



British Sign Language (BSL) Local Action Plan

2018 to 2024

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Glasgow Council Family
British Sign Language (BSL)
Local Action Plan 2018 to 2024

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Copies in alternative formats and community languages will be made available on request.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015 and the British Sign Language National Plan 2017 – 2023 requires public bodies in Scotland to publish local action plans by October 2018 and on a six yearly basis thereafter, showing how they will promote and support British Sign Language (BSL). This is the first BSL National Plan of its kind in the UK.
- 1.2 Glasgow Council Family has developed a plan around some key themes identified by the Scottish Government, Service Users, Services and Partners; outlining key areas for action over the next 6 years;
 - Across all Services
 - Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare
 - School Education
 - Training, Work and Social Security
 - Health (including social care), Mental Health and Wellbeing
 - Culture and the Arts
 - Justice
 - Democracy
- 1.3 The Scottish Government will also require that Glasgow publish an interim progress report in 2020 based on the local plan, which will help to refine some of the actions we will deliver by 2023.

2. Glasgow Context

- 2.1 BSL is the first or preferred language of some D/deaf people. It is also used by many people who are not deaf, for example, relatives and friends of D/deaf people and sign language interpreters. This Action Plan, by statute, requires us to look primarily at the needs and requirements of BSL users directly.
- 2.2 There are currently approximately 1,717 active users of BSL in Glasgow City according to the last Census in 2011. The Centre for Sensory Impairment Partnership (CSIP) estimates it might be as high as 2,000 active users. There is also a significant support network who may not necessarily be captured in Census figures and Service estimates.

3. Engagement and Consultation

- 3.1 Following advice from the Scottish Government BSL road show, the Chief Executive Department proposed a multi strand approach to engage with the BSL community as widely as possible and to gather views and suggestions for inclusion in the Glasgow Council Family BSL action plan. Officers met with a number of Deaf organisations to go over the proposed approach to ensure it was appropriate and accessible to the community.

3.2 Development of the Draft Action Plan

3.2.1 The first stage of the consultation was to gain views and suggestions from BSL users to identify gaps or particular issues in Glasgow to take action on.

3.2.2 The consultation approach included;

- Undertaking an audit with Council Family staff to gain a picture of services currently being provided to BSL users.
- Online Stakeholder Survey – Open from 13th June to 5th August and promoted to BSL users via various Deaf organisations, staff and Elected Members.
- Consultation questions were provided to Deafblind Scotland who kindly agreed to format it to individual requirements for tactile BSL users.
- Joint Event with NHS GGC for BSL users – hosted in the City Chambers on 11th July with NHS colleagues to look specifically at Social Care.
- Focus Group - facilitated by the independent research company Ipsos Mori with members of the BSL community on 5th July in the City Chambers.
- A tailored action plan for St.Roch’s school was developed with pupils and their teachers.
- Evidence was gathered from tailored events such as the National Deaf Children’s Society Participation Showcase; that supported young people and parents of D/deaf children to share their views.
- Officers from across the Council Family worked to identify solutions to the issues raised through the consultation
- Ongoing engagement with Deaf organisations in the city

3.2.3 Some key themes that emerged through the research and consultation were:

Stakeholder consultation	The majority of the responses expressed a wish to increase Deaf awareness and broaden the use of BSL in day to day interactions. There was a high proportion of responses from Council Family staff with an interest in how they can learn BSL.
Focus Group	The research identified three key themes recurring throughout the discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sense that the Deaf community was not being listened to • Perceived low standards of BSL interpretation • Concern about educational provision for D/deaf people and the wider impact of this on their sense of esteem and life chances.
Joint Event with NHS GGC	The discussions covered a range of topics including the following key areas of access: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health services available in BSL • Use of BSL in Care Homes • Improved information to access Self-Directed Support • Access to interpreters for Health appointments

- Interpreting Services supporting BSL users out of hours
- BSL awareness and training
- General access to HSCP services

3.3 Consultation on the Draft Action Plan

3.3.1 The second stage of the consultation was to gain feedback on the proposed draft action plan, asking stakeholders to identify their priority actions and any suggested areas for improvement.

