Scottish Government Scottish Held at Tayside Deaf Sensory Impairment Strategy Consultation
Hub 21st June 2013
Arranged by Deaf Links, Tayside Deaf Forum and Dundee Deaf Sports and Social Club

Session 1, 2.00pm – 4.30pm

Attendance: 13 people (1 severely hard of hearing, 1 hard of hearing, 10 Deaf BSL users, 1 BSL user also registered partially sighted)

Following explanation of background, strategy and recommendations, those present decided it would be best to collate responses from group discussion on flipchart paper as most present struggled with English, and could not cope with even the easy-read answer papers.

Question 1a
What difference do you think care pathways will make to you?

- may be helpful – but difficult to understand what "pathways" is
- must be communication support available for workers involved in care to communicate with sensory impaired people
- Consider training staff with BSL to become carers/support workers for easier communication
- Useful but must have interpreter for carers/family who are deaf so understand process, or carers/support workers need to be able to use BSL/clear communication

Question 1b
How can we make sure that services and support meet your needs?

- Service providers must listen to local people with sensory loss
- Service providers must involve people in planning and developing services – we know what we need – co-production
- Statutory services need to realise we live in 21st Century and STOP wasting money on old fashioned services that are oppressive, paternalistic and treat us like children (Social Workers for the Deaf/Social Workers for the blind)
- People with sensory impairment need empowering services that support their rights, give them information and build their confidence to be more independent - advocacy
- Interpreters/Communication support must be made available
- Funding for training interpreters & communication support

Question 2a
Which of these things do you think is most important for a care pathway to work well?

- Talk to people who use services
- Services need to work together (One-Stop-Shops)
- Find out how many people in Scotland have sensory loss so services can be targeted/planned properly to meet real need
- Awareness training for all staff
- Similar services across Scotland
- Accessible information

Question 2b
Which of these things do you think will be hardest to put in place?

- Finding out how many people in Scotland – missed chance with last Census and no register for deafness – stigma about deafness, people deny, don't admit due to worry they will be treated differently/badly/as is they are stupid.
- Carrying out checks at GP's – GPs often arrogant and think they know everything, work from medical model, don't see deafness as serious

Question 2c
Anything not on list?

- People with sensory loss should be recruited and trained to be carers for others with sensory loss
- To increase number of interpreters, more Deaf people need training to become tutors of BSL. This will increase availability of BSL classes across Scotland and make it easier for hearing people to train to be interpreters.

Question 3a
Which of these recommendations do you think will be the hardest to put in place?

1. How much money is being spent on sensory services and where?
2. Checking sight and hearing at GP's
3. Staff knowing to look for signs of sensory loss
4. H&SC should be able to show they meet needs in their area – accessible information. Constant problems with getting information in BSL from NHS

Question 3b
Which of these recommendations will make the biggest difference and why?

1. Spending money on the right things – listening to people with sensory loss on what money should be spent on. Fed up of being ignored by Councils for years
4. Accessible information – increased knowledge means increased empowerment and independence
6. Equality Act – must be used for ensuring equal treatment

Question 3c
Are there any other recommendations you would like to see?

- National Awareness raising campaign to reduce stigma about deafness – similar to work done for mental health. Need attitudes to change.

- Preventative work needed for younger generation who are exposed constantly to excessive noise via i-pods, mp3's gaming chairs, nightclubs, cinema, gigs etc. Estimated they will start going deaf in their 40's, so what will happen to the economy in less than 20 years time if they are unable to work due to early deafness????

- Should be funding available to support training for different types of communication support

Question 4
Can you tell us what you think of the services you have received or given?

- Lip speaking – excellent
- Interpreting – long ago there was none & thought all Deaf could read and write English – now better with interpreters
- Not fair that some places in Scotland have better services for sensory loss eg equipment. Better provision in Highland also laptops given to Deaf people in Motherwell for online interpreting
- Before – old Social Work service for Deaf – controlling, no consultation, treated like children
- Now – with Tayside Deaf Hub, Deaf people starting to catch up with information etc through Advocacy service
- Advocacy very important – push rights to equal access, explain information and what is happening, build knowledge that hearing take for granted, empowering
- Advocacy ensures equal treatment in workplace, ensured full information given in accessible format. Helped get Access to Work in place which Social Workers failed to do.

- Care Provision – Deaf people scattered across different residential care, all isolated with no communication. Need one place – centre of excellence. Should be supported by Scottish Government and also to support people with sensory loss to become trained carers
- Improvements move far too slow
- Systems in place for booking interpreters too formal (to suit agencies)
- Not appropriate for Children or families to be interpreting for adults in any setting

Question 5
What difference will this strategy make to your life?

- Think it's a lot of talk and not much will change
- This should be done anyway – nothing new, heard it all before
- Everything happens so slowly
- Hope there is commitment and funding to make it work, not false promises and let down as in the past.

Question 6
Do you think the 'See Hear' Strategy will meet the needs of children and young people?

- Transition from school to working life or further education/training is very difficult – needs to be mentioned
- Improved outcomes in education of sensory impaired children required
- Standardisation of education expectations for sensory impaired children across Scotland, should not be postcode lottery
- Hearing parents need more training available to help them communicate with their children. Support links with Deaf community – less focus on speech only as implants don't work for all and having many options for communication is best, peer support opportunities and work with positive Deaf adult role models important

Question 7
Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

More funding needed to ensure online interpreters 24 hours 365 days for emergencies/appointments, etc
Bus concession cards should be automatic for sensory loss – this will not change (will not improve or be cured), stop the nonsense of insisting on proof of sensory loss for renewals

TIME FOR YOU TO LISTEN!

Session 2, 6.30pm – 9.00pm

Attendance: 16 people (1 deafened, 13 Deaf BSL users, 1 deafblind, 1 hard of hearing)

Question 1a
What difference do you think care pathways will make to you?

