

# Report

## Adult Sensory Support

### Edinburgh Integration Joint Board

10 December 2019



#### Executive Summary

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1. Services for people with sensory impairments have been delivered by the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) and Deaf Action for the last ten years through a number of City of Edinburgh Council contracts.
2. The current adult sensory support contract will expire on 30 September 2020. Following extensive engagement with service users, carers and professionals, this report presents a range of options for the delivery of a suite of services to meet the needs of people with sensory impairment from October 2020.
3. The contract value is c£500k per annum. A projected saving of 10-15% can be achieved if the proposals detailed are approved.

#### Recommendations

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4. The Integration Joint Board is asked to:
  - i. Approve the recommendations of the Strategic Planning Group of 22 November described at paragraph 16.
  - ii. Agree that the Council be directed to commission services for a 3-year contract period with 1+1-year optional extensions to take account of proposals for a pan-Lothian sensory impairment service.

#### Background

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5. The Scottish Government/COSLA See Hear Strategy (2014) states that people with sensory impairments should receive a seamless assessment and support service, expect equal access, be treated as an individual and that all relevant services should promote people's maximum possible independence. This sets our context for working with people with sight loss, and all deaf\* people (hard of hearing people, deafened people, deafblind people and Deaf British Sign language [BSL] users) in Edinburgh.

6. The EIJB Strategic Plan 2019/22 notes that in 2015, the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act required public bodies to produce local plans based on the national model. The City of Edinburgh Council/Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership BSL Plan 2018-24 was published in October 2018. A key action within the plan is a review of contracted specialist services for BSL users and continued provision of appropriate services.
7. The Strategic Plan also records that people with sensory impairments represent a diverse and significant group within Edinburgh, with around 4,000 people on the sight loss register<sup>1</sup>, an estimated 400-600 Deaf British Sign Language users<sup>2</sup> and an estimated 25,000 to 85,000 people with acquired hearing loss<sup>3</sup> living in the city.

## Main report

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8. Third sector providers have been contracted to provide specialist health and social care services to deaf\* people and people with sight loss by the City of Edinburgh Council for the last ten years.
9. The current contract is delivered jointly by RNIB Scotland and Deaf Action, who formed a partnership vehicle, Lothian Sensory Partnership (LSP) to deliver services. The contract value is c£500k per annum. This contract will expire on 30 September 2020.
10. The current contract specification ensures the delivery of the following services: -

	For people with sight loss – RNIB	For deaf* people – Deaf Action
Specialist social work	✓	✓
Rehabilitation and mobility	✓	x
Eye Clinic Support Service (additional funding from NHS Lothian)	✓	x
Statutory Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI) registration service for Severely Sight Impaired / Sight Impaired people (formerly called “blind/partially sighted”)	✓	x

<sup>1</sup> RNIB Edinburgh and Lothians, 2019

<sup>2</sup> 2011 Census, Deaf Scotland statistics

<sup>3</sup> 2011 Census, <https://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/about-us/our-research-and-evidence/facts-and-figures/>

Equipment service	Small allowance only, linked to rehab.	✓
BSL interpretation duty service	✘	✓

11. Monitoring reports are delivered annually through the Lothian Sensory Partnership annual report. The latest report for 2018/19 shows that most services are performing to target or delivering above target, and demand is expected to continue at the same level over the next three years.

### **Context for future service delivery**

12. Although the EHSC Partnership’s long-term ambition had been to commission two organisations working in partnership to deliver all sensory support services, with one office base and a shared manager, the market landscape and differing cultures and needs of both groups make this unrealistic. It is likely that the services for people with sensory impairments described in this paper will be delivered by a mix of providers.

### **Engagement around future service delivery**

13. The new service delivery arrangements have been shaped by wide stakeholder engagement with over 90 service users and carers, and a group of around 30 professionals working in the sensory field.

14. Focus groups, a public/third sector short-life group and an online consultation survey with people with sight or hearing loss were organised between January and September 2019. Particular efforts were made to ensure that people with sensory impairments could give their views in the survey, including a BSL video embedded into the Council’s consultation hub. Further details can be found at Appendix 1.

