

Consultation on the Draft British Sign Language (BSL) National Plan 2017-2023

Response from local BSL users
and communities in Scotland to
the Scottish Government

Submission: August 2017

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I Introduction

In 2016 and 2017, members of the National Advisory Group (NAG) worked together to develop Scotland's first draft BSL National Plan. The NAG is made up of Deaf and Deafblind BSL users and parents with Deaf children, working alongside representatives of public bodies, which will implement the BSL (Scotland) Act (2015).

The NAG has been supported by the Deaf Sector Partnership (DSP), which the Scottish Government has funded to help gather the views of BSL users across Scotland to support the development of the plan, and make sure this consultation is fully accessible.

As a member of the Deaf Sector Partnership (DSP), BDA Scotland has worked closely with the Scottish Government to support the implementation of the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act (2015), support the development of the NAG and support BSL users to be involved in the development of the first BSL National Plan. More information can be found here - <http://deafsectorpartnership.net/>

The draft plan covers the whole of the Scottish Government and over 50 national public bodies that Scottish Ministers have responsibility for. Other public bodies, including public authorities and regional NHS Boards, will publish their own BSL plans in 2018. The first National Plan will cover the next six years to 2023.

The draft BSL National Plan has ten long-term goals. The first draft plan sets out the steps the Scottish Government thinks they can realistically achieve in the next six years. They want BSL users to tell them what they think about the steps they will take in the first BSL National Plan. Are they the right steps? Are the steps achievable? Will the steps set them off in the right direction to achieve the goals that they have set for themselves? They will use our feedback during the consultation to revise the plan, and they will publish the final plan in October 2017.

Funding from the Scottish Government Equalities Unit in 2016/17 has enhanced our capacity to empower and support the Deaf community across Scotland to confidently influence and access services, by providing them with a range of opportunities to input into and support the work of the National Advisory Group (NAG) and the draft BSL National Plan.

For three months from 1st March to 31st May 2017, BDA Scotland, in collaboration with local Deaf clubs and groups, organised a total of **36** open meetings and **9** one-to-one sessions with BSL users across Scotland. This offered opportunities for BSL users to tell BDA Scotland what they thought about the goals and steps in the first BSL National Plan.

Without the support of local Deaf clubs and groups BDA Scotland would not have been able to reach out to a total of **558** BSL users at **36** meetings. BDA Scotland also offered an opportunity to have one-to-one meetings with **9** individuals who were unable to attend these open meetings. These responses represent a significant contribution by adult members of the

Deaf community who use British Sign Language (BSL) and reflect the impact these matters have on their daily lives.

The consultation exercise offered BDA Scotland new opportunities to reach BSL groups at a local level who had not previously engaged in consultations with the BDA's outreach workers. Various methods including face-to-face engagement and social media were extended to reach and target under-represented groups. One of BDA's outreach workers facilitated three live streamed events on his Facebook page on Sunday nights in May 2017 to enable BSL users to access information and give feedback online. This helped BDA Scotland to reach out to BSL users not currently engaged at open meetings. There were **6,981** views altogether on our outreach worker's Facebook page, with many people putting forward ideas and solutions.

In addition to this, BDA Scotland recruited a new outreach worker covering the North of Scotland in January 2017. As our outreach worker is based in the Shetland Islands, we were able to engage with **40** BSL users from Eilean Siar (Western Isles), Highland, Moray, the Orkney Islands, and the Shetland Islands.

Throughout the report, we refer to 'BSL users'. This covers all Deaf people whose first or preferred language is BSL.

This is a summary of the responses from local BSL users and communities in Scotland to the Scottish Government on the consultation on the Draft British Sign Language (BSL) National Plan 2017-2023.

- **558 BSL users** across Scotland (adult members of the Deaf community who use BSL)
- **36** open meetings and **9** one-to-one sessions
- Covered **21 local authorities** in Scotland (out of 32)
- Top 3 local authorities: **30%** from Glasgow City, **11%** from North Lanarkshire and **8%** from the City of Edinburgh
- **6,981 views** on lived streamed events on a Facebook page
- Top 3 goals: **78%** Health, Mental Health and Social Care, **64%** Public Services and **53%** Transport

The draft BSL National Plan has ten long-term goals. Here is a summary of BSL users' feedback on the ten goals, which are expanded on in the full summary:

Public Services (64%)

- BSL users to be employed by public services so the approach to delivering public services is person-centred and BSL users can expect greater consistency.
- Introduce Q and A one-stop shops. There should be one booth for BSL users to seek face-to-face assistance with enquiries in each local authority. For example, a BSL Translation Hub where BSL users can take English based communications or letters, which they want translating.

Early Years (40%)

- Opportunities for parents to learn BSL with their children are limited and inconsistent in Scotland. Free sign language courses/instruction should be available to families, such as they have in Scandinavia.
- It is crucial for Deaf babies to have access to a visual language from the start, and that this support continues as they grow up. Many bilingual children do better academically due to improved language development in the early years.

Education (49%)

- Education is an area of great concern, with increasing numbers of Deaf children being placed in mainstream schools. BSL users do not support the isolation of Deaf BSL users within their local schools.
- Resource bases in Scotland should share good practice, skills, knowledge and resources in BSL. This will help all Deaf children to receive the same quality of education across Scotland.

Post-School Education (22%)

- Support for making transitions needs to be stronger; for example, Careers Advisors and Disability Advisors need BSL awareness training to be able to support BSL users, especially with CVs and application forms.

Employment (49%)

- BSL users would like fairer and more realistic assessments for Access to Work (ATW) funding. This will ensure that BSL users stay in their jobs.
- BSL users are frustrated in accessing employment opportunities, and they are struggling to find and sustain work. Having no job prospects for long periods can be demoralising.

Health, Mental Health and Social Care (78%)

- BSL users often do not use health services because they cannot arrange appointments easily. Booking systems at GP practices need to be reviewed because BSL users are not allowed to walk into their doctor's surgery to book an appointment.
- There was concern about mental health services for BSL users in Scotland, as some felt they were getting worse, especially in rural areas. Some BSL users have to travel further to attend appointments so mental health outreach work is needed.
- Many BSL users would like to see the return of care or nursing homes for elderly BSL users.

Transport (53%)

- Research on possible technological solutions for providing accessible information in transport hubs is needed because BSL users are frustrated by issues such as getting on the wrong train or having to change trains without notification.
- The majority of BSL users at consultation events expressed frustration with bus drivers, as they sometimes insist on knowing the Deaf person's exact destination, forcing the Deaf person into a difficult communication situation.

Culture, Leisure, Sports and the Arts (27%)

- BSL users would like a variety of choice with regard to access to all places of interest in Scotland: with Deaf/BSL guides, guided tours with BSL/English interpreters, hand-held devices (mobile/tablet/iPad) with BSL videos and/or subtitles, or fixed displays/TV screens on walls.
- There should be access to funding for Scottish athletes who use BSL to represent their country at local, national or international events. We want to see Scottish Deaf athletes with talent and commitment being provided with financial support to represent Scotland and Great Britain.

Justice (49%)

- Concern was expressed about police officers struggling to find BSL/English interpreters for police interviews and follow-up interviews. BSL users have the right to be provided with

interpreting and translation support at all stages of the legal process – including choices and preferences with regard to sourcing BSL/English interpreters.

- The issue of accessing funding for legal aid and funding for BSL/English interpreters for solicitors' services needs to be resolved. One solution would be a central fund.

Democracy (20%)

- BSL users should have full access to information about political parties. Some BSL users do not vote because information from political parties is inaccessible.
- Every political party should ensure that information is released in BSL and English at the same time. Producing a BSL version should not be an afterthought.

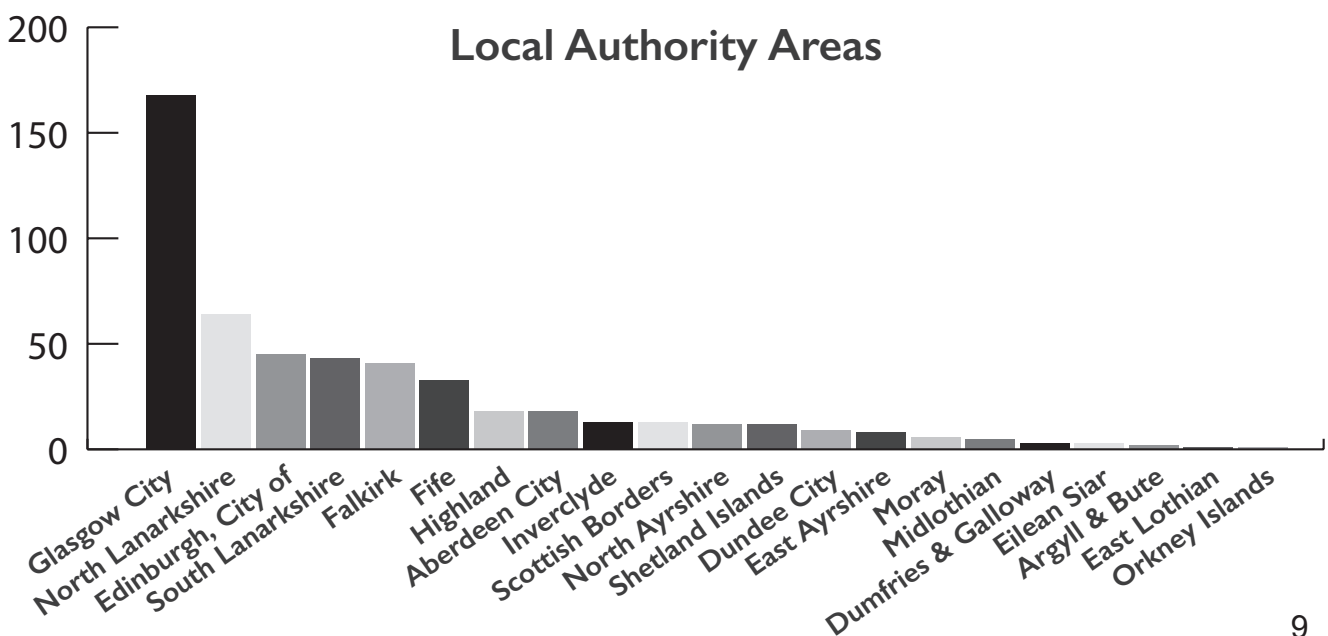
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Local Authorities

The meetings covered **21** local authorities in Scotland (**66%**). BDA Scotland did not physically host meetings in **11** local authorities (**34%**) but some BSL users from these local authorities were in attendance at other events, for example, BSL users from East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire were at meetings in Glasgow. It is a well-known fact that BSL users often travel to attend social events outside their local authority.

