

EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Community Support Services for Children Young People and Adults with Sensory Needs

Responsible Officer

Katherine Clark - ST SC

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

No

Commissioning/Procurement

Commissioning/Procurement

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Adult Social Care and Health

Responsible Service

Sensory Services

Responsible Head of Service

Simon Mitchell - ST SC

Responsible Director

Clare Maynard - ST SC

Aims and Objectives

Context:

Currently, 1:1 support for children, young people, and adults with sensory impairments (sight, hearing or dual sensory loss) who have been assessed to meet the council's criteria for unmet needs are either purchased on an ad-hoc basis via 'Indi' contracts by the council or managed by the individual or their family via Direct Payments. The service purchased provides a support worker to assist people with managing aspects of daily living that can be more challenging for people with sensory impairments, such as managing finances, shopping, using public transport to attend appointments and social activities, and dealing with correspondence.

The aim of this activity is to commission services that support people with sensory needs in particular to live as safely and as independently as possible by providing them with the assistance required identified within their Care and Support Plan. The need for 'specialist' support to be commissioned is to ensure that peoples' individual communication needs are met by their support worker. It reflects the level of training required for support workers, for example in British Sign Language (BSL) or Sign Supported English (SSE) used by a person who is D/deaf and block alphabet or hands-on communication used by a person who is deafblind, as well as knowledge and understanding of the impact that communication barriers experienced by people with sensory impairments can have on a person, including the isolating nature of diminished access to services and communities and the emotional difficulties that can be caused by reduced social activity, loneliness and lower levels of self-esteem and confidence.

Kent is experiencing increasing demographic pressures, with an aging population and people living longer with more complex needs. The RNIB Sight Loss data tool projects that the number of people in Kent living with sight impairment will increase by 23% between now and 2032, while nationally the RNID projects an 18% increase in people with hearing impairments by 2035. There are estimated to be 26,000 people living in Kent with learning disabilities (Source, KPHO Kent Sensory Impairment, 2017). Sensory impairments are more common in people with learning disabilities, and it has been estimated that one in three people with learning disabilities is likely to have a sensory impairment (Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities).

The development of this service is compliant with the Care Act 2014 by preventing, reducing or delaying needs for care and support. Many parts of the Care Act eligibility criteria are relevant to people with sensory loss, for example:

- Managing and maintaining nutrition- because accessing shops and food preparation is difficult and because food identification as well as the ability to read use by dates is compromised.
- Maintaining a habitable home environment- keeping the home clean is often problematic for visually impaired people. Health and safety risks may arise from the inability to see or hear hazards in the home, as well as difficulties accessing information relating to utilities.
- Developing and maintaining family and other personal relationships – both mobility and communication difficulties can be a barrier to developing and maintaining relationships, as they impact on essential activities such as travelling to visit friends, holding a conversation, using the telephone or accessing correspondence.
- Accessing and engaging in work, education, training or volunteering – mobility, access to information and communication all present barriers to this type of involvement.
- Making use of necessary facilities or services in the local community including public transport, and recreational facilities or services.

This commissioning activity supports:

- Framing Kent's Future, the council strategy (2022-2026), in particular by 'supporting vulnerable children and families and helping adults who draw on social care to lead the lives they want to live and improving the way we design and deliver our care and support services'.
- Making a Difference Everyday, the strategy for Adult Social Care (2022-2027) which aims to ensure that 'People experience flexible and creative ways of arranging support which enable a balance between choice for the person we support, quality and value'.
- Kent's Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (2021-2024), particularly the principle that Kent is a place where all children, young people with SEND and their families 'benefit from working with skilled practitioners who understand their needs and how these can be best met'.

Aims and objectives:

The service will provide 1:1 support for children, young people, and adults with sensory needs. Support will be aligned to an individual's Support Plan and achievements reviewed regularly, achieving for example:

- Increased resilience.
- Better emotional health, health, and wellbeing.
- Development of self-confidence and agency.

- Increased planning and problem-solving skills to support independence.

Support will be provided based on the assessed needs of each individual, tailoring the support offered as appropriate, without discrimination on the grounds of protected characteristics.

