

Health Impact Assessment of the Proposed Sensory Centre North Wales Deaf Association February 2009

Introduction

The aim of this report is to support the proposal for a north Wales Sensory Centre and identify its potential implications on the health and wellbeing of its clients and the wider population via a rapid health impact assessment (HIA).

Health impact assessment is defined as *“a combination of procedures, methods and tools by which a policy, programme or project may be judged as to its potential effects on the health of a population, and the distribution of those effects within the population.”* (Health Impact Assessment: Main concepts and suggested approach. World Health Organization. December 1999) and it is a process which supports organisations to assess the potential consequences of their actions and decisions on people’s health and well-being either positively or negatively.

HIA provides a systematic and flexible approach that can be used to consider the wider effects of local and national policies or initiatives and how they, in turn, may affect people’s health in the broadest sense. It uses the wider or social determinants of health as a framework to do this. Health impact assessment works best when it involves people and organisations who can contribute different kinds of relevant knowledge and insight. The information gathered is then used to build in measures to maximise opportunities for health and to minimise any risks. It also provides a way of addressing the inequalities in health that continue to persist in Wales.

The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) is committed to developing its use as a key part of its strategy to improve health and reduce inequalities. The Welsh Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU) was established to help support the use of the process in Wales, is impartial and facilitated the rapid HIA on the Sensory Centre Project, proposed by North Wales Deaf Association

HIA can take several forms – comprehensive and rapid. A comprehensive HIA can take many months and financial and human resources and will produce a large document. Rapid HIA is a way of considering health impacts in a more timely and resourceful manner and can take just hours or days. A Rapid HIA was conducted in February 2009 in order to assess the contribution of the proposed Sensory Centre Project on the health and wellbeing of both those who are part of the project and the community as a whole. The HIA appraised the potential positive and negative health and well-being impacts of the service on the local community and identified any gaps. It provided an opportunity for key stakeholders to provide practical recommendations on how The Sensory Centre could further improve the

health and well-being of the population and how any actions could be implemented.

It encompassed a half day participatory stakeholder workshop held on February 17th 2009 at the NWDA headquarters in Colwyn Bay. This was facilitated by Liz Green of WHIASU and the participants included:

Liz Green	Welsh Health Impact Assessment Support Unit
Jane Priestly	North Wales Deaf Association
Mike Spence	North Wales Deaf Association
Richard Jones	British Deaf Association
Cathie Robins Talbot	British Deaf Association
Jill Owen	Conwy Voluntary Services Council
Gwilym Bowen	North Wales Society for the Blind

Health impact assessment workshop

After presentations to the group on the proposed centre, the work of North Wales Deaf Association, details on health impact assessment and a case study of a previous HIA, the participants systematically assessed the potential health impacts of the project using the wider determinants of health as a framework. The wider determinants model encompasses assessing lifestyle factors, environmental, economic and social implications for health..

The following tables show a summary of were the group identified strengths and weaknesses (i.e. positives/negatives) of the proposed Sensory Centre. It focussed on vulnerable groups as well as the wider population. The overarching aim was to maximise the positive health implications and minimise / negate any potential negative impacts and fill any gaps in provision.

Lifestyles

Positives identified	Negatives identified
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training available - diet and nutrition classes for deaf people in the kitchen area • Healthy food to be provided in the social enterprise (café) • Use the kitchen as a resource centre to demonstrate equipment ie how to use a kettle/prepare food to blind people • Promotion of independence to clients particularly young deaf people - promote aspects of healthy food and how to make their own - aim to stop health problems in future -and build knowledge. Will increase confidence and lifeskills and promote cost effectiveness ie batch cooking and freezing for later • Can facilitate the promotion of Physical Activity through clubs and social activities ie the promotion of walking in national parks with blind people • Positive impact from the provision of a gym on PA and any training of instructors for the Local Authority. • Can also run courses on reflexology/beauty etc • Training can lead to an increase in self-esteem, increase optimism and employability. Increase personal development and give deaf/blind people the confidence to go out into the community • Can support other isolated groups too and link life skills together and share knowledge to those who are facing barriers/lack of opportunities in life day to day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Activity - gyms can be expensive (to set up and to join/run) and the deaf need s special instructor for inductions etc. Need to make people aware of interpretation. Gym would need to be in a central location • Potential negative of not finding work after being trained in different skills - need to manage expectations and be realistic

Gaps identified

look at training people to use Local Authority (LA) gyms etc which can be free. Budget for interpreting services for this?

