



# A Shared British Sign Language (BSL) Plan for Dumfries and Galloway

2018-24

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## **Introduction**

The Scottish Government wants to make Scotland the best place in the world for (British Sign Language) BSL users to live, learn, work and visit. This means that people whose first or preferred language is BSL will be fully involved in daily and public life in Scotland, as active, healthy citizens, and will be able to make informed choices about every aspect of their lives.

The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 requires public bodies in Scotland to publish plans every six years, showing how they will promote and support BSL. This is our first Shared BSL Local Plan developed in partnership with Dumfries & Galloway Council, NHS Dumfries and Galloway, Police Scotland V Division and Dumfries & Galloway College.

Throughout the plan, we refer to 'BSL users'. This covers all people whose first or preferred language is BSL, including those who receive the language in a tactile form due to sight loss.

BSL is a language in its own right, with its own grammar, syntax and vocabulary. It has its own dialects and rich variation. Most importantly, it is a language which enables many of our D/deaf (D - people born deaf, d - those who become deaf) and Deafblind citizens to learn, work, parent, be creative, live life to the full, and to make their contribution to our communities, our culture and our economy.

### **Dumfries and Galloway Shared BSL Local Plan:**

The D&G Shared BSL Local Plan is a plan that reflects the BSL National Plan, which was published on 24 October 2017. The D&G plan sets our collective intentions on how we will improve communication and access to services for people who use BSL and live, work and learn in Dumfries & Galloway.

The BSL National Plan is framed under ten long-term goals which have been co-produced with Deaf and Deafblind BSL users across Scotland. Our Local Plan sets out draft actions that the Dumfries & Galloway partners will cover for the period 2018-2024.

Our local BSL plan has been developed in partnership with Deaf, Deafblind people and their supporters who live and work throughout Dumfries & Galloway.

## National Context

The BSL Action Plan builds on work already achieved through strong partnership and outlines the actions we will take whilst maintaining the individual accountability of each organisation. We share the long-term goals for all Scottish public services set out in the BSL National Plan, including:

- Promoting the use of the Scottish Government's nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay services 'contactSCOTLAND-BSL' to staff and to local BSL users
- Increasing staff awareness, knowledge and understanding of Deaf culture, language and service provision
- Working with BSL stakeholders to produce and develop resources and information that are appropriate and relevant
- Taking 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 be further involved in their child's education
- Enabling BSL users to take part in culture and the arts as participants, audience members and professionals
- Continuing to support BSL users to participate in community engagement events

## **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”

### **By 2024, we will:**

Analyse existing evidence we have about BSL users in our organisation, identify and fill key information gaps so that we can establish baselines and measure our progress.

Review questionnaires/monitoring forms in relation to the use and understanding of BSL which the Scottish Government is developing for the next census.

Improve access to our information and services for BSL users including making our websites more accessible to BSL users by:

- Prioritising and producing signed videos to provide information about available services
- Reviewing guidance and policies on accessing interpretation and translation
- Using the intranet and internet to promote the use of the Scottish Government’s nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay service ‘contactSCOTLAND-BSL’ to staff and local BSL users
- Increasing staff awareness, knowledge and understanding of Deaf culture, language and service provision issues
- Working with local Deaf and Deafblind organisations to develop resources to raise awareness for front line staff
- Promoting awareness of the use of BSL to the general public (social media message/video/translation)

## **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”

### **By 2024, we will:**

- Direct parents, carers, children and all interested BSL users to the online video clips from the National Deaf Children’s Society (NDCS) in BSL on Getting to know GIRFEC
- Have an informed choice policy which means we offer parents information about all communication methods available for their child, including BSL
- Ensure our children’s services have access to nationally developed BSL resources and advice within key programmes such as Bookbug
- Promote Deaf Culture and address social isolation by working with schools, nurseries and families in a similar situation
- Deliver deaf awareness and basic signing classes to staff such as teachers, nursery nurses/assistants, office staff, kitchen staff prior to a BSL pupil going into the early years setting
- Offer visits to build up a relationship with parents/families, offer basic family signs, signed resources and offer deaf awareness to extended family, for example grandparents
- Work with BSL stakeholders to ensure we develop information and resources that are useful, relevant and appropriate
- Ensure information on language options is available to children and their families from the point of diagnosis
- Ensure families of D/deaf and Deafblind children have access to nationally developed BSL resources as early as possible in their child’s life

## **School Education**

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services 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”

### **By 2024 we will:**

- have introduced the Scottish Qualification Authority's new range of Awards in BSL, having worked with national partners to increase the opportunities for deaf and hearing pupils to learn BSL at school
- encourage more BSL users to become school teachers by working with partners including Scottish Government and the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), and create Continuous Professional Development (CPD) pathways for existing teachers and non-teaching staff to become BSL aware or BSL users
- review existing provision of support for BSL across our schools, through our local Communicators team, to ensure our Deaf and Deafblind children are fully engaged in learning and leave school with qualifications
- provide supports for parent BSL users to fully participate in their child’s educational experience.