	Local Authority	Numbers	Percentage
1	Glasgow City	168	30%
2	North Lanarkshire	64	11%
3	Edinburgh, City of	45	8%
4	South Lanarkshire	43	8%
5	Falkirk	41	7%
6	Fife	33	6%
7	Highland	18	3%
8	Aberdeen City	18	3%
9	Inverclyde	13	2%
10	Scottish Borders	13	2%
11	North Ayrshire	12	2%
12	Shetland Islands	12	2%
13	Dundee City	9	2%
14	East Ayrshire	8	1%
15	Moray	6	1%
16	Midlothian	5	1%
17	Dumfries & Galloway	3	1%
18	Eilean Siar	3	1%
19	Argyll & Bute	2	1%
20	East Lothian	1	0.5%
21	Orkney Islands	1	0.5%
	Not defined by local authority *	40	7%
Total		558	100%

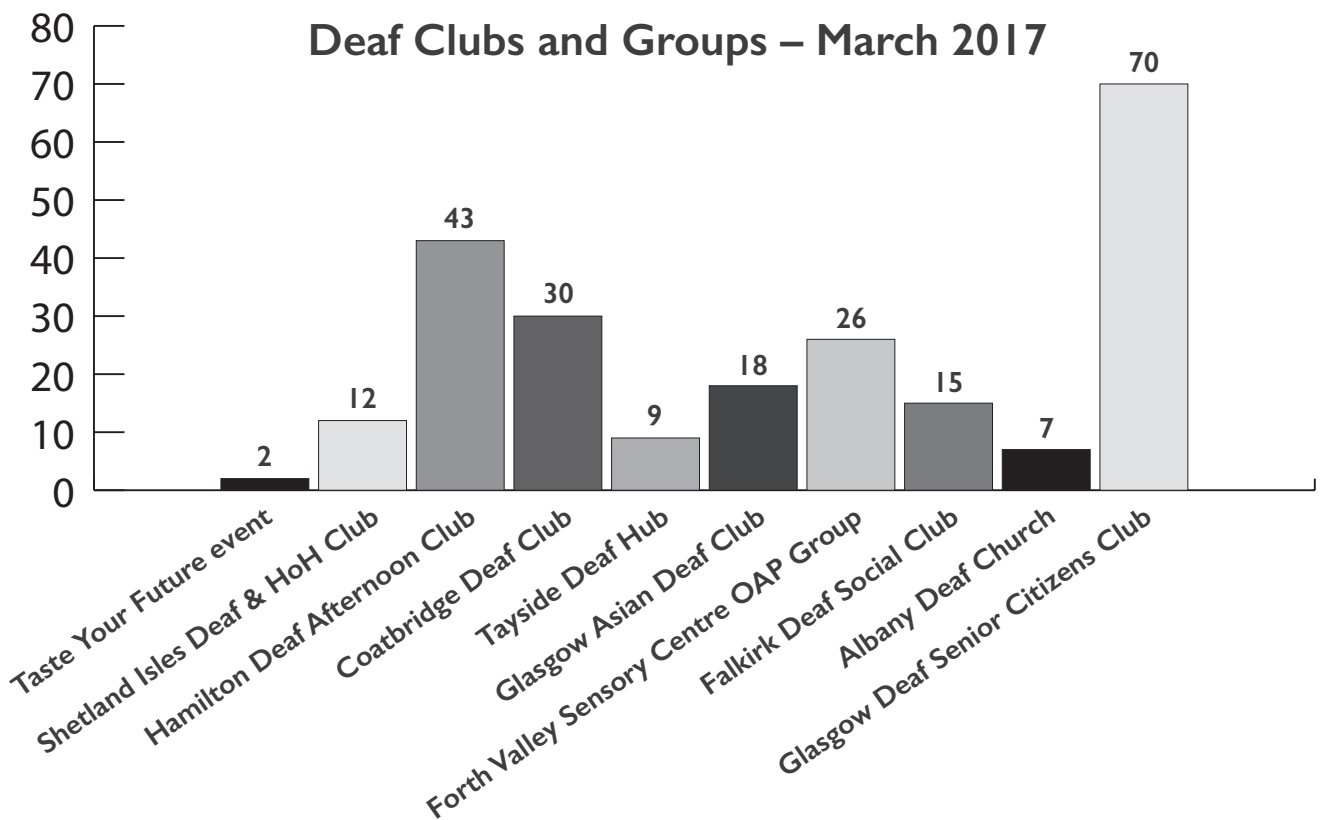
* This meeting is not defined by local authority, as it was a consultation at the Deaf History Scotland (DHS) Spring Gathering in Greenock in May 2017.



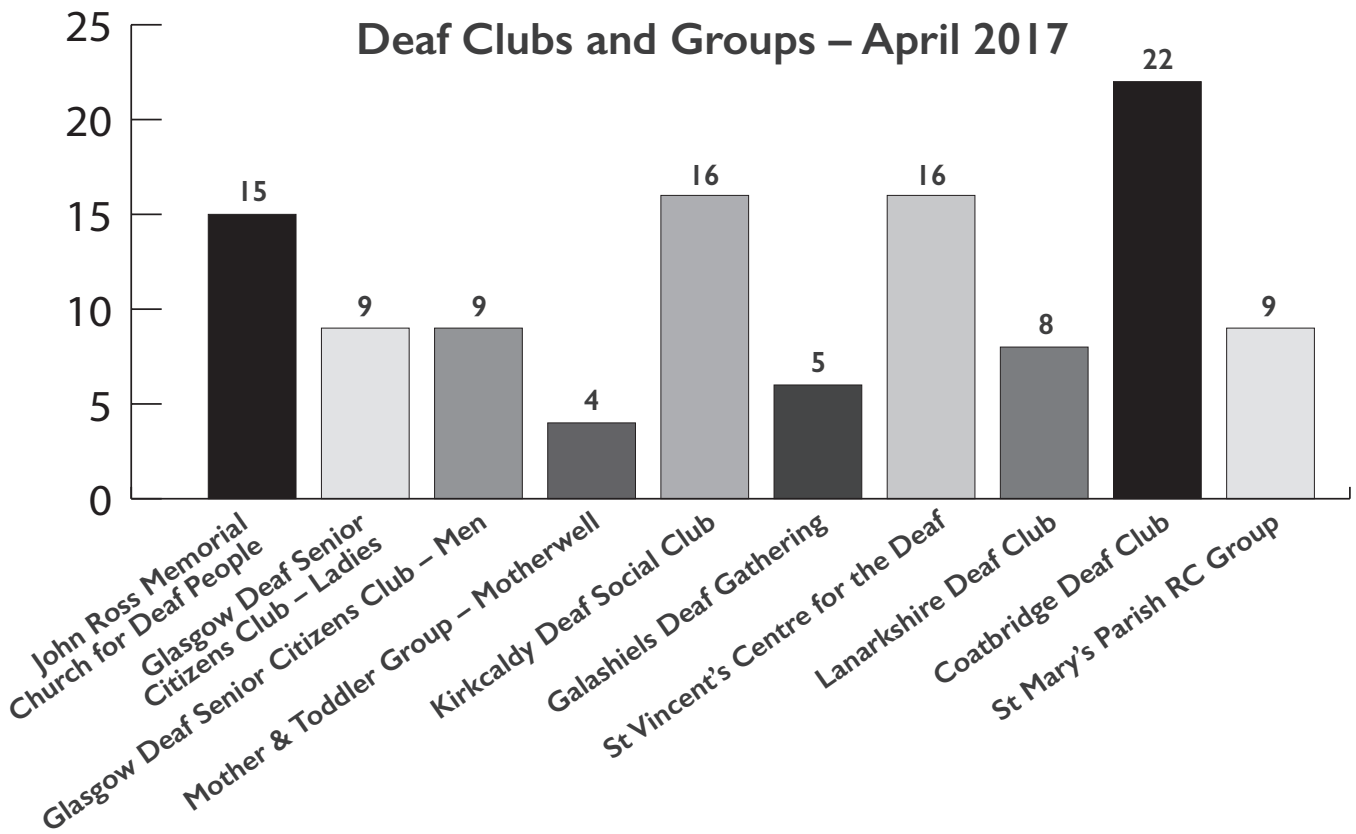
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Consultation with Deaf Clubs and Groups

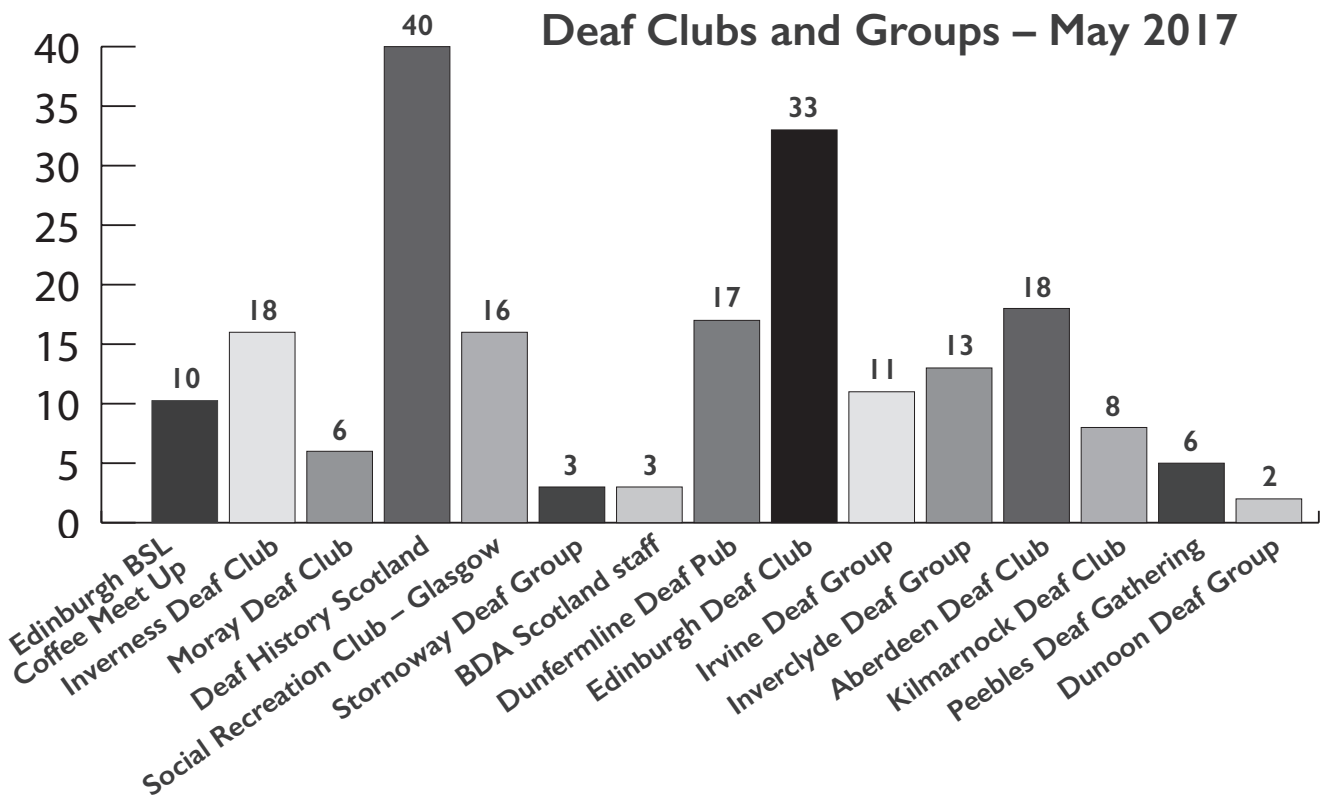
The open meetings and one-to-one sessions were facilitated by the BDA's Access & Inclusion (Engagement) Officer and four of the BDA's outreach workers. BDA Scotland would like to thank Deaf clubs/groups and individuals for their responses to this consultation. Without the input of BSL users, this report would not have been possible. BDA Scotland feel it is important to give something back to BSL users and the BSL community to acknowledge their invaluable contribution so BDA Scotland decided to produce a summary report outlining ideas and solutions to the ten goals.



