Hello

We would like to tell you about our plans for Sensory Services in Kent.

This is called a strategy.

This document is written by Kent County Council, when we say ‘we’ in this document we mean the council.

There is a short questionnaire about what you think about our plans we would like you to fill in when you have read the document.

Difficult words are written in bold and there is a list of them at the end of the document.

This is a easy read summary of the full document. You can read the full document on our website:

www.kent.gov.uk/sensorystrategy
Introduction

What do we mean by sensory impairments?

Sensory impairments affect how well people can see and hear.

People can be born with a sensory impairment or develop one because of an accident/disease or with age.

Some people have problems both seeing and hearing we call this deafblindness.

Why do we need a sensory services strategy?

This plan has been written because of a number of things that have happened.

In 2008 a UK Vision Strategy was created. This looked at making services better for people with problems seeing.

In response to this strategy Kent decided to develop a wider plan to include everyone with a sensory impairment.

Professionals worked with people who use the services to develop the plan and make 10 key commitments.
What this document is about

This strategy looks at what services are needed to meet the health and social care needs of children and adults who have sensory impairments.

It is a plan for the 3 years from 2016-2019.

What has been happening nationally

There are a number of laws and plans by government to make services better for people with sensory impairments.

These all impact upon people with sensory impairments and aim to make services better and more joined up.

What has been happening locally

There have been a number of local plans created to make services better in health and social care.

These look at bringing services together, making them more efficient and putting people at the centre of their services.
What we have done in Kent

Kent has been part of the Department of Health's programme to develop Local Vision Strategies as part of the UK Vision Strategy.

In doing this it was agreed that a strategy was needed for all sensory services in Kent.

Professionals from health and social care have worked with people who use sensory services to create this strategy.

What we know

What people told us

Service user meetings were carried out across Kent. These were for people with sensory impairments, carers and families. There were also feedback forms on the internet.

258 people told us their views.
Some of the things people told us were:

- Poor experience of health services, this was not just sensory but all services
- Takes too long to access low vision services
- Not enough information, advice and guidance
- Services not joined up enough
- People should have equal access to services not just when first diagnosed
- Need more local services
- Better public awareness of sensory impairment.

Some of the ideas people had to make things better were:

- Small groups for learning kitchen skills or technology
- The right training for carers and their families
- Integrated deaf and sight impaired clinics
- Community clinics at GP surgeries and community centres
- Sensory awareness training for personal assistants.
Some of the key themes for sensory impaired children and their families were:

- Better communication between agencies and better information, advice and guidance
- Difficulties accessing speech and language therapy
- Difficulties using after school clubs
- Events too far away
- Better access to short breaks and direct payments
- Lack of awareness regarding sensory impairment in schools.

What Kent people need now and in the future - some facts and figures

These are some of the things we need to think about when making plans for the future.

The number of people with a sight impairment will increase. National figures point out that between 2010 and 2030 the number of adults with sight impairment will increase by 64%.
In Kent, the areas of Thanet, Canterbury and Maidstone have the highest population of over 75’s. This may mean they have a larger population of people who have a sight impairment.

Around 5% of people aged over 85 in Kent will have a profound hearing impairment.

The number of people aged over 85 with a hearing impairment is set to increase by 100% between 2010 and 2030.

Of the 2243 people in Kent with Down’s syndrome, 1570 have hearing problems.

Of the 26,000 people with a learning disability in Kent up to 8,000 may have sight difficulties.

9,620 have some degree of deafness. Some people are likely to have both.
What we will deliver

Our vision is to support people who have a sensory impairment to be independent, have choice and control and take part fully in society.

What our services must be:

• Timely

• Right for people

• Easy to access

• Joined up with other services and organisations

• Informative

• Inclusive
What our principles are

These 6 principles support our vision and our commitments.

1. Ensure early intervention and prevention (find the problem quickly and fix it)

2. To improve what will happen

3. To improve the quality of services (for you)

4. To make sure everyone can access services

5. To come up with new ways to make services better

6. Give value for money.
Our commitments

This strategy says what we think are the types of services most important to deliver in Kent over the next 3 years. Our commitments support this.

Commitments are a list of things we will do.

Written here is our commitments in summary - you can read all of what we say in the full report.

In making these commitments we have looked at:

- What you have told us
- National and local policies
- Our own reviews on how services are given
- Recommendations from the Sensory Needs Assessment
- The need to make savings and improve services
- The need to work closer with health.

From these we have written our 10 commitments that are:
1. Reflect the needs of sensory impaired children and adults within the public health and prevention agenda.

These are some of the things we will do to make sure this commitment is met:

- We will carry out health promotion campaigns around ear health, regular eye and hearing tests
- Make people aware of living a healthy lifestyle
- Ensure all children receive a sight test
- Deliver sensory impairment awareness training for health and social care staff
- Ensure those over 12 with diabetes receive a screening test.
2. Ensure people are better informed about pathways and services provided.

