

# EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM



Equality impact assessment is a requirement for all strategies, plans, functions, policies, procedures and services under the Equalities Act 2010. We are also required to publish assessments so that we can demonstrate how we have considered the impact of proposals.

## Section 1: Description

Department	People's Directorate	Lead officer responsible for assessment	Nik Darwin
Service	Cheshire East All-Age Sensory Impairment Strategy	Other members of team undertaking assessment	Helen Clark
Date	March 2021	Version 1	
Type of document (mark as appropriate)	<div>Strategy</div> <div>Plan</div>	<div>Function</div> <div>Policy</div>	<div>Procedure</div> <div>Service</div>
Is this a new/existing/revision of an existing document (mark as appropriate)	<div>New</div>	<div>Existing</div>	<div>Revision</div>
<p>Title and subject of the impact assessment (include a brief description of the aims, outcomes , operational issues as appropriate and how it fits in with the wider aims of the organisation)</p> <p>Please attach a copy of the strategy/plan/function/policy/procedure/service</p>	<p><b>Cheshire East All-Age Sensory Impairment Strategy 2021 – 2024</b></p> <p>The Cheshire East All-Age Sensory Impairment Strategy is for children, young people and adults in Cheshire East living with visual and/or hearing impairment (also known as d/Deaf, deafblind or have a visual impairment).</p> <p><b>Vision</b></p> <p><i>Our shared vision is for children, young people and adults in Cheshire East living with a sensory impairment to be able to live their best lives and be inspired to achieve their hopes and ambitions and contribute positively to their community. We will work in partnership to improve awareness and access to information, services and support that are inclusive and appropriate to their individual and unique needs.</i></p> <p><i>This collective approach should enable a person with a sensory impairment to be as safe and as independent as possible and in control of their health and daily life.</i></p>		

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**Draft Priorities (2021/24)**

The following six draft priorities will form the basis of an action plan:

**1. Providing accessible information and advice**

**Our ambition:** We will fulfil our responsibilities to provide accessible information and advice about services available in Cheshire East.

**2. Integrated service provision and improved co-ordination of care**

**Our ambition:** We will work together to ensure access to co-ordinated services that provide the right support and the right time.

**3. Support for children and young people/Preparing for Adulthood (Transition)**

**Our ambition:** We will ensure children and young people receive the best support when moving to the next stages of their lives and preparing for adulthood, including transition between children's and adult services.

**4. Keeping your independence**

**Our ambition:** We will increase awareness and use of available equipment and assistive technology to improve independence. We aim to inspire people to achieve their personal goals and will offer support and training by appropriately qualified people.

**5. Emotional and peer support**

**Our ambition:** We will ensure that people who need counselling, emotional and peer support can access this when they feel the time is right for them.

**6. Awareness and understanding of sensory impairment**

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	<p><b>Our ambition:</b> We will educate our workforces on the impact of sensory impairments and their obligations in making services accessible. We will promote greater awareness within the general population and improve public health information.</p>
<p><b>Who are the main stakeholders?</b> (e.g. general public, employees, Councillors, partners, specific audiences)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children, young people and adults with sensory impairments, and their families and carers</li> <li>• Service user and patients of sensory treatment and support services</li> <li>• General public and residents of Cheshire East</li> <li>• Cheshire East Council – education and social care services</li> <li>• Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group</li> <li>• East Cheshire NHS Trust Ophthalmology and Audiology Departments</li> <li>• Mid Cheshire NHS Trust Ophthalmology and Audiology Departments</li> <li>• Local specialist sensory voluntary organisations and wider community groups</li> <li>• Councillors</li> <li>• GP Practices</li> <li>• AQP Providers for sensory services</li> </ul>