Deaf Clubs and Groups – April 2017



Deaf Clubs and Groups – May 2017

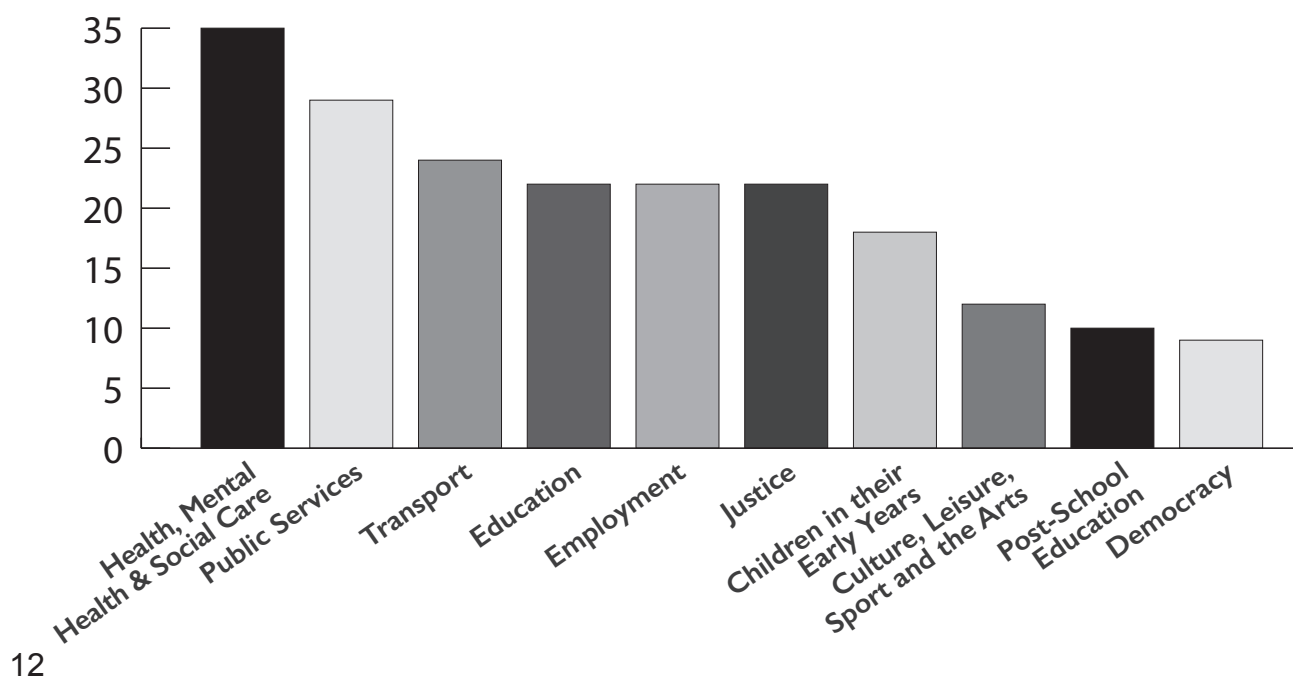


BDA Scotland is aware that the ten long-term goals are of equal importance. As the meetings were usually one or two hours long, there was not enough time to cover all ten goals. To go through all ten goals in one meeting would take hours. It was decided to pick at least three goals in each meeting. BSL users attending the meeting decided which three goals were the most important to them. Having decided on the three goals they wanted to talk about, the meeting discussed the steps and, if there was time, the groups carried on to talk about other goals. We also felt this approach allowed people to give quality attention to their chosen goals, going into each one in depth.

BSL users were reassured that no one goal is more important than another. They are equally important. The volume of responses for some matters over others should not be taken as an indication that other matters were less important. For example, travel is a hugely significant issue, as cultural, social or accessible events for BSL users which are in their own language – BSL – are often not local, so travel will always feature strongly as part of BSL users' lives.

Below is a summary of the topics that BSL users chose – in order of preference:
(Based on 36 groups and 9 individuals).

	Topic	Numbers	Percentage
1	Health, Mental Health and Social Care	35	78%
2	Public Services	29	64%
3	Transport	24	53%
4	Education	22	49%
5	Employment	22	49%
6	Justice	22	49%
7	Children in their Early Years	18	40%
8	Culture, Leisure, Sport and the Arts	12	27%
9	Post-School Education	10	22%
10	Democracy	9	20%
Total		558	100%



64% of groups and individuals chose public services as one of the goals they wished to discuss.

Our goal for Public Services

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

By 2023 Scottish Ministers will take these steps:

1. Develop, test and promote a set of guidelines for all Scottish Public Services to improve access to information and services for BSL users. This will include guidelines on how to ensure that BSL users can participate on a fair and equal basis in the design of Scotland's public services, including providing them with information and support to do so.
2. Promote the use of the Scottish Government service called contactSCOTLAND-BSL with public and third sector organisations and explore the potential for greater use.
3. Explore how to develop and deliver BSL awareness and training that can be accessed quickly across all frontline public services, including all the services covered in this Plan.
4. Consider the need for a comprehensive review of the current BSL/English interpreting landscape, including skill levels, training and regulation. Such a review would develop recommendations aimed at boosting the profession, and supporting the more efficient delivery of interpretation services across the public sector, including all the services covered in this Plan.
5. Explore ways in which BSL/English interpreters can develop more advanced skills to work in specific settings, including the justice and health care systems.
6. Consider where BSL information from across the public sector should be located so that BSL users can easily find it.
7. Give further consideration to what actions we could take to ensure that our approach to delivering public services is person-centred so that BSL users can expect greater consistency.

Key reasons given why these are the right steps:

- It is important because BSL users access public services on a daily basis as part of our everyday life.
- BSL users miss out on information taken for granted by hearing people. Often allied with a poor education or a low level of literacy in English (which is a second or third language for many BSL users), the result is a significantly lower knowledge base about public services than the rest of the population.
- Not being able to read documents and fully access television, radio and local news hinders BSL users from understanding how public services work.
- More needs to be done because BSL users are not aware of public services. A lot of time was spent at consultation meetings explaining what 'Public Services' meant.

- Staff working within public services often falsely assume that written communication with BSL users is always accurate and sufficient. Many BSL users still experience contact with frontline public services staff without a BSL/English interpreter being present and where staff resort to writing things down.
- Poor communication access and lack of cultural competence in service provision will adversely affect the kind and quality of assessment and service provision available to BSL users.
- Any processes connected with service provision that are largely dependent on the written word, for example, understanding complaints policies and making a written complaint, are problematic.
- Due to advances in technology, information and services should be accessible in BSL. There should be no excuses for public services not to produce BSL and English versions at the same time.
- A comprehensive review of the current BSL/English interpreting landscape is needed because the current delivery of interpreting services does not meet BSL users' differing needs.
- Experiences of funeral arrangements were shared. Many BSL users still experience contact with the Registrar at local council offices without a BSL/English interpreter. This creates additional stress on top of a bereavement because of poor communication.
- Public bodies never consult with BSL users in the improvement of council buildings. BSL users need to be involved from the start in discussions on the accessibility of council buildings.
- There are currently no BSL/English interpreters in Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands, and Shetland Islands.

Key reasons given why these aren't the right steps:

- There are not enough BSL/English interpreters in North of Scotland when accessing and engaging with public bodies.

Any other suggestions or solutions to add to the “public services” section:

- BSL users to be employed by public services so the approach to delivering public services is person-centred and BSL users can expect greater consistency. Deaf employees to act as bridge builders to bring together the BSL community with public bodies.
- Introduce Q and A one-stop shops. There should be one booth for BSL users for face-to-face assistance with enquiries in each local authority. For example, a BSL Translation Hub where BSL users can take English based communications or letters, which they want translating. This service would allow BSL users to ask for assistance in private rather than relying on a friend or family member.
- Deaf Interpreters or Deaf Relay Interpreters are suggested as new solutions to give support with interpreting and translation.
- Further consideration should be given to 24/7 access to video relay and interpreting services.
- One of the steps under health, mental health and social care indicates that patient health records should be available to indicate when a patient is Deaf. This should be introduced within public services. For example, council departments; when a staff member types a Deaf

resident's name into their computer, records should automatically indicate that the resident is a BSL user and they need a BSL/English interpreter.

- A recognisable BSL logo on public bodies' websites to indicate that there is information in BSL.
- BSL users liked the pictures to help explain each goal on the BSL National Plan consultation. A similar format should be used in the one-year plans to be produced by public bodies, including local authorities and regional NHS Boards.
- More BSL awareness training is needed for social workers, as they provide the wrong equipment like alarm devices with radio.
- BSL users need to engage more in the design, development and improvements of public bodies' services.
- BSL users need to be more involved in decisions on public services in forums or focus groups, both as individuals and through representative organisations.
- Regular dialogues with BSL users about any of the public services and improvements to be instigated.

Anything else participants said about “public services”:

- Many BSL users were not aware of the current Scottish Government service called contactSCOTLAND-BSL. As a means of filling the knowledge gap and given the absence of suitable information, some of the BDA's outreach workers explained the service, and carried out demonstrations of how it works. More needs to be done to promote the use of this service.
- There was concern about the emergencySMS service and how it works. BSL users were confused with the emergency services' responses after they sent an SMS message to the 999 service, where it was passed to the police, ambulance or fire rescue.
- Many BSL users still experience contact with the Citizens Advice Bureau without a BSL/English interpreter.
- There were issues around contacting banks and insurance companies, as some BSL users are unable to contact them directly. There are also privacy issues when BSL/English interpreters are sourced for these calls.
- BSL users from the Scottish Islands are unable to access contactSCOTLAND-BSL because of poor broadband connection/speed.
- Some frontline public services have said that they were unable to provide information or a service in BSL because they “have no money”. Can public services afford these steps?
- With a high turnover of staff working in frontline public service positions it will be a constant battle to ensure that they receive BSL awareness and training. Who will be responsible for paying for their training?
- There is nothing about increasing the number of BSL/English interpreters in Scotland or provision of free BSL/English interpreting courses.
- BSL users have reported on the limitations of services provided by just one supplier or contractor, including restricted choices and poor quality levels as a result of lack of competition.

40% of groups and individuals chose Early Years as one of the goals they wished to discuss.

Our goal for Early Years

Families and carers with a D/deaf or Deafblind child will be given information about BSL and Deaf culture and will be offered support to learn to sign with their child.

By 2023 Scottish Ministers will take these steps:

8. Develop information about BSL and Deaf culture for parents whose baby is diagnosed as deaf through the newborn hearing screening.
9. Commit to continuing the support for families and carers with D/deaf and Deafblind children to learn BSL appropriate for communicating with 0-5 year olds.
10. Support families of D/deaf and Deafblind children by ensuring that they have access to BSL resources as early as possible in their child's life. This will include providing information on BSL resources on our online Family Information Service website.
11. Develop key materials about play in BSL so that parents who use BSL have access to this information at a critical time in their child's life, so that all children can benefit from positive experiences of play.
12. Improve information and access to early years services for parents who use BSL.
13. Explore the best ways of bringing together children who use BSL as part of the early learning and childcare provision.

Key reasons given why these are the right steps:

- BSL users felt the most important step is for parents to be able to communicate with their Deaf child and to receive information about BSL, including Deaf organisations/services.
- Opportunities for parents to learn BSL with their children are limited and inconsistent in Scotland.
- Free sign language courses/instruction should be available to families, like they have in Scandinavia. This is crucial for language development in Deaf babies.
- It is crucial for Deaf babies to have access to a visual language from the start, and that this support continues as they grow up. Many bilingual children do better academically due to improved language development in the early years.
- An improvement in Early Years settings will lead to gains in attainment for Deaf children later in the education system.
- These will open doors, as exposure to BSL would help build language development and inclusion as a family.
- They also wanted Deaf children with cochlear implants to access BSL. Currently, parents are told not to sign with Deaf children after cochlear implantation by the medical profession. How will Scottish Ministers encourage these families to consider BSL?

