



Glasgow City Council
General Purposes City Policy Committee
Report by Chief Executive
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Item 1

21st September 2021

British Sign Language (BSL) Local Action Plan Update

Purpose of Report:

To present an update on activity towards the Glasgow British Sign Language (BSL) action plan for 2018 – 2024.

Recommendations:

The General Purposes City Policy Committee is asked to:

- Consider the update on key areas of activity during 2020/21.
- Note that this update will be shared with the British Deaf Association who are coordinating Local Authority updates on behalf of the Scottish Government.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes No

consulted: Yes No

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

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1. Background

- 1.1 The British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015 and the British Sign Language National Plan 2017 – 2023 required public bodies in Scotland to publish local action plans in 2018 and on a six yearly basis thereafter, showing how they will promote and support British Sign Language (BSL).
- 1.2 In May 2018, the General Purposes City Policy Committee considered a report which set out the process and timescale for developing and engaging on Glasgow's first [BSL local action plan](#). The plan was subsequently approved by City Administration Committee on 15th November 2018. A [progress update](#) was provided to General Purposes City Policy Committee on 21 January 2020.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The Glasgow Council Family BSL action plan was developed in consultation with BSL users and focusses around key themes identified by the Scottish Government, Service Users, Services and Partners:

- 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

- 2.2 This report provides an update on areas of progress during 2020/21 on the implementation of the BSL action plan.

3. Key areas of progress 2020/21

- 3.1 The following is an overview of activity towards the BSL action plan over the last year, this does not represent all activity across each of the themes.

3.2 Across all our services

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

- 3.2.1 A [BSL User Reference Group met in October 2019](#) to provide a direct link to the community and reflect the priorities of the community as the Council Family seeks to implement the Action Plan. It had been planned to reconvene the group on an annual basis, however the COVID response has interrupted this, we aim to return to our planned Reference Group schedule in 2021.
- 3.2.2 The BSL user reference group has been utilised during COVID-19 response, along with local BSL organisations, to raise awareness of a dedicated [COVID-19 page for BSL users](#). The content of this page mirrored that of the main COVID-19 page to ensure BSL users had up to date information on service changes.

3.2.3 Work is underway to scope options for a BSL consultant in order to support the delivery of the Glasgow Action Plan.

3.2.4 Work within Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership:

- Work to provide video content for the [Your Support Your Way Glasgow \(YSYWG\)](#) website has been affected by the pandemic. However as part of the communications response to the pandemic the [Health and Social Care Partnership \(HSCP\)](#) website has featured a range of video messages with associated transcripts to keep staff and the public informed of the work being undertaken to meet the challenges of Covid-19 in health and social care services.
- 45 videos translating information in relation to Covid-19 [were created in BSL](#) to date (June 21) since 16th March with the average views of 1680 at Facebook.
- To ensure all face to face BSL interpreters are safe and admitted at Medical Settings, an updated policy on working with face to face interpreter and online interpreter (near me) was created.
- A workshop is to be established with key members of the D/deaf community to gather their views of changing landscape of online and face to face interpreting.

3.3 Family Support, Early Learning and Childcare

“[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”

3.3.1 The GIRFEC approach is consistent for our specialist provision through close partnership with families who can make the choice for how they are supported. This is continued through all transitions out of school with enhanced support from [Skills Development Scotland](#) alongside school staff. This is prioritised and overseen by staff from S3 onwards. For our families in mainstream provision, our peripatetic team support families and schools and nurseries to ensure they are offered the right support at the right time. Feedback from children and young people and their families is positive.

3.3.2 We will continue to coordinate and implement across mainstream Glasgow schools to ensure this offer is consistent across all establishments and families feel fully informed and supported.

3.4 School Education

“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”

3.4.1 We use a personalised approach to learning for all our children and young people who are D/deaf and they receive the support they need which takes account of their preference. For example, one young person making their UCAS referral, was able to go through the same experience as mainstream supported by the pastoral care Principal Teacher.

