

REPORT TO: Healthy Halton Policy and Performance Board
DATE: 16 September 2008
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Health & Community
SUBJECT: Work Topic: Physical and Sensory Disability services – contracts with the voluntary sector
WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To present the final report of the work topic undertaken by the Board October 2007 to June 2008

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That:**

- (1) **Members note and comment on the report; and**
- (2) **Members agree the recommendations of the report as set out in Section 7 of the appendix.**

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 At its meeting in June 2007, Healthy Halton Policy and Performance Board agreed the Key outcomes and outputs sought from this work topic. These were incorporated into the project brief attached as Appendix 1.

3.2 Nine members participated in a small working group working with officers to examine service provision through contracts with three voluntary sector organisations for information services for disabled people and support services for visually impaired people and those with hearing impairment or dual sensory loss (deaf/blind).

3.3 The report covers findings of this work gathered through both desktop exercises and visits to all services.

3.4 Overall the review identified one organisation that was not delivering the contracted service. The other two organisations were generally delivering appropriate support with some areas requiring improvement. It was noted that welfare benefit advice was being offered rather than when signposting to the Council's in-house service.

3.5 A number of recommendations have been made for two of the organisations including updating of service specifications and

monitoring to give clarity around the service requirements of the contract and improve performance. In addition, further work will be undertaken to examine the strategic direction of in-house service provision for visual impairment rehabilitation.

3.6 The contract to deliver an information service for disabled people is not being fulfilled and over recent years the Council is meeting the need for such a service through Halton Direct Link and the Contact Centre. Many individuals also have access to a wealth of information through the internet. The recommendation relating to this contract is that it is de-commissioned and three months notice has been served to end this contract with Halton Disability Services.

3.7 The three services reviewed all had sight of the draft report and their comments have been incorporated into the final version but recommendations have not been changed.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None.

5.0 **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Financial/Resource implications

In addition to improving the performance of all services delivered via the voluntary sector, work is ongoing to achieve a 5% savings target in 2008/9. This includes redesigning services to reduce duplication and this report highlights areas that may contribute to delivering savings.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

Services provided for people with sensory impairments and their carers are cradle to grave. The support offered to young people through communication skills and equipment enables them to participate in ordinary life and reach their potential.

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

None

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

These services offer a range of support to people with sensory impairment to promote independence and enable participation in community life, whilst reducing risk of physical harm and have a positive impact on a persons sense of self worth and mental health.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

None

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**
None

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 None

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 These services promote social inclusion.

9.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.