### Section 2: Initial screening

<p><b>Who is affected?</b> (This may or may not include the stakeholders listed above)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children, young people and adults with sensory impairments, and their families and carers</li> <li>• Service user and patients of sensory treatment and support services</li> <li>• General public and residents of Cheshire East Council</li> <li>• Councillors</li> <li>• Cheshire East Council – education and social care services</li> <li>• East Cheshire NHS Trust Ophthalmology and Audiology Departments</li> <li>• Mid Cheshire NHS Trust Ophthalmology and Audiology Departments</li> <li>• Local specialist sensory voluntary organisations and wider community groups</li> <li>• GP Practices</li> </ul>
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<b>Who is intended to benefit and how?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The intended benefit and aim of the strategy is to enable children, young people and adults with a visual and/or hearing impairment, and their families and carers, to be as independent as possible and in control of their health and daily life. The strategy and action plan will implement the improvements identified based on the 6 key priority areas that have arisen from the pre-engagement and co-production work with stakeholders, service users and professionals.</li> </ul>										
<b>Could there be a different impact or outcome for some groups?</b>	<p>Yes – this will include children, young people and adults with a hearing impairment, visual impairment or dual sensory loss. Older people are disproportionately affected as sensory impairments increase sharply with age. Some people have a visual or hearing impairment that is associated with other conditions such as stroke, dementia, learning disabilities and mental health problems. For people with multi-sensory needs, particularly children and young people, their needs will be addressed through the SEND Strategy and Partnership.</p>										
<b>Does it include making decisions based on individual characteristics, needs or circumstances?</b>	<p>Yes – the strategy and action plan set out the vision and priorities for improvements to services and support for people with a sensory impairment by working together across health, education, social care and the voluntary sector. This will reflect the needs of those affected by sight or hearing loss and oversee the implementation of these actions.</p>										
<b>Are relations between different groups or communities likely to be affected? (e.g. will it favour one particular group or deny opportunities for others?)</b>	<p>The strategy is inclusive and committed to improving services and support for people of all ages affected by a visual or hearing impairment or dual sensory loss. Older people make up the highest proportion of people with sensory impairment as the incidence rises with ageing. There is a greater likelihood that they will also be physically frail or have other physical disabilities and health conditions. This will potentially be exacerbated by their sensory impairment limiting their mobility and opportunities for wider social and recreational activities and “staying connected” in their communities.</p>										
<b>Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality? Is there a history of unequal outcomes (do you have enough evidence to prove otherwise)?</b>	<p>No specific target action required</p>										
<b>Is there an actual or potential negative impact on these specific characteristics? (Please tick)</b>											
<b>Age</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Y</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>N</b>	<b>Marriage &amp; civil partnership</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Y</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>N</b>	<b>Religion &amp; belief</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Y</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>N</b>	<b>Carers</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Y</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>N</b>

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Disability	Y	N	Pregnancy & maternity	Y	N	Sex	Y	N	Socio-economic status	Y	N
Gender reassignment	Y	N	Race	Y	N	Sexual orientation	Y	N			
<p><b>What evidence do you have to support your findings? (quantitative and qualitative) Please provide additional information that you wish to include as appendices to this document, i.e., graphs, tables, charts</b></p> <p>The draft Strategy has been developed and co-produced with service users and professionals working across health, education, social care and the voluntary sector.</p> <p>Based on the results of the engagement and national good practice evidence, six draft priority areas have been identified that will form the action plan. These include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Accessible information and advice</li> <li>2. Integrated service provision</li> <li>3. Support for Children and young people (transition)</li> <li>4. Keeping your independence</li> <li>5. Emotional and peer support</li> <li>6. Awareness and understanding of sensory impairment</li> </ol>									<p><b>Consultation/involvement carried out</b></p> <p>Extensive pre-engagement work has involved an online stakeholder survey, two sensory workshops, semi-structured interviews and online surveys with service users including adults, children and young people with HI/VI and their families and carers.</p>		
									<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
Age			<p>Older people make up a large proportion of those in need of support. In the UK, 79% of people over 64 are living with some degree of sight loss. Nearly 42% of those aged over 50 years have hearing loss, increasing to about 71% of people aged 70+.</p> <p>In Cheshire East, there were an estimated 15,200 people with a visual impairment</p>						Yes –		

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	<p>in 2020 in including 2,070 with severe sight loss. There were 191 blind and partially sighted children and young people under 18 in 2020.</p> <p>There were an estimated 88,244 adults with a hearing impairment in 2020 including 8,613 with a severe hearing loss. There were estimated to be 262 children and young people under 20 in 2021 with a severe hearing impairment in Cheshire East.</p>	<p><b>telephone survey with adults with a visual impairment. Online surveys with adults with HI, children and young people with VI and HI. Also face to face interviews.</b></p>	
<b>Disability</b>	<p>Sensory impairments are recognised as a physical disability. They are often a “hidden” disability that may not be immediately obvious. Due to the greater incidence of sight and hearing loss among older people, they may also be physically frail or have other physical disabilities and health conditions.</p>	<p><b>Yes – children/young people and adults with VI/HI</b></p>	
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<p>There is no known element in the proposals which is likely to lead to the discrimination on the basis of this protected characteristic.</p>		No
<b>Marriage &amp; civil partnership</b>	<p>There is no known element in the proposals which is likely to lead to the discrimination on the basis of this protected characteristic.</p>		No
<b>Pregnancy &amp; maternity</b>	<p>There is no known element in the proposals which is likely to lead to the discrimination on the basis of this protected characteristic.</p>		No
<b>Race</b>	<p>This may adversely affect people from BAME communities who may not be aware of sensory support services or where to go for help.</p>	<p><b>Yes – equality monitoring was included on the survey forms</b></p>	