## **Post School Education**

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

“BSL users will be able be supported to transition to post-school education if they wish to do so and will receive the support they need to do well in their chosen subject”

### **By 2024 we will:**

- publish key BSL webclips to welcome potential College students
- ensure support is available to enable potential students to discuss the study options that would help them meet their long term aspirations
- ensure that needs assessments for students accommodate BSL users’ needs appropriately
- conduct a training needs analysis across the College to establish local needs in respect of BSL awareness training and address the needs identified
- ensure that staff can undertake appropriate CPD training in BSL to help them fulfil their role, including communicate with potential students

## **Training, Work and Social Security**

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services 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”

### **By 2024, we will:**

- make sure pupils and students are signposted to a wide range of information, advice and guidance in BSL about their career and learning choices and the transition process
- increase awareness of the Access to Work Scheme across our organisations to enable Line Managers to appropriately support staff and officers in considering reasonable adjustments
- work alongside partners to promote the Scottish Governments Fair Start Scotland initiative to raise awareness of those providing Employability Support Services in Scotland
- work with partner agencies to raise awareness of the needs of BSL users during recruitment and employment processes to ensure that they are given relevant, appropriate and accessible advice about potential employment
- ensure any Modern Apprenticeship schemes developed meet the needs of BSL users through consultation with BSL users
- work with partners who deliver employment services and with employer groups already supporting employability to help signpost and make effective use of specific advice on the needs of BSL users
- explore opportunities with partner organisations in sharing BSL translated resources relating recruitment/employment advice
- ensure that policies and practices are reflective of the UK Government’s Access to Work scheme so that they can be effectively used to support BSL users in the workplace
- work with partners to review recruitment practices to ensure that they meet the needs of BSL users
- improve access to our recruitment information and services for BSL users including making our website more accessible to BSL users by including signed videos to provide information about employment opportunities and working with Deaf organisations to promote employment opportunities within our organisations

## **Health (including Social Care), Mental Health and Wellbeing**

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

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

### **By 2024, we will:**

- increase the availability of accurate and relevant health and social care information work with BSL users to determine where this information should be located
- raise staff awareness across the partnership of BSL and deaf culture by rolling out the national learning resource when this becomes available
- make better use of social media to share information on what mental health support is available
- ensure appropriate BSL training and advice is accessible for those providing or receiving care, including contractors and partnership organisations
- ensure our sports facilities and training providers have appropriate information and BSL users have access to sport and sporting opportunities
- signpost BSL users to health and social care information available in BSL (to be produced by NHS Health Scotland and NHS 24) and to develop complementary information in BSL about local provision where appropriate
- work with the BSL community in Dumfries and Galloway to develop prioritised information in appropriate, accessible formats, including signed information on the internet and provision of easy read materials
- improve patient records to clearly show when the first or preferred language is BSL and an interpreter is needed
- work with partners to improve the way that adult social care is delivered for BSL users, including how residential care is commissioned and how care and support is offered to people at home
- ensure that psychological therapies can be offered on a fair and equal basis to BSL users
- ensure that any work to tackle social isolation explicitly considers the needs of BSL users

## **Transport**

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services 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”

### **By 2024, we will:**

- work alongside partners to promote and achieve the outcomes set out in the Accessible Travel Framework for Scotland
- work with the BSL community in Dumfries and Galloway to develop prioritised transport and travel information in appropriate, accessible format, and provision of easy read materials
- work closely with South West of Scotland Transport Partnership (SWestrans) to remove barriers to using public transport and improving access to travel
- assist with the promotion of SWestrans’ Thistle Card Scheme, which aims to improve communication between bus drivers and passengers, improve passenger confidence and personal safety
- work with rail organisations to review BSL improvements required at train stations within the region.

## **Culture and the Arts**

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services 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”

### **By 2024, we will:**

- enable BSL users to take part in culture and the arts as participants, audience members and professionals
- encourage and support BSL users to consider a career in culture and the arts by considering work experience and volunteering opportunities where possible
- improve access to the historical environment, cultural events and performing arts and film for BSL users at relevant Dumfries and Galloway Council venues
- explore the merits of developing a BSL training programme for front of house, curator and learning staff with the aim of identifying BSL ambassadors
- encourage providing BSL interpretation at a selection of public lectures, talks, music and art performances after consultation with the Dumfries and Galloway Council - BSL user group
- explore the use of technology to enhance the experience of BSL users when visiting exhibitions or accessing museum collections

## **Democracy**

We share the long-term goal for all Scottish public services 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”

### **By 2024, we will:**

- support BSL users to participate in community engagement events
- provide information in BSL on our website about how to vote and participate in local and national elections – (considering Deafblind tactile BSL users)
- continue raising awareness through our Elected Member Training programme on the use of SLi (Sign Language Interactions) and ContactScotland BSL
- provide links on websites to national information on the Access to Elected Office Fund (Scotland) to provide a signpost to BSL users who wish to stand for selection and election
- 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
- ensure BSL users have access to information about Elected Members/Public Appointments in BSL
- provide access to BSL translators to ensure appropriate communication with Elected Members

## **Justice**

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

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

### **By 2024, we will:**

- ensure BSL users have appropriate information to support their access to the Criminal Justice system
- ensure BSL provision is available for criminal justice service users
- Police Scotland will develop and implement measures to improve access to Emergency Services for BSL users