



West Dunbartonshire
Community Health Partnership



SENSORY IMPAIRMENT STRATEGY

2007 - 2010

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Foreword

The West Dunbartonshire Joint Future Partnership is pleased to present its first Local Partnership Sensory Impairment Strategy 2007 - 2010.

This Strategy sets out our plans for Sensory Impairment services across the West Dunbartonshire area.

Introduction

This strategy is bedded in the principles of Sensing Progress: Social Work Services for People with a Sensory Impairment 1998; The Report from the Registration and Certification Working Group 2001 and Community Care Services for People with a Sensory Loss: An Action Plan 2004. Publications such as NHS Audiology Services in Scotland (2003), Closing the Gap (1997) and Unseen (2004) have also highlighted the importance of sensory impairment services.

Section 1

Underlying principles of the Strategy

This strategy is founded on the belief that people who are Deaf or have a sensory impairment have a right to opportunities and services. Therefore this strategy is based on the following principles:

- Service users should have a voice to articulate their needs at all levels of the decision making process and to be enabled to lead full lives as citizens and members of the community.
- Service providers must be sensitive to the personal, emotional and material consequences of Deafness and sensory impairment.

With changes in legislation¹ and national policy² we have been helped to develop our services in a more co-ordinated way. Involvement from stakeholders from statutory and voluntary organisations has helped us to build on these principles.

The continued development of this partnership approach will be key to the development and implementation of this strategy across all services. Service users have a strong representation within the strategic planning process; as equal partners this means that they are involved in current service delivery, service planning, redesigning and commissioning of services and are able to highlight gaps in service provision.

¹ The Disability Discrimination Act (1995)

² For example The Joint Future Report 2001 and Our National Plan 2001

Section 2

Deaf People and People with Sensory Impairment

The term “sensory impairment” is used in this report as a broad descriptor to cover blindness, visual impairment, deafness, hard of hearing, being deafened, dual sensory impairment and deafblindness³.

Within West Dunbartonshire, sensory impairment is considered to reflect one client group within the Joint Community Care Plan and the Joint Health Improvement Plan. In terms of service delivery from social work, for deaf, deafblind and visually impaired people, this is provided by one sensory impairment team consisting of specialist workers for deaf people and visually impaired people. Therefore for the purposes of this report sensory impairment is considered as one homogenous group, although the unique nature of the different communities within sensory impairment is also recognised.

Within West Dunbartonshire

There are 652 people on the Register⁴ of Blind and Partially Sighted people. Given the RNIB estimates that for every person who is registered there are three people who could be referred to as “registerable”, the total number of people with severe eyesight problems in West Dunbartonshire can be estimated at around 1,956.

There is no formal register of Deafness or hearing loss however previous research identified less than 30 Deaf people living in West Dunbartonshire⁵. Using the RNID figure of 1 in 7 of the population have a hearing loss, it would suggested that there are around 14,000 hard of hearing and deafened people living in the Council area.

In terms of an additional disability, work carried out within Lennox Castle Hospital estimates that 33% of people with a learning disability have an additional visual or hearing impairment⁶.

West Dunbartonshire has recently commissioned Deafblind Scotland to identify deafblind people living in the area. Numbers of deafblind people identified were categorised as follows; existing Deafblind Scotland members in WDC area recorded at 8; self-referrals found to be deafblind recorded at 6; people known to the social work department recorded was 13. A total

³ Appendix One describes Notes on Terminology

⁴ Scottish Executive Return Form SWB 2005

⁵ West Dunbartonshire and Deaf Connections studies 1998 & 2001

⁶ Dr Alison Kerr Lennox Castle Hospital (Scottish Medicine Volume 16 No 3 1997)

therefore of 27 people were identified as having a dual sensory impairment. The population in the West Dunbartonshire Council area is approximately 93,000, using generally accepted incidence of 40:100,000 the realistic expected number would be 37 deafblind people⁷.

Clearly there are large numbers of people who have a sensory impairment that impacts on their mobility, communication and access to information. Sensory impairment added to other conditions such as acquired brain injury, physical disability including stroke patients, those with diabetes or MS, where there are issues of mental ill health, makes sensory loss a significant issue for those planning and co-ordinating service provision across agencies.