Key reasons given why these aren't the right steps: None.

Any other suggestions or solutions to add to the “Early Years” section:

- Staff involved in these activities should be fluent in BSL.
- Ensure that all parents and carers of Deaf children are made aware of BSL classes and given every opportunity to attend.
- One suggestion was to set up parents & babies/toddlers groups with BSL users to support with language development.
- Parents should have access to BSL role models for professional advice and exposure to BSL.
- Signposting needs to be in place to support families and carers with a Deaf child.
- Funding for Deaf BSL workers to visit and support Deaf children and their families to develop a bicultural environment at home.
- Doctors and other professionals working with families of Deaf children should have access to information about BSL support and information.
- Audiologists and GPs to receive BSL/Deaf culture training before giving advice and support to parents about their Deaf child's future. This will ensure fair treatment for families.
- An opportunity for Deaf people to work in maternity wards to meet parents whose baby is diagnosed. They can ensure that they have access to BSL resources as early as possible.
- Develop leaflets with information about where to learn BSL available in hospitals and maternity wards.
- There should be opportunities for a Deaf child's extended family to learn BSL – not just for parents.
- More childcare provision like Hamilton School for the Deaf Nursery. There should be a specialist nursery for Deaf children in each local authority so that families do not have to move away or fight for a place for their child.
- Nurseries to employ Deaf staff to work with deaf children, as they know what Deaf children's communication needs are. They could also teach BSL to nursery staff, teachers and classroom assistants.
- Nurseries or Deaf units should be operated with full-time staff. Each Deaf child should be assigned a full-time Communication Support Worker (CSW) or a support worker, not for just three hours a week.
- Intergenerational sharing of knowledge to start at early years with Deaf culture, history and language.
- Families to be given information about Deaf identity. They need to be aware what identity means? There are different types of identities, which should be celebrated.
- A dedicated TV channel for communicating with Deaf children aged 0-5 years old would help ensure that families have access to BSL resources as early as possible.
- Develop BSL resources to promote language development and family interaction, for example, nursery rhymes or songs/music in BSL. Parents who use BSL find it difficult to practice nursery rhymes at home. They would like to attend classes or courses to learn nursery rhymes, songs and music in BSL.
- Specialist Social Workers used to support parents who use BSL but this provision is no longer available. Some families would like to see a return of this provision.
- Parents who use BSL need access to BSL/English interpreters for newborn hearing screening of their babies.

- Staff working with parents who use BSL needs to understand the language development of hearing children who are bilingual.

Anything else participants said about “Early Years”:

- Who will teach families BSL? They should be qualified BSL teachers.
- BSL users were concerned about the initial referral. How does the referral work?
- With regard to identification during newborn screening tests, intervention services based on the medical model of ‘fixing’ or curing deafness must stop.
- Support is needed for parents who use BSL with Deaf child/children, as they are worried about their future. Where is the support?
- It is challenging to establish an Early Years provision in remote rural areas. There was concern about how families in rural areas can access BSL resources.

49% of groups and individuals chose Education as one of the goals they wished to discuss.

Our first goal for Education

That children and young people who use BSL reach their full potential at school.

By 2023 Scottish Ministers will take these steps:

14. Discuss with General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) how we could remove barriers to register Deaf people who want to become teachers.
15. Investigate the qualification level of BSL that teachers have and review how the General Teaching Council for Scotland's Professional Update and Standards could inform guidance for teachers of pupils who use BSL.
16. Discuss with Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) the potential for developing SQA Awards in BSL.
17. Ensure that appropriate guidance and resources are available to schools and local authorities.

Our second goal for Education

That parents who use BSL can access the same opportunities to be involved in their child's education as other parents.

By 2023 Scottish Ministers will take these steps:

18. Ensure that guidance to schools and local authorities consider the needs of parents who use BSL.
19. Consider what more we can do to ensure that parents who use BSL can be fully involved in their child's education.

Our third goal for Education

That the 1+2 language learning policy offers the opportunity for BSL to be included in the suite of languages local authorities choose to offer to children and young people.

By 2023 Scottish Ministers will take these steps:

20. Make sure that education authorities and schools know that BSL can be part of the language offer in schools under 1+2 language policy.
21. Gather information annually on where BSL is being offered in schools as part of the 1+2 language policy.
22. Gather and share examples of good practice in teaching BSL to hearing pupils as part of 1+2, and make sure there is guidance to support this.

Key reasons given why these are the right steps:

- Education is an area of great concern, with increasing numbers of Deaf children being placed in mainstream schools. BSL users do not support the isolation of Deaf BSL users in their local schools.
- Deaf children are falling behind their hearing classmates and many are not getting the support they need to achieve.
- The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) presents barriers to Deaf people who want to become teachers; these barriers need to be removed. We need more Deaf teachers. Deaf people currently face barriers during teacher training, especially with placements in mainstream schools. Placements should start at Deaf units instead of hearing schools.
- Many young Deaf people leave school without maximising their potential at school, leaving with limited life experience and social skills. Greater achievement should be encouraged.
- Formal qualifications are needed for people teaching BSL. In some areas of Scotland, there is a chronic shortage of BSL teachers. Training is needed to increase the numbers of BSL teachers.
- Deaf Education is currently too weighted in favour of teachers of Deaf children who cannot sign fluently, and not enough towards Deaf/BSL teachers and qualified educational BSL/English interpreters.
- There is evidence of an effect on Deaf children of staff having such weak BSL skills.
- A Deaf child should have the right to be taught by Deaf and hearing teachers who use BSL fluently and hold the equivalent of BSL Level 6.
- BSL users recognise that the number of Deaf children using BSL varies in every local authority, from very low (especially in rural and remote areas) to high (cities & towns). But for rural or remote areas, Deaf Education support comprises only a few hours a week direct support to the Deaf child, while those in large towns and cities children get more hours of support. This is unfair.
- It is hard for parents when they must send their Deaf child far away to a school that provides BSL because their local school does not provide this.
- Academic achievement is not the only measure of successful schooling; just as important is self-confidence, resilience, friendships with a wide range of people, and having the personal resources to solve problems and make decisions. We need to overcome the social barriers that hold Deaf children back.
- We need to change attitudes towards Deaf children and young Deaf people's abilities and expectations of what they can achieve.
- We need to ensure that every Deaf child has opportunities to learn, build friendships and relationships and achieve their dreams.
- The 1+2 language policy is a welcome move, which would see hearing and Deaf children learning BSL as a modern language.
- Hearing children should also be exposed to BSL, as this would be a good way of promoting BSL
- The 1+2 language policy is great but we need a structure to allow educational institutions to create meaningful resources that can be developed in a timely basis and not rushed through.

- Any mainstream school that has Deaf pupils should offer BSL as part of the 1+2 language policy in both primary and secondary education. This will help improve access for Deaf pupils, change attitudes in others, raise awareness about BSL and reduce bullying in schools.
- In addition to this, these BSL courses will also offer Deaf pupils an opportunity to obtain a qualification in BSL.
- Transition from primary school to secondary school can be a shock to the Deaf child who may have been taught up to that point within one classroom by the same teacher, unlike in secondary schools.
- This will help reduce isolation of parents who use BSL, as they get frustrated if they miss out on information from schools about their child's education. They would like access to BSL/English interpreters for all events, for example, parents' evening, parent council meetings, musicals and plays, and information sessions.
- Parents with BSL felt that they were not included in their children's extra-curricular activities. They need to have the same opportunities to be involved in their child's education as other parents, for example, parents' evenings.

Key reasons given why these aren't the right steps:

- The materials that the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) has developed for the SQA Awards in BSL are heavily based on English. BSL teachers feel this is wrong. Deaf staff should be employed by the SQA to create teaching materials. This would include developing materials using regional signs and visual materials, which would be highly beneficial for both Deaf and hearing children.

Any other suggestions or solutions to add to the "Education" section:

- Priority should be for teachers to have BSL qualifications, more Deaf teachers to register with the GTCS, and to develop the SQA Awards for BSL.
- Local authorities need to consider the communication needs of children and young people who use BSL, for example, Communication Support Workers (CSWs) or educational BSL/English interpreters and teachers to have minimum BSL Level 6.
- CSWs and teachers to continue BSL training as part of their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) after completion of BSL Level 6.
- A BSL school with qualified BSL teachers to be set up for children and young people who use BSL so that they can leave school with confidence, with a positive Deaf identity and strong life/social skills. A BSL school could be a whole service like a hub rather than people accessing different mainstream services. A whole service, which encompass the whole family, with qualified teachers of the Deaf and professionals who are knowledgeable about Deaf children's development.
- The six-year plan is too long, and should be reviewed at more regular intervals.
- Resource bases in Scotland should share good practice, skills, knowledge and resources in BSL. This will help all deaf children to receive the same quality of education across Scotland.
- Some BSL users strongly felt that the option to learn French or Spanish at school should be removed, and replaced by BSL.
- Schools to employ skilled, fluent Deaf staff, especially in primary schools, which would make

a huge difference and provide better outcomes for Deaf children than employing hearing staff with only BSL Level 1, 2 or 3.

- Deaf adults and other people who use BSL fluently should be encouraged to train to work in education in roles such as support workers, educational instructors, teaching assistants, cooks, playground assistants, and teachers.
- BSL users have told us that Deaf or specialist schools have low expectations of Deaf children. Such views should be challenged and changed by bringing in Deaf adult role models and more qualified Teachers of the Deaf who can also get children more involved in the BSL community.
- Regular 'BSL Clubs' for hearing children and families of Deaf children to learn and make friends with Deaf children in a signing environment
- More needs to be done to ensure that Deaf parents can be fully involved in their child's education. For example, Hamilton School for the Deaf prepares DVDs for parents who use BSL, and translates letters from English into BSL.
- Mental health awareness/information should be offered in BSL in schools.
- Although some deaf children use spoken language/oral approach in schools, teachers must have BSL.
- BSL must be recognised as National 4 or National 5.
- BSL users hope Scottish Ministers will recognise the importance of listening to the experiences of BSL users sharing their accounts, be they successes, failures or frustrations in primary, secondary, further and higher education and training. Their experiences must outweigh those of non-Deaf professionals and teachers who are prone to make biased or unbalanced decisions and impose controls over Deaf Education provision.
- Links with iBSL was suggested.

Anything else participants said about "Education":

- Models of good practice could be useful, for example, Lanarkshire Deaf Club has BSL classes at Holytown Primary School and New Stevenson Primary School, teaching hearing children BSL.
- It is not known whether there is an advanced BSL training budget so that support staff can obtain qualifications up to BSL Level 6. There is very little evidence that schools and authorities are making this commitment.
- Who will be responsible for monitoring schools and local authorities' BSL guidance and training materials? Will they work with BSL users to produce the resources?
- Hearing children will benefit from access to Children of Deaf Adults (CODAs) at schools, and learn BSL.
- Will schools provide extra lessons or tutorials for hearing children of parents who use BSL, whose first language is not English?
- The problem of not having enough specialist teachers with BSL skills is most likely to affect rural areas including the Scottish Islands and those local authorities which do not have a resource base school or Deaf school available.

22% of groups and individuals chose post-school education as one of the goals they wished to discuss.

Our first goal for Post-School Education

BSL users will be able to maximise their potential at school, will 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(s).

