

BSL (Scotland) Act 2015


Scottish Local Authorities: Summary of Progress being made with BSL Plans

October 2020



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Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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We would like to thank the Local Authorities in Scotland who gave their time to share their feedback and experiences.

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BDA Scotland
www.bda.org.uk

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I. Background

In 2015 Scotland passed the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015. The Act placed a responsibility on listed public bodies to set out how they will promote the use and understanding of British Sign Language (BSL).

The Scottish Government is required to publish a BSL National Plan every 6 years that will cover itself and national agencies – the first one was published in 2017.

Other listed Public Bodies are required to create BSL Authority Plans, which are to take due regard of the BSL National Plan. This includes Local Authorities, NHS Boards, Colleges and Universities across Scotland. The majority published their first BSL Authority Plans in 2018.

The Scottish Government funds four Deaf organisations under the auspices of the BSL Partnership to support the public sector with implementing their work in relation to BSL.

The Access and Inclusion (Engagement) Officer within BDA Scotland is funded to support the thirty-two (32) Scottish Local Authorities.

2. Establishing Relationships

In November 2017, work began to engage with all 32 Local Authorities (Councils) to establish who would lead in developing the BSL Authority Plans within each Local Authority. This was a huge task that took many months to complete. Initially, there was some difficulty in identifying the council lead for the BSL Authority plans. The council websites were in the most part very difficult to navigate and when calling Local Authorities to ask for assistance, staff were unsure of who the correct department or council lead may be.

In the first few months of 2018, BDA Scotland worked with BSL Partners to deliver BSL Roadshows across Scotland. During this time relationships began to form with the council leads for each Local Authority. Whilst initially challenging (possibly due to Local Authorities not having an awareness of who or what BDA Scotland were and how BDA Scotland could offer support), across the year things became progressively easier. The Access and Inclusion (Engagement) Officer noticed during initial contact with Local Authorities at the roadshows that this was often the first time council leads had met and worked with Deaf BSL users; this was a very new experience for some.

There were new working practices that had to be learned. For example, as a hearing person, arranging a meeting is straight forward – they place a call or email to arrange a date and time, then have the meeting. When working with Deaf BSL users, different practices had to be adopted, such as when arranging a call, offering a selection of dates and times to ensure that BSL/English interpreters could be booked, then agreeing a meeting time, again offering a selection of dates and times to allow for BSL/English interpreters to be booked. This was a learning curve but through time council leads became more used to working alongside staff within the BDA Scotland. All council leads were open to this new way of working and were happy to adapt usual practices.

From November 2019 onwards, those relationships were established and working practices were more fluid between BDA Scotland and the council leads.

Early in 2019 it became clear that there was some confusion over the differences between the See Hear Strategy and the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015. The Access and Inclusion (Engagement) Officer attended the Scottish Council Equality Network (SCEN) to address all Local Authorities around the differences between these two pieces of work.

The Access and Inclusion (Engagement) Officer and the Community Development Manager attended a further SCEN meeting in March 2020. This was to follow up on the need to move forward with BSL Authority Plans and ensure work was on track. After this meeting, many of the council leads said they were clearer on what was expected of them and the meeting served as a good reminder that they had support from BDA Scotland.



3. Purpose

The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 states a BSL National Plan Progress Report is to be submitted before the Scottish Parliament. This was due in October 2020. However, this submission will now take place in 2021 due to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

In order to collate information from the 32 Local Authorities to submit to the Scottish Government for consideration in the BSL National Progress Report, the Access and Inclusion (Engagement) Officer created a questionnaire and interviewed council leads in relation to their progress with their BSL Authority Plans over the last 3 years. This work had already commenced before the decision to postpone the BSL National Plan Progress Report, and so the data are presented in this report.

This report is an interim one with the intention of supporting Scottish Government and Public Bodies in identifying good practices and challenges in advance of the BSL Progress Report due October 2021. It is hoped the information in the report will assist Local Authorities with progressing their BSL Authority Plans and in engaging with their local BSL communities. We also present this report in the hope of encouraging collaboration across Local Authorities and Public Bodies in working together to share ideas and tackle common challenges, in order to make progress towards a common goal.