Key partners within West Dunbartonshire have invested time and resources to try to identify sensory impaired people unknown to services through local identification projects and by hosting open events across the Council area. Initial findings would suggest that it is unlikely that there are large numbers of visually impaired people living in the community who are unknown to services of any kind⁸. Partnership work will continue with specialist organisations working within the community to link people with a sensory loss into local services.

The West Dunbartonshire Joint Future Partnership Carers Strategy 2004, acknowledges the vital role of carers and recognises the role of carers in the planning and delivery of all services to physically disabled people.

⁷ West Dunbartonshire and Deafblind Scotland Identification Project 2005-2006

⁸ The Identification Project, Visibility 2004

Section 3

Planning Overview

Context of Planning

“It is essential that future services cover the range of needs from the simple to the most complex and to the highest standards. The belief that people who use services should be at the heart of developments in those services. Their active participation....will ensure that opportunities are made available for them to lead ordinary lives as valued members of society”.

Sensing Progress 1998.

The Scottish Executive has recently followed up Sensing Progress 1998 with a draft consultation document, Community Care Services for people with Sensory Loss: An Action Plan⁹. Sensing Progress made seven recommendations to ensure that services develop to meet the range of needs of people with sensory loss¹⁰.

The Scottish Executive Action Plan was part of a consultation process taking place during 2003 – 2004 with service users and providers across Scotland. The draft action points cover a diverse range of issues including local research and mapping exercises, the development of a national training strategy, development of service standards for sensory impairment services and the role of Single Shared Assessment in service provision¹¹.

The implementation of the Scottish Executive Action Plan is being led by a joint partnership of voluntary organisations, local authorities and the Scottish Executive. West Dunbartonshire has had an enthusiastic commitment to sensory impairment issues until now, and is keen to ensure that the Partnership remains committed to this agenda through their representation within the Action Plan Steering Group and the implementation sub-groups.

In 2005, West Dunbartonshire’s Disability Equality Strategy was adopted by the Council, this will formalise the Councils’ arrangements across all departments for the use of BSL interpreters, textphones, large print and other accessible formats.

⁹ Available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/health/ccssim-03.asp>

¹⁰ Appendix Two lists the Recommendations from Sensing Progress 1998

¹¹ Appendix Three lists the Recommendations from the Action Plan 2004

Planning Process

“Community care services for people with a sensory impairment are often an important lifeline that, through a range of supports, offer a quality of life that might not otherwise be possible”

Community Care Services for people with a sensory impairment – an Action Plan 2004.

Our key partners ensure local joint plans and strategies are agreed, progressed and monitored through Local Planning and Implementation Partnership and through the Sensory Impairment Strategy Group.

Their main focus is to:

- Review and develop local services
- Ensure national strategies and plans are incorporated into local planning
- Commission specialist services for people who are deaf, deafblind, blind or partially sighted or have complex needs

In 2000, Greater Glasgow Health Board Department of Public Health began working closely with West Dunbartonshire Council Sensory Impairment Team to map the service user's route through health and social work services. Partners in the studies included Deaf Connections, RNIB Springfield, Visibility and Deafblind Scotland.

User involvement has always been seen as a priority for the team who has helped initiate and support various user groups across West Dunbartonshire, including the two talking newspapers; West Dunbartonshire Deaf Forum; Focus and Clydebank Blind Club. Over the past five years, the Sensory Impairment Team with its colleagues in Community Development have held open days annually for people with sensory loss to facilitate discussion about services.

Existing Service Provision

West Dunbartonshire Council

The Sensory Impairment Team as part of West Dunbartonshire's Social Work Department provides assessment, advice and assistance to people of all ages, and their carers, who have visual and/or hearing impairments.

The sensory impairment team also accesses additional specialist services for example:-

- Specialist services for people with visual impairment and learning difficulty
- British Sign Language interpreting services, lipspeakers and note-takers
- Guide-communicator services for people with dual sensory impairment
- Respite for sensory impaired children with complex needs.

The Council's Education department have peripatetic services for deaf children based within Braehead Primary school providing educational and communication support as well as the provision of environmental aids and equipment and access to communication services such as Sign Language Interpreter Services.