15. Key findings of engagement exercises:

- Participants were satisfied with current services: Over half the participants had used one or more of the contracted sensory services, and 74% were very satisfied or satisfied with these, with only 8% being dissatisfied.
- People wanted more modern and integrated equipment to be provided but also to self-purchase: Most comments were about equipment, with a third of respondents saying they would like information and advice on equipment they could purchase, and a similar proportion requesting more up to date integrated equipment than currently available to be provided free of charge.

- Professionals wanted improved partnership working and communication: closer working between services such as NHS Lothian Audiology, improved communication, information sharing and IT, and for services to be better publicised.
- Although the lots described below are broadly similar to those currently delivered, the detail of each service will be altered in the new service specifications to take account of service demand and service user/carer/professional feedback.

#### 16. Recommendations for future service delivery:

Visual Impairment: social work	
Client group	People with sight loss
Service area	social work
Comments	<p>RNIB will deliver a specialist service up until the end of the current contract.</p> <p>The scale of this work is approximately 172 reviews or assessments and 336 pieces of duty work per annum</p> <p>Case file auditing and in-depth meetings between a Hub Manager and the social work staff at the provider has illustrated that little specialist input is required for people with sight loss.</p>
Recommendation	<p>for the Council to re-examine and thereafter re-arrange activities across all locality teams. To monitor outcomes for visually impaired people within the locality social work structure to ensure needs are being met.</p> <p>The approach is agreed in principle by the Head of Operations for the Partnership following discussions with a Locality and a Hub Manager, who consider that these cases can be absorbed into the normal work of the locality teams and no resource implication is foreseen.</p>
Risks	Not being able to secure staff time for training. Training to be provided at no additional cost through See Hear programme.

Visual impairment: rehabilitation and mobility service plus equipment allocation	
Client group	People with sight loss
Service area	Rehabilitation and mobility service plus equipment allocation
Comments	The scale of this work is a target of 275 clients per annum, which in the last year was exceeded by 74 to a total of 349 clients

Recommendation	<p>Establish interest in the provider market through a procurement PIN (Prior Information Notice), which would subsist for 30 days, followed by detailed assessment of interest thereafter.</p> <p>City of Edinburgh Council requires to work in partnership with West Lothian Council, Midlothian Council and East Lothian Council and so further consideration is required in respect of any joint tender methodology.</p>
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Visual impairment: Eye Clinic Support Service (ECSS) and Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI) registration	
Client Group	People with sight loss
Service area	Eye Clinic Support Service and CVI Registration
Comments	The scale of this work is over 1,000 people receiving support from across Lothian, with 70% of these residing within the City of Edinburgh Council boundary, and 225 Edinburgh domiciled individuals registered as Sight Impaired/Severely Sight Impaired in 2018/19.
Market comments	One established provider has indicated they would bid for this lot, others exist in marketplace
Recommendation	Tender as small integrated lot, utilising additional funding contribution from NHS Lothian as indicated in paragraph 10

Deaf specialist social work plus BSL interpretation duty service	
Client Group	Deaf* people
Service area	Social work assessment and care management for chiefly BSL users (delivered directly by social work staff with BSL skills without interpreter) BSL interpretation duty service – provides regular opportunity for clients to seek interpretation of English documents, have phone calls made etc.
Comments	The scale of this work in 2018/19 was 42 social work assessments or reviews with 314 pieces of duty work, and 134 clients seen at BSL interpreting duty.
Risks	Fracturing of service for BSL users in particular if equipment service lot awarded to another provider. To mitigate this, the service specification can require that the service is delivered in BSL as well as English.
Benefits	Offers the opportunity for a new provider to bring a fresh approach to the equipment service. Allows competition to reach every aspect of the service.
Recommendation	Tender as a lot

