

**From:** Penny Southern, Interim Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health

**To:** Graham Gibbens, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

**Decision Number:** 18/00022

**Subject:** **SENSORY STRATEGY 2018-2021**

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Past Pathway of Paper:** Adult Social Care and Health Core Directorate Management Team Meeting – 18 April 2018  
Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee – 18 May 2018

**Future Pathway of Paper:** Cabinet member decision

**Electoral Division:** All

**Summary:** The Sensory Strategy 2018-2021 has been finalised following public consultation and this report seeks Adult Social Care Cabinet approval of the strategy. As part of the implementation of the strategy it is proposed to end the grants awarded to Hi Kent and KAB and re-let these as strategic grants for a year, during which time a new Sensory Contract/s will be tendered and awarded to begin in April 2019. In parallel with this re-commissioning, work will be carried out on the development of an all-age pathway for people with sensory impairments and the in-house sensory teams redesigned.

**Recommendation:** The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care is asked to approve the Sensory Strategy 2018-2021.

## **1. Introduction and Policy Background**

- 1.1 A Sensory Strategy has been produced with the vision of supporting d/Deaf, deafblind and sight impaired people of all ages to be independent, to have choice and control and to participate fully in society (see Appendix 1). The strategy included extensive consultation with individuals with sensory impairments and their carers. The strategy has been updated in the light of feedback from a formal public consultation.
- 1.2 The grants currently awarded to KAB and Hi Kent are not compliant with the VCS policy and they need to be awarded as either strategic grants or contract(s).

## **2. The Sensory Strategy**

- 2.1 The development of the Sensory Strategy involved extensive consultation with individuals with sensory impairment and their families and carers. The aims of consulting with sensory impaired service users were to:
- Review current services, identify gaps and describe service user pathways
  - Explore their priorities within health and social care
  - Gather personal views and experiences
  - Explore how information, advice and guidance is received and how it could be improved.
- 2.2 A number of different methods were used to engage including online surveys, distribution of questionnaires, semi structured interviews, service user focus groups and attendance at regular groups of sight impaired, hard of hearing and deafblind people. In total, 258 service users contributed their views and opinions on services. This included ideas for new approaches and services..
- 2.3 The analysis of this engagement helped inform the vision, principles, outcomes and commitments of the strategy. People told us our services must be:
- *Responsive* - addressing the needs of individuals in a timely way
  - *Appropriate* – providing specialist sensory knowledge
  - *Accessible* – community based services which take into account communication and accessibility requirements of people
  - *Connected* – ensuring service pathways within and between social care, health and education work together
  - *Informative* – providing information, advice and guidance at every step along someone’s journey
  - *Inclusive* – children and adults with sensory impairment have the same access to a range of opportunities as those without impairments.
- 2.4 The development of the Sensory Strategy was also guided by a Consultative Group made up of representatives from Health, KCC, and the voluntary sector. Information on national policy, research, and Best Practice from across the UK was analysed and informed the strategy. A Sensory Joint Needs Assessment was co-produced in collaboration with Public Health which considered prevalence and needs. A discrete piece of work was also carried out to consider the needs of people with sensory impairments and learning disabilities. A separate report of this work was produced and key recommendations for people with learning disabilities were included in the Sensory Strategy in Outcome Seven.
- 2.5 The responses to the strategy through the public consultation were analysed by the KCC Business Intelligence Unit. (Full details of the analysis of the consultation by the Business Intelligence Unit are included as a background document to this report). They identified some common themes but there were also many varied individual comments made. Generally the response to the strategy was positive and supportive with the majority of the respondents expressing the view that the outcomes identified were complete and there was

little missing. When all responses were viewed as a whole the following issues were most prominent:

- Accessibility for those with sensory impairments
- Awareness of sensory impairments amongst the public and professionals
- More widespread teaching and use of British Sign Language
- Greater consideration of, and working with Education settings to improve the experience of those with sensory impairments.

2.6 Similarly the top three areas identified for improvement overall were:

- Raising awareness/providing information around sensory impairment
- Education for children with sensory impairments
- Accessibility for people with sensory impairments.

2.7 The strategy has been updated in the light of the feedback from the public consultation and refreshed to reflect changes in national and local policy.(See changes in the document 'You Said, We Did' attached as Appendix 2).

2.8 Ongoing engagement has taken place with local sensory impaired people since the formal consultation exercise was carried out. This has taken several formats. The in-house Sensory Services team have established a Deaf Community Worker role, who has set up a local forum of Deaf people (British Sign Language users) and developed a KCC Sensory Services Face Book page to provide information to the local Deaf community and seek feedback and views. Education's Specialist Teaching and Learning Service for sensory impaired children have been holding roadshows in Kent to seek the views of parents on services. KAB run service user forums two or three times a year in each area of Kent and use a variety of other methods to ensure ongoing feedback and engagement with service users. Hi Kent also use a variety of means to consult regularly with deaf and hard of hearing people.

### **3. The Way Forward – the Establishment of a Sensory Collaborative**

3.1 It is proposed that a Sensory Collaborative is now established along a similar model to that established for autism and dementia to develop and take forward an implementation plan for the strategy. It is proposed that this meeting will be chaired by the Assistant Director for Specialist Services, meet quarterly and comprise stakeholders from KCC, Health, the voluntary sector as well as service users and carers.

### **4. Current Sensory Developments**

#### **4.1 The Development of an All Age Sensory Pathway**

4.1.1 Work has commenced between adult and children's commissioning on developing an All Age Sensory Pathway. Current services have been mapped and issues and gaps identified.

4.1.2 Work has begun with Health Commissioners and the Local Eye Health Network exploring opportunities for more integrated services and joint commissioning opportunities.

#### 4.2 Redesign of the in-house sensory teams

4.2.1 A Change Implementation Officer (Sensory Redesign) has commenced work on redesigning the in-house sensory teams.

#### 4.3 Recommissioning of services provided by KAB and Hi Kent

4.3.1 As part of the implementation of the strategy it is proposed to end the grants awarded to Hi Kent and KAB and 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.

4.3.2 There will be ongoing engagement with sensory impaired people, families and carers and wider stakeholders in the recommissioning and redesign of sensory services, building on the work already undertaken. Presentations have been given to the Health Watch panel and “Ester cafes” are currently being planned where local sensory impaired people will be given the opportunity to express their views.

### **5. Financial Implications**

5.1 Grants 2017-18:

- KAB: £818,877 (and £81,000 from Education and Children’s Social Care)
- Hi Kent: £282,867

5.2 A 1.84% saving will be applied to the grant in 2018/19.

### **6. Legal Implications**

6.1 There are no legal implications associated with this decision.

### **7. Equality Implications**

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached as Appendix 3.

### **8. Recommendations**

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care is asked to approve the Sensory Strategy 2018-2021.

### **9. Background Documents**

Sensory Strategy Consultation

<https://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/SensoryStrategy/consultationHome>

Consultation Analysis for Kent Sensory Strategy

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=14799>

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