Information: Staff must be aware of the information available and how to access it.
3. The above should inform staff action when inserting patients into the pathway.

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

Training: Staff need to be aware of primary and secondary pathways in order to realise the value of the system.

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

No. Only time will reveal what has been missed.

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?

This report refers to locally provided services. Local provision means local differences and to complaints of a 'post code lottery'.

Some national supervision is needed.

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

For the deafblind, provision of communication will make the biggest difference. The Equality Act provisions may become important for this group.

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

Money is short and for the foreseeable future it is not probable that finance will be available for other areas.

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.

I am deafblind and a service user. I have no experience of 'one stop shops'. However as the Deafblind Society has no connection with these shops, I doubt their usefulness.

I have found Social Services at all levels at all times helpful.

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

My husband acts as my guide and scribe.

Others are less fortunate and depend on a few hours with a guide communicator to connect them with 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?

Integrating sensory impaired children into mainstream schools as Doran suggests may later be considered a form of child abuse and is probably now in conflict with Equality legislation. These children require continuous one on one contact with teachers who are not only trained communicators but also able to teach subjects at the level required.

I fear for the future of these children.

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?

1. Many teachers recently over supplied are still unemployed. These could be encouraged to additional training and work with the sensory impaired.
2. I note that the definition of 'deaf blind' has been weakened. The European definition better covers the condition. Deafblindness can only become worse with time. Continuous assessment is of no value
3. The strategy does not cover the effect of the Equality Act on the deaf blind or the sensory impaired.