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.

NA

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

NA

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

The pathway models on pg 8 and 10 indicates that there is a desire to ensure that a wider range of staff are appropriately skilled and developed to support the health and care for people with sensory impairments. Related to this, recommendation 3 suggests there should be mandatory training in sensory impairment awareness and assessing for non-complex needs.

There may also be specific training needs to support the use of telemedicine for this group. This is not really reflected in the training recommendations and should be acknowledged.
There is probably a need for a good learning needs analysis exercise. In any case, it would make sense to take a national approach to development of learning resources and opportunities as this is likely to be more efficient than funding a number of disparate local initiatives.

(d) How will you make these changes?

We feel that it would be important to take a targeted approach to training and development. Awareness and assessment are in fact two distinct training needs. However, they may not be sufficient and some staff groups, particularly in primary care, may require further skills development so that needs identified in the assessments can be met locally and in primary care.

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?

There is a strong theme of recognising the impact of sensory impairment (developmental/acquired/hidden and untreated) on communication and this is welcome

The diagram in Section 5 is very helpful - from our experience it may be useful to explicitly clarify the use of the term "universal"

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

No standard set of expectations in relation to maintaining information in relation to people with the various diagnoses of sensory impairment

A commitment to awareness raising training for front line staff who may have to deal with people with sensory impairments

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

The statement regarding the communication needs of individuals with sensory impairment (6.5) is fundamental - this will be a critical component of the mandatory training being recommended.

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?

The training must ensure staff (in all sectors) as a minimum recognise communication as a two way process and that *they* may be required to adapt how they communicate i.e. this is not about changing how the individual with sensory impairment communicates

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

Agreeing target groups, delivery methods etc to ensure a wide coverage

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

Service users / carers / care providers will be key contributors to the development of mandatory training and consideration will need to be given as to how best enable this

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.

NES has already done some work on sensory impairment awareness, which ran as a short term programme with an online component still available on the Little things make a big difference website. Sustainability has been an issue and we can consider the role of e-learning to reach wider numbers of staff. This is an area where NES has expertise and may be in a position to offer support.

You may also wish to consider the contribution that the Knowledge Network can make to supporting practice through the Knowledge into Action approach and by supporting a community of practice.

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?

NES supports education and development for Administrative and Support staff, many of whom have direct customer care and patient interaction in their roles. It is vital that they not be left out when we are thinking about awareness training as they have very important roles to play. NES has portals to signpost these groups to learning.

Of course, all this would require resource and it will be important to identify not only resource but to clarify the level of priority to ensure we are able to mobilise resources appropriately and effectively.

We may also wish to note that NES has an inclusive education and learning policy and is working to support NHS Boards on inclusive education approaches. This will help to making learning and development more accessible to staff with sensory impairments and also helps to raise awareness.