Deaf equipment service	
Client Group	Deaf* people
Service area	Deaf equipment service (all four types of deafness)
Comments	The scale of this work in 2018/19 was 231 installations of equipment
Risks	Fracturing of service for BSL users in particular. To mitigate this, the service specification can require that the service is delivered in BSL as well as English.
Benefits	Offers the opportunity for a new provider to bring a fresh approach to the equipment service. Allows competition to reach every aspect of the service.
Recommendation	Tender as a lot

### Lothian-wide Procurement

- Discussions are at an early stage around the development and procurement of a pan-Lothian sensory service. It is therefore proposed that the contract period for service provision in Edinburgh from October 2020 would be set for a period of three

years, to provide for the commencement of a pan-Lothian contract in October 2023. This contract(s) should, however, have an option to extend for a further two years, which would come into effect should the pan-Lothian service prove unfeasible or undesirable.

18. The advantages of a pan-Lothian sensory service would be consistency over the Lothian area, enhanced scrutiny of providers and potentially greater opportunities for innovation.
19. The disadvantages of a pan-Lothian service would be the time required to secure agreements from four IJBs, one authority (likely City of Edinburgh Council on behalf of the EHSCP) would need to lead the development of the framework leading to an uneven distribution of workload.

### **Further development of equipment services for sensory impairment**

20. There are opportunities for developing the equipment service for deaf\* people, and the equipment allocation for people with sight loss to link more closely to the Smart House and ATEC24 service in Edinburgh, and reflect the direction towards provision of more information about connected devices which service users can self-purchase, in addition to the standard service which currently exists of supplying user-friendly simple equipment. One-third of service users in the online survey wished information and support about equipment they can buy themselves. We have agreed to set up sensory equipment working group to include current and future service providers as appropriate to inform and shape future work in this area. This will potentially include developing a core equipment list for the equipment service contract and scoping out/purchasing appropriate additional showroom equipment for self-purchase.

## **Key risks**

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21. Individual users of the social work service at RNIB may feel disadvantaged by this change in provision. The outcomes for visually impaired people receiving their assessment and care management through a locality team will be monitored to ensure a high-quality service.
22. Pan-Lothian arrangements may not be feasible or desirable following joint options appraisal with Lothian IJBs. If the contracts to run from October 2020 are fit for purpose these could be extended for two further years to bring in line with the standard contract period.

## **Financial implications**

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23. The current contract ends on 30 September 2020. Contract value £494k.

24. A projected saving of circa 10-15% can be achieved if the above proposals are approved, with no diminution of service anticipated.
25. This saving has been realised by the cessation of commissioned social work for people with sight loss, and integration of this provision into the workload of the locality social work teams. No resource implications, save staff training which can be funded from the See Hear budget, are foreseen.
26. Small allocations of additional resource are required to meet needs identified in the engagement process, e.g. to purchase a range of demonstration equipment for self-purchase.

## **Implications for Directions**

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27. Draft direction attached as Appendix 2.

## **Equalities implications**

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28. Consideration is being given to equalities throughout the development of this proposal, and a full IIA will be carried out in due course.

## **Sustainability implications**

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29. Sustainability is being considered and will be covered within the IIA.

## **Involving people**

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30. Over 90 service users and around 30 professionals working in the sensory field have been involved in shaping these plans, as described at paragraph 15.

## **Impact on plans of other parties**

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31. Commissioning a larger number of lower value lots means that the Lothian Sensory Partnership vehicle for delivery need not be utilised, which has greater impacts on the smaller partner in the LSP.
32. West Lothian, Midlothian and East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnerships will be affected by decisions made in Edinburgh, as they also commission similar services from the same providers. Decisions taken in Edinburgh will affect these Partnerships both in the short term from October 2020 and longer term. Planning and commissioning leads from all four Lothian HSCPs meet regularly together at the Lothian Sensory Impairment Group.