Children with visual impairments have access to the Visual Impairment Unit within Dumbarton Academy, who provide educational support, training in mobility, independent living skills and communication, advice to carers about household arrangements such as lighting and furniture layout, provision of environmental aids and equipment. Information and advice about local authority services, voluntary services such as the RNIB Family Service and assistance through benefits and charitable organisations is provided by specialist education staff.

The Sensory impairment team, the Education Department, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde have developed a service providers practitioner group for visual impairment services for children. This group ensures a joined up multi-agency approach to services for visually impaired children and young people moving through services.

Health Services

Acute services for Audiology, at present are provided from NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde services are based within Dumbarton Health Centre, Royal Alexandra Hospital in Paisley and Gartnavel Hospital in Glasgow. Services available from the audiologist include a full examination of hearing, and assessment and fitting of hearing aids. Other problems associated with

hearing difficulties will be addressed by the audiologists, for example Tinnitus.

As with Audiology services, ophthalmology and optometry services for West Dunbartonshire are provided from Gartnavel Hospital in Glasgow, Dumbarton Health Centre and Royal Alexandria Hospital in Paisley. The Low Vision Service is available for individuals who have some sight can be helped and encouraged to make better use of their remaining sight. They provide specialist aids such as illuminated magnifying glasses and monoculars to people with a visual impairment.

Partnership services

The Sensory Impairment Team, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and Lomond Care and Repair provide an equipment, advice and information service to hard of hearing people as yet unknown to specialist services through the Home Safety Check carried out in partnership with the Council's Homecare service. Completion of the first evaluation report of Lomond Care and Repair, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and sensory impairment equipment provision was completed in March 2004.

It was envisaged that the service would play a "front line" role in the provision of services for people with hearing impairment and would, when appropriate, refer on to health and social work service. In the first nine months of the project, a total of 238 people had been assessed as needing a service from Care and Repair's Hearing Aid Equipment Service. Of those 175 people were identified through the Home Safety Questionnaire, with people presenting with a level of hearing loss that affects their independence in the community. In other words, people had difficulty with hearing and using the phone, doorbell and their televisions being so loud that it affected their relationships with their family and neighbours. Further work is being developed with Care and Repair who are keen to work with Audiology services.

The Sensory impairment team and Clydebank Community Health Partnership provide an Outreach Service of advice and equipment to people with a sensory loss within a clinic setting within Clydebank health centre.

The Sensory Impairment Team and the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association have been providing additional Rehabilitation for the Blind services to ensure waiting times are kept to a minimum for visually impaired people.

Focus in partnership with West Dunbartonshire Council, Visibility and Clan have delivered Eccentric Reading training, provided by Visibility, to visually impaired people from across the authority.

Training

The Sensory impairment team has developed a sensory impairment awareness training pack for all frontline staff. A pilot of the training pack was undertaken with health and social care staff in 2000. Over the next two years a programme of training was developed and delivered to staff from a variety of agencies. In 2003 the sensory impairment team and Disability Resource Centre developed a physical disability awareness training pack for all frontline staff which includes a session on sensory impairment.

Additional training has been provided by the RNIB in Visual Impairment Awareness training and Visual Impairment and Learning Disability training. Deaf Connections provide Deaf Awareness training, and Deafblind Scotland provide Deafblind Awareness training. This training has been undertaken by a variety of staff from both statutory and voluntary sector providers, including Key Housing, Leisure services and Community Older People's services.

Section 4

Financial Framework

West Dunbartonshire Council and partners (as noted in Appendix 5) are moving towards models of joint commissioning that will take account of the total financial resources available for services.

The complex nature of Sensory Impairment services determines that funding comes from a number of different sources and this is important to consider within the draft financial framework currently being prepared. This includes a number of agencies from statutory, private and voluntary sectors and this can be viewed from the list of Partners (see Appendix 5). In addition, services provided range from direct community sensory impairment services and acute specialist services such as Audiology and Ophthalmology to private providers contracted to provide specific services such as British Sign interpreting services.

Financial commitment requires to be established from all agencies and for example changes arising from the dissolution of NHS Argyll & Clyde may result in a reassessment (and potential realignment) of these. An integral part of this process is the evaluation of current costs with the required service development and this is currently in progress. There is recognition by partners that service development does require increased financial commitment in order that the services can be provided both effectively and efficiently.