By 2023 Scottish Ministers will take these steps:

23. Make sure that students whose first or preferred language is BSL have a much more positive experience when they make the transition to post-school education. We will make sure that schools, colleges, universities and employers are aware of their responsibilities. We will work together to improve the information given to BSL users.
24. The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) will establish a steering group to help colleges and universities develop their own BSL plans.

Key reasons given why these are the right steps:

- Young Deaf people are not always made aware of their options when deciding what to do when they leave school.
- They may miss out on education or career opportunities because other people do not think they can achieve. They need more support to help them develop confidence, independence and resilience.
- Support for making transitions needs to be stronger; for example, Careers Advisors and Disability Advisors need BSL awareness training to be able to support BSL users especially with CVs, application forms and their chosen career pathway.
- It is difficult and challenging for young Deaf people to make a transition if they receive no support.
- There was concern about where young Deaf people will be supported. Will they attend Deaf clubs or organisations? Currently, young Deaf people are isolated during the transition process, and this needs to be looked into.
- Attendance at Skills Development Centres can be very demoralising.

Key reasons given why these aren't the right steps: None.

Any other suggestions or solutions to add to the “Post-School Education” section:

- Careers Advisors, Disability Advisors and Lecturers at colleges and universities need BSL training to be able to support BSL users. They should recognise that BSL users have English

as a second or third language. This will lower the chances of Deaf students pulling out from courses.

- BSL users are often not aware they can ask for extensions or extra time for handing in assignments. This needs to be acknowledged.
- Currently, there are Careers Advisors at mainstream schools but this service is not accessible for young Deaf people.
- Colleges and universities to organise events for BSL users, and give them opportunities to meet other Deaf students to share their experiences.
- BSL/English interpreters should be provided at extra-curricular activities in colleges and universities.
- BDA Scotland has implemented a new Deaf Roots and Pride project. This model will make a real difference to BSL users being supported to transition.
- Signposting will help BSL users to receive information and explore options and opportunities available to them, enabling them to make decisions.
- Organisations who are being signposted should make sure that their information, resources, services and events are accessible for BSL users. For example, organisations like SAAS, UCAS, and Skills Development Scotland to invite BSL users in forums or focus groups, both as individuals and through representative organisations, to improve the information given to BSL users.
- They welcome the recommendations of the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) to establish a steering group, and would like them to engage and involve BSL users to help colleges and universities develop their own BSL plans. Their experiences would be an excellent source of information.

Anything else participants said about “Post-School Education”:

- There was concern about access to evening classes, for example, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), as Deaf people/BSL users are not able to access ESOL qualifications, making it difficult for some to gain access to employment opportunities.
- No BSL/English interpreting provision is offered for Deaf refugees who wish to learn English and undertake exams. The same applies for Deaf refugees who wish to learn BSL, as there are no ESOL qualifications in BSL (taught via sign language).
- Evening classes should be taught by Deaf teachers through Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), as they would be able to adapt the curriculum to suit Deaf people for whom English is second or third language.

49% of groups and individuals chose Employment as one of the goals they wished to discuss.

Our first goal for Employment

People who use BSL will be supported to develop the necessary skills to become valued members of the Scottish workforce, and will have fair and equal access to employment opportunities, including apprenticeships, internships and employability programmes.

By 2023 Scottish Ministers will take these steps:

25. Ensure fair and equal access to employment opportunities, including apprenticeships, internships and employability programmes.
26. Introduce in April 2018, a new Scottish employability programme. The key principle of this service is that all those who participate (including BSL users) will receive support to find and sustain work.

Our second goal for Employment

BSL users will be provided with support in the workplace to enable them to remain in and progress in their chosen career.

By 2023 Scottish Ministers will take these steps:

27. Provide in-work support, of up to 12 months, for BSL users accessing any of our in-work support services.
28. In the new devolved employment services, we will expect those who deliver employment services to work with specialist employment support partners at a local and national level to help tackle the range of barriers that all participants face, including BSL users.
29. We will actively promote the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) Access to Work (ATW) scheme to employers and BSL users to ensure a higher uptake and use of the scheme in Scotland.

Key reasons given why these are the right steps:

- Employers' fear of the perceived costs of making adjustments to the workforce is a key barrier to the recruitment of BSL users to the Scottish workforce
- Staff at Job Centres have advised BSL users not to put 'Deaf' on their CVs or application forms. They advised BSL users to put down 'disabled' instead of 'BSL user' or 'Deaf', which made people uncomfortable.

- BSL users still have this discussion: when do you disclose? Should people declare at the application stage? For BSL users with CVs, which often refer to Deaf schools and may comprise periods of work within the Deaf community, will employers detect that they are a BSL user?
- BSL users deliberately do not declare that they are Deaf because they feel it will go against them, especially when employers see on the application form or CV that a BSL/English interpreter is needed for interview or within work.
- Staff who deliver employability programmes, for example, Job Centre Advisors, need BSL training to be able to support BSL users especially with CVs, application forms and their chosen career pathway.
- BSL users are frustrated in accessing employment opportunities, and they are struggling to find and sustain work. Having no job prospects for long periods can be demoralising, particularly with the increasing barriers to employment.
- There was concern about long waits at Job Centres to meet Advisors because of the availability of BSL/English interpreters for face-to-face appointments.
- Concern was expressed that employers (wrongly) cite Health and Safety legislation as an excuse not to employ BSL users.
- Those who are currently employed feel they are in the wrong jobs and do not have equal access to employment opportunities in their chosen career pathway.
- BSL users felt it would be easier to set up their own businesses rather than applying for jobs, especially when finishing university and trying to look for work.
- BSL users are still experiencing difficulties when being assessed for Access to Work (ATW).

Key reasons given why these aren't the right steps:

- Some had serious doubts about these steps, and felt this was “the same old story”, with BSL users not having fair and equal access to employment opportunities.
- There were concerns about the BSL (Scotland) Act (2015), as the Act does not cover local businesses and Job Centres, but Scottish Ministers still make representations to Westminster and to relevant civil service departments.

Any other suggestions or solutions to add to the “Employment” section:

- Employers should not worry about the extra costs of employing BSL users, as there is the Access to Work (ATW) scheme, which supports organisations/businesses with BSL/English interpreting support costs.
- There should be a campaign to encourage organisations and businesses to employ BSL users with ATW support.
- Employers in Scotland need to recognise the benefits of employing BSL users. We need to raise awareness of the untapped talent that exists among BSL users.
- BSL users would like fairer assessments for Access to Work (ATW). They want these assessments to be fair and accessible in BSL to ensure the most vulnerable do not lose out on their rightful entitlements. Fair and realistic assessments will ensure BSL users stay in their jobs.
- Workplaces with staff working with BSL users should receive BSL awareness and training.
- Health and safety legislation should be translated into BSL.

Anything else participants said about “Employment”:

- In the new devolved employment services – who will offer the support? Will they have knowledge of BSL and the barriers that BSL users face? Through Deaf organisations and existing mainstream organisations/services? There should be a range of options for BSL users to be provided with support in the workplace – and this should not be restricted to only one service/organisation.
- Social Workers for Deaf people used to support BSL users with employment opportunities but this provision is no longer available. BSL users have to go on-line to seek employment via Job Centres but English is not their first language.
- Currently, Deaf Action provides an Employability Service but they only support BSL users who are currently out of work, and not those who already have jobs.
- There was a query about the role of Skills Development Scotland in supporting Deaf people in employment programmes.
- The step on providing in-work support, of up to 12 months, for BSL users accessing any in work support services should be available for longer periods.
- ATW does not cover voluntary jobs. How will BSL users in voluntary positions have access to BSL/English interpreting services?
- What about Deaf refugees accessing employment opportunities in Scotland without BSL or English skills. Deaf relay interpreters are suggested as a solution to give support to employment opportunities.



Health, Mental Health and Social Care

78% of groups and individuals chose Health, Mental Health and Social Care as one of the goals they wished to discuss.

Our goal for Health, Mental Health and Social Care

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.

By 2023 Scottish Ministers will take these steps:

- 30.** Ensure that information on national health screening and immunisation programmes is routinely translated into BSL and is readily available and easy to access.
- 31.** Improve access to, and the availability of, professionally approved health information in BSL by ensuring that it is located in a central place online.
- 32.** Develop and roll out BSL awareness training for health and social care staff across Scotland ensuring that it is readily accessible at the point of need and tailored to a health setting.
- 33.** Consider ways to improve individual patient health records so that a person's records clearly indicate when a patient's first or preferred language is BSL.
- 34.** Ensure that information about people's rights to directing their own social care and support (Self-directed Support) is available in BSL.
- 35.** Ensure that a national source of mental health information, advice and support is developed for BSL users.

Key reasons given why these are the right steps:

- BSL users experience life-long inequalities in access to health, education and social care, resulting in significantly poorer health and well-being outcomes.
- Many BSL users subsequently delay action around health issues until the situation becomes critical and more costly to remedy, highlighting their vulnerability within healthcare systems.
- In many cases, this can create a vicious circle, as BSL users develop an increased need for support from mainstream services that are often ill-prepared to respond effectively to their access and support needs. This leaves BSL users routinely feeling disempowered, lacking the knowledge and confidence to know how to address their own needs and overcome the communication barriers they face in accessing health services.
- BSL users had not used health services because they could not arrange appointments easily.
- BSL users find it difficult to contact NHS staff to change appointments through the telephone or to understand letters from GPs and hospitals. There should be a translation service to help BSL users understand the contents of their letters.
- When engaged with services, Deaf people are more vulnerable to missed or incorrect

diagnoses. Early diagnosis will lead to early intervention.

- BSL users need support services that are provided by, and for, Deaf BSL users or by people who can use BSL.
- Non-BSL users generally have clear access to appropriate care pathways with the right support, but if BSL users do not get the same level of access, they are at risk of their health deteriorating. Both BSL and non-BSL users should have equal access to appropriate care pathways.
- There is no 24/7 access for BSL users at Accident and Emergency (A&E) Departments.
- The emergencySMS service and NHS 24 are inaccessible.
- BSL users would find it difficult to communicate if they had an accident (perhaps collapsing) whereas hearing people can hear, talk or nod their heads to acknowledge communication with emergency staff.
- Some BSL users have had to travel to the mainland to see a doctor with a BSL/English interpreter and access health information because local NHS Boards will not pay for BSL/English interpreters to fly to the Scottish Islands.
- BSL users are still suffering from the lack of, or poor, interpreting services. Some NHS Boards have a contract with non-specialist interpreting services.
- More BSL awareness training is needed for NHS staff.
- With regard to support groups, BSL users should have the choice of being placed in hearing support groups or have their own support groups (e.g. mental health support group) where they can have equal access to care pathways.
- There was concern about mental health services for BSL users in Scotland, as some felt they were getting worse, especially in rural areas. Some BSL users have to travel further to attend appointments so mental health outreach work is needed.
- The difficulties BSL users face when seeking mental health help are often misunderstood by NHS services, who in some cases assume that booking a BSL/English interpreter is enough. This does not work for some BSL users, and can often make mental health treatments less effective as the three-way conversation can cause stress or misunderstanding.
- BSL users struggling with mental health issues find it too difficult to access counselling or psychological therapy. An improvement to BSL users' access to mental health services is needed with a quick access to psychological interventions.
- Information is important to ensure that BSL users make informed choices. BSL users should be able to choose to see a counsellor or therapist fluent in BSL or to book a BSL/English interpreter to see a non-BSL therapist. This includes choices for face-to-face or online sessions.
- Counsellors or therapists fluent in BSL need to understand different cultures, faiths and religions. They must be culturally sensitive.
- Steps need to explore ways in which BSL/English interpreters can develop specialist training to work in mental health settings.
- There are limited training opportunities for BSL users to become mental health professionals, for example, Deaf Independent Mental Health Advocates (IMHA) to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate support if BSL required.
- Application forms for Self-directed Support are inaccessible, and not known to many BSL users. New benefits information should be available in BSL.

