

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?

Q1 a & b refer to those in receipt of services. While in Fife we are aware of service users' views from the service user panels, this question would be best answered by them directly. We do know from what service users have told us that there is a need to improve access to services including the care pathway approach.

Fife Council Chairs a Physical Disabilities and Sensory Impairment Strategic Implementation Group (PD&SI SIG) involving representatives from all statutory and voluntary sector partnership agencies. In December 2012 the Group decided to undertake a review of Sensory Impairment Services across Fife to ascertain spend and ensure effective delivery in the future. This Review will capture information to ascertain the changes required to consider how best to implement a care pathway approach.

(d) How will you make these changes?

The outcome of the Review due December 2013 will consider options for change with a proposed action plan signed off by the PD&SI SIG.

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?

Some service users (blind and partially sighted) have told us they feel there is already an efficient pathway in place and others (hard of hearing) have said there is 'nothing post diagnosis'. Some do support the concept of a register for hearing loss. Overall one of the key factors for us in Fife is making sure we take on board service users' views in implementing the strategy.

We would agree that referral routes into support services and information is an important step in the care pathway. We expect any gaps in access and referral criteria to be identified through the Review. In addition the Health and Social Care Integration in Fife will provide an opportunity to clarify referral pathways from primary and secondary care routes.

With regard to maintaining information pertaining to people with all aspects of sensory impairment this has been identified as a key task in the Review.

Assessment with clear eligibility criteria is a key element in making sure individuals receive services and support according to their needs. In Fife we already have single shared assessment in place through generic assessment and care management teams and a range of service provision across all sectors. We aim to identify areas for improvement and reduce any unnecessary duplication where possible making it easier for individuals to receive the support they need. This should include reviewing who is best placed for basic screening and making appropriate referral as part of a recognised pathway approach.

We would consider a highly trained and aware workforce of all staff key to making sure all elements of a pathway approach is successful.

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

We welcome the challenge of improving our services in partnership in Fife in all aspects. We aim to make sure that local services meet local need. One of the key challenges will be in identifying the population of all these key groups of people with a sensory impairment and engaging with the most hard to reach. In addition we aim through the review to identify resource allocation across all health and social care and voluntary sector agencies to ensure resources and services are targeted effectively. We welcome the opportunity to draw on the funds being made available in 2013/14 and 2014/15 which we hope will support us in meeting these challenges.

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

In the context of the changing role of statutory services e.g. Health and Social Care Integration and reducing budgets, we recognise the need to engage with the voluntary and independent sectors to ensure that there are cost effective supports, services, information etc which will allow people with a Sensory Impairment to be as independent as possible within their communities

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?

We know from what service users have told us that they want to feel confident of getting the right level of support by trained staff in a fair and equitable way. We aim to respond to that challenge locally by engaging with service users in the course of the Review and strategic planning.

With regard to all of the recommendations and areas for action Fife Council has started to undertake a review which will encompass an audit of spend across all sectors, screening and access to services, clear and accessible information both in terms of services available and data collection, and workforce requirements. As above we look forward to the funding being made available to support us in the current financial climate to implementing these recommendations.

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

The Review currently underway is in recognition of our commitment in Fife to make sure services for people with a sensory impairment are effective, reach those who need them, are best value and outcomes focussed. Accurate information will make sure we forward plan effectively to meet increasing need and demand for future services.

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

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.

As a commissioner and provider of sensory impairment services we draw on the views of service users in a variety of ways to assist us improve our services. Fife Council has well established service user panels for both hearing and visual impairment. The Review will map current service provision and engage service users through service user panels and individuals so that we are clear of their views in shaping future services.

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

Service users have told us that they feel there is duplication and information could be improved.

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?

The strategy appears to reflect ably the principles inherent within both GIRFEC and the Doran report of ensuring that young people and their families get the appropriate and proportionate support at the right time and in their local community. Fife Council is progressing an agenda towards integrating more fully our multi-agency assessments of young people affected by disability so that we can produce comprehensive child planning which will follow a child throughout their lives thereby minimising the disruption sometimes caused at times of transition. While this work is not without its challenges all agencies are committed to the principle of keeping children's needs at the centre.

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?

In collating these comments the views across Adult, Childrens and Older Peoples Services have been included. The views of service users represented by people with sensory impairment on service user panels in Fife have also been included. In addition service users may respond to the consultation separately.