

To: SOCIAL WORK (OPERATIONS AND SERVICES) SUB COMMITTEE	Subject: COMMUNITY CARE SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH A SENSORY IMPAIRMENT – AN ACTION PLAN: DRAFT RESPONSE TO SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK	
Date: 24 FEBRUARY 2004	Ref: SKMcD

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT / INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report seeks approval of the North Lanarkshire draft response to the consultation document “Community Care Services for People with Sensory Impairment – an Action Plan” which was published by the Scottish Executive in August 2003 which is attached as an appendix to this report.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. A Social Work Services Inspectorate (SWSI) report, Sensing Progress, was published in 1998, and highlighted key areas for action following an inspection of sensory impairment services in local authorities in Scotland. Whilst this was helpful, the Executive recently recognised that the report required to be updated by identifying common priorities for the future with principal stakeholders.
- 2.2. The Executive established a small planning group with representation from Deafblind Scotland, the Royal National Institute of the Blind and the Scottish Council on Deafness to outline what the common community care needs might be for people with sensory impairment. This group produced an Action Plan, which was circulated for consultation, and carried out some research on numbers affected and future trends.

3. PROPOSALS / CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The recommendations outlined in the report are broad and require further research and development. Five key areas are identified:

- Better Joint Working
- Single Shared Assessment and Sensory Impairment
- Standards
- Training
- Physical Access

3.2 The report details seven separate recommendations:

- The Scottish Executive should consult on the best method of collecting information to assist in service planning and delivery, including consideration of a registration process.
- The Scottish Executive should consider how local partnerships can ensure that the ability to capture sensory impairment needs arising from the Single Shared Assessment (SSA) process for older people should be incorporated into SSA for other care groups.
- Every social work or social care facility should have staff who are able to meet the basic communication needs of a person with a sensory impairment by April 2005.
- Local research projects should be conducted to find out what is working well in both urban and rural areas.
- A short life working group should be established to produce common sensory impairment service standards to be completed by September 2004.
- A national training strategy should be devised that balances generic and specialist needs, and focuses on the needs of service users and carers , based on existing good practice.

3.2 The response prepared by North Lanarkshire Council (attached as an appendix) supports all the above recommendations, but stresses that:

- There has been a shift towards involvement and participation of service users and carers in the planning and design of services which has proved to be a more helpful way of developing meaningful partnership and encouraging ownership.
- Any guidance/requirements in relation to Single Shared Assessment should be contained within the existing arrangements/framework of the joint future agenda
- The recommendations will have significant implications for local authorities and health, and consideration will require to be given to this matter by the Scottish Executive.

3.3 Through work undertaken during the Best Value Review of Independent Living Services, North Lanarkshire Council is already addressing some of the recommendations in the Action Plan. This includes plans to redesign existing services, the development of communication support arrangements and the implementation of training.

3.4 The Best Value Review of Independent Living Services will be considered by Social Work Committee and Policy and Resources Committee.

4. FINANCIAL / PERSONNEL / LEGAL / POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. There are no financial implications associated with the publication of this report, but as outlined, there would be significant financial implications associated with implementation. This will require more detailed consideration following the production of the final report by the Scottish Executive.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. The Committee is asked to:

- (i) approve the response to the Consultation Report
- (ii) request the Director of Social Work report to Committee following the production of the final report, including details about implementation arrangements and costs
- (iii) otherwise note the contents of this report



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Director of Social Work
(26th January 2004)

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A copy of the document is available in the Members' library.

