**Hertfordshire Sensory Strategy 2020 - 2024**





Contents

[Introduction 3](#_Toc141173658)

[What do we mean by people with Sensory needs? 3](#_Toc141173659)

[Principles 4](#_Toc141173660)

[Key Strategic Priorities for 2020-2023 will be: 4](#_Toc141173661)

[Background 5](#_Toc141173662)

[The Future Model 8](#_Toc141173663)

[Case Studies 10](#_Toc141173664)

[Sensory Transitions Pathway 11](#_Toc141173665)

[Sign Video 11](#_Toc141173666)

[Partnership and Voluntary Sector 11](#_Toc141173667)

[Progress Update 12](#_Toc141173668)

[Next steps 14](#_Toc141173669)

[Sensory Strategy – 2023/2024 Action Plan 15](#_Toc141173670)

[Sensory Strategy 16](#_Toc141173671)

[Children & Families Workstream 16](#_Toc141173672)

[Action Plan – 2023/24 16](#_Toc141173673)

[Overarching Priorities for the Children & Families Workstream 17](#_Toc141173674)

[Sensory Strategy 24](#_Toc141173675)

[Employment Workstream 24](#_Toc141173676)

[Action Plan – 2023/24 24](#_Toc141173677)

[Overarching Priorities for the Employment Workstream 25](#_Toc141173678)

[Sensory Strategy 32](#_Toc141173679)

[Home & Community Workstream 32](#_Toc141173680)

[Action Plan – 2023/24 32](#_Toc141173681)

[Overarching Priorities for the Home & Community Workstream 33](#_Toc141173682)

[Sensory Strategy 43](#_Toc141173683)

[Health Workstream 43](#_Toc141173684)

[Action Plan – 2023/24 43](#_Toc141173685)

[Overarching Priorities for the Health Workstream 44](#_Toc141173686)

[Glossary 54](#_Toc141173687)

# Introduction

The Hertfordshire Sensory Strategy has been developed in partnership with the residents of Hertfordshire with sensory needs in response to our statutory duties as defined in the Care Act 2014 and Children’s & Families Act 2015.

Several national strategies have highlighted the need to work preventatively with people with Sensory needs and this Strategy is also aligned with Hertfordshire County Council’s new social work assessment framework, Connected Lives.

Connected Lives is about ensuring that people are connected with their local communities and recognising that they have a contribution to make to those communities. The principles of Prevent, Enable and Support are core to the work we do with adults, children and young people with sensory needs and this Strategy will outline how a partnership between the voluntary sector, statutory agencies and the Sensory Services team will help deliver this to individuals.

The strategy was launched at a public event in February 2020. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the strategy was paused as colleagues responded to the lockdowns and increasing pressure on services.

Whilst the pandemic paused work on the strategy, it also highlighted the need for such work. The increased use of face masks made communication more challenging for deaf and hard of hearing residents who lip-read, and a lack of BSL interpreters at government briefings on Covid meant many found they were being excluded from these updates. For those with a visual impairment, both social isolation and rates of depression were found to have increased during the pandemic.

In 2021, work on the Sensory Strategy resumed, and in 2022 it was extended until December 2024. This was accompanied by an updated action plan to further address sensory inequities in Hertfordshire.

# What do we mean by people with Sensory needs?

The term **sight impairment** also known as visual impairmentrefers to someone who is blind or partially sighted. It does not refer to someone who is short-sighted or long-sighted.

**d/Deaf** refers to someone who is Deaf, deafened or hard of hearing. The term d/Deaf will be used throughout to include people who are Deaf (British Sign Language users), who were either born deaf or became deaf in early childhood and use BSL as their first preferred language. The focus of this term is on the ‘D’ in Deaf to indicate that they have their own sign language, culture and identity.

D/deaf is used to describe people who are Deaf (Sign language User) and deaf (including people who are hard of hearing or deafened, losing hearing later in life, but have English as the first language and may lipread and/or use their hearing aids).

Deafblindness is regarded as a separate unique disability. Persons are regarded as deafblind if their combined sight and hearing loss causes difficulties with communication, access to information and mobility.

**Sensory Needs** (also known as sensory loss) refers to all people who are d/Deaf, deafblind or have a visual impairment.

**Sensory needs** with additional disabilities – this report also includes references to children and adults with Sensory needs who have additional disabilities e.g. Autism, learning disability/difficulty and this will be further defined during the consultation process.

# Principles

The principles underpinning our approach is that services must be:

**Responsive** – addressing the needs of individuals in a timely way;

**Appropriate** – providing specialist sensory knowledge;

**Accessible** – community-based services which consider 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 needs have the same access to a range of opportunities as those without disabilities.

# Key Strategic Priorities for 2020-2023 will be:

* Providing clear and accessible information,
* Improve emotional/peer support,
* Making Assistive Technology accessible for people with Sensory needs to help increase their independence,
* To improve the wider Sensory Awareness of our staff and key partners,
* Improving collaborative working through integrated pathways,
* Taking a “tell us once” approach to support.

# Background

The inequalities faced by people with a Sensory need are widespread; challenges in healthcare settings where communication is not accessible, access to employment & job opportunities, and the everyday barriers faced in the community and at home. In many of these cases these are not only preventable but are leading to worse outcomes for the resident and increased costs where minor needs become more complex. For example, where a deaf resident is unable to access their GP surgery, they may put off receiving early treatment, resulting in visits to A&E after the condition has worsened.

The headline facts around sensory inequalities**:**

* **1 in 6 people are deaf or hard of hearing**, and **1 in 30 have a visual impairment**. This equates to 38,900 (3.25%) people living with sight loss[[1]](#footnote-1), and 204,120 (17%) living with hearing loss in Hertfordshire[[2]](#footnote-2).
* In 2022 it is estimated that there are over **450,000 people in the UK who are deafblind.** This is expected to increase by 35% to over 610,000 by 2035**.** This is expected to increase by 35% to over 610,000 by 2035[[3]](#footnote-3).
* 77% of people with accessible information needs reported rarely or never receiving information in alternative formats[[4]](#footnote-4).
* 1 in 3 health and social care providers were unaware or unsure of the existence of the NHS Accessible Information Standard[[5]](#footnote-5).
* 81% of guide dog users experienced an ‘access refusal’ in 2021/22. This includes restaurants, retail, public transport, and even healthcare settings[[6]](#footnote-6).
* Only 17% of people experiencing sight loss are offered emotional support in response to their deteriorating vision[[7]](#footnote-7).
* More than 4 in 10 people attending low vision clinics are experiencing symptoms of clinical depression[[8]](#footnote-8).

**Data on sensory needs in Herts**

What do we know about sensory needs, and how will demand on services change in the future?*(Sourced from RNIB Sight Loss Data Tool)*

As of 2022, there were 38,900 people living with sight loss in Hertfordshire. By 2032 this is expected to increase to 45,800, an increase of 17.7%.

*(Sourced from RNIB Sight Loss Data Tool)*

Regional comparisons show a similar trend. The number living in Essex with sight loss as of 2022 was 54,700. By 2032, this is expected to increase by 20% to 65,700.

As of 2020, there were an estimated 204,120 people living with hearing loss in Hertfordshire. This is predicted to rise to 247,578 in 2030, an increase of 21.3%. Again, regional trends show a similar increase in the rate of hearing loss. The number living with hearing loss in Essex is expected to rise by 20.2%, from 286,796 to 344,854.