The draft financial framework for 2006 / 2007 estimates a total budget of some £469,000 across health and the local authority and is currently being fully developed. As noted in other sections (and specifically within Section 6 of the Action Plan) within the document the development of a clear financial framework (including the preparation of a detailed Medium term Financial Plan) is essential and this will be progressed through 2007.

Section 5

Issues affecting West Dunbartonshire

Through the jointly resourced local mapping of services, referred to earlier, within both specialist and generic and voluntary and statutory agencies, the key findings from this research have been used to improve service delivery and inform local planning process.

Research has been carried out over a five year period, with researchers interviewing patients, clients, carers, health, voluntary sector and social work staff about services for people who are deaf, blind and deafblind. User consultation has taken place within the Deaf community, with hard of hearing people, with people who are visually impaired and people with a dual sensory impairment.

- Consultation with hard of hearing service users and providers was carried out in partnership with NHS Greater Glasgow and West Dunbartonshire Council¹². This mapped services available and identified gaps within services.
- Deaf users were interviewed on a one to one basis in British Sign Language by Council staff on the service provision from all partner organisations¹³.
- A review of services for visually impaired people was carried out by Visibility on behalf of NHS Greater Glasgow in partnership with West Dunbartonshire Council¹⁴.
- Visually impaired people were invited to jointly hosted health, Council and voluntary sector Open Days to give their views on services for visually impaired people in 2003.
- Deaf Connections were commissioned in 2004/5 by NHS Greater Glasgow, NHS Argyll and Clyde and West Dunbartonshire Council to review the existing consultations carried out in 2001 and action key themes for hard of hearing people; in other words the provision of lipreading classes, to improve confidence and reduce social isolation.
- Deafblind Scotland were commissioned by NHS Greater Glasgow and West Dunbartonshire Council to carry out an identification project across the area for people with a dual sensory loss¹⁵
- Deteriorating vision and falls are often linked to older people. Visibility on behalf on NHS Greater Glasgow and in partnership with West

¹² Report on Services for People with Hearing Loss 2001

¹³ Report on Services for Deaf People 2001

¹⁴ The Identification Project: Improving Access to Specialist Services for People who are Visually Impaired 2004

¹⁵ Deafblind Scotland : West Dunbartonshire Identification Project 2005

Dunbartonshire Council, interviewed older people to establish if significant sight loss is occurring in older people who have fallen¹⁶.

Some of the key messages were: -

Common issues across sensory impairment

- Need for improved communication between statutory services
- Better integration between services
- Need for joint sensory impairment awareness training for all staff in health and social care settings
- Need for improved referral pathways between acute, primary care and social work services
- Frustration at long waiting times within specialist health and social work services
- Lack of knowledge of professionals about other services available
- Confusion around accessing specialist services
- Need for signposting between services for service users
- Address the issue of social isolation for people living in the community
- Improved access to basic aids and equipment

Deaf issues

- Provision of lipreading classes for hard of hearing and deafened people
- Provision of local hearing aid support services
- Increased number of British Sign Language interpreters

Visual impairment issues

- Increased capacity of rehabilitation for the blind services
- Increased awareness of visual impairment across services such as health visitors, home/helps and community older people's service

Dual sensory impairment issues

- Deafblind awareness training for all residential and care homes staff for older people
- Ensure that the SSA records dual sensory loss and triggers a specialist assessment
- Guide/communicator service is developed to meet the expanded number of deafblind people identified.

¹⁶ Deteriorating Vision: Falls and Older People the Links 2005

Partnership Responses

In order to address these issues, services were developed locally to bridge the gaps between agencies and to begin to address the gaps as identified above. The services listed below have now become part of mainstream services as a direct result of user consultation with people locally.

- Development of RNIB Realise project, day opportunities and supported accommodation (2001)
- Development of Sensory Impairment Outreach Service within health settings (2002)
- Development of Care and Repair Hard of Hearing Equipment Service (2003)
- Development of lipreading classes across the West Dunbartonshire area (2004)
- Increase in Rehabilitation service for visually impaired people (2005)

There is a commitment to build on this good practice and the action plan below outlines our actions for the next three years to continue to work with our partners to review, monitor and develop services locally.