- 3.4.2 Interpreters are provided for all meetings for children and families. In our secondary provision, families will often choose staff from school to interpret. Reports are offered in BSL and covered in review meetings. We provide informal events to support families to link and form a support network.
- 3.4.3 We will continue to provide the relevant supports to ensure families are fully involved. Gather feedback from families and young people to inform future planning. Consider use of virtual events to continue support for families from wider afield.
- 3.4.4 A range of online applications to connect with families and young people during lockdown were used, including; Google classroom, Teams and See-Saw. This provided continuity in learning and helped to maintain a connection but also provided support to those families who are most vulnerable. Schools supported families in gaining access to technology where this was an issue through messaging and face to face support. Schools provided appropriate devices and equipment and supported with issues in accessing wi-fi.

3.5 Training, Work and Social Security

“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”

- 3.5.1 GCC continues to offer wage incentives through the [Glasgow Guarantee programme](#) to support all age unemployed with barriers/disadvantaged into work. While there was limited vacancies advertised through the Glasgow Guarantee Programme due to COVID 19, the MAPPIT database disability identifier was updated to include an option to identify Deaf/Hearing Impaired and identify any support that may be needed pre interview. Potential job opportunities continue to be advertised to specialist employability training providers, SDS, schools and Further Education/Higher Education (FE/HE) establishments to advertise. Access to Work is promoted to all candidates at the earliest opportunity by both In Work Support or Training Officers. A Glasgow Guarantee Provider/Partners Forum has been established to discuss service improvements and provide updates on opportunities.
- 3.5.2 Young Persons Guarantee funding was used to increase the Developing the Young Workforce staff in all Glasgow Schools to provide the resource to support Senior pupils with a disability including D/deaf, Deaf/Blind that are ready to leave school and support their transition to a positive destination and the No One Left Behind grant was used to fund the post school team in Education Services who support school leavers with no positive destination.
- 3.5.3 In 2020/21, GCC continued to part fund, through the European Social Fund, the [Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living’s Open Doors Employability programme](#), which engages and progresses people with a disability including people who are Deaf/Hearing Impaired.
- 3.5.4 The Glasgow Guarantee operational Forum remit will be expanded to cover the new National ERI and the Young Persons Guarantee Programme. All opportunities will continue to be communicated to employability training providers/SDS and other stakeholders.

3.5.5 More than 28 Sessions were delivered at various health centres across Glasgow city between August and November to improve links and communication with Glasgow City Council and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC). The sessions included:

- Understanding Deafness
- Promoting British Sign Language and inclusive communication
- How to successfully work with Deaf clients and BSL interpreters.

3.5.6 A total number of 320 health visitors and other support staff attended the training course. 95% of the attendees found the course very useful and relevant and acquired better knowledge of working with D/deaf families and signposting to appropriate services for D/deaf children.

3.5.7 A Workshop was planned in March 2020 to improve mental health services for D/deaf community members including enhanced support for self-care and positive mental health & wellbeing, improved early intervention support and increased access to mental health care. The proposed workshop was delivering at North West Primary Care mental health team, Sandy Road Glasgow. Unfortunately, due to social distancing measures. The workshop had to be postponed and the HSCP is currently considering when restrictions will allow for this to take place safely.

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

“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”

3.6.1 The Sensory Services area of [Your Support Your Way Glasgow \(YSYWG\)](#) has been updated to include information relevant to BSL service users around flu vaccinations and changes to hearing aid battery collection brought about by the pandemic.

3.6.2 An information workshop for members of St Vincent Deaf Club was delivered 14th September with more than 50 members attended. Issues covered included:

- Services available at Glasgow City HSCP
- Mental health services pathways including Lifelink counselling services
- Mental Health Glossary in BSL,
- BSL Act update
- Managing health appointments and exploring video relay services and video remote interpreting

3.6.3 We are continuing to push the [Lifelink](#) online counselling initiative for Deaf and Hard of hearing people with ongoing marketing campaign by social media and working with external partner agencies such as Scottish Mental health for Deaf people and Deaf organisations.

3.6.4 A peer support worker who is Deaf and a BSL user; had been appointed March 2020 and he will be working with D/deaf services users referred to GCHSCP mental health services. The post will be working closer with Lifelink, Scottish mental health service for D/deaf people under national services and D/deaf organisations to ensure that the [NHSGGC five year strategies for adult mental health](#) takes account of the needs of BSL users.

- 3.6.5 The BSL Mental Health Glossary will be updated aligning with the COVID 19 impact towards D/deaf community.
- 3.6.6 HSCP will review access routes to psychological therapies including how BSL users can access at a local level and on a fair and equal basis.