Key reasons given why these aren't the right steps:

- There was concern that there is no dedicated Deaf health organisation in Scotland like SignHealth or BSL Healthy Minds to access psychological therapy.
- There were concerns with sheltered accommodation and Cordia Home Care, as older Deaf people have difficulties communicating with staff with no BSL skills.
- BSL users felt additional steps are needed to stretch these goals to a higher standard.

Any other suggestions or solutions to add to the “Health, Mental Health and Social Care” section:

- Models of good practice could be useful on access to health. For example, some health centres have visual displays to alert BSL users when it is their turn to see the GP.
- Many BSL users would like to see the return of care or nursing homes for elderly BSL users. There were discussions about whether BSL users would prefer a separate unit within a “hearing” care home or a new, dedicated Deaf care home. They would like Scottish Ministers to consider this huge gap.
- Access to services for hearing people like Cordia Home Care is not sufficient to meet Deaf people's needs. BSL users need support services that are provided by, and for, Deaf BSL users or by people who can use BSL.
- More information is needed about care or nursing homes, as BSL users want to prepare in advance. Who do they contact for more information? Social Workers? It would be good to have a list of homes that have BSL residents.
- A befriender scheme for BSL users to reduce isolation and loneliness.
- The NHS need to include Deaf professionals in their workforce planning strategy, as BSL users would like the NHS to employ specialist Deaf staff to work with them.
- The booking system at GP practices needs to be reviewed because BSL users are not allowed to walk into their doctor's surgery to book an appointment. BSL users have to book appointments through the telephone. Not everyone can use a textphone/minicom, as it relies too much on English. In this age of internet and smartphones, the group would like GP practices to consider a SMS/text message service which allows BSL users to make appointments.
- Research on possible technological solutions for booking appointments. Perhaps an app or text service where BSL users can book appointments, order repeat prescriptions, pick up medication, and get reminders – rather than relying on family or friends to make calls or using the NGT app or video relay and interpreting services where there is a third party involved.
- A pager system to be introduced in hospitals to alert BSL users to attend their scheduled appointment.
- Technological solutions for providing accessible information via texts, for example, receiving text messages from Scottish Water if water is not safe to drink or the Met Office with weather warnings.
- Individual patient health records to include the BSL user's preferred language on the top of the screen. There should be no excuses for GPs for not booking BSL/English interpreters or not being aware that patients are BSL users.
- Introduce barcodes on mobile devices so that BSL users can scan health information.

- NHS staff to learn BSL as part of their induction training so that they can communicate effectively with Deaf patients.
- This sector to employ BSL users to develop and roll out BSL awareness training for health and social care staff.
- BSL users would like choices and preferences with regard to the sourcing BSL/English interpreters.
- BSL users must be included in the design and provision of BSL/English interpreting services.
- BSL users must be the advocates for their own needs and services – including a robust and accessible complaints procedure.
- BSL users need to be more involved in forums or focus groups about information and services on health issues, both as individuals and through representative organisations.
- BSL users can advise on whether access to a central place online with health information/ health promotion materials in BSL would be useful. This will include signposting to further information and services.
- The BSL Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programmes should be rolled out in Scotland (<https://www.signhealth.org.uk/for-health-professionals/refer-to-bsl-healthy-minds-therapy/>). The service, to treat depression and anxiety, is only available in England.
- There are many specialist mental health services including NDCAMHS in England. There is nothing in Scotland.
- Explore ways to reduce the stigma and discrimination of mental health in the BSL community. Mental health is still a taboo issue.
- There was concern about understanding prescriptions and medicine instructions. A suggestion was to bring iPads to pharmacists and use video relay or interpreting services.
- Clarification is needed around the roles of support workers, as they were not allowed to carry out some chores around the house.
- What about care homes for young BSL users? Will foster carers have BSL skills? Deaf children in foster care to have access to BSL/English interpreters and safe BSL environments. It is important for Deaf children to be able to communicate, to be informed, be able to discuss problems and give their views.
- Staff in Child Protection Services should receive BSL awareness training and have basic BSL skills to help them communicate with young people in emergency cases.

Anything else participants said about “Health, Mental Health and Social Care”:

- There was a query about BSL users’ rights to direct their own social care and support, be that through social services or Cordia or private care.
- With regard to accessing Samaritans and Breathing Space, is the web-based support confidential? There was concern about privacy issues.
- Currently, access to the information and services relating to Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) are not “Deaf friendly”.
- There was concern about the high percentage of BSL users committing suicide.

53% of groups and individuals chose transport as one of the goals they wished to discuss.

Our goal for Transport

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

By 2023 Scottish Ministers will take these steps:

Implement the recommendations of 'Going Further: Scotland's Accessible Travel Framework' which has been developed with disabled people, including, including BSL users. Key actions in the framework include:

36. Ensuring that transport users, including BSL users, can participate in the ongoing feedback process of the framework.
37. Researching technological solutions for providing accessible information in transport hubs (like train stations, airports etc.)
38. Creating guidance on how to contact transport providers when things go wrong on a journey.
39. Developing training for transport providers which includes strategies for communicating with BSL users.

Key reasons given why these are the right steps:

- Research on possible technological solutions for providing accessible information in transport hubs is needed because BSL users are frustrated by issues such as getting on the wrong train or having to change trains without notification or not being aware when things go wrong on a journey.
- Systems to make public announcements/notifications accessible are needed for BSL users, as transport providers need to take responsibility for completion of a journey, including across different modes of transport.
- The majority of BSL users at consultation events expressed frustration with bus drivers, as they sometimes insist on knowing the Deaf person's exact destination, forcing the Deaf person into a difficult communication situation.
- Many BSL users are fed up and embarrassed by having to communicate with bus drivers behind a glass screen.
- BSL users would like bus drivers to be BSL aware and have an introduction to BSL skills.

Key reasons given why these aren't the right steps:

- These are not the right steps because ferry prices in Eilean Siar are too high, and transport providers will not pay for BSL/English interpreters to fly to Stornoway.

Any other suggestions or solutions to add to the “Transport” section:

- BSL users have suggested potential solutions to these ongoing problems: a list of destinations behind drivers' windows so they can point to where they are going. Will this be an effective way of discreetly communicating with BSL users?
- A simple solution was suggested by BSL users which could be easily be implemented now, is to have a separate National Entitlement card for BSL users, which will allow them to immediately and discreetly convey their status to bus drivers.
- Models of good practice could be useful on access to transport. For example, there are visual displays on Lothian Buses to indicate the next stop. Camelon Train Station in Falkirk also works in close collaboration with the Forth Valley Sensory Centre to involve BSL users in research into technological solutions.
- BSL users to register with transport providers such as National Rail, Virgin, Citylink, Stagecoach etc. to receive live updates via text messages. The registration system could be similar to the emergencySMS service. BSL users to register their mobile numbers with transport providers to receive updates through SMS/text messaging.
- Guidance is needed about making complaints in BSL and getting refunds for delayed journeys (without having to rely on BSL/English interpreters or BSL translators to translate letters from BSL to English or vice versa).
- The help points at transport hubs are inaccessible and sometimes there are no staff. There should be emergency points with video equipment for BSL users to ask for assistance.
- There is a mobility assistance phone at train stations but BSL users need to press a button and await a response from staff. How will BSL users know that someone will respond or is on his/her way? There need to be simple strategies for communicating with BSL users.
- Strategies to inform BSL users on a single website rather than expecting them to check individual transport providers' websites.
- Simplify information, for example, 'rear' could be re-worded to 'back'.
- There should be visual announcements on adverts at train stations. There is a regular news update on TV monitors. Why don't they include live travel updates with BSL/English interpreters and/or BSL presenters?
- Systems to make public announcements/notifications accessible are needed on trains on TV monitors not visual displays physically located near the doors.
- An app for BSL passengers to track the whereabouts of their buses. It is difficult to ask for help in rural areas to find out when buses will arrive or if there has been a diversion.

Anything else participants said about “Transport”:

- All of those involved in and around transport need to view BSL users as both a key customer group and an excellent source of information when improving their services, not just in the way these are provided for BSL users themselves, but for everyone, especially with regard to researching technological solutions for providing accessible information in transport hubs.
- There are some areas in Scotland where there is no mobile signal or internet access with 3G/4G so it is difficult for BSL users to communicate or find out information about their transport.
- Some public transport information is bilingual in English and Gaelic but not in BSL.
- Four ferry vouchers per year are not enough for BSL users in Eilean Siar.

Culture, Leisure, Sports and the Arts

27% of groups and individuals chose Culture, Leisure, Sports and the Arts as one of the goals they wished to discuss.

Our goal for Culture, Leisure, Sport and the Arts

BSL users will enjoy fair and inclusive access to Scotland's culture, leisure pursuits, sport and the arts and will have every opportunity to share their own Deaf culture with the people of Scotland.

By 2023 Scottish Ministers will take these steps:

40. Encourage BSL users to take part in the culture, leisure, sport and the arts as participants, audience members and professionals.
41. Support professional pathways and advocate for BSL users to consider culture, leisure, sport or the arts as a potential career choice.
42. Encourage the integration of BSL in the performing arts and film.
43. Work with the bodies delivering culture, leisure, sport and the arts to ensure that websites are easy to access and inclusive for BSL users.
44. Increase the number of public events and arts programmes that have BSL interpretation.
45. Work with Historic Environment Scotland to introduce British Sign Language tours in historic buildings in order to improve access for BSL users.
46. Work to ensure that everyone is empowered to access and participate in Scotland's culture. The new Cultural Strategy will be owned by the people of Scotland and will be co-created with artists, cultural producers and anyone else with an interest across the sector and beyond.
47. Work with sportscotland to provide information on their website about good practice when working with BSL users and increase awareness and understanding about BSL.

Key reasons given why these are the right steps:

- Continue the work with Glasgow Museum to ensure BSL users enjoy access across the city's museums. BSL volunteers have been trained to offer guided tours, and BSL users need to be aware of this new service.
- More training opportunities following the Glasgow Museum's efforts to train BSL volunteers. Staff should be encouraged to become BSL guides. If BSL users consider this pathway as a potential career choice, they should be able to access training opportunities so that they can host BSL tours.
- BSL users would prefer guides to be well educated in their field so that BSL users can enjoy public events and arts programmes.

- BSL users would like a variety of choice with regard to access to every place of interest in Scotland: with Deaf/BSL guides, guided tours with BSL/English interpreters, hand-held devices (mobile/tablet/iPad) with BSL videos and/or subtitles, or fixed displays/TV screens on walls.
- This will help create employment opportunities for BSL translators to produce accessible BSL videos in museums and galleries, and ensure that websites are inclusive for BSL users.
- Amongst young Deaf people in society today there are different expectations with regard to real time communication, signed mediums and online platforms. They prefer to access information with immediate effect, and expect this to be fast and reliable.
- BSL users are fed up with subtitled films at cinemas, which are shown at inconvenient times, for example, early mornings or late in the evening, when people are often unable to attend. People felt that opportunities to watch accessible/subtitled films were limited. There should be a greater choice of subtitled films at reasonable and peak times.
- BSL users faced barriers in sport, in particular, access to coaching, with no funding for BSL/English interpreters.
- BSL users need to be active to stay healthy and fit but it is difficult because they are put off from participating in mainstream sports with limited BSL resources.
- Staff in sport centres needs BSL awareness and training.

