

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE: 25 JANUARY 2007**

### **SERVICE REVIEW - SENSORY IMPAIRMENT SERVICES**

#### **Report by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To advise Social Work Committee of the outcome of a service review of Sensory Impairment Services.
- 1.2 To seek Committee endorsement of the Service Improvement Plan arising from the review findings.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Social Work Services currently provide a service to residents of East Ayrshire affected by sight or hearing loss which includes assessment, advice, provision of equipment and sign language interpreters.
- 2.2 The Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003 places a duty on Councils to demonstrate Best Value. A key requirement is to carry out reviews on all of their services to secure continuous improvement while maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost.
- 2.3 A Review of the Sensory Impairment Service was conducted by officers in accordance with the principles set out in the Council's guide to carrying out a Best Value Review and constitutes a part of the Department of Educational and Social Services Best Value Review Programme.
- 2.4 The process involved extensive consultation with stakeholders including service users and staff.

#### **3. SUMMARY OF REVIEW PROCESS**

- 3.1 A wide range of consultation exercises have been undertaken with existing service users which included meetings, questionnaires and an independent consultation of British Sign Language (BSL) users undertaken by the Scottish Deaf Association.
- 3.2 NHS Ayrshire and Arran are currently undertaking work to quantify and improve access to services for people affected by sensory impairment. This process includes stakeholders from the three Ayrshire Councils and voluntary organisations.
- 3.3 The outcome of these exercises along with National Strategy in respect of sensory impairment requirements has informed the review findings.

3.4 Demographic changes impacting on the increased demand placed on Sensory Impairment services by an ageing population have also been considered within the context of the service review.

3.5 The consultation element of the review process identified the following:

- A need for deaf people to have access to a worker to undertake assessments of need who can communicate with BSL.
- Increased awareness of Sensory Impairments and how they can impact on accessing all services.
- Improved accessible information regarding services.
- Establishment of a central location for the service to improve sign posting and information availability.
- The need to further explore where the shared services agenda can support the Council deliver services effectively.

#### **4. BEST VALUE REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 The service review established that existing staffing levels may be sufficient to ensure improved outcomes for service users, their families and carers this is however dependent on consolidating and implementing changes to staff roles and responsibilities.

4.2 Continuous staff training to be provided to improve British Sign Language use by staff in various positions within social work.

4.3 A Service Improvement Plan is attached as Appendix 1 to this report for consideration by Committee.

#### **5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 To meet the identified needs of the service it is proposed to implement the following minor changes to the staffing structure.

5.2 The current establishment includes a post of Information and Advice Worker, it is proposed to delete this post and replace it with a new post of Support Assistant (Sensory Impairment). This post will provide direct social care / person centred / communication support role to individuals with sensory impairment.

5.3 The Rehabilitation Worker posts, currently provide support to people with sight loss; they will in future require to undertake duties which will extend their responsibilities to all service users with sensory impairments.

5.4 The posts of existing Resource Worker, Sign Language Interpreter and Technicians will remain unchanged at this time.

5.5 Current staffing structure and proposed staffing structure are attached as Appendix 2.

5.6 The staffing proposals within this report have been agreed with the trade unions.

## **6. POLICY/LLEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Implementation of the Sensory Impairment Service Review will support the Council to meet a range of requirements outlined in Scottish Executive policies including Sensing Progress, Community Care Services for People with a Sensory Impairment – An Action Plan and the recently published Scottish Eye Care Review.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There will be a small net saving of £3,667 plus employers expenses following the implementation of the proposed staffing structure.

## **8. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 These developments will directly contribute towards the Improving Opportunities, Improving Health and Eliminating Poverty themes of the Community Plan.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 Social Work Committee is asked to:-

- (i) agree the recommendations outlined in the Service Improvement Plan;
- (ii) refer the Personnel Implications in section 5 to Corporate Governance Committee and
- (iii) otherwise note the contents of this report

**Graham Short**  
**Executive Director of Educational and Social Services**  
**AF/EF**  
**Enc (1)**

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

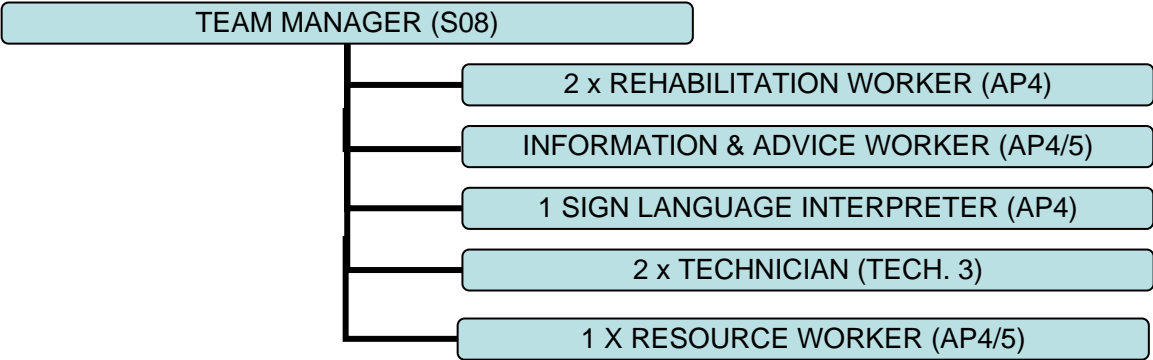
- (1) Service Review – Sensory Impairment Services 2006
- (2) Community Care Services for Adults with a Sensory Impairment – An Action Plan – Scottish Executive 2003
- (3) Sensing Progress – Social Work Services for People with a Sensory Impairment – The Scottish Office 1998

For further information on this report please contact:-  
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**IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: JACKIE DONNELLY**

<b>9. SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN</b>		
<b>Issue</b>	<b>Improvement</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Staffing arrangements.	Existing staffing reconfigured.	March 07
Staff currently dispersed.	Establish core base.	June 08
Improved access to council services.	Promote training and awareness raising across the Council.	March 08
Improved communication between service users and sensory impairment services.	Satisfaction and feedback survey to be implemented bi-annually.	August 07
Lack of public information re services.	Information to be provided in accessible formats.	March 08
Communication and access to a range of resources.	Participate in Pan Ayrshire Development Group for Equalities and Sensory Impairment.	Commenced

**CURRENT STAFF STRUCTURE**



**PROPOSED STAFF STRUCTURE**

