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.

SCOVI is an umbrella group of both local authorities and voluntary sector organisations operating for the benefit of blind people in Scotland.

A number of member organisations are submitting responses that go to a level of detail that is appropriate to them, and we do not wish to simply pad out the responses by repeating their responses long form in this response from SCOVI. Our aim is rather to emphasise the common themes that our members are identifying that therefore require emphasis from a sectoral viewpoint.

Thus, the absence of a response to a question does not mean we do not have a view, just that it is not among the key messages we wish to convey as an umbrella body. Our member organisations will have given fuller answers across the whole set of questions.

Overall we are supportive of the central drive towards partnership working at the local level, and keen to assist by highlighting issues that need further attention to make it effective.

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

By introducing standards and protecting resources for services.

All people with similar needs across Scotland should expect the same services to be available, with the same response and waiting times.

Service standards should be introduced Scotland-wide. Such standards should be aspirational but achievable, and not standardise at the lowest level. “Seeing it My Way” provides an excellent blueprint for this, and is informed by a user’s perspective.

(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?

Partnership working across and between sectors, building on relationships and mechanisms that already exist.

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

In the current financial background here is a need to achieve as much as possible without taking resources away from service provision. Therefore, in setting the path for local partnerships it will be important to encourage use of existing data systems so that bureaucratic change processes are restricted to those that are really needed to improve pathways and services.

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

The audit in recommendation 1 will need to be specified and designed carefully if it is going to yield useful information at a reasonable cost. In drawing up the specification cognisance should be taken of existing data and records so that the audit will be realistic at the outset as to what information it can obtain. The scope of the audit needs to be considered and articulated carefully so that all stakeholders are clear as to what it has and has not covered.

The audit would need to address outcomes as well as resource use.

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

Recommendation 3. If carried out effectively its effect will be far reaching and benefit everyone with a visual and/or hearing impairment. At the next stage it will be important to clarify:

- Who will be required to receive the training
- What will be the content and level of the training that will be required
- Frequency of update/refresher training
- By what mechanism the training will be made mandatory
- How the requirement will be enforced

Clear pathways and information sharing between agencies will make a big difference and can greatly reduce the stress experienced by someone going through the system of treatment, habilitation and support.

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

Strategically there are serious workforce issues to address, particularly in rehabilitation services where training opportunities are scarce and there is a real danger of loss of skill as practitioners retire. These services are crucial to people attaining independent living and minimising dependence on providers of support.

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?