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<b>Religion &amp; belief</b>	There is no known element in the proposals which is likely to lead to the discrimination on the basis of this protected characteristic.			No
<b>Sex</b>	None directly although as sight and hearing loss increase with ageing, more women may be affected in the oldest age categories.		<b>Yes – equality monitoring was included on the survey questionnaires.</b>	
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	There is no known element in the proposals which is likely to lead to the discrimination on the basis of this protected characteristic.			No
<b>Carers</b>	Carers and families of people living with a sensory impairment need access to support in their own right. The council contracts the Cheshire East Carers' Hub to provide services for all carers including adults, parent and young carers.			No
<b>Socio-economic status</b>	This may adversely affect those people in lower income households who may not have access to the equipment and technology to support their independence e.g. internet access, laptops, iPads and other aids.			No
<b>Proceed to full impact assessment? (Please tick)</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Date</b>	

If yes, please proceed to Section 3. If no, please publish the initial screening as part of the suite of documents relating to this issue

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### Section 3: Identifying impacts and evidence

This section identifies if there are impacts on equality, diversity and cohesion, what evidence there is to support the conclusion and what further action is needed

Protected characteristics	Is the policy (function etc....) likely to have an adverse impact on any of the groups?  Please include evidence (qualitative & quantitative) and consultations	Are there any positive impacts of the policy (function etc....) on any of the groups?  Please include evidence (qualitative & quantitative) and consultations	Please rate the impact taking into account any measures already in place to reduce the impacts identified <b>High:</b> Significant potential impact; history of complaints; no mitigating measures in place; need for consultation <b>Medium:</b> Some potential impact; some mitigating measures in place, lack of evidence to show effectiveness of measures <b>Low:</b> Little/no identified impacts; heavily legislation-led; limited public facing aspect	Further action (only an outline needs to be included here. A full action plan can be included at Section 4)
Age	No direct impacts have been raised to date. The new Sensory Impairment Strategy should have a positive impact on people of all ages with a visual and/or hearing impairment.	<p><b>The surveys conducted with children, young people and adults identified barriers to independence and the changes or improvements needed to improve peoples' outcomes.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved information and advice</li> </ul> <p>When surveyed, 75% of children/young people with VI/HI said they had been given enough information and support at diagnosis. This compared to 31% of</p>	<p>High – the service pathways for children and young people are well-established across health, education and social care. However, clear processes are needed around transition to Adult Services where appropriate.</p> <p>For adults, some gaps in the service pathways have been identified. Further work will be undertaken to make the improvements needed through</p>	<p>A new cross-partnership Sensory Impairment Strategy Working Group has been established. This group will oversee and co-ordinate the Strategy action plan. Three task and finish groups have been set up to look at the priority areas of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information and awareness of sensory impairments</li> <li>Equipment and Technology</li> </ul>

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		<p>adults with a VI. 55% said they didn't get enough information and support.</p> <p><b>Top three changes or improvements needed (Children/YP with HI)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More information about what services are available</li> <li>• More access to counselling and emotional support</li> <li>• Better access to equipment</li> </ul> <p><b>Top three changes or improvements needed (Children/YP with VI)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better access to equipment</li> <li>• More support for families and carers</li> </ul> <p><b>Top three changes or improvements needed (Adults with VI)</b></p>	<p>the action plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and Young People pathways and support (Transition)</li> </ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing where to go for more help</li> <li>• More information about what services are available</li> <li>• Getting help in a timely way</li> </ul> <p><b>Top three changes or improvements needed (Adults with HI)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More information about what services are available</li> <li>• Knowing where to go if I need more help</li> <li>• More social and group activities</li> </ul>		
<b>Disability</b>	No direct impacts have been raised to date. The new Sensory Impairment Strategy should have a positive impact by improving the understanding and awareness of people with a sensory impairment.	Having a visual and/or hearing impairment is often referred to as a “hidden” disability. A key priority is to improve the understanding and awareness of the impact of having a sensory impairment among staff and the wider community.	High – The aim of the Strategy and action plan is to improve the lives of people with a sensory impairment by ensuring they get the right help and support at the right time.	See above- this will be addressed through the action plan and sub-groups.

