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.

Not Applicable

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

Not Applicable

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

Falkirk Council works in partnership with Stirling Council Social Work Service, NHS Forth Valley, Action for Hearing Loss, RNIB and Guide dogs in the provision of the Forth Valley Sensory Centre.

Whilst there are existing care pathways with ophthalmology and audiology departments there are many other service areas where integration into the care pathway would need to be developed. Particularly with GP practices and local generic frontline social work teams.

Locally there was a time limited project run in conjunction with RNIB to complete work around awareness raising and training in relation to the high prevalence of unidentified visual impairment in people with a learning disability. Whilst this work was of clear benefit it highlighted the need in this area. In keeping with the See Hear strategy there is further work required in relation to the pathways for people with a learning disability.

The implementation of an inclusive and holistic pathway would be complex given the range of services across different provision and organisations. That said Falkirk Council is well placed in having the platform of the Forth Valley Sensory Centre. However the establishment of an inclusive care pathway would take dedicated time and given the demand on services with reducing resources it is unclear from where this resource would come. It is well recognised that the development, implementation and establishment of robust care pathways can take 2 to 3 years even with dedicated time and resource.

(d) How will you make these changes?

To continue to work within the partnership of the Forth Valley Sensory Centre noting the challenges and limitation of resources as detailed above.

Falkirk and Stirling Councils in partnership with NHS Forth Valley actively deliver shared assessments to produce better outcomes. The strategic framework will provide an opportunity to review key priorities with all partners and will support transformational change to meet the needs of our local community.

. 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?

A clearly developed set of local sensory impairment pathways that are agreed by key stakeholders and understood by all clinicians, assessors, service providers and, most importantly the person themselves. (Bullet point 6)

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

A single point of access.
Consistent approach across Scotland and ensure similar access to services across Scotland.

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

The sharing of information is crucial to improving outcomes for service users and improved sharing of IT systems would support this.

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?

- An audit of all current spend on sensory impairment including in relation to carers across statutory Health and Social Care and third sector agencies. This would be challenging. Whilst this would be less of a challenge for spend on specialist provision it would be very complex in relation to those elements of service provision that impact on people with a sensory impairment. The source of spend is diverse and in some areas not readily identifiable to sensory impairment particularly for people with a range of complex care needs.
- Robust systems for maintaining information locally and sharing this between agencies, in relation to people who have received a diagnosis of a sensory impairment at any time from birth onwards. As previously stated Falkirk

Council through the Social Work team based in the Forth Valley Sensory Centre has joint working arrangements with Ophthalmology and Audiology services including the sharing of information. There is a mechanism in terms of reporting and assessing those with a visual impairment following certification by a consultant ophthalmologist. However although there is joint working there is no similar system for deaf or hard of hearing people who would benefit from such. Not only does this demonstrate the difference in information sharing in relation to sensory impairments the complexity and range of services providing assessment and care support add to the complexity of information maintenance and sharing. Not with standing the different IT information databases.

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

Reporting on sensory impairment as a discrete area provided it is not too onerous and in keeping with existing reporting systems. Additionally it requires the commitment of all partners.
Performance reporting ensures commitment to service and ensuring positive outcomes for people with a sensory impairment.

(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 stated previously Falkirk Council works in partnership within the Forth Valley Sensory Centre which is a focus of provision for people with a sensory impairment. The centre has well established service user groups. Service users are represented at director level on the Forth Valley Sensory Centre Board.

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?

Yes with reference to individual care planning and outcomes.

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 Falkirk we offer Sensory Awareness training to all fieldwork staff. It follows the training packs endorsed by the Scottish Government as part of the roll out of the Sensory Impairment Action Plan. However not all of the training across Scotland follows this and it would be helpful if the strategy were more specific about the contents of mandatory training.

In summary Falkirk Council welcomes a framework for the delivery of services to people with a sensory impairment. It lays out the context for local areas to respond to the needs of people with a sensory loss within the familiar model of care pathways. Although it would re-iterate the point that the development, implementation and establishment of robust and comprehensive care pathways is very resource intensive and takes significant dedicated time.