*(Sourced from RNIB Sight Loss Data Tool)*

**National Deafblind Statistics – As of 2022**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Age** | **Male** | **Female** | **Total** |
| **0-19 Years** | 18,243 | 5,136 | **23,379** |
| **20-69 Years** | 79,366 | 46,086 | **125,452** |
| **70+ Years** | 116,103 | 186,277 | **302,380** |
| **Total** | **213,712** | **237,498** | **451,211** |

Data on the number of deafblind people in each Local Authority is more limited. In Hertfordshire, there are an estimated 7,560 people living with dual sensory loss, and 2,960 living with severe dual sensory loss. In 2022 it is estimated that there are over 450,000 people in the UK who are deafblind. This is expected to increase by 35% to over 610,000 by 2035[[9]](#footnote-9).

# The Future Model

People in Hertfordshire need safe, high quality, integrated and sustainable health and social care services to meet their needs now and in the future.

Collaborative working, which has been established during the development of this Strategy, includes establishing clear pathways for residents to access the relevant support and services to meet their needs.

This Sensory Strategy aims to work with partners on wider system improvements. This involves aligning work with that of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy and Hertfordshire & West Essex Integrated Care Strategy. There is a strong preventative focus with the aim to reduce the risk of:

* Social isolation, poor mental health, and well-being,
* Falls,
* Poor education & unemployment,
* Social injustices,
* Poor care in a residential or domiciliary setting,
* Relationship breakdown within the family/support network and loneliness,

**The proposed model**

The model outlined below is aligned to the Hertfordshire Connected Lives Principles. It has a preventative focus which is our first level of involvement working with the voluntary sector and other partners to reduce and prevent the need for social care support. The next level of enablement involvements the provision of equipment, emotional support, and information and advice. Connected support is providing support to those people in Hertfordshire who have complex and, or additional needs that require commissioned services. This model will inform HCC’s commissioning intentions for 2020-2025.

Fig 2. A pyramid of need showing the proposed new structure

Low level support to stay independent

1. 1.Certficate of visual impairment CVI registrations, offering immediate advice, support and navigation
2. 2.Self-running peer support groups
3. Training other organisations to be accessible- Sensory- Friendly initiatives
4. 4.Identifying and supporting carers

Specialist support when it is needed

1. Hearing aid maintenance
2. Demonstration of equipment
3. Practical support, including in a hospital setting providing advice and training to promote independent living
4. Specialist/Advocacy Communication support

Statutory Provision

Rehabilitation

Safeguarding

Supporting people

Supporting people with daily living skills

Case management support with complex needs

Equipment referrals

Connect and Support

Connect and Enable

Connect and Prevent

# Case Studies

**Connect and Prevent**

13-year-old deaf girl last known to Childrens Services 2013. She attends a deaf school in the county. Childrens Services received a referral from Deaf CAMHS with concerns that they cannot manage risks in the home in relation to her mental health. Parents do not and refuse to sign, instead focusing on medical model of deafness – trying to get her implanted. This has impacted her mental health where she is deprived of language and communication at home, resulting in attachment issues with parents and siblings. Parents are unable to understand her needs and subsequently she is unable to communicate to them her wishes and feelings. Safeguarding concerns of neglect but to try to get parents to engage it was agreed that a FFA is required with the view of 0-25 involvement for direct payment. This would provide her with a deaf mentor/role model/PA to support her to access deaf recreation activities and bring a BSL tutor into the home to teach and encourage family to sign.

**Connect and Enable**

Mr Ryan lives with his wife Jane. Mr Ryan was recently diagnosed with macular degeneration eye condition and his wife is the main carer, doing everything for him. A referral including Certificate of visual impairment registration was made to Sensory Services as Mr Ryan was distressed about what his eye condition means and thought he couldn’t do what he used to do. He is keen to do more for himself and want to be able to get out and about, giving his wife a break. Rehabilitation Officer assessed Mr Ryan and agreed a programme to support him with daily living skills including making tea for himself with simple low vision aid, improved lighting in his home so he can read items in kitchen and in his sitting area (including reading his favourite book in large print. Also signposted him to library and talking newspaper for information in audio format. His wife was offered carer assessment and information about the eye condition. Mr Ryan was also referred to a VI organisation for emotional support counselling relating to his sight loss.

**Connect and Support**

Mrs Brown totally lost her eyesight in her left eye Arterial arteritis and blockage to the optic nerve and within a month started to lose her eyesight in her right eye. She is now totally blind. The work with Mrs Brown involved supporting her and her 2 daughters to adjust to her sight loss and start to accept it. It was important for this process to take place prior to providing training with independent living skills, E.G learning to prepare meals and snacks with no vision. Following training Mrs Brown is now able to heat meals up in the microwave, or oven, fill her water dispenser and prepare a hot drink, prepare a jacket potato with filling and prepare a sandwich.

## Sensory Transitions Pathway

The Transitions pathway for children and young people with sensory needs has been established as an excellent example of collaborative working with Children’s Service, Education and a range of partners and stakeholders. The pathway provides clear information about how the processes change with the child’s educational milestones. The Transitions pathway document can be found here: [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/sensorypathway](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/sensorypathway).

There is further work required to complete the organisational business processes to support the effective implementation of the pathway. This will require collaborative working with colleagues in the 0-25 Together Service and the Mental Health services.

## Sign Video

Hertfordshire County Council provide a video link service for people to make contact if they are deaf. The service operates between the hours of 09:00 – 6:00 pm. Monday – Friday.  
This exemplifies the principle on Accessibility and the commitment to use technology.

[SignVideo, our live BSL video interpreting service](https://sv2.me/public_access.php?hash=693659883e81f9dd58f48213a55e16ec)

## Partnership and Voluntary Sector

There is a commitment to working with the voluntary sector and other key partners to deliver and implement the Sensory Strategy. This is in alignment with the Connect and Prevent principles within Connected Lives. A key requirement for the strategy is to include collaborative working with Herts Help, The Community Navigators and other partners.

## **Progress Update**

Following the re-launch of the Sensory Strategy, significant progress has been made in each area of focus.

**Health**

* **ICB-wide engagement** – buy-in from all providers in Hertfordshire to promote consistent implementation of NHS Accessible Information Standards. The AIS puts a legal requirement on all organisations that provide NHS care and/or publicly funded adult social care to apply a consistent approach to identifying, recording, flagging, sharing and meeting the information and communication support needs of patients, residents, carers and parents with a disability, impairment or sensory loss. We have also developed links with West Essex to promote this consistency across the wider ICB.
* **Quality Assurance visits** – Agreed sensory-focused accessibility questions as part of wider quality assurance visits to hospital wards and health providers to report on practice.
* **SignVideo Pilot** – Installation of tablets at GP Surgeries to allow remote interpretation service and improve accessibility.
* **Deaf Mental Health** – Report written detailing gaps in accessibility of mental health services for deaf people, with recommendations to be implemented.