3.7 Transport

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

- 3.7.1 [Strathclyde Passenger Transport \(SPT\)](#) are the public transport authority for Glasgow, as such GCC has a limited role in running public transport. However, GCC has a role in infrastructure such as accessible bus lanes, signals, walking and cycling routes. [Spaces for People](#) is a temporary travel infrastructure that provides additional public space for walking, wheeling and cycling during Covid-19. It has been introduced across Glasgow with more programme measures to be completed soon. [Information on this programme was made available in BSL.](#)

3.8 Culture and the Arts

“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”

- 3.8.1 Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 and the resulting restrictions, Culture and Arts venues were closed for the majority of 2020 and 2021. Information on these closures and also information about what to expect in venues as they reopen, was shared in BSL via the Covid BSL website. This information was also regularly shared with the BSL user reference group.
- 3.8.2 A new story display is under development at the Riverside Museum. This will be about [Dr Gerry Hughes](#) – an icon in the Scottish Deaf Community who was the first Deaf person to circumnavigate the globe on his own. The display will be in BSL with English translation and will focus on the ability to achieve anything you set your mind to. It has been developed with Dr Hughes and will enable much programming about celebrating BSL and D/deaf awareness.
- 3.8.3 Tours of the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Riverside Museum are usually regularly available in BSL, unfortunately these are currently unavailable due to Covid restrictions. Previously engaged BSL Volunteers have continued to be invited to virtual events (via the Burrell Collection) with Interpreter support or one on one with BSL Level 6 trained staff member. Online content for specific displays at Kelvingrove have plans for short BSL talks to continue and engage with BSL using visitors and volunteers.
- 3.8.4 As part of the Burrell collection redevelopment there are plans to provide BSL on any films / digital labels that have spoken or written English making BSL visible to all.
- 3.8.5 Work continues to support volunteer guides by offering opportunity for volunteering and training. Museums continue to target BSL users in recruitment. Many Museum

opportunities have accepted video application submissions which makes applying easier for BSL users.

3.9 Justice

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

3.9.1 A project team that consists of seven criminal justice organisations continue the progress of the Criminal Justice Disability Project and have produced the [Criminal Justice Disability Project Report](#) ; with 49 key recommendations.

3.10 Democracy

“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”

3.10.1 We promoted the [Access to Elected Office Fund](#) in all documentation for the Scottish Parliament elections. We also included details for the fund in all of our nomination packs for any potential candidates.

3.10.2 BSL guides on how to register to vote were shared via GCC social media in the run up to the May 2021 election.

3.10.3 We continue to promote the involvement of BSL users in Community Councils. We recently called upon Sign Language Interactions (SLI) to support a Community Councillor with hearing impairment to attend and participate in a recent COP26 meeting.

3.10.4 SLI highlighted that Microsoft Teams meetings doesn't support on screen captions for the participant to view via Teams platform. SLI set up a separate zoom call with the participant and shared screens with her as a separate link that sent the participant text via Zoom whilst also being on the Teams meeting at the same time. It is most likely that we will facilitate this function again for future COP26 meetings.

4. **Policy and Resource Implications**

Resource Implications:

<i>Financial:</i>	The Scottish Government awarded a small amount of funding for implementing the action plan. It is anticipated that the plan will be implemented within existing resources.
<i>Legal:</i>	None
<i>Personnel:</i>	None
<i>Procurement:</i>	None

Council Strategic Plan: 94 – Consult with our citizens at the earliest stage on policy and service design, demonstrating how we have addressed their views.

99 - Work to deliver a fairer, more equal Glasgow.

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.

This report is directly related to the Equality Outcomes for 2021 to 2025.

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?

It is expected that this action plan will have a positive impact on the BSL community. This will be monitored through the Equality Working Group and progress report

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.

It is expected that this action plan will have a positive impact of the BSL community, who suffer socio economic disadvantage. BSL users are known to experience significant barriers to accessing services, information, employment and social security.

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:

None

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?

None

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?

None

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

None

5. Recommendations

5.1 The General Purposes City Policy Committee is asked to:

- Consider the update on key areas of activity during 2020/21.
- Note that this update will be shared with the British Deaf Association who are coordinating Local Authority updates on behalf of the Scottish Government.