Outcomes:

Formal commissioning and contract management of the service will lead to better outcomes for children, young people and adults in Kent who have sensory support needs via:

- Increased control over the service purchased, in terms of quality and cost.
- Establishing quality baselines in a market with no regulatory oversight.
- Ensuring service alignment and promotion of council strategies through design of the service specification.
- Utilising expert skills and knowledge of local specialist providers.
- Supporting the development of organisations supporting the D/deaf community in particular.
- Allows specialist providers to lead innovation in supporting people to maintain or improve their independence.

Summary of equality impact:

This EqIA finds that the impact of this work will be positive across all groups and therefore supports the Equality Act 2010.

This service will offer flexible and personalised support and is therefore able to provide support for people with protected characteristics that may experience barriers to accessing their community. The support put in place for people will be needs-led meaning that the service can work with children, young people, and adults where barriers may exist for them, for example, travelling to a location for social activities.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?

Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

Yes

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

Yes

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

Market engagement with service providers was conducted in January 2023 through a Prior Information Notice on Kent Business Portal. Organisations were given the opportunity to have 1-1 meetings with Commissioners and Sensory Team (Adults and children’s) Managers to develop knowledge of market trends, capability, and capacity. Findings from these meetings will be incorporated into the service specification.

Other Local Authorities have been consulted with in relation to their model of delivery of this service and to share knowledge, ideas and practice.

Co-production with people with lived experience of sensory impairments will be woven in to the design of

the service as the service specification is developed.

Adult Social Care & Health (ASCH) Senior Management Team in March 2023.

Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?

No

Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?

Yes

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service Users/clients

Service users/clients

Staff

Staff/Volunteers

Residents/Communities/Citizens

No

Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?

Yes

Details of Positive Impacts

The formal commissioning of support services for people with sensory needs will offer the opportunity to build on lessons learnt from current purchasing arrangements and improve the overall service offering.

The contract terms and conditions and service specification will address the requirement for providers to deliver inclusive services that meet the needs of the people from all protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.

Age and Sensory Support Services:

- Older people who find it difficult to connect and engage with their community for accessibility reasons will be able to do so more easily.
- Gives older people the opportunity to continue to live in their home for as long as possible.
- Supports digital inclusion for older people.
- Socially isolated older people benefit from the interaction with their support worker.

Disability and Sensory Support Services:

The service will be provided to children, young people, and adults with sensory impairments as well as people with additional disabilities and complex needs and will deliver a positive impact on their wellbeing by using a person-centred approach to delivery.

Sex and Sensory Support Services:

The service will not only support people in need regardless of their sex but will be actively tailored to support individual needs.

Gender Identity/ Transgender and Sensory Support Services:

The service will not only support people in need regardless of their gender identity but will be actively tailored to support individual needs.

Race and Sensory Support Services:

The service will not only support people in need regardless of their race but will be actively tailored to support individual needs and respond to culturally specific needs.

Religion and Belief and Sensory Support Services:

The service will not only support people in need regardless of their religion and beliefs but will be actively tailored to support individual needs and respond to culturally specific needs.

Sexual Orientation and Sensory Support Services:

The service will not only support people in need regardless of their sexual orientation but will be actively tailored to support individual needs.

Pregnancy and Maternity and Sensory Support Services:

The service will not only support people in need regardless of their pregnancy and maternity status but will be actively tailored to support individual needs.

Marriage and Civil Partnerships and Sensory Support Services:

The service will not only support people in need regardless of their marriage and civil partnership status but will be actively tailored to support individual needs.

Carer's Responsibilities and Sensory Support Services:

This service will have a positive impact for informal adult carers of children, young people and adults by providing specialist support and promoting independence for the people that they are caring for.

Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions

19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

Are there negative impacts for age?

No

Details of negative impacts for Age

Not Applicable

Mitigating Actions for Age

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age

Not Applicable

20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability

Are there negative impacts for Disability?

No

Details of Negative Impacts for Disability

Not Applicable

Mitigating actions for Disability

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Disability

Not Applicable

21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex

Are there negative impacts for Sex?

No

Details of negative impacts for Sex

Not Applicable

Mitigating actions for Sex

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Sex

Not Applicable

22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender

No

Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No
Negative impacts for Race
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships

Not Applicable

28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities

Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities

No

Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities

Not Applicable

Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities

Not Applicable