**Home & Community**

* **Launch of RNIB’s *Living Well with Sight Loss*** – Emotional support & wellbeing courses now offered as part of rehabilitation offer to those with a visual impairment.
* **Deaf/blind club engagement** – Ongoing visits to deaf & blind clubs in Hertfordshire to improve understanding of the challenges our residents face, with action plans developed from this feedback.
* **Contract monitoring of commissioned providers** – Agreed new data monitoring template for commissioned providers to improve services.
* **Linkup with Assistive Technology Pilot** - Referral of residents to the AT pilot to understand whether home adaptions can support people to live independently.

**Employment**

* **Internal sensory resources** – creation of toolkits and checklists aimed at improving staff knowledge of sensory needs.
* **iLearn+ module** – Launch of an eLearning module to improve staff awareness.
* **Sensory Webinars** – ongoing schedule of webinars covering a variety of topics within the field of sensory. This is open to staff and partners to raise awareness and understanding.
* **Support for employers in Herts** – Creation of external resources, focusing on improving understanding of sensory needs, to be shared with employers across Hertfordshire.
* **Inclusive Employment Project** – Working with Step2Skills to get more people with a sensory need into employment, with a Sensory Community Care Officer seconded to this work.

**Children & Families**

* **Awareness raising**  – understanding of raising levels of awareness can benefit practice. Agreed a communications plan to improve staff awareness, including presenting to CS Managers Forum to inform the wider workforce.
* **IT System Launch** – system development so that Sensory Services now have access to the Children’s EHM IT System for recording of child cases they manage. This allows for better reporting & monitoring and opens Sensory Services to further integration with support on offer in Children’s Services.
* **Sensory Services/ Early Help Integration** – Sensory Services will have access to the Early Help offer and personalised commissioning via Families First Assessments, making for a more joined up approach
* **Unmet needs review** – Review of CS cases where sensory needs were present focussing on how sensory needs can be recognised and met. This helped inform practice and what support would be needed in future cases.

**Sensory Partnership Board**

* **RAD and RNIB involvement in Hertfordshire** – Formal arrangements made with the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) and the Royal Association of Deaf People (RAD) to join the strategy at board and workstream level. They provide national expertise in these areas and support with community engagement.
* **Co-production merger** – Sensory Needs co-production has merged with the Partnership Board on a 2-year trial, with experts-by-experience joining.
* **Highways & Transport** – discussion with Environment colleagues and experts-by-experience highlighted gaps in the accessibility of Hertfordshire’s highways & transport work, with a task/finish group agreed to address these concerns.

**Sensory Conference**

In March 2023, the Sensory Strategy held its first Sensory Conference. This brought together over 100 stakeholders and residents from 25 different organisations for the first time since the strategy launch in 2020. We welcomed speakers from The Royal National Institute of Blind people, SignHealth, and Sense, who shared their personal experience of living or working with people with a sensory need. Councillor Tony Kingsbury, Adult Care Health and Well Being Portfolio Holder opened the event.

The aim was to review and celebrate the progress made so far and agree actions for the remaining term of the strategy. Whilst progress had been made, the strategy had been designed in a pre-covid world, and it was important to re-engage with partners and residents to confirm the new areas of focus. The conference was also a chance to announce an extension of the Sensory Strategy to December 2024, giving additional time for that lost during the pandemic. Feedback indicates that the conference was very valuable, and we are noticing increased momentum and engagement with the work of the strategy as a result.

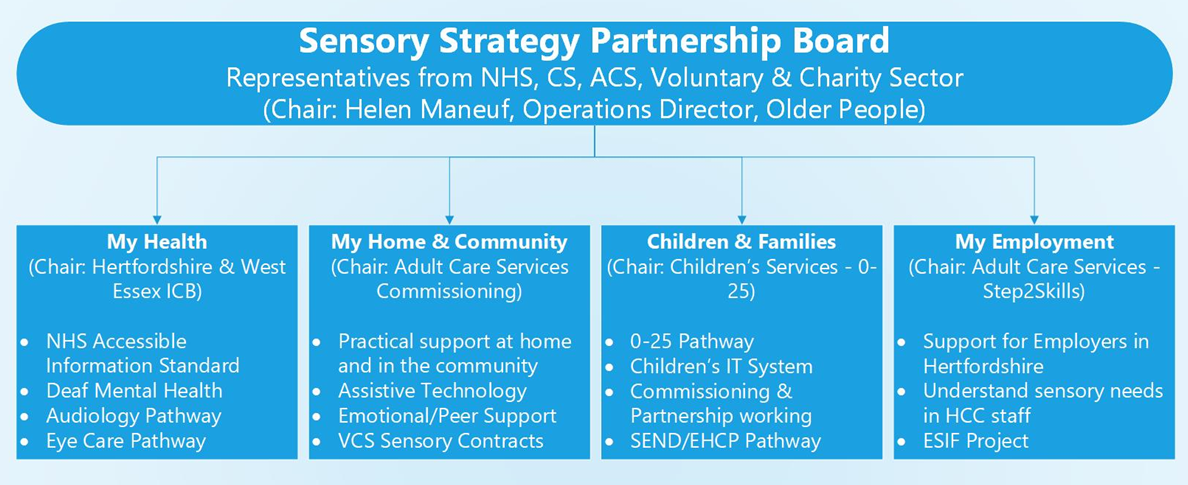
## **Next steps**

We know there will be greater focus on sensory inequalities in future, and how the public sector complies with national legislation. This is coupled with the increasing number of Hertfordshire residents with a sensory need and need to promote independence and preventative support. In many areas it is still the simple accessibility issues that are preventing people from equitable access to services. When considering our response to sensory inequalities, there are several key drivers to be conscious of:

* **BSL Act 2022** – British Sign Language now an official language of the UK, and public sector recommendations are expected soon – This will impact our responsibilities on providing information in British Sign Language across all services, not just social care.
* **CQC/ SEND Inspections** – Inspections focusing on HCC social care will look at how care & support for adults and children with a sensory need is delivered. Having a plan to address sensory inequalities is important when considering this additional scrutiny.
* **NHS Accessible Information Standards –** The legal requirement for social care to ensure information is in an accessible format. This was introduced in 2016 with an updated standard to be released in late 2023. While already in force and a standard that all health and social care providers should be meeting, analysis from SignHealth shows this is consistently not met. For effective implementation, social care must meet the five steps of the AIS: Identify, record, flag, share, and meet a person’s communication needs. To support work in this area, an Adult Care Services Management Board champion for Accessible Information Standards has been identified
* **Greater scrutiny and focus on accessibility in future.** The above measures highlight the increased focus that can be expected on sensory in future. How confident are we that all HCC services are accessible to someone with a sensory need?

## **Sensory Strategy – 2023/2024 Action Plan**

Following the sensory conference and agreed extension, an updated action plan for the strategy has been developed. This has involved all stakeholders involved in the strategy, workshops that took place at the conference, and ongoing co-production at both deaf & blind clubs in Hertfordshire, and at the Sensory Partnership Board.

****

# Sensory Strategy

# Children & Families Workstream

# Action Plan – 2023/24

## **Overarching Priorities for the Children & Families Workstream**

**Priority 1 - Provide clearer and accessible information**

“Parents need better information and advice about services that are available in Hertfordshire. This includes making sure that information is available in the appropriate format for the person and that a directory of services is available for all people with Sensory needs. For example, it is important that Children’s Services are aware how to book interpreters to support a person’s communication needs. This should be in line with the NHS Accessible Information Standard”

**Priority 3 - Improve emotional/Peer support**

“Peer support should be available in preferred format and available to all and that these peer support groups are promoted as widely as possible to encourage referrals in a timely way.”