Key reasons given why these aren't the right steps:

- Where will Asian Deaf culture fit in these steps, as there are no examples of how Asian Deaf people will enjoy fair and inclusive access to Scotland's culture, including Asian culture?

Any other suggestions or solutions to add to the “Culture, Leisure, Sports and the Arts” section:

- Models of access elsewhere could be useful, for example, museums providing devices or iPads with BSL videos. The Royal Yacht Britannia in Leith has tablets available with a tour in BSL. The Roman Baths in England provides BSL handsets and a printed copy of the audio guide text. Some staff at the Roman Baths also have basic BSL skills, which helped with work-related signs such as prices, times, etc.
- A solution was suggested – an app for smartphones or tablets for BSL users to download BSL videos (like downloading videos via Amazon or Netflix) prior to visiting museums.
- A suggestion was to introduce barcodes on devices with BSL videos.
- Access should not be limited to devices or fixed displays/screens with BSL videos on the wall; some people would prefer access to be mobile to be able to press buttons to suit their own pace.
- Access should not be limited to just one method of communication, for example, adding subtitles with no BSL videos or vice versa.
- There was concern about hand held devices because these are difficult to see if they have gloss screens, especially with lights above or reflections. Screens should be covered in matt not gloss.
- Some BSL users rely on websites prior to visiting museums to gain some background information. Information on websites should be inclusive in BSL and updated regularly.

There was concern that though there was plenty of information on websites, very little was displayed on walls or handouts or TVs with BSL access or subtitles in museums.

- Work with Historic Environment Scotland to introduce BSL tours and employ BSL guides.
- Ensure that auditions are in place to recruit BSL guides, and that BSL guides are familiar with museums and galleries. There are examples of BSL translation on websites where BSL presenters have never visited the museums and were unfamiliar with exhibitions. They should be trained, and perhaps vetted by Deaf History Scotland (DHS) – <http://www.deafhistoryscotland.org.uk>
- Monthly-guided tours specifically designed for BSL users in partnerships with museums, for example, on the first Sunday of every month at a fixed time, the tour includes a BSL/Deaf guide and/or BSL/English interpreter.
- Look into successful bodies delivering BSL access, for example, John Wilson's guided tours in London are usually fully booked. They are funded by local London boroughs and/or art galleries such as the Tate Gallery and the Royal Academy.
- Deaffest, the UK's leading Deaf film and arts festival should be available for BSL users in Scotland – <https://deaffest.co.uk>, funded by Creative Scotland.
- sportscotland should encourage BSL users to become trainers or coaches or any other professional roles linked with sports.
- There should be government funding to support Scottish Deaf sports.
- There should be access to funding for Scottish BSL athletes to represent their country at local, national or international events. We want to see Scottish BSL athletes with talent and commitment being provided with financial support to represent Scotland and Great Britain.
- Increased collaboration with museums to include Deaf/BSL history in 'mainstream' information, for example, Princess Joanna Stewart (daughter of James I of Scotland) was born Deaf and used sign language.
- Another example is the 3D topographical relief map, which is cast in bronze on the corner of Buchanan Street and St Vincent's Street in Glasgow. The model highlights Glasgow Deaf Club, which demonstrates that the Deaf club is part of Glasgow's cultural heritage.

Anything else participants said about “Culture, Leisure, Sports and the Arts”:

- Concern about 'tokenistic' gestures, for example, museums ticking the 'access box' by providing BSL access on their websites and do nothing more in their museums such as updating information about new exhibitions.

49% of groups and individuals chose justice as one of the goals they wished to discuss.

Our goal for Justice

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

By 2023 Scottish Ministers will take these steps:

48. Assess how the justice system could better meet the needs of BSL users and carry out a plan of improvements.
49. Look at research on technologies which aim to improve BSL user access to our Justice systems.
50. We will ensure that appropriate guidance and resources are developed by the justice sector to improve understanding of and response to BSL users (this could include BSL awareness training and the development of guidance for BSL users on what they can expect in justice settings).

Key reasons given why these are the right steps:

- BSL users did not feel they were receiving equal treatment and more could be done with the police and justice departments in terms of BSL awareness training. For example, handcuffing BSL users when they are trying to use BSL is problematic.
- Specialist training for BSL/English interpreters, police forces and justice departments is needed to ensure the integrity of the legal process is not compromised.
- Concern was expressed about the interpreting or/and translation skills required to work in court settings; for example, specialist training to adjust language skills to meet the communication needs of Deaf prisoners, offenders, suspects, witnesses or victims.
- Concern was expressed about police officers struggling to find BSL/English interpreters for police interviews and follow-up interviews. BSL users have the right to be provided with interpreting and translation support at all stages of the legal process – including choices and preferences with regard to sourcing BSL/English interpreters. There should be a clear response about whether a BSL/English interpreter will be provided at interviews, as this has created frustration among BSL users.
- BSL users' experience of police interviews was dependent on the relevant police officers' attitudes (e.g. whether they made wrongful arrests or wrote notes as opposed to booking BSL/English interpreters).
- BSL users feel more could be done with regard to information, guidance, resources and training about the legal process; for example, how to report a crime or what to expect as a witness going to court. This could be share on websites and via social media.

- BSL users trying to use legal aid faced barriers. Their experiences of legal aid need to be shared with the Government, as some BSL users are being charged for both the solicitor's service and that of a BSL/English interpreter who was needed to facilitate communication.
- BSL users need access to public funding for legal advice and representation in both civil and criminal cases. They would like Scottish Ministers to look at how accessible legal aid is for BSL users.
- Deaf offenders are more vulnerable because police forces and justice departments are not BSL aware. They sometimes use unnecessary words such as 'deaf and dumb'.
- Police Scotland is already starting to improve access to their services. On the Police Scotland website they are posting information in BSL that has been signed by police officers. The feedback from the BSL community is positive but BSL users in the North of Scotland felt work is too focused on the central belt of Scotland.

Key reasons given why these aren't the right steps:

- These steps are too brief and need expanding.
- There is no mention of Deaf people serving on juries. Deaf people are still barred from jury service. Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service is unable to accept Deaf people as members of the jury because only jurors are allowed to be present in the jury room (an interpreter would constitute a '13th person'). Will Scottish Ministers look into this, as BSL users feel they are not being treated as equal citizens?

Any other suggestions or solutions to add to the "Justice" section:

- The process for Legal Aid is not clear. When can you claim it, and for what?
- The issue of accessing funding for legal aid and funding for BSL/English interpreters for solicitors' services needs to be resolved. There is no consistent approach to funding BSL/English interpreters. One solution would be a central fund which BSL users could access to cover BSL/English interpreters' costs.
- Frontline police officers at stations should have BSL skills.
- An identification card that Deaf people could use to inform police officers that they are BSL users, and would need a BSL/English interpreter if they are arrested, cautioned or questioned.
- Visual displays at courts to alert BSL users that they are being called into court.
- What about Deaf prisoners? BSL users' experiences in prisons in Scotland need to be looked into.
- Police Scotland should employ BSL users to recognise the value of diversity within the workforce.
- Police officers to engage more with BSL users and the BSL community by organising community engagement meetings with local Deaf clubs and groups. They would be an opportunity for local BSL users to share their views about local issues which are important to them, and also to directly influence the priorities of their local officers.
- Models of good practice or projects elsewhere such as Police Link Officers for Deaf People (PLOD) in England could be replicated in Scotland.
- A focus group of BSL users to give feedback to the justice sector would support with this goal.

Anything else participants said about “Justice”:

- BSL users would like choices and preferences with regard to sourcing BSL/English interpreters to communicate with police forces and justice departments on a face-to-face or online basis but there was concern about confidentiality and privacy.
- A suggestion was to visit courts prior to court hearings so people know what to expect as a witness going to court.
- Computer systems within justice departments to indicate Deaf BSL users are barred from jury service, as some BSL users have been called for jury service several times. They were concerned about ignoring letters, and getting fined or penalised.
- There was concern about contacting the police via the 101 non-emergency number.

20% of groups and individuals chose democracy as one of the goals they wished to discuss.

Our first goal for Democracy

BSL users should be able to represent the people of Scotland as elected politicians at a national and local level, and to serve on boards of our public bodies.

By 2023 Scottish Ministers will take these steps:

51. Assess whether the Access to Elected Office fund met the needs of BSL users. This pilot fund offers support to cover additional costs, like BSL/English interpreting, who wish to stand for selection or election in the 2017 local government elections.
52. Offer advice and support to BSL users about how to participate in politics and to political parties and organisations about how to be more inclusive of BSL users.
53. We will raise awareness of public appointments as a way to participate in public life. We will make sure that the boards of public bodies know about BSL and the BSL National Plan and what they need to do.

OUR SECOND GOAL FOR DEMOCRACY

BSL users should have full access to information about democracy, including voting.

By 2023 Scottish Ministers will take these steps:

54. Provide better information about voting in BSL and review whether it has been effective.
55. We will encourage political parties to produce election information in BSL.

Key reasons given why these are the right steps:

- BSL users should have the same access to public life and politics as anyone else.
- BSL users should have full access to information about political parties. Some BSL users do not vote because information from political parties is inaccessible. When they browse through a website to find out more about politics find only English text, they cannot access that information. It needs to be translated into BSL. For example, BSL manifestos for the political parties.
- Every political party should ensure that information is released in BSL and English at the same time. Producing a BSL version should not be an afterthought.
- BSL users agree that Scottish Ministers should look into financial support for BSL users who wish to stand for election at a national or local level.

Key reasons given why these aren't the right steps:

- These steps are too brief and need to be expanded.

Any other suggestions or solutions to add to the “democracy” section:

- All political parties to book BSL/English interpreters at their political events, press conferences, public announcements and at parliamentary/constituency offices.
- Information should be accessible in BSL on Facebook groups to help people find out more about politics. For example, political parties could set up a Facebook page to share information in BSL.
- TV broadcasts should be accessible to the BSL community. Pre-recorded TV broadcasts should be translated into BSL to ensure that BSL users do not miss any information.
- The type of high level English or jargon that is being used on TV broadcasts with subtitles is difficult for BSL users to digest.
- Offer training opportunities for Deaf people explaining how to participate in politics and how to stand for selection or election in government elections.

Anything else participants said about “democracy”:

- There were concerns about the location and framing of BSL/English interpreters on TV, as they were not clearly visible.
- The Scottish Council on Deafness (SCoD) developed a DVD ‘Access to Democracy’, which explained the different voting systems and the electoral registration process. What has happened to these resources? Why are they not being used now? Information can be found on <http://www.scod.org.uk/access-to-democracy>

Anything else participants said at the event:

- There was concern that some BSL users did not fully understand the steps because the original video clips on BSL Consultation Facebook page were difficult to follow when they were first published on 1st March 2017. People lost interest after viewing them briefly.
- BSL users felt the video clips should be presented by grass-roots BSL users because a lot of English-based signs were used.
- The questions 'Yes, 'No', and 'If Yes, why?' are unhelpful. Sometimes people wanted to answer both 'Yes' and 'No' and add comments or offer solutions.
- Many BSL users felt they were not able to contribute or engage with the plan, as they did not understand either format – the original BSL videos or the online consultation in English. Some of the wording in the draft BSL National Plan is unclear.
- BSL users learned a lot about the work of NAG, and what the national plan is for.
- There was some discussion about why no Deaf person from a Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) background was included as a member of the National Advisory Group (NAG). The group does not reflect our diverse community.
- The groups in the Scottish Borders were pleased to have had the opportunity to discuss the ten goals over two meetings. They felt they were part of the system in helping Scottish Ministers to make decisions on the future of BSL.
- BSL users would like to be kept informed about the next steps and what will happen before the final BSL National Plan is published.
- Some BSL users felt they should not have to wait for six years for a review, improvements or actions because the BSL National Plan will be "locked" for the next six years from October 2017.
- When the final draft is drafted, make it clear, test it and pilot it with a group of BSL users. People want to keep the wording simple to suit BSL users, and the use of high level English or jargon that is usually used at Scottish Government level should be avoided.