These are some of the things we will do to make sure this commitment is met:

- We will improve access to and amount of information, advice and guidance
- Improve the information available on the KCC website and work with others
- Ensure that information is provided in a range of media and accessible formats.

3. Support and enable children and adults to be as independent as possible.

These are some of the things we will do to make sure this commitment is met:

- Continue to develop self-management and peer support programmes
- Continue to support Telecare and Telehealth being provided
- Ensure enablement services are trained in sensory impairments.
4. Ensure d/Deaf, deafblind and sight impaired children and adults receive skills training (rehabilitation) and equipment to support their independence.

These are some of the things we will do to make sure this commitment is met:

- Improve services given for people with sensory impairments
- Improve the availability of equipment services
- Continue to provide communication aids
- Give the opportunity for training equipment for deaf blind children and adults
- Support children and adults in accessing information technology training
- Ensure learning disability services are accessible and meet the needs of people with sensory impairments
- Ensure the ongoing provision of a local hearing aid maintenance service.
5. Ensure services are responsive and personalised, enabling children and adults to access opportunities appropriate to their needs.

These are some of the things we will do to make sure this commitment is met:

- Continue to give services by trained staff skilled in working with sensory impairments.
- Case management to also work with people whose main needs are because of impaired sight.
- Make sure staff are trained to the same standard.
- Provide local services in Gateway centres.
- Work to encourage more personal assistants.
- Make sure there is specialist advocacy for deaf and deaf blind people.
6. Develop emotional support programmes and appropriate mental health services.

These are some of the things we will do to make sure this commitment is met:

- Continue to support the supply of specialist d/Deaf mental health services
- Develop the right counselling and mental health services for sight impaired and deaf blind children/adults
- Continue to provide self management and peer support programmes and make sure they are right for the person.

7. Provide appropriate services for children and adults with learning disabilities.

These are some of the things we will do to make sure this commitment is met:

- Make people aware of sensory impairments among children and adults with learning disabilities
- Train staff to give accessible eye and ear health care
- Develop sensory professionals in each special school for profound, severe and complex needs.
8. Improve integrated services providing clearer, seamless pathways and better outcomes for children and adults.

These are *some* of the things we will do to make sure this commitment is met:

- Work closely with health services to make sure services fit together well

- Carry on providing Eye Clinic Liaison Officer posts in clinics

- Make sure there are better links between sensory services and other council social care services

- Make sure the needs of young people with sensory impairments are considered in transition

- Look at improvements in appointments for clinics for deaf blind children and adults.
9. Ensure all services are accessible.

These are *some* of the things we will do to make sure this happens:

- Continue to provide access to quality interpreting services communication support for d/Deaf and deaf blind people and develop video interpreting services
- Improve access for people using health care such as booking appointments and communication support
- Make sure there is information, advice and guidance in accessible formats
- Involve service users in telling us their experiences and delivering training
- Continue to give services and outreach work with Black and Minority Ethnic communities.
10. Recognise that people’s lives are not lived in isolation, but with families and carers, and make recommendations for improvements to improve the inclusion, participation and independence of children and adults with sensory impairments.

These are some of the things we will do to make sure this happens:

- Give information and training to parents and carers of children
- Tell people with sensory impairments about information technology and communication support that could improve their independence
- Continue to support individuals in accessing benefits, employment, education and leisure
- Develop and build on ways to make service user involvement better.
How we will check the commitments are being met.

We will monitor our services to make sure the commitments are being done.

We will report these back in our plans.

List of difficult words

These are a few words that might need to be explained.

Accessible
Make it easy for people to get in and out of a building or use things.

Commitment
A statement to say that something will be done.

d/Deaf
This means someone who is Deaf, deafened or hard or hearing. It includes people who are Deaf (Use British Sign Language).
Deafblindness
This is where a person has problems seeing and hearing.

Diabetes
A disease which affects a person’s blood sugar.

Efficient
Making something work as well as possible.

Enablement services
A short term service where a social care worker helps you to gain or regain home skills.

Inclusive
Making sure everyone is thought of and included.

Telecare/Telehealth
Gadgets and helpful technology to keep people healthy and safe at home.

Peer
Someone of the same age and experience.
UK Vision Strategy
A plan to improve the UK’s eye health.

Sensory Needs Assessment
A report that looks at what the needs are of people with a sensory impairment to makes sure the right services are provided.

Where can I find out more?

There is a full version of this strategy if you would like to read it on our website:

You can also see the questionnaire:
www.kent.gov.uk/sensorystrategy

This publication is available in alternative formats and can be explained in other languages. Please contact 03000 416310 (voice) and for Text Relay, please use 18001 03000 416310.