**Priority 6 - Improving collaborative support through integrated pathways**

“All services must work together to make sure that appropriate solutions are explored to allow adults, children and young people with sensory needs to have an equitable service

**Priority 7 - Take a ‘tell us once’ approach**

Work to ensure residents of Hertfordshire do not need to repeat information or accessibility requests to the different teams providing support.

1. **Integration of Children’s Services (CS) and Sensory Services IT Systems**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **1.1** Completion of Phase 2 of the CS/Sensory IT project. Sensory Services will have further integration into CS ways of working, and a transition to business as usual (BAU) for future IT system improvements. | Agree completion of IT system project plan at C&F Workstream. | December 2023 | Sensory Strategy (Ryan Heard)  IT  (Theresa Whitfield, Salim Kouchard) |
| **1.2** Confirm cross referral process between CS and Sensory Services. | Ensure CS teams can refer into Sensory Services, and link-up with LCS system**.** | January 2024 | Sensory Strategy (Ryan Heard) |
| **1.3** Continue to work on visibility of records across multi-disciplinary teams. Alignment across EYES and EHM IT systems. | Teams involved in supporting children with a sensory need will be able to view child records across the different IT Systems. | September 2023 | Sensory Strategy (Ryan Heard)  IT  (Theresa Whitfield, Salim Kouchard) |
| **1.4** Sensory Services to have access to Early Help and support Personalised Commissioning for children. | Bespoke delivery of training on EHM Early Help including access to personalised commissioning.  Families with a Families First Assessment will be led by Sensory Services.  Confirm Sensory Services led cases have accessed the offer of personalised commissioning. | January 2024 | Children’s Services  (Karen Dorney)  Sensory Services  (Sabina Iqbal) |

1. **Improving data quality of children with a sensory need in Hertfordshire**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **2.1** Develop a better understanding of the children we support and demand on services. | Produce a data report on the number of children with a sensory need in Hertfordshire, those supported across social care, and future trends to understand demand versus capacity. | April 2024 | Sensory Strategy  (Sammi Draper)  Integrated Services for Learning (ISL)  (Emma Dudley)  Sensory Services  (Sabina Iqbal)  0-25  (Andy Lawrence) |
| **2.2** Support the completion of a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) to better inform partners on the action need to tackle sensory inequalities. | Support evidence gathering and detail for the child-focused elements of the JSNA. | April 2024 | Sensory Strategy  (Ryan Heard)  Public Health |

1. **Develop partnership working between Children’s Services and Sensory Services**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **3.1** Development of a Cross Service Protocol Agreement (CSPA); outlining availability of support and duties of each team involved in support for a child with a sensory need. | Gain agreement from different teams in CS that provide services to children with a sensory need; detail what these services are, how to access, and what support can be expected.  Sign-off CSPA with relevant CS board (Peoples Board). | September 2023 | Sensory Strategy (Ryan Heard)  0-25  (Andy Lawrence) |
| **3.2** Support wider partnership working across SEND and Health. | Champion the Sensory Strategy in wider Health & Social Care work  Provide evidence of tangible improvements in our ways of working such as best practice examples and staff training.  Ensure link-up with wider groups such as CHSWG to promote partnership working to address sensory inequalities. | December 2024 | Sensory Services  (Sabina Iqbal)  0-25  (Andy Lawrence) |
| **3.3** Raise awareness of sensory needs amongst the Children’s Services workforce. | Develop a communication plan, detailing specific awareness raising actions.  Measure overall staff awareness via the staff survey against the 2021 baseline, and completion of internal resources. | April 2024  December 2023 and 2024 | Sensory Strategy  (Sammi Draper) |
| **3.4** Present at the Children’s Services Management Forum to raise awareness to the wider Children’s Services workforce. | Presentation of sensory awareness item at the management forum. | November 2023 | Sensory Strategy  (Ryan Heard)  Sensory Services  (Laura Eadsforth) |
| **3.5** Provide clarity on what services are on offer for families to access. Ensure this information is accessible. | Create and circulate visual documents for families to show where to go for support. | September 2024 | Sensory Services  (Laura Eadsforth)  Sensory Strategy  (Sammi Draper) |

1. **Increasing support for children with a sensory need with the Short Break Local Offer (SBLO)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **4.1** Increase support for children with a visual impairment within the Short Break local offer. | Undertake market development.  Community Short Breaks Tender  Community Short Breaks Award and contracts issued. | May 2023  August 2023  April 2024 | 0-25 Commissioning  (Julie Reddish) |

1. **Support the Youth Ambassador Scheme / Role Model & Mentoring for children**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **5.1** Ensure peer support is available to children with a sensory need. | Scoping of existing CYP groups across Hertfordshire to engage in the Young Ambassador programme. | June 2023 | 0-25 Commissioning  (Julie Reddish) |
| **5.2** Develop an advisory group to inform work. | A programme of woks is in place for the Young Commissioners.  To explore linking the Young Commissioner to the District Youth Councils. | April 2023  Autumn 2023 | 0-25 Commissioning  (Julie Reddish) |
| **5.3** Link in with Health’s existing ambassador plan to prevent duplication. | Link in with the ICB and set up an Integrated Ambassador Programme, covering Social Care, Health, and Education.  Bring CYP together (event) from various groups to launch the ambassador Programme. | June 2023  Autumn 2023 | 0-25 Commissioning  (Julie Reddish) |
| **5.4** Engage with HCC mentoring programme to ensure inclusivity and representation of sensory needs. | Identify adults and children to join the mentoring service. | February 2024 | Children’s Services  (Karen Dorney, Sally Gubb)  Sensory Strategy  (Ryan Heard) |

1. **Review and publish pathway documents for different ages**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **6.1** Review current demand and capacity of services, and work with data teams to understand future pressures. | Link with ACS/CS Performance teams to map out current and future demand on services. | September 2024 | Sensory Strategy  (Ryan Heard, Sammi Draper) |
| **6.2** 18-25 Multi-agency Review of Sensory Provision. | Provide clarity on the support available for this age group: numbers, what teams should be supporting at which point, transition arrangements.  Ensure all current documentation is reviewed and updated where needed. | December 2024 | 0-25  (Andy Lawrence)  Sensory Services  (Sabina Iqbal) |

1. **Addressing the barriers in accessing universal services for families**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **7.1** Report on the accessibility issues facing schools, and what recommendations are needed to address these:   * Budgetary pressures when booking interpreters, * Accessibility at school visitation, * Availability of children’s resources for parents with a visual impairment. | Present a paper to CS leadership on current gaps and recommendations to address accessibility in Hertfordshire schools. | April 2024 | ISL  (Emma Dudley) |
| **7.2** ‘Tools for schools’ – Awareness campaign to promote resources on offer for schools to address accessibility, including those for deaf and visually impaired parents, and to celebrate existing good practice. | Produce and deliver information sessions to schools in Hertfordshire. | September 2024 | Sensory Strategy (Sammi Draper)  ISL  (Emma Dudley)  Sensory Services  (Laura Eadsforth) |

# Sensory Strategy

# Employment Workstream

# Action Plan – 2023/24

## **Overarching Priorities for the Employment Workstream**

**Priority 1 - Provide clearer and accessible information**

“Residents with a sensory need require better information and advice about services that are available in Hertfordshire. This includes making sure that information is available in the appropriate format for the person and that a directory of services is available for all people with Sensory needs. For example, it is important that agencies are aware how to book interpreters to support a person’s communication needs. This should be in line with the NHS Accessible Information Standard”

**Priority 5 - Wider Sensory Awareness for all staff including partner agencies**

“People would be able to access services more readily if staff they approach in Health, Social care or other partner agencies have an awareness of Sensory needs and the Equality Duty”

**Priority 7 - Take a ‘tell us once’ approach**

Work to ensure residents of Hertfordshire do not need to repeat information or accessibility requests to the different teams providing support.