Section 6

The action plan outlines the tasks identified to meet the local gaps in service as identified by sensory impaired people living in West Dunbartonshire. These actions will be reviewed annually through local planning structure as well as using our own West Dunbartonshire News. We will also be required to report on progress through the Social Work Service Plan Quarterly Performance Report, the Community Health Partnership Annual Plan, and the Scottish Executive Local Improvement Targets. The Action Plan will be the focus of the work of the Sensory Impairment Strategy Group.

The first part of the Action Plan demonstrates the Sensory Impairment Strategy Group's long running commitment to User Involvement and Partnership working. The Strategy and Action Plan were developed in partnership with partners from the statutory and voluntary sector as well as undergoing a three month consultation period before being published.

- 1 In partnership with stakeholders, continue to develop the Sensory Impairment Strategy Group and feed into the Joint Planning Process
- 2 Continuing commitment to service user involvement throughout the planning process, with sensitivity to the communication, language and cultural needs of Deaf people and people with sensory impairment
- 3 Continuing commitment to identifying Deaf people and people with a sensory loss who are unknown to health and social care services, through work with communities and partner organisations
- 4 Continuing commitment to adapting and developing mainstream services to meet the changing needs of people with a sensory impairment
- 5 Commitment to involvement in the Audiology Modernisation Working Group in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
- 6 Continuing commitment to be involved in the Implementation of the Scottish Executive Health Department Review of Eye Care Services
- 7 Continuing commitment to be involved in the Implementation Group of the Scottish Executive Community Care Services for people with a sensory loss : An Action Plan
- 8 Continuing commitment to be involved with the ADSW sub-group structure for Sensory Impairment issues

- 9 Continuing commitment to work with Guide Dogs for the Blind Association to take forward the review and development of Rehabilitation services
- 10 Continuing commitment to work with the Scottish National Federation for the Welfare of the Blind in their strategic review and in the development of Visual Impairment Awareness training
- 11 Continuing commitment to work with the Scottish National Federation for the Welfare of the Blind Service Providers' sub-group (ScotsVIP)
- 12 Continuing commitment to work with Scottish Council on Deafness Social Inclusion sub-group

Service Developments:-

1. Sensory Impairment

- 13 Provide service users and other stakeholders with information on the availability and access to services through updated The Guide to Services for People with a Sensory Impairment
Ongoing WDC SI Team
- 14 Sensory impairment team hold surgeries within community settings to provide a simple assessment with an option, where appropriate, of referral for a full assessment
2008 WDC SI Team
- 15 Develop Single Shared Assessment for specialist sensory impairment assessment in line with Scottish Executive guidance
Ongoing WDC SI Team & NHS GG & C
- 16 Work with partners to extend WDC Sensory Impairment Outreach Service across the area
2007 WDC SI Team

2. Deaf

- 17 Deliver lipreading classes within the community, in Clydebank, Dumbarton and Alexandria
2007 – 2008 WDC SI team, NHS GG & C and Deaf Connections

- 18 Establish support groups for Hard of Hearing people across West Dunbartonshire area
2007 WDC SI Team, NHS GG & C and WDC Community work
- 19 Facilitate consultation with deaf and hard of hearing people identify key issues for hard of hearing people through newly established group
2008 WDC SI Team, NHS GG & C and WDC Community work
- 20 Review type and level of equipment provided to deaf and hard of hearing people
2008 WDC SI Team
- 21 Provide financial support to community groups for deaf and hard of hearing people working across West Dunbartonshire
2007 – 2009 WDC Social Work

3. Visual Impairment

- 22 Review type and level of equipment provided to visually impaired people
2008 WDC SI Team
- 23 Review level of Rehabilitation Service for visually impaired people
2008 WDC SI Team
- 24 Review and evaluate the Eccentric Reading programme for visually impaired people in partnership with Focus, West Dunbartonshire Council Clan and Visibility.
2007 All partners
- 25 Review and develop with Focus and the WDC Homecare service the Password scheme for visually impaired people in the community
2007 Focus and WDC Homecare
- 26 All partners work with Focus to scope a sighted guide service across the area
2007 Focus
- 27 Work with Visibility, Focus, Community Older People's Team, the SI Team and local opticians to identify older people with sight loss within the community, by promoting regular eye checks
2007 – 2008 Visibility, Focus, COPT and SI Team