## Background reading/references

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[City of Edinburgh Council/Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership BSL Plan 2018-24](#)

[See Hear Strategy 2014](#)

Lothian Sensory Partnership annual report 2018/19 available on request

Engagement focus group and survey results available on request

## Report author

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## Appendices

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**Appendix 1**                      Engagement Report

**Appendix 2**                      Draft EIJB Direction

## Adult Sensory Support Contract

### Engagement Report: January to September 2019

1. Engagement was carried out with both service users and professionals working in the sensory field. Five **focus groups for service users and carers** were held with a total of 27 citizens (ten hard of hearing people, four Deaf BSL users, one person with a cochlear implant, six with vision impairment, two deafblind people and four carers). An additional five people with a vision impairment were also involved in a citizen's forum for the Physical Disability Commissioning Plan Results from these groups were used to shape a service user questionnaire.
2. A short-life **public and third sector sensory impairment needs assessment group** was set up, with three workshops in February, May and September 2019. Thirty professionals representing a wide range of organisations were involved, with an average of 20 professionals from adult and children's services participating in each workshop, including current providers RNIB and Deaf Action. The group aimed to first shape the adult service user questionnaire, then capture the views of providers on the shape of the new adult sensory support contract, also to shape questions for a similar needs assessment exercise on the development of children's services and ultimately to gather information to shape the overall implementation of the See Hear strategy in Edinburgh.
3. The **online adult needs assessment** had unique features to ensure that people with sensory impairments could fully participate and record their views.
  - The questionnaire was sited on the Council's Consultation Hub on the [www.edinburgh.gov.uk](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk) website which is designed to comply with the AA level of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 issued by the World Wide Web Consortium WC3. These guidelines are designed to meet the needs of visually impaired people using websites.
  - A BSL video was made and embedded on to the Consultation Hub, which we understand to be a Scottish first, which outlined to BSL users how they could access an interpreter to record their views.
  - Deafblind Scotland enabled their members to answer the questions through guide communicators, who recorded answers manually.

4. The online consultation ran for the standard six weeks and yielded 62 responses, with a variety of people with all forms of sensory impairment and their carers. The largest group of respondents was in the 45-54 age group, probably reflecting that fewer older people are online.
5. The key findings of engagement exercises were as follows: -
  - **Service users were satisfied with current services:** Over half the participants had used one or more of the contracted sensory services, and 74% were very satisfied or satisfied with these, with only 8% being dissatisfied.
  - **People wanted more modern and integrated equipment to be provided to them free of charge, but also wanted a service which would assist them to purchase more integrated and high-tech solutions if they wished:** Most comments were about equipment, with a third of respondents saying they would like information on equipment they could purchase, and a similar proportion requesting more up to date integrated equipment than currently available to be provided free of charge.
  - **Professionals wanted improved partnership working and communication:** closer working between services such as NHS Lothian Audiology, improved communication, information sharing and IT, and for services to be better publicised

**Susan Shippey**  
**Planning and Commissioning Officer**  
**September 2019**

<b>DIRECTION FROM THE EDINBURGH INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD</b>
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Reference number	EIJB-10/12/2019-3		
Does this direction supersede, vary or revoke an existing direction? If yes, please provide reference number of existing direction	No		
Approval date	10/12/2019		
Services / functions covered	Adult sensory support services		
Full text of direction	Commission and redistribute a revised suite of services for meeting the needs of adults with a sensory impairment on a three-year basis (from October 2020) with an option for 1+1 year extensions to take account of proposals for a pan-Lothian sensory impairment service		
Direction to	The City of Edinburgh Council		
Link to relevant EIJB report / reports	<a href="#">Provide hyperlink to EIJB report when published online</a>		
Budget / finances allocated to carry out the detail		<i>NHS Lothian</i>	<i>City of Edinburgh Council</i>
	2019/20	£0.0m	£0.0m
	2020/21	£0.0m	£0.235m
	2021/22	£0.0m	£0.471m
Performance measures	Each commissioned service will have its own KPIs developed as part of the commissioning process. Outcomes for people using the service to be delivered within the locality teams (social work assessment and care management with people with a vision impairment) will be monitored.		

Date direction will be reviewed	April 2021
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