4. Methodology

The questionnaire consisted of five questions. The first 4 were developed around the key themes identified in the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015:

(see https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/111/pdfs/asp_20150011_en.pdf, p.11)

1. Do you feel that the action points under the BSL Plan are on track? Bearing in mind the requirement to consult in the Act, do you feel it has been straightforward to engage with the Deaf/BSL community? What challenges have you faced, and do you think the level of engagement has been sufficient?
2. Are you able to share any milestones or achievements that have occurred during the period of 2017-2020? Has there been any feedback on the direct impacts on BSL users?
3. Are there any challenges that you face in influencing and promoting the BSL Plan? What are the major issues?
4. Have you considered any plans and work required for 2021-2024?
5. What support would you want from BDA Scotland, and to what extent? Do you feel you have a good understanding of BDA Scotland's role and work?

The interviews ran across 9 months from November 2019 to July 2020.

Councils:	Interview date:	Councils:	Interview date:
Aberdeen City	25 February 2020	Glasgow City	21 January 2020
Aberdeenshire	23 June 2020	Highland	28 May 2020
Angus	3 December 2019	Inverclyde	9 June 2020
Argyll & Bute	2 June 2020	Midlothian	24 March 2020
Clackmannanshire	-	Moray	4 February 2020
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	7 January 2020	North Lanarkshire	20 April 2020
Dumfries & Galloway	24 July 2020	Orkney Islands	28 July 2020
Dundee City	28 January 2020	Perth & Kinross	21 January 2020
Pan Ayrshire (East, North, and South)	10 December 2019	Renfrewshire	14 April 2020
East Dunbartonshire	10 March 2020	Scottish Borders	19 December 2019
East Lothian	16 January 2020	Shetland Islands	26 November 2019
East Renfrewshire	23 June 2020	South Lanarkshire	2 June 2020
Edinburgh City	18 February 2020	Stirling	23 June 2020
Falkirk	7 January 2020	West Dunbartonshire	19 November 2019
Fife	2 June 2020	West Lothian	5 May 2020

The interviews were conducted either face to face or over the phone. It was decided not to utilise email. The main reason for this was to help build better two-way rapport between BDA Scotland and the council leads, allowing for better conversations and shared learning to take place. It also allowed the Access and Inclusion (Engagement) Officer to better understand the corporate culture that the council leads were operating within.

It became clear, after the BSL Roadshows that were delivered across 2018, that some council leads had, through a lack of information, made some decisions that needed review. This became particularly apparent through responses to question number 5 (see p.7).

On reflection, the roadshows may have presented council leads with an information overload. Looking back, it would have been worth having half-yearly follow up engagements with Local Authorities to ensure they had all the information they required.

As of July 2020, 31 interviews have been conducted. One Local Authority, Clackmannanshire, is still outstanding. Clackmannanshire Council has undergone a significant period of redesign and service restructure which concluded in late 2019 and have faced a significant challenge to date in not having dedicated resources in place to implement their BSL Authority Plan.

5. Overview

Within these 31 interviews, there have been some commonalities across Local Authorities, which are detailed below. It should be noted that although there has been no formal interview with Clackmannanshire Council, the Access and Inclusion (Engagement) Officer has reviewed their website and included some information on achievements in this report.

We will use the frame of the five questions above to address the commonalities.

1. Do you feel that the action points under the BSL Plan are on track? Bearing in mind the requirement to consult in the Act, do you feel it has been straightforward to engage with the Deaf/BSL community? What challenges have you faced, and do you think the level of engagement has been sufficient?

From the 31 reports that were carried out over 9 months, information given by council leads shows that:

- 16 of the Local Authorities have been pro-actively implementing some sections of their BSL Authority Plan.
- 9 Local Authorities; Dundee City, Falkirk, Fife, North and South Lanarkshire, Pan Ayrshire (East, North, and South) and Perth & Kinross, have achieved some of the actions stated in their plans due to effective engagement with their local BSL communities.
- It should be noted that some council leads have other responsibilities within their remit which can impact on their focus on the BSL work, including limiting proactivity.
- It is noted that there have also been a number of absences amongst the council leads which have caused delays in implementing some of the actions.

2. Are you able to share any milestones or achievements that have occurred during the period of 2017-2020? Has there been any feedback on the direct impacts on BSL users?