- 28 Work with Visibility, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, West Dunbartonshire Community Health Partnership, Sensory Impairment Team to provide community based support services for blind and Partially sighted people
2007 – 2008 Visibility, WD CHP, SI Team and NHS GG & C
- 29 Provide financial support to community groups for visually impaired people working across West Dunbartonshire
2007 – 2009 WDC Social Work
- 30 Provide services to visually impairment people with a Learning Disability through RNIB Springfield services
2007 SI Team, Learning Disability services and RNIB Springfield
- 31 Develop links with CLAN and Community Education to ensure access for blind and partially sighted people to the Local Operational Literacy's Partnership
2007 Focus

4. Deafblind

- 32 Develop recording systems with information systems for dual sensory impaired people in line with Scottish Executive guidance
2007 – 2008 SI Team
- 33 Further develop the guide/communicator service in West Dunbartonshire
2007 – 2008 SI Team
- 34 Access specialist assessments services from Deafblind Scotland for adults with dual sensory impairments
2007 – 2010 SI Team and Deafblind Scotland
- 35 Provide financial support to community groups for deafblind people people working across West Dunbartonshire
2007 – 2010 WDC Social Work
- 36 Provide specialist services to children and young people through Sense Scotland, including day care, respite and out and about service
2007 – 2010 SI Team and Sense Scotland
- 37 Identify and support people with dual sensory impairment to participate in service planning and development

2007 – 2010 SW Strategy

5. Training

38 Delivery of specific training to partner agencies e.g. homecare and community older people's team

2007 – 2010 SI Team

39 Review capacity for delivery of Sensory Impairment Awareness training in line with Scottish Executive guidance

2008 SW Strategy

6. Monitoring and evaluation

40 Development of Local Improvement Targets for Sensory Impairment

2007 – 2010 All partners

41 Participation in the development of Scottish Executive Guidance and Service Standards for Sensory Impairment Services for local Partnerships

2007 – 2010 All partners

42 Ensure all new developments are monitored in line with partners' and corporate performance indicators

2007 – 2010 All partners

43 Use existing external review mechanisms e.g. COSLA awards and APSE awards

2007 – 2010 All partners

44 Use the Community Care Planning and Implementation Partnership to monitor progress of the action points

2007 – 2010 All partners

45 Work with corporate policy to ensure the development and implementation of the Disability Equality Scheme

2007 – 2010 All partners

Appendix one

Notes on Terminology

Visual Impairment

This is a term to cover the spectrum of those who have some residual vision to those who have no sight at all. The terms blind and partially sighted are also frequently used within the document. Blind in the context of a person being unable to perform any work for which eyesight is essential, as described in the BP1 document, it does not necessarily mean the person concerned will have no vision at all.

Deaf people and those who are hard of hearing

The Deaf Community is generally used to describe those Deaf people who use British Sign Language and who feel they share a culture with other Deaf people. There are a large number of people who are also profoundly deaf, many of whom will have become deaf during the course of their lives and who will acquire a variety of new communication skills. The largest group are those who are hard of hearing, many of whom acquire hearing loss as they become older.

Deafblindness

Deafblindness, or dual sensory loss, refers to people with a combination of sight and hearing difficulties with communication, access to information and mobility.¹⁷

Deafblind Scotland and indeed all of the organisations working in the field of dual sensory impairment use the terms deafblind and dual sensory impaired interchangeably on the understanding that in the use of both terms the criteria within the definition are met. It is often easier for people to accept the use of the term dual sensory impaired and indeed less than 10% of those who meet the criteria within the definition are fully deafblind in layman's terms.¹⁸

¹⁷ Sensing Progress Social Work Services for People with a Sensory Impairment 1998

¹⁸ Deafblind Scotland Identification Project Report West Dunbartonshire 2005

Appendix two

Recommendations from Sensing Progress (1998)