As this summary report shows, there is still a great deal of work to be done. BSL users miss out on information taken for granted by hearing people. Often allied with a poor education or a low level of literacy in English (which is a second or third language for many BSL users), the result is a significantly lower knowledge base about, for example, public services and health information. A lot of time was spent at consultation meetings explaining what 'Public Services' meant.

All those involved in delivering services need to view BSL users as both a key customer group and an excellent source of information when improving their services, not just in the way these are provided for BSL users themselves, but for everyone, especially with regard to researching technological solutions for providing accessible information. For example, BSL users have suggested potential solutions to the ongoing problems with bus drivers. They came up with two solutions: a list of destinations behind drivers' windows so they can point to where they are going, or having a separate National Entitlement card for BSL users, which would allow them to discreetly convey their status to bus drivers.

Due to recent advances in technology, BSL users expect information to be accessible in BSL; this is particularly true amongst young Deaf people. There are different expectations with regard to real-time communication, signed mediums and online platforms. They prefer to access information with immediate effect, and expect this to be fast and reliable. For example, ensuring that information is released in BSL and English at the same time. Producing a BSL version should not be an afterthought. Some BSL users do not vote because information from political parties is inaccessible and manifestos are not available in BSL. BSL users also suggested an app where they can book appointments, order repeat prescriptions, pick up medication and get reminders – rather than having to rely on family or friends to make calls or using the NGT app or video relay and interpreting services where there is a third party involved.

One of the steps under health, mental health and social care indicates that patient health records should indicate when a patient is Deaf. BSL users at the consultation meetings felt this should be introduced within public services and justice departments too. Such records would indicate that they are BSL users and need a BSL/English interpreter.

There is strong consensus that BSL users should be employed by bodies covered in the BSL National Plan so the approach to delivering services or accessible information provision is person-centred and BSL users can expect greater consistency. Deaf employees can act as bridge builders to bring together the BSL community with various organisations.

BSL users also hope that the BSL National Plan will help create employment opportunities, as they are frustrated and struggling to find and sustain work. Examples include opportunities for BSL translators to produce accessible videos in museums and galleries, funding for Deaf BSL workers to visit and support Deaf children and their families to develop a bicultural

environment at home. There is concern about the Access to Work (ATW) scheme, as this is still a key barrier to the recruitment of BSL users to the Scottish workforce. BSL users feel that there should be a campaign to encourage organisations and businesses to employ BSL users with ATW support.

In addition to employment opportunities, BSL users felt priority should be for teachers to have BSL qualifications, more Deaf teachers to register with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), and to develop the SQA Awards for BSL.

There appears to be a willingness among BSL users to be involved in the consultation exercise, although there was a sense of consultation 'fatigue'. It will be necessary to conduct a different kind of explanation and dialogue so as to ensure continued positive engagement and contributions from BSL users. The groups in the Scottish Borders were pleased to have had the opportunity to discuss all ten goals over two meetings. They felt they were part of the system, helping Scottish Ministers to make decisions on the future of BSL. There was, however, concern about having to wait six years for a review, improvements or actions because the BSL National Plan will be "locked" for the next six years from October 2017.

BSL users suggested an example of positive engagement. They suggested that police officers could engage more with BSL users and the BSL using community by organising community engagement meetings with local Deaf clubs and groups. These would be an opportunity for local BSL users to share their views about local issues, which are important to them, and also to directly influence the priorities of their local officers.

To keep the momentum going after the BSL National Plan is finalised, BDA Scotland feel that it is important to ensure that BSL users are engaged more in the design, development and improvements of services. They need to be more involved in decisions on services in forums or focus groups, both as individuals and through representative organisations.

BDA Scotland is looking forward to contributing to the Local Authority plans when these are introduced and to acting as consultants on behalf of, and in collaboration with, a significant user group for whom the BSL (Scotland) Act was devised.

List of Deaf clubs or groups (36) and individuals (9) by local authority areas:

Aberdeen City

1. Aberdeen Deaf Club (18)

Argyll & Bute

2. Dunoon Deaf Group (2)

Scottish Borders

3. Anonymous (1)
4. Jacqueline Scott
5. Galashiels Deaf Gathering (5)
6. Peebles Deaf Gathering (6)

Dumfries & Galloway

7. Anonymous (2)
8. Anonymous (1)

Dundee City

9. Tayside Deaf Hub (9)

East Ayrshire

10. Kilmarnock Deaf Club (8)

East Lothian

11. Joseph Sheridan

Edinburgh, City of

12. Albany Deaf Church (7)
13. Edinburgh BSL Coffee Meet Up (10)
14. Edinburgh Deaf Club (28)

Falkirk

15. Falkirk Deaf Social Club (15)
16. Forth Valley Sensory Centre OAP Group (26)

Fife

17. Dunfermline Deaf Pub (17)
18. Kirkcaldy Deaf Social Club (16)

Glasgow City

19. Anonymous (1)
20. BDA Scotland staff (3)
21. Glasgow Asian Deaf Club (18)
22. John Ross Memorial Church for Deaf People (15)
23. Glasgow Deaf Senior Citizens Club - Ladies' Group (9)
24. Glasgow Deaf Senior Citizens Club - Men's Group (9)
25. Glasgow Deaf Senior Citizens Club (70)
26. Social Recreation Club (16)
27. St Mary's Parish RC Group (9)
28. St Vincent's Centre for the Deaf (16)
29. Taste Your Future event – Deaf Roots & Pride Project (2)

Highland

30. Inverness Deaf Club – afternoon (10)
31. Inverness Deaf Club – evening (8)

Inverclyde

32. Inverclyde Deaf Group (13)

Midlothian

33. Edinburgh Deaf Club (5)

Moray

34. Moray Deaf Club (6)

North Ayrshire

35. Anonymous (1)
36. Irvine Deaf Group (11)

North Lanarkshire

37. Coatbridge Deaf Club – 1st session (30)
38. Coatbridge Deaf Club – 2nd session (22)
39. Lanarkshire Deaf Club (8)
40. Mother & Toddler Group – Motherwell (4)

Orkney Islands

41. Anonymous (1)

Shetland Islands

42. Shetland Isles Deaf and Hard of Hearing Club – 1st session (8)

43. Shetland Isles Deaf and Hard of Hearing Club – 2nd session (4)

South Lanarkshire

44. Hamilton Deaf Afternoon Club (43)

Eilean Siar

45. Stornoway Deaf Group (3)

Not defined by local authority

46. Deaf History Scotland (40)

The British Deaf Association's British Sign Language Charter

The purpose of the Charter for British Sign Language (BSL Charter) is to promote better access to public services for Deaf people who use BSL and in doing so; enable public agencies meet their legislative duties under the Equality Act 2010.

The UK Government ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2009. Local authorities, public services and agencies should follow the intentions of the UNCRPD. One way this can be achieved is by adopting the BSL Charter.

Under the Equality Act 2010, Deaf people have the right to equal access to services through a variety of access provision including BSL/English interpreters when required. The Deaf community is a linguistic community with a rich history, identity, language and culture. The BDA believes equal opportunities can be achieved by working with the Deaf community, rather than by taking decisions and designing services decided on their behalf.

The BSL Charter sets out five pledges:

1. Consult formally and informally with our local Deaf community on a regular basis
2. Ensure access for Deaf people to information and services
3. Support Deaf children and families
4. Ensure staff working with Deaf people can communicate effectively using British Sign Language
5. Promote learning and high quality teaching of British Sign Language.

The expectation is that by adopting these pledges, public services can achieve the following objectives:

- Remove direct and indirect discrimination against Deaf people
- Resolve conflicts between service providers and Deaf people
- Increase awareness of Deaf issues and BSL issues
- Empower local Deaf people to be more participative in the wider community
- Provide better educational options for Deaf children.

The BDA recognises that public services will have different priorities for the areas they serve and it is expected that each public agency will consider the number of pledges that it can sign up to. For some, this may be a minimum of one pledge towards achieving equality for Deaf people in their areas while others will sign up for all five pledges.

For more information: www.bda.org.uk/project/bsl-charter

What is British Sign Language (BSL)?

British Sign Language (BSL) is the first or preferred language of many Deaf people in the UK. It is a language of space and movement using the hands, body, face and head.

BSL is the sign language of the Deaf community in the UK (in Northern Ireland, Irish Sign Language (ISL) is also used). BSL is a real, full and living language that is part of a rich cultural heritage. It is one of the UK's indigenous languages; other includes English, Welsh, Scottish Gaelic and Cornish. Many hearing people also use BSL; it has more users than other indigenous languages such as Welsh or Gaelic.

It is a language that has evolved in the UK's Deaf community over hundreds of years. There is considerable research evidence that shows Deaf children who are exposed to BSL early can develop linguistically at the same rate and to the same linguistics levels as hearing children with spoken language. This kind of early access to language ensures the ability for learning throughout life, leading to improved life opportunities.

BSL is not just a language; it is also a gateway to learning, a path towards a sense of Deaf identity, and the means whereby Deaf people survive and flourish in a hearing world.

The British Deaf Association (BDA)

The BDA stands for **D**eaf **E**quality, **A**ccess and **F**reedom of choice

Vision

Our vision is Deaf people fully participating and contributing as equal and valued citizens in wider society.

Mission

Our Mission is to ensure a world in which the language, culture, community, diversity and heritage of Deaf people in the UK is respected and fully protected, ensuring that Deaf people can participate and contribute as equal and valued citizens in the wider society. This will be achieved through:

- Improving the quality of life by empowering Deaf individuals and groups;
- Enhancing freedom, equality and diversity;
- Protecting and promoting BSL.

Values

The BDA is a Deaf people's organisation representing a diverse, vibrant and ever-changing community of Deaf people. Our activities, promotions, and partnerships with other organisations aim to empower our community towards full participation and contribution as equal and valued citizens in the wider society. We also aim to act as guardians of BSL.

- 1. Protecting our Deaf culture and Identity** – we value Deaf peoples' sense of Deaf culture and identity derived from belonging to a cultural and linguistic group, sharing similar beliefs and experiences with a sense of belonging.
- 2. Asserting our linguistic rights** – we value the use of BSL as a human right. As such, BSL must be preserved, protected and promoted because we also value the right of Deaf people to use their first or preferred language.
- 3. Fostering our community** – we value Deaf people with diverse perspectives, experiences and abilities. We are committed to equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination with a special focus on those affecting Deaf people and their language.
- 4. Achieving equality in legal, civil and human rights** – we value universal human rights such as the right to receive education and access to information in sign language, and freedom from political restrictions on our opportunities to become full citizens.
- 5. Developing our alliance** – we value those who support us and are our allies because they share our vision and mission, and support our BSL community.



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The BDA stands for **D**eaf **E**quality, **A**ccess and **F**reedom of Choice

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