**1.Increasing the number of employers signed up to the Disability Confident Scheme**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **1.1** Gather information to create a baseline for the number of known employers that are signed up to the DCS and are willing to consider people with sensory needs. | Have figures on how many employers are currently signed up to the DCS in Hertfordshire.  To ensure the employer resource pack produced by Step2Skills Employment Liaison Officers (ELO) contains guidance for working with people with sensory needs. | December 2023 | Step2Skills  (Emma Gladdish)  DWP  (Helen Wellby, Beverley Gellett) |
| **1.2** Increase the number of employers signed up over 2023 and 2024, both overall and those at the higher levels of the Disability Confident Scheme. | DWP will provide details of new employers signing up.  Inclusive Employment Project (IEP) target for 2022/2023 is to sign up 100 employers to the scheme.  For 2023, to sign up 70 employers.  For 2024, to increase this number to 80 employers. | December 2024 | Step2Skills  (Emma Gladdish)  DWP  (Helen Wellby, Beverley Gellett) |

**2.Support more young people aged 16-25 into employment**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **2.1** Create a baseline number of young people (YP) ages 16-25 in employment with a sensory need, and those supported into work in 22-23. | To investigate numbers with CS Performance & Development Team.  To ascertain what the national average of YP with sensory needs supported into work is as a baseline. | December 2023 | Step2Skills  (Emma Gladdish)  ESIF Project  (Emma Callan) |
| **2.2** Increase the number of YP ages 16-25 in employment with sensory needs in 23/24. | Based on data collected, to increase the percentage of YP in employment. | December 2024 | Step2Skills  (Emma Gladdish)  IEP Project  (Emma Callan) |

**3.Improve the data on staff with a sensory need within Hertfordshire County Council**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **3.1** Baseline the number of staff within HCC that are recorded as having a sensory need. | Have figures on how many people recorded having a sensory need on SAP  Compare this with other local authorities to give a baseline and comparative measure. | December 2023 | HR  (Jane Mackie)  Campaigns  (Ross McLean)  Sensory Strategy  (Ryan Heard) |
| **3.2** Look at improving the quality of data held centrally in HCC. | Look to split current recorded sensory categories on SAP down further, from ‘full/partial’ measure to separate ‘full’ and ‘partial’ measures.  Confirm the percentage of staff detailing their disability and sensory need and compare to other local authorities. | September 2024 | HR  (Jane Mackie)  Campaigns  (Ross McLean)  Sensory Strategy  (Ryan Heard) |
| **3.3** Run an awareness campaign of sensory needs and the importance of recording this data. | Create awareness videos involving HCC senior leaders to promote the importance of detail disabilities on SAP.  Yammer posts on disability leave and other support on offer to staff. | April 2024 | HR  (Jane Mackie)  Campaigns  (Ross McLean)  Sensory Strategy  (Ryan Heard) |
| **3.4** Report on changes to data held on staff with a sensory need following awareness campaign. | Re-run reports following awareness raising and improvements in data quality, look at the percentage change. | September 2024 | HR  (Jane Mackie)  Campaigns  (Ross McLean)  Sensory Strategy  (Ryan Heard) |
| **3.5** Create guidance for staff on recording their sensory need. | Document to be included as part of the new starter process. | December 2023 | HR  (Jane Mackie)  Campaigns  (Ross McLean)  Sensory Strategy  (Ryan Heard) |

**4.Develop training resources to increase staff awareness of sensory needs**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **4.1** iLearn+ Training Module to be developed. | iLearn+ Module created, signed off by corporate L&D and available for internal staff to complete. | April 2023 | Sensory Strategy  (Sammi Draper) |
| **4.2** Measure staff participation in training module, with aims for wider completion across the Council workforce. | Report on the number of staff completing the module every 6 months. | October 2023  April 2024 | Sensory Strategy  (Sammi Draper) |
| **4.3** Development of sensory webinars to inform professionals of services available in Hertfordshire. | Delivery of webinars to all professionals in Hertfordshire. A variety of internal/external topics & speakers will present, with webinars recorded for future use. | Ongoing schedule | Sensory Strategy  (Sammi Draper) |
| **4.4** Create an internal resource hub for sensory information and guidance to raise staff awareness. | Internal intranet page created and available to HCC staff.  Regular updates to the resource hub, with new resources, e.g. webinars, added regularly. | May 2023/ ongoing | Sensory Strategy  (Sammi Draper) |
| **4.5** Report on metrics behind created resources to assess uptake and potential to further raise awareness. | 6-monthly reports detailing staff uptake of resources. | April 2024 | Sensory Strategy  (Sammi Draper) |
| **4.6** Run a survey looking at staff awareness of sensory needs against the 2021 baseline. | Use of same questions as the 2021 survey to report on changes in staff understanding of sensory needs and the available resources.  Increase the target audience of staff survey from Social Care staff to all HCC staff. | December 2023  December 2024 | Sensory Strategy  (Sammi Draper) |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **5.1** Work with the Equality & Diversity team to promote HCC to move to Level 3 on the Disability Confident Scheme. | To work with the D&I lead to raise awareness and the importance of HCC becoming level 3 DCS. | December 2024 | Step2Skills  (Emma Gladdish, Katie Leighboro) |

**5.Support wider Hertfordshire County Council efforts to become a Level 3 Disability Confident Employer**

**6.Increase the number of people with a sensory need into employment**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **6.1** Work in partnership with the IEP project to support 58 people with a sensory need into employment. | Referrals are assessed for eligibility via the IEP Community Care Officer. The number supported into employment are recorded on CHARMS. | December 2024 | Step2Skills  (Emma Callan)  Sensory Services  (Sabina Iqbal) |

**7.Develop resource packs to support employer understanding of sensory needs**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **7.1** Produce sensory resource documents for employers in Hertfordshire to support them to raise staff awareness. | Employer resource pack produced using HCC tested resources, adapted for an external audience. This will be piloted with select employers before full circulation. | April 2023 | Sensory Strategy  (Ryan Heard) |
| **7.1** Circulate resources via the Disability Confident Scheme employers and via Step2Sills job fairs. | Work with DWP and Step2Skills to advertise the employer resources across Hertfordshire. | September 2023 | Sensory Strategy  (Ryan Heard)  DWP  Step2Skills |
| **7.2** Collate feedback from employers using the resources to assess impact. | Report on the number of employers in Hertfordshire using the resource packs, and qualitative feedback on its use. | April 2024 | Sensory Strategy  (Ryan Heard) |

# Sensory Strategy

# Home & Community Workstream

# Action Plan – 2023/24

## **Overarching Priorities for the Home & Community Workstream**

**Priority 1 - Provide clearer and accessible information**

“Residents with a sensory need require better information and advice about services that are available in Hertfordshire. This includes making sure that information is available in the appropriate format for the person and that a directory of services is available for all people with Sensory needs. For example, it is important that agencies are aware how to book interpreters to support a person’s communication needs. This should be in line with the NHS Accessible Information Standard”

**Priority 3 - Improve emotional/Peer support**

“Peer support should be available in preferred format and available to all and that these peer support groups are promoted as widely as possible to encourage referrals in a timely way.”