3.3.2 The consultation approach included;

- Draft Action Plan Engagement Event – Hosted in the City Chambers on 10th October, facilitated by officers, including professionals from the Health and Social Care Partnership, who represented each of the areas of the National Plan.
- Online Stakeholder Consultation – open from 5th September to 21st October. This was promoted to BSL users via various Deaf organisations and our social media.
- Draft Action Plan and consultation questions were provided to Deafblind Scotland who kindly agreed to format it to individual requirements for tactile BSL users.
- Participation at Scottish Government led Roadshow.
- Ongoing engagement and individual feedback from Deaf organisations in the city

Draft Action Plan Engagement Event	<p>The discussion tables covered a wide range of suggestions including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy and Addictions Services • Youth Council participation • BSL museum tours • Increasing uptake of BSL as an additional language in schools • Supporting D/deaf Parents to access information in BSL • BSL Role Models
Online Stakeholder Consultation	<p>Suggestions included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a fluent BSL user is involved in any skills audit for staff. • Concerns over references to other non verbal languages within a BSL action plan • Concerns over the Attainment Gap of BSL children • Encourage young people to become involved in Civic life • Access to Interpreters in health care settings • Access to mental health support for children • Improved online access to BSL information

3.4 The tables above presents only a brief summary of the feedback generated through the research conducted as part of the action plan development process. Officers from across all Services and ALEOs were involved in both face to face consultation with key stakeholders and also part of a formal feedback of findings in order to consider issues and identify suggested actions to take forward.

3.5 Ongoing engagement

3.5.1 As well as continuing dialogue with local Deaf organisations, the action plan includes a commitment to establish a BSL user reference group, in order to ensure that the BSL Community continue to be fully involved in the implementation of the action plan. Participants in the consultation process were asked to volunteer to continue to engage on these issues, for the duration of the plan.

3.5.2 Officers have established good working relationships with many of the Deaf organisations in the City and intend to build on this during the implementation process. This group will ensure that two way engagement is established and consistent.

4. Next Steps

4.1 A BSL version of this plan will be produced following approval at committee. This will be published on the Council webpage and communicated to Deaf organisations.

4.2 Glasgow City Council will provide a progress update to the Scottish Government in 2020, in line with the National progress report.

4.3 In order to monitor the implementation of this action plan, an interim progress report and update to the user reference group will be prepared by the Equality Working Group on an annual basis.

4.4 Where appropriate, actions arising from this process will be considered as part of the review of the Council Family Equality Outcomes which the Council Family are required to provide a progress report and review of associated actions by end of March 2019..

5. Glasgow City Council British Sign Language (BSL) Local Plan

5.1 Across all our services

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“Across the Scottish public sector, information and services will be accessible to BSL users”



Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

- We will establish an ongoing reference group of BSL users to continue to develop actions over the duration of the plan and to address any emerging issues with regard to service delivery.
- Develop a report on the number of BSL users known to the Glasgow Council Family, in particular those using Social Work Services.
- Improve access to our information and services for BSL users, including making our website and social media more accessible to BSL users. This will include:
 - Consider BSL friendly options as part of the development of our new Corporate Communications Strategy.
 - Improve availability of information about services through BSL videos.
 - Explore training opportunities for Communications staff on how BSL is structured to consider when writing website materials and leaflets.
 - Look to expand the number of Glasgow Life venues which have BSL welcome videos.
 - Continue to rollout BSL video content to ‘Your Support Your Way’ website, which provides information about a wide range of health and social care services available within Glasgow.
 - Update our Interpreting Service (Centre for Sensory Impairment) website to ensure information is up to date
- Promote the use of the Scottish Government’s nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay services called ‘contactSCOTLAND-BSL’ to staff and to local BSL users. This will be done through referencing on our ‘contact us’ sections of the website and through training of call centre staff.

- Signpost staff who work with BSL users to appropriate BSL and deaf awareness training.
- In terms of general access to our services across the Council Family, we will;
 - Complete the review the BSL Interpreting Service.
 - Continue to roll out the e-learning sensory awareness programme, which is currently being used across health and social care platforms, and measure uptake.
 - Further develop formal classroom training which will be implemented across social care services, including residential and day care services.
 - Undertake a skills audit of staff to determine who can use BSL and who would like to learn it.
 - Consider incorporating BSL spell your name signage for children and accompanying adults as part of playpark refurbishments.
 - Continue to provide BSL sessions as part of adult learning week in Glasgow Life.

5.2 Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach will be fully embedded, with a D/deaf or Deafblind child and their family offered the right information and support at the right time to engage with BSL”



Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

- Continue to provide early years staff with information about BSL and Deaf culture, and about resources that are available in BSL, so that they can meet the needs of families with a D/deaf or Deafblind child.
- Continue to work with families and relevant partners including speech and language therapists and Allied Health professionals to plan for children.
- Review e-learning programmes available to education staff.
- Review care and education pathways from early years through to adult services.
- Improve links and communication with partners to continue to signpost families to appropriate agencies for sign language support through our Early Years Multi-disciplinary Clinic and the Early Years New Referral Clinics.
- Explore further opportunities for BSL training for all staff that support D/deaf learners. We will also look to support users with additional communication support needs and this will be reflected in our refreshed Equality Outcomes 2017 to 2021.