North Lanarkshire Council

Response to “Community Care Services for People with a Sensory Impairment - An Action Plan

1. General Comments on the plan

- 1.1 The draft action plan confirms the direction of Sensing Progress (1998), and this is supported.
- 1.2 It is agreed that a set of standards is long overdue and that our English colleagues are well ahead of us, having their own set of standards.
- 1.3 Five key areas are identified for development, however recommendations are broad and require further research and development. Some of the recommendations are already being addressed within North Lanarkshire via the Best Value Review of Independent Living Services, which is currently being concluded. This will also influence the future and shape of service provision. As recommendations become more detailed, they should highlight the potential impact on resources, eg staffing, training, budgets etc.
- 1.4 North Lanarkshire Council is already addressing some of the recommendations in the Action Plan, including identifying what needs to change in community care services. This included a Deafblind identification project, which a) identified Deafblind people living within North Lanarkshire, b) identified gaps in service provision for this group, an Open Space Event which allowed service users to voice their thoughts on current service delivery as well as their hopes and dreams for the future, questionnaires which allowed service users and carers of all ages to comment on current and future service and exercises involving staff on current practice.

North Lanarkshire Council would be pleased to be involved in any further development leading from the Action Plan.

2. Comments on Recommendations:

Recommendation 1:- *The Scottish Executive should consult on the best methods of collecting information to assist service planning and delivery, for all those with a sensory impairment, including consideration of the registration process.*

While consultation is valuable, within North Lanarkshire, there has been a shift towards involvement and participation of service users and carers in the planning and design of services. This has proved to be a more helpful way of developing meaningful partnership and encouraging ownership.

While not opposed to the recommendation, there is a need to consider what information already exists and what is to be gained from further consultation.

Recommendation 2:- *The Scottish Executive should consider how local partnerships can ensure that the ability to capture sensory impairment and needs arising from this in the Single Shared Assessment process for older people shall be incorporated into SSA for other care groups.*

It is important that the needs of people with sensory impairment are captured within the shared assessment processes for all care groups. While there is no objection to the Scottish Executive wishing to encourage and promote this within existing partnerships, it is vital that any additional guidance/requirements are contained within the existing arrangements/framework of the joint future agenda

Recommendation 3:- *The Scottish Executive should review existing information standards for people with a sensory impairment in conjunction with the Scottish Accessible Information Forum and other appropriate organisations to assess what is and should be available.*

Recommendation 4:- *It is recommended that every social work or social care facility should have staff who are able to meet the basic communication needs of a person with a sensory impairment by April 2005.*

Both recommendations are supported. North Lanarkshire Council is already addressing this following the recommendations from the Best Value Review of Independent Living Services.

Training staff to meet the basic communication needs of service users will have major resource implications both in budget and in staff time. This also has implications for our colleagues in Health in the implementation of shared assessment arrangements.

Further guidance on this would be welcome.

Recommendation 5:- *It is proposed that local research projects be conducted to find out what is working well in both urban and rural areas. These should identify what needs to change in community care services for people with a sensory impairment so that present inconsistencies and specialist needs are addressed. Consideration should be given to beginning this work in those areas of Scotland where Deafblind has already assessed needs.*

This recommendation is supported.

North Lanarkshire Council has undertaken several needs identification projects, and has been keen to learn from best practice. The Scottish Executive should fund specific research across Scotland which would lead to the production of "what works" material and encourage innovation.

Recommendation 6:- *It is proposed that a short life working group is set up to produce common sensory impairment service standards to be completed for implementation by September 2004.*

This recommendation is supported and will be useful in helping shape the future of services, especially in areas of assessment, joint training and joint protocols. Our Health colleagues require to be involved in this, given the expectations that shared assessment arrangements be in place for all care groups by 1st April 2004.

Recommendation 7:- *A national training strategy which strikes a balance between generic and specialist needs should be devised that places the needs of users and carers at its heart and is based on existing good practice standards. As a first step, the Scottish Executive should carry out an exercise to map all the information that is currently available, clarify the numbers involved and assess the usefulness of training programme content.*

This recommendation is supported. North Lanarkshire Council has a very strong commitment to the involvement and participation of service users and carers in all aspects of service planning, design, implementation and delivery. There are various organisations, as well as individual service users/carers, who will have an interest in the development of a training strategy due to their recent involvement in the Best Value Review of Independent Living Services in North Lanarkshire.