**Priority 4 - Assistive Technology should be accessible for people with Sensory needs.**

“Residents with a sensory need would like to see assistive technology being rolled out for people with sensory needs to allow them to have greater independence and remain in their own homes for longer.”

**Priority 5 - Wider Sensory Awareness for all staff including partner agencies**

“People would be able to access services more readily if staff they approach in Health, Social care or other partner agencies have an awareness of Sensory needs and the Equality Duty”

**Priority 6 - Improving collaborative support through integrated pathways**

“All services must work together to make sure that appropriate solutions are explored to allow adults, children and young people with sensory needs to have an equitable service.”

**Priority 7 - Take a ‘tell us once’ approach**

Work to ensure residents of Hertfordshire do not need to repeat information or accessibility requests to the different teams providing support.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **1.**1 Maintain regular engagement with sensory community clubs and groups in Hertfordshire.  Initial visits to be followed up with additional visits and support, such as Careline, health teams, Citizens Advice, and other services in Hertfordshire. | Develop an engagement visit schedule to manage group visits.  Feedback log to be updated from visits.  Action taken to be fed back to groups at future engagement visits. | December 2024 | Sensory Strategy  (Ryan Heard, Sammi Draper)  Community & Wellbeing Team  (Holly Castle, Freya Anderson) |
| **1.2** Regular engagement updates from community partners to better understand needs and challenges of the sensory community. | Update from partners on a scheduled basis.  Partners to update on feedback they have received at each meeting to ensure a range of feedback is discussed. | Monthly at workstream meetings | All partners represented at the Home & Community Workstream. |
| **1.3** Develop workplans based off community feedback to respond to challenges faced by sensory community. | Actions agreed from engagement updates and action 1.2, to be followed up at the following workstream. | December 2024 | All partners represented at the Home & Community Workstream. |

**1.Ongoing engagement with sensory community in Hertfordshire**

**2.Mapping the offer of community support available to those with a sensory need in Hertfordshire**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **2.1** Mapping the geographical spread of community groups to understand where support is available and potential gaps. | Map out all services we are aware of, including services on HHAS and HVL websites, from wider web searches, as well as the services HCC have visited in person  We will consult with the My Home & Community workstream members to identify any more and update the map accordingly. | June 2023 | Community & Wellbeing Team  (Holly Castle/Freya Anderson) |
| **2.2** Improving the data quality on sensory needs in Hertfordshire. | To research and analyse Census data surrounding demographics and gaps, which can then be reviewed in coordination with the community group map to highlight any gaps in services and locations. | July 2023 | Community & Wellbeing Team  (Holly Castle/Freya Anderson) |
| **2.4** Develop a better understanding of the demographics of those accessing community support in Hertfordshire, and any gaps in protected characteristics. | See work under 2.2 and 6.1, which together will provide a fuller picture of demographics and access. | April 2024 | Community & Wellbeing Team  (Holly Castle/Freya Anderson) |

**3.Promoting the use of Assistive Technology in Hertfordshire**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **3.1** Work with Careline to baseline the number of people with a sensory need in Hertfordshire that currently access the assistive technology offer. | Careline to confirm the number of residents with sensory needs currently supported.  Sensory to confirm number of referrals made to careline in last 12 months. | September 2023 | Careline  (Stephanie Bevan)  Sensory Services  (Sabina Iqbal) |
| **3.2** Increase the number of people accessing the Assistive Technology offer - ensure it is communicated to residents and community groups. | Clarity of offer across partners  actively taking information out on engagement visits.  See increased referrals from Sensory Services, and data from Careline of the number of people supported.  Confirm offer is communicated to residents via engagement visits and detailed on webpages. | September 2024 | Careline  (Stephanie Bevan)  Sensory Services  (Sabina Iqbal) |
| **3.3** Promote consistency of understanding of the assistive technology offer across partners. | Ensure partner websites are consistent in information about the Assistive Technology offer in Hertfordshire, with information to be reviewed every 6 months.  Clarity of equipment available from Sensory Services – up to date lists shared with partners on a regular basis. | December 2024 | All partners represented at the Home & Community Workstream. |

**4.Work with partners to develop community resources on offer to residents with a sensory need**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **4.1** Promote the availability of the Royal National Institute for Blind People’s *Living Well With Sight Loss* course. | Work with HVL and the Vision Rehabilitation Specialists to ensure the course is promoted and made available to residents who receive their certificate of visual impairment (CVI).  Report on the number of residents referred to LWWSL every 6 months. | Ongoing | Sensory Strategy  (Ryan Heard)  Sensory Services  (Lee Nese Davis) |
| **4.2** Evaluate feedback of the *Living Well With Sight Loss* and aim to improve future offer. | Qualitative feedback from attendees of the course, detailing its effectiveness in providing emotional support and wellbeing.  Quantitative feedback – the number of residents engaging with the course. | April 2023, October 2023, and April 2024 | Sensory Strategy  (Ryan Heard)  Sensory Services  (Lee Nese Davis) |
| **4.2** Involvement of Guide Dogs in Hertfordshire to address waiting times for Sensory Rehabilitation. | Capacity for 2 workers for one day each in Herts with the potential to increase by a further 2 workers if needed.  Implementation will see reduction in wait lists for Sensory Rehabilitation, with ongoing monitoring of progress. | Implement for June 2023  Monitor until December 2024 | Community & Wellbeing Team  (Holly Castle) |
| **4.3** Work with the Royal Association for Deaf People to continue engagement with the deaf community in Hertfordshire. | RAD to provide workshops across 2023 to deaf residents of Hertfordshire. | December 2023 | Sensory Strategy  (Ryan Heard)  Sensory Services  (Sabina Iqbal)  Integrated Health and Care Commissioning  (Adam Solomon) |
| **4.5** Support the accessibility of advocacy for residents with a sensory need, and the future re-commissioning of this service. | Work with commissioners to ensure residents views are captured when commissioning advocacy contracts. | December 2024 | Sensory Services  (Sabina Iqbal) Integrated Health & Care Commissioning (Tara Mullaney) |

**5.Support improvements to the accessibility of Hertfordshire (Highways & Transport)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **5.1** Form a task/finish group with visually impaired residents and partners to identify areas of improvement | Group to be formed with representation from Sensory Services, RNIB, Highways & Transport, and residents with a visual impairment. | June 2023 | Sensory Strategy  (Ryan Heard)  Highways & Transport  (Alex Westrop, Mark Youngman) |
| **5.2** Work with Highways & Transport teams to implement improvements to the accessibility of Hertfordshire. | Develop recommendations with residents to address the key accessibility challenges facing residents with a visual impairment. | December 2024 | Sensory Strategy  (Ryan Heard)  Highways & Transport  (Alex Westrop, Mark Youngman) |