- All Local Authorities have published their BSL Authority Plans in written English. 30 of them have also published their BSL Authority Plans in BSL. East Dunbartonshire Council state that they are currently working on a translation for their BSL Authority Plan. Orkney Council intend to use their draft plan in BSL as there were no changes made from the draft plan to the final plan. The final plan is still to be ratified by the management committee within Orkney Council. (See www.bsiscotlandact2015.scot/plans)

- 26 Local Authorities have implemented changes on their websites to include the contactSCOTLAND-BSL logo. However, most of these changes are in the 'Contact Me' section of the website. This can prove difficult to find, as navigating council websites can be challenging, given the level of English used. It is recommended that the contactSCOTLAND-BSL logo is placed on the home page at the top, ensuring it is clearly visible (see <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/home>, for example).

This relates to Action **05** of the BSL National Plan which states:

Promote the use of Scottish Government's nationally funded BSL online interpreting video relay service (VRS) called 'contactSCOTLAND-BSL', which allows BSL users to contact public and third sector services and for these services to contact them, and explore potential for its greater use.

- 5 of the Local Authorities have established Deaf and/or BSL Awareness training for staff. This relates to Action **06** of the BSL National Plan which states:

Encourage public bodies to access BSL Awareness training for staff who may work with BSL users, and signpost to appropriate training.

- During the COVID-19 crisis, many Local Authorities have been proactive in producing BSL information videos. 27 of the Local Authorities have translated information visible on their online platforms. This supports Action **40** of the BSL National Plan –

Increase the availability of accurate and relevant health and social care information in BSL and work with BSL users to determine where this information should be located. NHS Health Scotland and NHS 24 will deliver this work in partnership and will review progress in 2019 and every two years thereafter.

*****Notable Achievements*****

- a. There have been some councils who have established excellent connections to their local BSL communities such as Dundee City, Falkirk, Fife, North and South Lanarkshire, and Perth & Kinross. This has undoubtedly made their job far easier.

Local Authorities in areas where there is an active Deaf club, have found that attending the club on occasion, making connections with community members in an environment where they feel safe, has proved beneficial. For other Local

Authorities, establishing a working group which involves a number of Deaf BSL users has allowed for more efficient working practice in the achievement of actions contained in the BSL Authority Plans.

Councils:	Connections:
Dundee City	Tayside Deaf Hub
Falkirk	Forth Valley Sensory Centre
Fife	Deaf Service Fife
North Lanarkshire	Deaf Service Lanarkshire, Lanarkshire Deaf Club
South Lanarkshire	Deaf Service Lanarkshire, D.E.A.F. South Lanarkshire
Perth and Kinross	Tayside Deaf Hub

This relates to Action **03** of the BSL National Plan which states:

Develop, test and share a set of guidelines to help Scottish public services to improve access to information and services for BSL users. This will include advice on how to involve BSL users in the design and delivery of Scotland's public services.

- b. North and South Lanarkshire Councils planned an annual BSL conference that should have taken place on 2 June 2020. This is on hold due to the COVID-19 crisis but there is a commitment to ensuring this takes place as soon as possible. The aim of the conference is to develop further actions the BSL community wants to prioritise over the course of the next 3 years.
- c. Angus and Dundee City Councils have pooled finances to establish a social enterprise, training a number of BSL users in presentation skills. They will use these trained people to produce translated materials for the Local Authorities whilst also engaging in social enterprise by selling this resource to others.
- d. Perth & Kinross Council produced a poster and BSL video for their Christmas Lights switch-on 2019 for their local BSL residents. See link below.
www.facebook.com/groups/1470165406637765/permalink/2444728895848073

This supports Actions **54** and **56** of the BSL National Plan which state:

Enable BSL users to take part in culture and the arts as participants, audience members and professionals.

Increase information in BSL about culture and the arts on websites and at venues.

3. Are there any challenges that you face in influencing and promoting the BSL Plan? What are the major issues?

- As mentioned earlier, there have been challenges with capacity for several Local Authorities, as council leads have multiple roles and various foci within their remit.

Further challenges exist where council leads have struggled to connect with their local BSL communities.

