

Wiltshire Council

Health and Wellbeing Board

12 September 2013

Subject: Vision Ahead

Executive Summary

The report outlines the recommendations for improvement to services supporting those who are visually impaired.

Proposal(s)

It is recommended that the Board considers the recommendations contained in the Vision Ahead report (Appendix 1);

Reason for Proposal

The Vision Ahead report is from a partnership of organisations which looked at support for those with sensory impairment in the county and how this could be improved. A wide range of recommendations are made which are worthy of consideration by the Board.

James Cawley
Service Director

Julia Cramp
Service Director

Ted Wilson
Wiltshire CCG

Wiltshire Council

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Purpose of Report

1. To present the findings of the Vision Ahead report.

Background

2. In 2009-10 Wiltshire undertook a consultative project to help it identify how older people could be supported better. The project started with an “Open Space” event and was followed by 5 workshops that were attended by older people who were customers, carers, social care staff (including practitioners), NHS staff (including practitioners), voluntary sector representatives and other stakeholders. The aim was to “co-produce” an assessment of current services and recommend how they could be improved.
3. This process was facilitated by Dan Short for the Department of Health Care Services Efficiency Delivery (CSED) programme and it was very successful. It provided the foundations for, created the impetus for and built the relationships/consensus necessary to implement the new “*Help to Live at Home*” approach. This approach is now being used across Wiltshire and increasingly being recognised across England as “good practice”.
4. In the summer of 2012 the Wiltshire and Swindon User Network (WSUN), Wiltshire Involvement Network (WIN) and Wiltshire Council decided they wanted to sponsor something similar for people who are blind, partially sighted or visually impaired. They hoped that a similar “co-production” process could help create the conditions for improvement across the system for caring and supporting people who live with sight loss. Notably they wanted to:
 - Involve as many stakeholders as possible,
 - Foster an environment of trust and openness,
 - Gain consensus that things need to and can improve,
 - Develop a shared vision for the future, and
 - Recommend the first steps (bottom up/ top down) needed to create the momentum necessary for real improvement.
5. From the start there was recognition by the sponsors that the Vision Ahead project needed to be seen in a local and a national context and more specifically to harness momentum from:

- Increased national and international recognition about the need to reduce avoidable sight loss and improve support for blind and partially sighted people. This is evidenced by the *UK Vision Strategy 2008* first developed in response to the World Health Assembly VISION2020 resolution and refreshed 2012.
- The recent series of initiatives to involve blind and partially sighted people living in Wiltshire in processes that aimed to identify how support for blind and partially sighted people living in Wiltshire could be improved including the Wiltshire Vision Strategy Action Group (WVSAG).

6. The stated aim in the project brief/scope document dated 28th September 2012 was that:

“Wiltshire is committed to transforming how it supports people with sensory impairment(s) and it wants this transformation to be co-produced by customers and stakeholders.

7. Therefore, it was agreed, in July 2012, that the partnership of:

- Wiltshire Involvement Network (WIN),
- Wiltshire & Swindon Users Network (WSUN), and
- Wiltshire Council.

Would, together, focus on visual impairment/loss, and work on a project to produce recommendations on improving the care and support of blind, partially sighted and visually impaired people of Wiltshire.

8. In recognition of ‘Hearing Impairment’ and ‘Big ‘D’ Deaf’, it is hoped that there will be some work in the near future to embrace these two categories of sensory impairment”.

9. The stated scope of the approach for the project was that it was about:

- being aspirational
- finding out how things are now
- defining what would be better
- giving a ‘voice of the customer’

Ultimately, the end point was to give evidence showing a need for change and provide a list of recommendations for further action

10. The stated scope of the project was clear that it was not about:

- designing in detail
- deploying/implementing the change
- commissioning

Though all of these could possibly follow - resulting in changing the way care and services are commissioned in future. In short; the project was to co-produce recommendations for decision takers to consider, rather than make decisions.

11. To ensure that the momentum built up by this project is maintained WSUN has committed to holding an update event by the end of 2013, at which implementation progress will be reported.

Main Considerations

12. The findings of the Vision Ahead project are detailed in the report attached at Appendix 1. Board members are asked to note the recommendations and consider their implementation.
13. The work on Vision Ahead has been complementary to another project, known as Wiltshire Voices, which aims to capture the stories of 'seldom heard' groups in Wiltshire. One of the strands for this was the experience of Blind and Partially Sighted People and their film is available to view [online](#). Some of the issues identified in the Wiltshire Voices project have been picked up in the 'Vision Ahead' work; the project also highlights an important role for blind and visually impaired people who both individually and collectively can lobby, encourage and complain. The collective voice of people with these experiences can be very powerful and recommendations in the Vision Ahead seek to capture this where possible.
14. Children's Services currently work closely with Wiltshire Parent Carers Council (an organisation representing around 400 parents and carers of children with a disability or Special Educational Need) to consult and co-produce solutions to issues faced by disabled children and their families. As such there are separate consultation and co-production arrangements for children and young people with sight/ hearing problems. The focus of Vision Ahead is largely on adults; although recommendations are included on actions which can be taken at a young age to detect and prevent sight problems.

James Cawley
Service Director

Report Author:

David Bowater, Senior Corporate Support Officer
01225 713978

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Background Papers

No unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Vision Ahead report.