**6.Contract Monitoring of commissioned providers**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **6.1** Promote the partnership working with our commissioned providers – Herts Vision Loss, Herts Hearing Advisory Service, Sense. | Data returns from providers  feedback from community engagement.  Monitoring template has now been designed and agreed with providers to start from 1st April. Quarterly data collection dates have been agreed and diarised. Monitoring feedback will be shared with teams.  Develop any additional commissioning work arising from our partnerships. | April 2024  Quarterly monitoring  April 2024 | Community & Wellbeing Team  (Holly Castle/Freya Anderson) |
| **6.2** Explore accessibility of Care Homes for BSL users**.** | Review practice of care homes in how they support residents that use BSL.  Look at best practice in neighbouring authorities and organise awareness sessions from Sensory Services to care home staff. | September 2023 | Community & Wellbeing Team  (Tim Napper)  Sensory Strategy  (Ryan Heard)  Integrated Accommodation Commissioning  (Bryony Morris) |

**7.Ensure services in Hertfordshire are accessible (Access to information)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **7.1** Keep publicly available information on services available in Hertfordshire regularly updated. This includes but is not limited to:   * Deaf & Hard of Hearing Directory, * HCC Sensory Services Webpage, * HCC Sight Loss Factsheets, * Websites of commissioned providers, * Community Group Lists, * Assistive Technology. | Ensure webpages are regularly updated with the support available for residents with a sensory need, and new information is routinely included.  Ensure information on partner information is also updated and consistent. | December 2024 | Sensory Strategy  (Ryan Heard)  All partners |
| **7.2** Ensure BSL signposting/ guidance is available in Hertfordshire. | Report on the number of residents supported by BSL guidance services and qualitative feedback. | December 2024 | HertsHelp, Welwyn & Hatfield CAB Statutory Deaf Advice |
| **7.3** Promote accessible services such as 999 BSL. | Accessible information on these services available on partner websites. | December 2024 | Sensory Services, HHAS, HertsHelp |
| **7.4** Availability of public information in accessible formats. | Statutory information from HCC available in BSL and screen reader accessible formats – to be reviewed.  Explore further topics to be made available, in line with BSL Act Public sector recommendations. | December 2024 | Sensory Strategy  (Ryan Heard)  Information, Advice, & Engagement  (Alex Brace) |
| **7.5** Produce suitable guides for residents with a sensory need to access services in Hertfordshire. | Journey guides – role of sensory team and other services in accessing support  Availability of this information in accessible formats. | December 2024 | Sensory Strategy  (Sammi Draper) |

# Sensory Strategy

# Health Workstream

# Action Plan – 2023/24

## **Overarching Priorities for the Health Workstream**

**Priority 1 - Provide clearer and accessible information**

“Residents with a sensory need require better information and advice about services that are available in Hertfordshire. This includes making sure that information is available in the appropriate format for the person and that a directory of services is available for all people with Sensory needs. For example, it is important that agencies are aware how to book interpreters to support a person’s communication needs. This should be in line with the NHS Accessible Information Standard”

**Priority 2 - Commitment to work with partners on a joint pathway for audiology and eye clinics**

“There is not a consistency of approach across the county when a person receives a diagnosis. This must link with the Eye Care Liaison Officer (ECLO) role so that the person is supported and signposted (where appropriate) at the early possible intervention. This priority action is for staff within Sensory Services, Specialist Advisory teachers (Education), ECLOs and other relevant partners to work in collaboration with the Clinical Commissioning groups in Hertfordshire to implement this priority area.”

**Priority 4 - Assistive Technology should be accessible for people with Sensory needs.**

“People would like to see assistive technology being rolled out for people with sensory needs to allow them to have greater independence and remain in their own homes for longer.”

**Priority 6 - Improving collaborative support through integrated pathways**

“All services must work together to make sure that appropriate solutions are explored to allow adults, children and young people with sensory needs to have an equitable service.”

**Priority 7 - Take a ‘tell us once’ approach**

Work to ensure residents of Hertfordshire do not need to repeat information or accessibility requests to the different teams providing support.

**1. Reviewing Quality Assurance of Health Providers in Herts**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **1.1** Agreeing questions focused on accessibility and communication for Quality Assurance visits. | Questions Agreed. | Completed | ICB Quality Assurance  (Shazia Butt) |
| **1.2** Implement accessibility and communication questions in Quality Assurance Visits. | Questions included in quality visits. | Completed | ICB Quality Assurance  Shazia Butt |
| **1.3** Evaluation of Quality Assurance feedback to inform future work. | Feedback on response to accessibility and communication questions in Quality Assurance Visits shared at My Health Workstream. | December 2023 | ICB Quality Assurance  Shazia Butt |

**2.Improving access to interpreters at Primary Care**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **2.1** Pilot installation of tablets to support remote interpretation at 2 GP Surgeries. | Tablets installed at Bennetts End and Everest House GP Surgeries, with staff trained on use. | June 2023 | Herts Hearing Advisory Service  (Phil Linnegar) |
| **2.2** Evaluation of pilot to understand effectiveness in providing interpretation services to patients. | Qualitative feedback from staff and patients on use of remote interpretation services  Quantitative detail from SignVideo usage reports. | February 2024 | Herts Hearing Advisory Service  (Phil Linnegar) |
| **2.3** Potential expansion of pilot based on feedback. | Report to be written on the pilot with cost-benefit analysis on wider rollout | March 2024 | Herts Hearing Advisory Service  (Phil Linnegar) |

**3.Raising staff awareness of sensory needs**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **3.1** Run awareness sessions on sensory needs with Primary Care. | Session runs in all 3 places in the ICB (South and West Hertfordshire, East and North Hertfordshire and West Essex) | September 2023 | Primary Care  (Liz Cox, Sarah Ayub) |

**4.Improvements to Low Vision Pathway in Hertfordshire**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **4.1** Develop the role of Eye Care Liaison Officers (ECLO) in Hertfordshire Hospitals. | Look to implement ELCO pathway in East and North Hertfordshire and South and West Hertfordshire | December 2023 | ICB Commissioning  (Uche Anumadu) |

**5.Improving access to mental health services for deaf residents in Hertfordshire**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **5.1** Report to be written detailing issues in accessing mental health services for deaf residents, and recommendations to address these issues. | Report on access to mental health services to be presented to the Health workstream of the Sensory Strategy. | Complete | Integrated Health and Care Commissioning  (Adam Solomon) |
| **5.2** Implementation of recommendations across Hertfordshire. | Task/finish group to be formed. This will review the report and action the recommendations. | Review September 2023 | Integrated Health and Care Commissioning  (Adam Solomon) |

**6.Actioning wider reviews/ papers that detail need for improvements to sensory care**

| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **6.1** Carry out recommendations of the Watford Borough Council report detail barriers to health services for deaf people in Hertfordshire. | Recommendations reviewed in line with agreement of 2023/24 objectives.  Update on this alongside wider strategy report to be taken to the Health & Wellbeing Board for review. | September 2023 | Sensory Strategy (Ryan Heard)  Workstream Chair |
| **6.2** Actioning SignHealth Recommendations on improving access to health services under the NHS Accessible Information Standard. | Self-Assessment of SignHealth Recommendations completed  Actions plan following self-assessment developed. | Review of self-assessments from providers in by end of May 2023 | West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospital – (Amanda Budd)  Hertfordshire Community trust - (Anthony Power)  Central London Community Healthcare - (Dominic Mundy)  East & North Herts Trust – (Sophie Williams)  Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation trust (HPFT) – (Lara Harwood) |
| **6.2** Consider future recommendations to improving access to health services for residents with a sensory need. | Future papers that look at accessibility of health services will be reviewed by partners. | December 2024 | Health Workstream Chair |