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<b>Gender reassignment</b>	No impacts have been raised to date. As such the effects of this plan are currently deemed as neutral on this protected characteristic.	No specific action has been identified around this protected characteristic.	Low	See above
<b>Marriage &amp; civil partnership</b>	No impacts have been raised to date. As such the effects of this plan are currently deemed as neutral on this protected characteristic.	No specific action has been identified around this protected characteristic.	Low	See above
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	No impacts have been raised to date. As such the effects of this plan are currently deemed as neutral on this protected characteristic.	All new-born babies are screened at birth for hearing and there are well established processes in place for babies and their parents/carers.	Low	See above
<b>Race</b>	No impacts have been raised to date. As such the effects of this plan are currently deemed as neutral on this protected characteristic.	Further work will be explored through the Strategy Action Plan to address the communication/language needs of people from minority ethnic groups with visual and/or hearing impairments.	Medium	See above
<b>Religion &amp; belief</b>	No impacts have been raised to date. As such the effects of this	No specific action has been identified around this protected	Low	See above

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	plan are currently deemed as neutral on this protected characteristic.	characteristic.		
<b>Sex</b>	No direct impacts have been raised to date. The new Sensory Impairment Strategy should have a positive impact by improving the understanding and awareness of people with a sensory impairment	The incidence of sight and hearing impairments increase with ageing, there may be more women disproportionately affected in the oldest age categories.	Low	See above
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	No impacts have been raised to date. As such the effects of this plan are currently deemed as neutral on this protected characteristic.	No specific action has been identified around this protected characteristic.	Low	See above
<b>Carers</b>	No direct impacts have been raised to date. The new Sensory Impairment Strategy should have a positive impact by improving the understanding and awareness of people with a sensory impairment.	Through the engagement work to develop the Strategy, it has been identified that families and carers of people with a visual and/or hearing impairment need to be recognised and offered support in their own right.	Medium	This will be addressed through the Strategy action plan.
<b>Socio-economics</b>	No direct impacts have been raised to date. The new Sensory Impairment Strategy should have	Access to and training to use appropriate equipment and assistive technology has been	Medium	A review of equipment and assistive technology will be undertaken by a dedicated sub-

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	a positive impact by improving the understanding and awareness of people with a sensory impairment. It will also consider equipment and assistive technology.	recognised as a need across all age groups. People may be disproportionately affected if they are required to purchase their own equipment and may not have the means to access the internet and other technology.		group to understand what equipment is currently available through the council and health and how to improve access to training and other support.
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**Is this project due to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors? If yes, please indicate how you have ensured that the partner organisation complies with equality legislation (e.g. tendering, awards process, contract, monitoring and performance measures)**

It is currently anticipated that some services could be commissioned later in the year once progress has been made on the action plan and the Strategy has been ratified by the Council. Contracted services are subject to comprehensive performance monitoring.

### Section 4: Review and conclusion

**Summary: provide a brief overview including impact, changes, improvement, any gaps in evidence and additional data that is needed**

The Strategy Action Plan and task and finish groups will prioritise progress on the following three areas over the next 6 months:

- Accessible information and awareness
- Equipment and assistive technology
- Children's and Young People (pathways and transition)

This will consider the gaps identified and improvements needed from the pre-engagement work.

Specific actions to be taken to reduce, justify or	How will this be monitored?	Officer responsible	Target date
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<b>remove any adverse impacts</b>			
<p>Formal public consultation on the draft Strategy is scheduled to take place from June 2021. This will be in a range of media to ensure it is as accessible as possible.</p> <p>We will take account of all the views and comments received following the engagement and the final Strategy will be updated in light of this.</p>	Project plan and scheduled timeline	Helen Clark	August 2021
Approval sought on Final Strategy following public consultation at Health and Social Care Committee and Children and Families Committee	Project plan and scheduled timeline	Nik Darwin/Helen Clark	September 2021
Strategy Action Plan and tasks to make improvements identified.	This will be co-ordinated and monitored by the Sensory Impairment Strategy Working Group.	Nik Darwin/Helen Clark	November 2021
<b>Please provide details and link to full action plan for actions</b>	Draft action plan will sit alongside the Strategy Document – this is currently being drafted		
<b>When will this assessment be reviewed?</b>	October 2021		
<b>Are there any additional assessments that need to be undertaken in relation to this assessment?</b>	No		
<b>Lead officer signoff</b>	Nik Darwin	<b>Date</b>	08/06/21

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Head of service signoff		Date	24/06/21
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