5.3 School Education

We share the long-term goal for school education set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“Children and young people who use BSL will get the support they need at all stages of their learning, so that they can reach their full potential; parents who use BSL will have the same opportunities as other parents to be fully involved in their child’s education; and more pupils will be able to learn BSL at school”



Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

- Contribute to the Scottish Government’s investigation of the level of BSL held by teachers and support staff working with D/deaf and Deafblind pupils in schools, and take account of any new guidance for teachers or support staff working with pupils who use BSL.
 - Continue to offer BSL classes to teachers in primary and secondary.
 - Work with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) to develop an initial suite of awards in BSL. This will form the basis of any future development of BSL qualifications up to Level 6 of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Network. In addition, identify the potential for Teachers to provide BSL Learning in Schools.
 - Undertake an Education Services staff survey to identify BSL users who are in school but not currently utilising their BSL skills.
- Take forward advice developed by Education Scotland to improve the way that teachers engage effectively with parents who use BSL and ensure that parents who use BSL know how they can get further involved in their child’s education.
 - Continue to provide information and guidance for all schools to ensure that all schools are aware of what they need to do to engage with parents who use BSL.
 - Ensure D/deaf Parents have access to information in BSL. This includes Report Cards, Parents Evenings, routine information and being able to participate in Parent Councils.
 - Be proactive, through St. Roch’s Learning Community in seeking views of parents and the 3rd sector who use BSL with regards to parental involvement in education.

- Contribute to Scotland's National Centre for Languages (SCILT) programme of work to support the learning of BSL in schools for hearing pupils as part of the 1+2 programme, including sharing best practice and guidance.
 - Pilot the new SQA units for BSL in mainstream secondary
 - Continue to investigate and support, with St. Roch's Learning Community in collaboration with schools, opportunities for learning BSL in schools.
 - Ensure that all staff and young people will have the opportunity to learn BSL leading up to National Qualifications within the St. Roch's Learning Community.

5.4 Training, Work and Social Security

We share the long-term goal for training, work and social security set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will be supported to develop the skills they need to become valued members of the Scottish workforce, so that they can fulfil their potential, and improve Scotland’s economic performance. They will be provided with support to enable them to progress in their chosen career”



Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

- Signpost pupils and students to a wide range of information, advice and guidance in BSL about their career and learning choices and the transition process.
- Work with partners who deliver employment services, and with employer groups already supporting employability, to help signpost them to specific advice on the needs of BSL users.
 - Raise awareness of our employment support services with BSL users.
 - Continuing to promote Glasgow Guarantee vacancies through Remploy.
 - Continuing to support the Open Doors employability project which provides waged work experience, support and training to disabled people who wish to enter employment, education or volunteering. Continue to actively target BSL users through this project.
 - Continue to work with both D/deaf and Deafblind young people by supporting independent living skills and mobility training.
 - Deliver a five day duty service that provides information to D/deaf individuals of all ages on support services, employment and benefits.
- Raise awareness locally of the UK Government’s ‘Access to Work’ (AtW) scheme with employers and with BSL users (including those on Modern Apprenticeships) so that they can benefit from the support it provides.
- Scope opportunities to capture Modern Apprenticeship BSL requirement on the MAPPIT database (an interactive web program promoting Modern Apprenticeships in Scotland) as part of the scheduled upgrading.

5.5 Health (including social care), Mental Health and Wellbeing

We share the long-term goal for health, mental health and wellbeing set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will have access to the information and services they need to live active, healthy lives, and to make informed choices at every stage of their lives”



Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

- Signpost BSL users to health and social care information available in BSL (to be produced by NHS Health Scotland and NHS24), and develop information in BSL about local provision, as appropriate.
 - Undertake a self-evaluation to allow Social Work Services managers to consider a range of accessibility issues, including awareness amongst staff of how to signpost to relevant information available in BSL. We will then build on the findings of a self-evaluation.
 - Scope the provision of formal certified BSL training for appropriate front-line HSCP staff. Scope where deaf awareness training would be most appropriate and most effective.
 - Ensure opportunities presented through improved use of technology are acted upon.
 - Explore the use of phone scannable codes (QR code) to access virtual information concerning Deaf organisations and Deaf clubs for BSL service users.
 - Continue to work with Care Homes to highlight; and record, sensory loss and communication needs in clients’ records when they enter into care homes.
 - Review existing deaf access to Self Directed Support (SDS), and map the care pathway currently available to BSL users, and develop an action plan.
 - Ensure specific focus on access to services for BSL users is included in Advocacy contract monitoring meetings.
 - Continue to develop BSL information on the ‘Your Support Your Way Glasgow’ website, including information on Deaf organisations and clubs; health and social care supports; and sport and leisure opportunities.
 - Include a short welcoming film in BSL on the homepage of the ‘Your Support Your Way Glasgow’ website.