**7.Implementation of the NHS Accessible Information Standards in healthcare settings across Hertfordshire**

| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **7.1** Develop patient experience metrics to include focus on meeting communication needs. | WHHT, ENHT, HCT and CLCH to add questions on meeting communication needs. | December 2023 | West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospital Hertfordshire – (Amanda Budd )  Community Trust Central London - (Anthony Power )  Community Healthcare  (Dominic Mundy)  East & North Herts Trust Hertfordshire  (Sophie Williams)  Partnership Foundation Trust (HPFT)  (Lara Harwood) |
| **7.2** Review updates to NHS Accessible Information Standards, due to come in late 2023. | Report on any changes to the NHS Accessible Information Standard, and circulate to health providers and Primary Care in Hertfordshire. | February 2024 | Workstream Chair |
| **7.3** Report on quantifiable data on use of accessible communication . | Report on feedback collated from 7.1. | December 2024 | West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospital Hertfordshire – (Amanda Budd)  Community Trust Central London - (Anthony Power )  Community Healthcare  (Dominic Mundy)  East & North Herts Trust Hertfordshire  (Sophie Williams)  Partnership Foundation Trust (HPFT)  (Lara Harwood) |

**8.Ensure consistency of work across Hertfordshire & West Essex ICB**

| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **8.1** Ensure representation at this workstream from all ICB groups within Hertfordshire. | Health Inequalities Lead for ICB now invited.  Equality and Diversity Lead for ICB now invited.  Primary Care rep for ENH place identified.  HPFT Rep to be invited to the Health Workstream. | May 2023 | Workstream chair |
| **8.2** Ensure representation from CLCH, HPFT, & ENHT at this workstream. | CLCH, HPFT, & ENHT representative participating in My Health Workstream. | May 2023 | Workstream chair |
| **8.3** Maintain links with West Essex ICB and Essex County Council to ensure consistency of improvements to sensory care across Herts & West Essex ICB. | Quarterly meetings with West Essex ICB and Essex County Council to promote wider consistency. | Ongoing | Workstream Chair  Sensory Strategy  (Ryan Heard) |
| **8.4** Engage with Pharmacy, optometry, and dentistry groups to promote consistency in wider healthcare settings | Attendance of representatives from pharmacies, optometry and dentistry to be invited to the Health Workstream. | September 2023 | Workstream Chair  Sensory Strategy  (Ryan Heard) |

**9.Maintain ongoing engagement with sensory community**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **9.1** Engage and feedback with the Deaf Health Forum to understand views of deaf residents using health services. | Herts hearing Advisory Service to link up the Health Workstream and views of the Deaf Health Forum. | Ongoing | Herts Hearing Advisory Service  (Phil Linnegar) |
| **9.2** Engage and feedback with the visually impaired residents to understand their views of health services. | Liaise with local blind clubs, voluntary sector providers and co-production members to inform work. | Ongoing | Herts Vision Loss  (Clement Musonda) |
| **9.3** Engage with deafblind residents to understand their views of health services. | Work with Sense to carry out engagement events and questionnaires to gather views. | Ongoing | Sense |

**10.Improve accessibility of Health complaints process**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Measure** | **Timescale** | **Lead** |
| **10.1** ICB to review complaints process to ensure accessibility for people with sensory needs. | Review complaints process & implement any updates required. | Review completed by end of October 2023/2024 | Herts and West Essex ICB  (Melanie Mavers) |
| **10.2** Providers to review complaints process to ensure accessibility for people with sensory needs. | NHS providers to review complaints process & implement any updates required. | Review completed by May | West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospital Hertfordshire – (Amanda Budd )  Community Trust Central London - (Anthony Power )  Community Healthcare  (Dominic Mundy)  East & North Herts Trust Hertfordshire  (Sophie Williams)  Partnership Foundation Trust (HPFT)  (Lara Harwood) |

## Glossary

| **Abbreviation** | **Detail** | **Abbreviation** | **Detail** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| HCC | Hertfordshire County Council | ACS | Adult Care Services |
| CS | Children’s Services | BAU | Business As Usual |
| EYES | Children’s Services Social Care System | LCS | Children’s Services Social Care System |
| EHM | Early Help Module IT System | JSNA | Joint Strategic Needs Assessment |
| CSPA | Cross Service Protocol Agreement | 0-25 | Services available to children and young people aged 0-25 |
| YP | Young Person | IEP | Inclusive Employment Project |
| ICB | Integrated Care Board | DWP | Department for Work & Pensions |
| RAD | Royal Association of Deaf people | RNIB | Royal National Institute of Blind people |
| ISL | Integrated Services for Learning | ECLO | Eye Care Liaison officer |
| WHHT | West Hertfordshire Hospital NHS Trust | ENHT | East & North Hertfordshire NHS trust |
| HCT | Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust | CLCH | Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust |
| HHAS | Herts Hearing Advisory Service | HVL | Herts Vision Loss |
| SEND | Special Educational Needs & Disability | SBLO | Short Break Local Offer |
| ELO | Employer Liaison officer | L&D | Learning & Development |
| CHARMS | Social Care IT System | CYP | Children & Young People |
| CHSWG | Children’s Hearing Services Working Group | SAP | County Council Staff IT System |
| DCS | Disability Confident Scheme | D&I | Diversity & Inclusion |
| HR | Human Resources | CAB | Citizens Advice Bureau |
| BSL | British Sign Language | Sense | National Deafblind Charity |

If you would like to receive this information in larger font size, braille, Easy Read, or would like any help in understanding the information in this document, please contact [sensory.services@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sensory.services@hertfordshire.gov.uk)



**Revised: June 2023**

1. As of June 2022 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. As of June 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [Deafblindness statistics in the UK - Sense](https://www.sense.org.uk/about-us/statistics/deafblindness-statistics-in-the-uk/#How%20Many%20Deafblind%20People%20Are%20there?) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [Review-of-the-NHS-Accessible-Information-Standard-FINAL.pdf (signhealth.org.uk)](https://signhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Review-of-the-NHS-Accessible-Information-Standard-FINAL.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [Guide Dogs Let's Open Doors report (azureedge.net)](https://gd-prod.azureedge.net/-/media/project/guidedogs/guidedogsdotorg/files/how-you-can-help/campaigning/guide-dogs-access-report-2022.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Slade J and Edwards R (2015) My Voice 2015: The views and experiences of blind and partially sighted people in the UK. RNIB [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Nollett, Bray, Bunce, et al (2016) Depression in visual impairment trial (DEPVIT): a randomized clinical trial of depression treatments in people with low vision. Invest Ophthalmol Vis Sci. 57:4247–4254 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. [Deafblindness statistics in the UK - Sense](https://www.sense.org.uk/about-us/statistics/deafblindness-statistics-in-the-uk/#How%20Many%20Deafblind%20People%20Are%20there?) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)