- Some council leads have experienced confusion around the Equality Act 2010, BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 and the See Hear Strategy, and have found it challenging to understand concepts such as Deaf culture and the linguistic minority concept (as opposed to a disability model). This has been apparent in some of the actions contained within some of the BSL Authority Plans, which refer to a disability or sensory impairment for example.
- There is confusion around the difference between Video Relay Service (VRS) and Video Remote Interpreting (VRI). VRS involves a meeting between a BSL user and a hearing person, using a BSL/English interpreter online, with all three in different locations. VRI is used where the BSL user meets with someone in person and uses their tablet, i.e. iPad, to call a remote BSL/English interpreter facilitate communication; in this case the two people conversing are in one location, and the interpreter in another.
- There are challenges for Local Authorities who have a rural demographic. The numbers of BSL users may be small and can be scattered. This poses a financial challenge as well as a logistical one when trying to engage. Further to this, councils such as Argyle & Bute have poor broadband connectivity. Strong reliable broadband connectivity is vital for Video Relay Services such as contactSCOTLAND-BSL or video messages via YouTube or Vimeo, for example.
- As has been mentioned previously, Local Authorities who are not as effective in engaging with their local BSL communities, and who may also not have established working groups, are experiencing further challenges with achieving actions.

- There were significant issues early on, with BSL translation of BSL Authority Plans. Local Authorities were advised not to use BSL/English interpreters and so they looked to local BSL community members for support with this. However, those community members often did not have the necessary skill to translate complex information from English into BSL. Local Authorities then looked to tender work out to translation companies, however, most Local Authorities were looking to secure the same services and so delays and difficulties arose in achieving translations.
- Looking forward, Local Authorities have made commitments within actions that they will make information accessible. There are concerns around budgets however, and whether funding will come from the Scottish Government to support BSL translation activity.
- There are further considerations around activities such as BSL Awareness training. This had been funded by the Scottish Government during the first year of the BSL National Plan (2017) for public services, however, that has now stopped.

4. Have you considered any plans and work required for 2021-2024?

- All Local Authorities are continuing to work through actions that are still to be achieved.
- Only 4 Local Authorities (Falkirk, Fife, North and South Lanarkshire), have set up working groups that include Deaf BSL users. Several other Local Authorities are looking at this suggestion.
- All Local Authorities have stated a commitment to engage with local BSL community members to understand what local needs there are in relation to BSL translations.
- The Access and Inclusion (Engagement) Officer has encouraged council leads to consider collaboration, working with other Local Authorities and Public Bodies to gain support and advice.

5. What support would you want from BDA Scotland, and to what extent? Do you feel you have a good understanding of BDA Scotland's role and work?

- Over Year 1 and 2, most Local Authorities had little understanding of the support they could receive from BDA Scotland, in Year 3, through the face-to-face interviews and telephone calls Local Authorities began to have a better understanding of the role of BDA Scotland.

A comment repeatedly made by several Local Authorities was that **“we wish we’d realised from the start that we had this level of support from BDA Scotland.”**

- Face-to-face meetings and telephone calls have allowed Local Authorities to better understand the subtleties of working with the Scottish BSL community and a need for BDA Scotland to act as mediator to support the establishment of initial connections. It has also been important for Local Authorities to understand why they should book highly skilled BSL/English interpreters when engaging with the Scottish BSL community.
- Local Authorities now understand that BDA Scotland, as a Deaf-led, BSL focused organisation, can provide the specific support and guidance needed when looking to engage with BSL users in their areas.

6. BDA Scotland's Perspective

An unexpected and fortunate positive has evolved from the COVID-19 crisis. To date, 27 out of the 32 Local Authorities have now realised that access to information in BSL is crucial. Council websites are now more accessible for BSL users than ever before and with BDA Scotland emailing Local Authorities every week with updated news bulletins and other information videos. Connections with each Local Authority have improved and the support they feel they have from BDA Scotland has increased. The appendix contains links and evidence of this.

From the 31 reports that have been collated, the Access and Inclusion (Engagement) Officer has noted that a number of Local Authorities still require significant support from BDA Scotland. Currently they face significant challenges whilst also finding engagement with the local BSL communities problematic.

In one progressive example, Glasgow City Council are now considering creating a secondment opportunity for a Deaf BSL user from another organisation to assist with their BSL work for a set period of time.

Employing a Deaf BSL user within Local Authorities, whether individually or as part of a consortium, would ease the burden on council leads and allow Local Authorities to access the Deaf BSL individual's knowledge, lived experience and networks, therefore potentially making actions more achievable. There would be great potential for shared and incidental learning for all parties. This would also create employment opportunities for a community that has a high unemployment rate and faces a number of challenges. This will require resourcing of course, but it may be a useful area to develop.