- Scope options for pre-flagging BSL users on client records, in order to facilitate appropriate translation or interpreting services in advance of specific appointments and general engagement.
- Complete the review of the BSL Interpreting Services and report on the recommendations by end March 2019.
- We will work closely with NHSGGC through Glasgow's Integrated Joint Board (IJB) to ensure that psychological therapies can be offered on a fair and equal basis to BSL users.
 - Launch a suite of films "Positive Signs" on mental health and resilience messages and use as part of HSCP mental health services promotion.
 - Review access routes to psychological therapies including how BSL users can access at a local level and on a fair and equal basis.
- Take steps to improve access to information about sport and physical activities, local sports facilities and opportunities.
 - Continue to support D/deaf children to attend swimming lessons by ensuring that swim coaches are appropriately trained to offer Deaf friendly swimming.
 - Scope options for BSL signing at Glasgow Life operated sporting events.
 - Continue to support interactive participation in walking groups through the use of visual and tactile materials, for individuals, groups and their interpreters.
 - Continue to support Countryside Ranger Talks for West of Scotland Deaf Children's Society.
- Ensure that any local work to tackle social isolation explicitly considers the needs of BSL users.
 - Using direct links established with the Campaign to End Loneliness there will be a specific focus on tackling isolation for older BSL users.

5.6 Transport

We share the long-term goal for Transport set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will have safe, fair and inclusive access to public transport and the systems that support all transport use in Scotland.”



Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

- As part of the connected transport strategy, the Glasgow Community Planning Partnership will support the development of specific BSL actions for safe, fair and inclusive access to public transport.

5.7 Culture and the Arts

We share the long-term goal for culture and the arts set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will have full access to the cultural life of Scotland, an equal opportunity to enjoy and contribute to culture and the arts, and are encouraged to share BSL and Deaf Culture with the people of Scotland”



Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

- Enable BSL users to take part in culture and the arts as participants, audience members and professionals by improving access to the historical environment, cultural events and performing arts and film for BSL users.
 - Within new museum displays we will share stories about Deaf history, artists or themes where objects support these stories.
 - Continue to support regular tours in BSL at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Riverside Museum.
 - Roll out interpreted tours to the Mitchell Library.
 - Continue to support interpreted events as part of festival performances.
 - Support BSL users, particularly young people to get the most from cultural opportunities by building relationships with organisations such as Solar Bear.
 - Support D/deaf artists to be a fully inclusive part of performances.
 - As part of the Burrell collection redevelopment, investigate making use of technology such as [Signly](#) to ensure displays are accessible.
 - Work in collaboration with BSL users to create a display at the redeveloped Burrell collection.
- Encourage and support BSL users to consider a career in culture and the arts.
 - Promote both voluntary and professional art opportunities to BSL users.
 - Promote future careers in culture and arts by working closely with partners such as Solar Bear, Deaf Youth Theatre and the Royal Conservatoire.
 - Work with the Royal Conservatoire BSL Acting MA for future programming at the Burrell Collection.

- Continue to support volunteer guides by offering opportunities for volunteering and training
- Increase information in BSL about culture and the arts on relevant websites.
 - Look to expand the number of Glasgow Life venues which have BSL welcome videos.

5.8 Justice



We share the long-term goal for Justice set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will have fair and equal access to the civil, criminal and juvenile justice systems in Scotland”

Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

- Implement the BSL recommendations from the Criminal Justice Disability Project, as part of review of Community Justice, which includes;
 - Better inform solicitors that funding can be sought for “special arrangements” needed by clients e.g. BSL interpreter or to visit a client at home.
 - All correspondence should be in Plain English. Improve staff awareness of the needs of D/deaf people and how to respond to BSL translation requests.

5.9 Democracy

We share the long-term goal for democracy set out in the BSL National Plan, which is:

“BSL users will be fully involved in democratic and public life in Scotland, as active and informed citizens, as voters, as elected politicians and as board members of our public bodies”



Our Actions

By 2024, we will:

- Take opportunities to promote the Access to Elected Office Fund locally, which can meet the additional costs of BSL users wishing to stand for selection or election in local or Scottish Parliament elections.
 - We will highlight the fund in all Local Government and Scottish Parliament by elections.
 - Include details of the fund in all of our nomination packs and discussions with any potential candidates.
 - Be more proactive in readying elected office support provided to support BSL users
- Consider how the Access to Elected Office fund could be used to promote the involvement of BSL users in Community Councils.
- As part of a digital review, consider the information that should be available online in BSL for potential elected members.
- With the Improvement Service, consider the advice, training and guidance available for elected members.
- Scope options for providing a BSL signed version of Full Council on our website.
- Aim to increase participation on Community Council Discussion Forum by promoting the availability of translators for these events.
- Develop an information video for BSL users on how to engage in Council Family consultations for our Consultation Hub.
- Include BSL as a key consideration in our revised Consultation Guidance.
- Encourage young BSL users to participate in local democracy. E.g. Youth Council.