Recommendations

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Manage increased expectations appropriately and be realistic in aims
Disability Sports are an organisation that can support the centre with equipment (Gwilym to provide contacts)
Contact and use the Sports Council for the Deaf/Blind

Social & Community Influences on Health

Positives identified	Negatives identified
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The centre can facilitate breaking down divisions in the community - bringing younger/older people and other groups together • Peer pressure - a centre like this can have a positive influence on young deaf people and give them somewhere to feel comfortable in their disability - many deaf and hard of hearing young people are in denial over their condition in order to 'fit in' • Can give deaf parents access to health facilities and a community forum • NWDA currently facilitate speakers to do this in Conwy and it works well - can expand this in the Centre Provision of a DVD/ translation studio - basics covered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh language can be an issue within the centre and the conflict within welsh/English language signing • It can be expensive to translate in to Welsh - just to tick a box. Only pockets of Welsh speakers in Conwy • Issues around signing in Welsh and English Signage for the Blind too needs to be considered - Braille/large print/audio

Gaps Identified

Need to look at translation and transcription services – is there a need for a specialist?

Recommendations

- Communication is a BIG issue to consider – not just language but also provision of signage etc in Centre
- Need to be open and aware to other languages
- Identify funding streams and ensure that there is a Welsh Language Policy (BDA already have this)
- Encourage people to use British Sign Language

Living & Environmental Conditions affecting Health

Positives identified	Negatives identified
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best Practice Guidance on the Building and its environment - RNIB 'Building Sight' - health and safety issues too • Aim to make the building INCLUSIVE - handrails at waist height rather than head height • There will be attractive inside areas for all to use and will encourage inter-age activities etc • Best Practice Model available - Birmingham Centre • Centre aims to be a general community resource and can facilitate and encourage all users • Cardiff Institute for the Blind can run clinics in the Centre and encourage other health professionals to use the centre - this would increase footfall. • Aim to encourage the public to use the social enterprise café and classes through better facilities • Aims to be a model of local working and there will be a central management committee to lead all partners and a separate committee to manage the building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to make the building totally accessible and Access and security issues need to be addressed ie child access/DDA • Safety issues if all groups mix together at the same time ie Deaf/blind mix, older/younger together. Need to consider separate needs when booking the rooms out at the same time • Need to consider the aim of the front of the building • No outdoor play area to the building - not enough space and need to set parameters about what want to achieve • Lack of research - how many people will use the Centre? NWDA have put feelers out and this is ongoing. • Assumptions may be made about service users and numbers who may go ie in the Birmingham model local deaf people will not use the Centre because it is led by hearing people • 5/6 different client groups are involved - what if they all want to run training sessions at the same time? Need for a room that can be split and partitioned. • Need to consider how to manage the centre- booking system - centralized reception to do this? • Need to avoid duplication of courses offered etc between the partner organisations • Need to consider the numbers in training courses - 15 the max for some groups, so may need to

	<p>consider a larger number of smaller rooms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem of organisations who are providing the same services - BDA, RNID - and competition • It will be difficult to start and issues will arise - need to be addressed • Issues around the ownership of the building
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Gaps Identified

- Need to be careful how the outside is designed - where will Guide dogs/hearing dogs be able to go? How will they be provided with water etc?
- What about allotment area for social and training purposes?
- Need to encourage parents to take their deaf children to the centre - many deaf young are in denial about their hearing status in order to fit in with peer groups

Recommendations

- Location is the key and need to identify a suitable and available location soon
- Early consultation on the building layout and signage. Consider access issues from the youngest group upwards
- Need to consider how different client groups needs can be meet and any health and safety issues of mixing together
- Need to consider a small garden area for use for all including dogs - depends on the siting of the building
- Signpost interested parties to locally available allotments
- Need to obtain more evidence - numbers who will possibly use Centre and organisations and partners who would like to be involved. Need to do this sooner rather than later
- Need for co-ordination between partner organisations in provision of services and training and integrated working - Need to think smarter in current financial climate.
- Have a common agreement to work together and be aware of any political sensibilities
- Get potential partner organisations on board sooner rather than later

Economic Conditions affecting Health

Positives identified	Negatives identified
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social enterprise within the centre - generate income and support local economy• Will support those who are economically inactive and increase their skills base• Better facilities will lead to better training and increased opportunities to access employment• Provision of resource room with specialist equipment• Tie-in with careers employment officers - RNIB/RNID• Provide work placements with local schools and colleges• Retail enterprise to be offered	Specialist IT software needed for Blind - barrier
Gaps Identified None Recommendations None given	

Access and Quality of Services

Positives identified	Negatives identified
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provision of information on welfare rights etc• Education/IT/training facilities to be offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Location not yet decided - needs to be accessible to all in north Wales - community transport implications• If centre has its own minibus - issues. Who would drive the bus? Would a driver be employed or use a service user/staff member? Needs to be thought thorough - management issue• Young people issue - MIDAS test needed to drive bus

Gaps Identified

Look at providing own transport as a central service. Needs to be disability accessible

Recommendations

- Liaise with local community service transport organisations now
- Start selling the proposal to partner organisations now.
- Get groups involved at the beginning
- The Morgan Foundation can fund a minibus - approach them

Macro-economic, Environmental & Sustainability Factors

Positives identified	Negatives identified
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supports national WAG and local strategies and service provision• Promotes sustainable development, economic and health policies• Aims to provides a well-planned, modern facility Focus on partnership working	None Identified

Gaps Identified

None

Recommendations

- Look at grants for geothermal heating