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.

n/a

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

N/a

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

Current pathways will need to be reviewed along with input from other care providers and if possible service users.
Once reviewed pathways are agreed these should then be circulated to all care providers.
Future review and agreement of pathways along with re-circulation to keep all staff up to date and to allow for staff changes/new staff coming in to post.
We will also need to ensure that we are able to keep a current, accessible and appropriate record of peoples additional needs related to sensory impairment to ensure that we are able to support them fully at all points of access to services (both primary and secondary care) – this is not yet well enough developed in systems in use.
It is possible, with the changing demographic, that we should consider moving to a model where sensory impairment is presumed unless specifically recorded otherwise (the opposite to this is the case currently) to ensure that the most vulnerable people are supported to access all available services.

(d) How will you make these changes?

All care providers and if possible service users, will need to be involved in process mapping of current pathways/services to find the most efficient, cost effective pathways.
As above the agreed pathways will need to be communicated to all service/care providers, so that all are communicating the same message to service users.
We will need to further develop our ability to capture and use information about additional needs for support relating to sensory impairment. This may be through improved use of existing systems or procurement of new systems, where this requirement is explicitly included in the essential scope of the systems.
We will need to ensure that the anticipatory care planning process is considered for all people with sensory impairment in the care service, particularly those where their impairment is a significant barrier to them accessing services or having needs identified.

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?

Our Audiology team notes that for them a commitment at primary care level to undertake screening for sensory impairment, and then make appropriate onward referral is the most important. Given the evidence on page 3 that “GPs do not refer 45% of people reporting hearing problems for any intervention,”

On a wider level the ability to effectively capture and share key information about sensory impairments, and other key needs, at all stages of care pathways is key to improving access to all services.

As noted before a possible approach would be to assume sensory impairment unless explicitly noted otherwise.

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

A “single point of access” as this will challenge the many different agencies to work together to achieve this.
Also fully integrated information systems remain a long term goal. Improvements are being made in terms of information sharing between key systems but this is not yet universally available or proactive.

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

No

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?

Our Audiology team identified Recommendation 5 – sharing information locally between agencies from birth onwards as a key challenge.

Taking a wider overview all of the identified areas for action will present challenges moving forwards – both in terms of individual experiences and providing an effective service to an increasing number of people with sensory impairment.

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

Our audiology team feel that Recommendation 2 will make the biggest difference – screening at primary care level is likely to find the majority of currently unmet need and therefore will generate increased demand. The demand, especially if it occurs suddenly will put pressure on secondary care with increased numbers of referrals and then the costs of providing equipment, hearing aids etc to meet this need.

Looking at the wider service, all of the areas for action are important and all would be expected to make a difference.

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

No

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.

Our Audiology team notes that current service provision is adequate but coming under increasing pressure due to increasing demand. Their experience of one-stop shop working is mixed, it can work well to provide testing and hearing aid provision on one appointment but this is only suitable for mild losses. Most patients still require a more traditional treatment plan with ear moulds needing to be made before hearing aid issue can proceed. Also, they have found that one-stop shop works best for review patients as new patients who have not used hearing aids before tend to struggle. This appears to be due to the patient being unprepared for hearing aid issue as they agree to this course of action at the one-stop shop but mentally they have not been prepared for this. At follow up appointments the adaptation to the hearing aids seems to be less effective in some one-stop shop patients.

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

As a Health Board it is vital to know that all individuals are receiving the appropriate support and care for all aspects of their health. Implementation of this strategy would help us ensure that this was happening, both for conditions leading to sensory impairment and the wider range of health needs that may be adversely affected by sensory impairment eg someone with a sensory impairment not being supported to access care for a medical condition that then deteriorates leading to increased healthcare needs that could have been avoided.

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?

No comment

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?

No