1. Local authorities should take the lead in establishing multi-agency strategy and resource groups for services for people with sensory impairments. These resource groups should be in place by April 2000.
2. Local authorities and their partners in children's services planning should review their existing arrangements for FNAs. The review should
 - Examine how well FNAs currently identify young people's needs for continuing education, training, welfare services and other support
 - Examine the arrangements for ensuring identified needs are met by all the relevant agencies
 - Identify any improvements which are necessary to ensure the recommendations made by FNAs are carried outAuthorities should complete these reviews by April 1999 and report their findings to the Scottish Office.
3. The Beattie Committee should consider the concerns expressed in their report about effective joint working and the FNAs as part of their wider deliberations.
4. The Scottish Office should convene a short life working group of representatives of local authorities, health services and people with a visual impairment to review, and change as necessary, the efficiency of arrangements for certification and registration.
5. All local authorities should review their assessment arrangements for people who have a sensory impairment to ensure that assessments are carried out speedily and that wider needs are considered wherever necessary. The outcome of these reviews should be reported by SWSI by April 1999. All authorities should establish and publish their timescales for assessments.
6. Local authorities should immediately look to:
 - Increase the number of their staff trained to BSL Stage 3, who work with people with a sensory impairment;
 - Provide sensory awareness training for all levels of staff, including receptionists;
 - Increase the number of guide/communicators

7. The Scottish Office should incorporate consideration of the training needs of those who work with people with a sensory impairment into its wider consultations about the future development of education and training in social work services.

Appendix three

Recommendations from The Scottish Executive Community Care Services for People with a Sensory Impairment: An Action Plan (2004)

1. The Scottish Executive should consult on the best methods of collecting information to assist service planning and delivery, for all those with a sensory impairment, including consideration of the registration process
2. The Scottish Executive should consider how local partnerships can ensure that the ability to capture sensory impairment and needs arising from this in the Single Shared Assessment for other care groups
3. The Scottish Executive should develop an information strategy for people with a sensory impairment by reviewing existing information standards in conjunction with the Scottish Accessible Forum and other appropriate organisations to assess what is and should be available
4. It is recommended that every social work or social care facility should have staff that are able to meet the basic communication needs of a person with a sensory impairment by April 2006
5. It is proposed that a short life working group be set up to consider how best to review, commission and disseminate research findings on meeting the needs of people with a sensory impairment, the underlying purpose being to identify what needs to change in community care services for people with a sensory impairment so that present inconsistencies and specialist needs are addressed
6. It is proposed that a short life working group be set up to produce common sensory impairment service standards, to be completed for implementation by September 2005
7. A national training strategy which strikes a balance between generic and specialist needs should be devised that places the needs of users and carers at its heart and is based on existing good practice standards. As a first step, the Scottish Executive should carry out an exercise to map all the information that is currently available, clarify the numbers involved and assess the usefulness of training programme content

Appendix four

Numbers of people with a sensory impairment

Deaf people

In the UK 8.7 million people are estimated, by the RNID, to be deaf, deafened or hard of hearing (some one in seven of the population). Epidemiology shows that 730,000 adults in Scotland have a hearing loss that results in communication difficulties. Of that 533,000 benefit from NHS hearing services with 18 out of 20 referrals to Audiology coming from GPs. The incidence of deafness increases with age significantly, so much so that it is estimated that some 55% of those over 60 years will have difficulty hearing, increasing to over 90% after the age of 80 years.

There is no formal recording process of Deafness or hearing loss as there is with Blind and Partially Sighted people.

Visually impaired

In Scotland the number of people registered blind or partially sighted was estimated to be 37,423 and prevalence data from the RNIB suggests that the number of people registered is some 23% of those eligible. This would give an estimate of around 120,000 visually impaired people in Scotland. As with hearing loss the incidence of visual impairment increases with age with 68% of those registered being over the age of 75.

Appendix five

Partner Agencies

- West Dunbartonshire Council
- West Dunbartonshire Community Health Partnership
- NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
- Focus
- Bankie Talk Talking Newspaper
- Rockvale Rebound Talking Newspaper
- RNID Scotland
- Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People
- Deaf Connections
- Scottish Council on Deafness
- RNIB Scotland
- RNIB Springfield Service
- RNIB Realise Service
- Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
- Visibility
- Deafblind Scotland
- Lomond and Argyll Care and Repair