

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:
Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

DECISION NO:
18/00022

For publication

Non-Key
Affects more than 2 Electoral Divisions

Subject: SENSORY STRATEGY 2018-2021

Decision: As Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, I **APPROVE** the Sensory Strategy 2018-2021

Reason(s) for decision: Supports the Strategic Outcome to ensure vulnerable residents are safe and supported with choices to live independently.

Financial Implications: None

Legal Implications: None

Equality Implications: An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation: The proposed decision was discussed at the Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee on 18 May.

Beryl Palmer (Manager, Sensory and Autism Services) and Jo-Ann Robson (Specialist Teacher - Hearing Impairment at the Goldwyn School) were in attendance for this item)

1. Beryl Palmer introduced the report which set out the finalised Sensory Strategy for 2018-2021.
 - a) In response to a question, Beryl Palmer said that a Deaf Community Worker had been employed in Thanet to work with Deaf people to empower them and help them understand how things work and get improved access to local services.
 - b) In response to a question, Beryl Palmer said that communication colleagues were working towards improving Kent County Council's website accessibility for people with sensory impairments. A Member suggested that the recommendation be amended to ensure that the accessibility of Kent County Council's website be improved as a priority. Members of the Committee supported this.
 - c) In response to a question, Beryl Palmer said that there were ECLO's (Eye Clinic Liaison Officers) based at Maidstone Hospital and William Harvey Hospital which were currently funded by KAB.
 - d) In response to a question, Beryl Palmer said that Hi Kent had expanded the amount lip-reading classes that they provided.
 - e) In response to a question, Beryl Palmer said that Sensory Services were for everybody, regardless of a person's other disabilities. She added that teams would work with colleagues to give advice, and input into an assessment for an individual and ensure that the needs of that person were met.

- f) In response to a question, Beryl Palmer said that KAB had arranged art clubs and found the classes very helpful and therapeutic for people with sensory impairments, there were opportunities to use The Heritage Arts Company to enhance these services.
- g) In response to a question, Beryl Palmer said that training courses were available for carers and staff in communication with people living with sensory impairments.
- h) In response to a question, Beryl Palmer said that technology was making a big impact on sensory-impaired people's lives. Jo-Ann Robson said apps had been introduced in many Kent Schools and children were gaining a better understanding of sensory disabilities and how they affect people. Anne Tidmarsh said that Kent were developing a digital strategy for Adult Social Care, but this would be something that was looked at across the board.
- i) In response to a question, Beryl Palmer said that KAB had started to provide a counselling service for visually impaired adults.
- j) In response to a question, an officer confirmed that they would investigate and circulate information to Members of the Committee with regards to whether staff working on the reception desk within Sessions House were trained to communicate with a person who had a sensory impairment.
- k) In response to a question, Beryl Palmer said that several staff within sensory services were deaf and used hearing loops. She said that it was important to ensure that hearing loops were regularly tested and were accessible.

2. RESOLVED that: -

- a) the proposal to end the grants awarded to Hi Kent and KAB and to re-let these as strategic grants for one year, during which time a new Sensory contract/s will be tendered and awarded to begin in April 2019, be noted; and
- b) action be taken to improve the accessibility of KCC's website for sensory impaired users; and
- c) the decision proposed to be taken by the Cabinet Member of Adult Social Care to approve the sensory strategy 2018-2021;

be endorsed.

Any alternatives considered: None

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:



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signed

13 JUNE 2018
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date