- improvement on past when there was nothing
- should make a difference because will make sure communication support
- needed particularly when family members need care and carer is Deaf no BSL interpreter provided, nightmare
- don't involve Deaf family member, only hearing family get information
- ignore deaf family members

Question 1b
How can we make sure that services and support meet your needs?

- Deaf people need full information to make choices
- Deaf people need advocates to support Deaf rights
- Need to realise not all Deaf People want or need Social Work
- Be aware of Deaf Culture – English is 2nd language
- Need to listen to deaf peoples views as to where to spend funding for services
- Change peoples attitudes – raise public awareness of deafness
- Peoples rights to equal information & help to understand letters
- Respect and professional behaviour from workers – ignore Deaf people
- More Deaf people being qualified in professions – education in BSL – courses etc.

Question 2a
Which of these things do you think is most important for a care pathway to work well?

- Access across Scotland needs to be equal
- Talk to people who use services
- Accessible information – BSL qualified interpreters as well as large print or DVDs
- How many people in Scotland
- BSL taught in schools

Question 2b
Which of these things do you think will be hardest to put in place?

- Checks at doctors
- Finding out numbers – missed opportunity with census

Question 2c
Anything not on list?

- Better education for sensory impaired children and further education access for qualifications
- BSL taught in schools
- Doctors (GP's)and other medical staff need to be aware of sensory issues – they don't understand and don't seem to care
- Teachers need proper qualifications for teaching Deaf Children
- Public health campaign similar to those done for Mental Health 'see me' to reduce stigma for deafness

Question 3a
Which of these recommendations do you think will be the hardest to put in place?

- Getting councils to accept that Social Workers for the Deaf/Blind not needed – more advocates and interpreters are needed
- Government need to listen – do they act on findings of consultations?
- Mainstream Social Workers working with Deaf people should be able to have basic sign – up-to-date training
- Same for professions like nursing
- Most service providers ignore the requirements under the equality act, it needs to be enforced! Individuals can't afford to take service providers like NHS and Councils to court, so there should be a body that takes cases on, like it used to be with Disability Rights Commissioner.

Question 3b
Which of these recommendations will make the biggest difference and why?

- 6. Equality Act being enforced
- 4. Health & Social Care giving proof that services meet the needs in local area – this needs to be monitored properly with penalties if not met
- 1. How the money is spent – should be monitored across provision like employability, care services, training, social work, health etc.
- 3. Training for staff

Question 3c
Are there any other recommendations you would like to see?

- Awareness campaign for employers that people with sensory impairment are not a health and safety risk, higher profile that Access to Work can enable people in the workplace, also how to use Access to Work properly
- Expand options for text messaging and online interpreting
- More Deafblind Guide Communicators trained and available
- Help to implement Self Directed Support – current support services do not have budgets for communication support so Def, deafened, hard of hearing and deafblind people are unable to access these services and are being discriminated against

Question 4
Can you tell us what you think of the services you have received or given?

- Accessing opticians and dentist difficult, training for those staff needed too
- Terrible experience of Social Workers for the Deaf creating dependency, being controlling and being bullies
- Advocacy service is miles better use of money.
- Advocacy service is brilliant – we are starting to have our rights to equal access respected, get full information, have thing properly explained. We feel empowered and able to make choices for the first time.
- Guaranteed job interview scheme for disability is a waste of time, just tick box exercise
- Current insistence of Angus, Dundee and Perth & Kinross Councils to keep wasting money on Social Workers for the Deaf when the Deaf community have told them this is oppressive, old fashioned and controlling
- Councils and NHS don't listen, keep ignoring us, pretend everyone happy with services
- Sensory impairment is bottom of priority list for services and funding. Should be proportionate to numbers of people affected. Other disabilities get higher priority for smaller numbers affected.
- Scottish Government should use more power to ensure local service provision is equal
- More modern equipment and more choice of equipment needed through Occupational Therapy to enable greater independence
- Health staff need top be Deaf and Deafblind Aware, very arrogant and don't see BSL as a language, assume all Deaf people can lipread and read English which is not true

Question 5
What difference will this strategy make to your life?

- It will make a huge difference if it is implemented – Watchdog needed to check it is happening
- Equality Act, when broken should be Government who pursues
- Hope it doesn't take to long, in past everything is so slow

Question 6
Do you think the 'See Hear' Strategy will meet the needs of children and young people?

- Yes, if implemented properly
- In education there has to be the same standard of services across Scotland, not postcode lottery
- BSL needs to be taught in schools
- Sensory impaired children need to have equal chance to achieve potential and proper qualifications, in BSL if necessary (it is provided for kids who speak foreigh languages and BSL is an indigenous language in Scotland!)

Question 7
Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

- Hearing/sighted people don't realise the problems in Education and most deaf/blind children are born into hearing/sighted families.
- Too much focus on cochlear implants being a miracle cure – it is not and doesn't work for all. Families think it makes deaf children hearing which it does not. Medical staff give out misleading information and this leads to false expectations on the child and isolation away from their peers and those who could support them with true understanding.
- Needs to be accessible training for Deaf people to become professional carers/support workers for older/disabled Deaf people so communication is easy, improving quality of life and reducing isolation.
- Older people's residential care – should be a centre of excellence for sensory impairment in one establishment in each area so people aren't isolated/scattered in lots of care homes with no-one to communicate with
- Advocacy for sensory impairment should be rolled out across Scotland and totally replace Social Workers for the Deaf/Blind.
- Advocacy is empowering and promotes independence and choice. Social Work for the Deaf/Blind is old fashioned and oppressive – you don't get Social Workers for the Hearing, so why should we be stuck with them poking their noses in all aspects of our lives???