Having a Deaf BSL member of staff working within Local Authorities could bring about cultural shifts in attitudes, especially for those Local Authorities who are not as fully engaged with the Scottish BSL community. Having a visible Deaf BSL member of staff who can act as a positive role model will go some way towards changing certain societal views that are still held by some.

Society in general views deafness as a disability, perceiving it in terms of the medical model. BSL users are also considered in this light. However, change needs to be made towards a social model, understanding that BSL users see themselves as a linguistic minority rather than a disabled group. BSL is a language that any person can learn and adopting social model framing will allow people to adapt and change to understand BSL users in a new way, one of benefit to the organisation.

As the Scottish Government state, we want Scotland to be the best place in the world to live, learn, work and visit.

Dundee City Council established an apprenticeship course for young people to work alongside management. The successful candidate was a young Deaf person who impacted the working practices of the Local Authorities. This is a successful example of the change that could happen.

Employing Deaf people can already be seen at the Scottish Parliament (BSL Development Officer), within the Scottish Government (BSL Policy Officer), and at the University of Edinburgh (BSL Development Officer). This should be exemplified as good practice for public bodies, including Local Authorities, across Scotland.

Further supporting evidence for this system can be seen at Belfast City Council, Northern Ireland, where a dedicated Language Policy Officer is employed.

See <https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/language>.

The Scottish BSL community must be mobilised to have the ability to engage with Local Authorities. This can be achieved through empowerment training, delivered over time to allow the community to gradually and fully absorb the knowledge and understanding of the structures and processes that exist within local government, which can appear complicated at first.

It has been noted that there are specific challenges for Local Authorities with a rural demographic such as the Islands, Argyle and Bute, Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders. With the lack of face-to-face BSL/English interpreters in these rural regions and more specifically the Islands, access to services are impeded where there is a reliance on interpreting. It is felt that the Scottish Government should consider providing VRI services at no cost for BSL users, whether via contactSCOTLAND-BSL or another provision.

Several Local Authorities are reporting that they need BSL Awareness training. BDA Scotland is asking if there will be any move from Scottish Government to reinstate funding of the BSL Awareness training for Local Authorities.

It is BDA Scotland's view that this is in fact part of a package of empowerment training. We are driven to empower the BSL community to engage with Local Authorities effectively - however, we must also remember council staff need to feel empowered and confident to engage with the Scottish BSL community. This is a two-way process, and both parties must be able to engage fully with each other.

One potential solution to better empower council staff to engage could be to deliver a series of meetings in a roadshow format. This will bring BSL users and Local Authorities together, allowing them to create better engagement and begin to build the bridges needed to succeed in achieving the actions in their plans. This could be done via either face-to-face or via online platforms e.g. Zoom.

In relation to empowerment training for the Scottish BSL community, it is vital that we work towards providing this. Historically, Deaf BSL users have had no access to information about the workings of government and its structures. The Scottish BSL community requires time to fully understand how government structures work, including local government, national government,

and parliamentary bodies. There also needs to be work done with the Scottish BSL community to allow them to understand and access complaints procedures. As there is no statutory obligation to provide access for BSL users it is vital that BSL users have the understanding and confidence to challenge and respond to any inequalities they experience. This can be achieved through empowerment training.

7. Key Points

Across the course of the last three years, we have seen some excellent initiatives, excellent working practice and some challenges. This is to be expected, and as we move forward to the next three years, we will see further examples of real success and major challenges.

The following 7 proposed **key points** are:

	KEY POINTS	BSL Users	Local Authorities
1.	Empowerment training (BDA provides Empowerment trainings to both BSL users and Local Authorities)	BSL users are confident to promote the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 and to have their voice heard.	Local Authorities learn BSL Awareness and BSL Levels 1 – 3. They are confident in working with BSL users and provide BSL access at their workplace and local events. They lead by example in promoting the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015.
2.	BSL Awareness training and BSL Level 1 – 3 learning for Local Authorities	BSL users in Scotland are trained and employed to do translation work and teach BSL Awareness and BSL Levels 1 – 6.*	Local Authorities learn BSL Awareness and BSL Levels 1 – 3. They are confident in working with BSL users and provide BSL access at their workplace and local events. They lead by example in promoting the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015.
3.	BSL Roadshow (BDA Scotland leads the roadshow events)	BSL users are consulted about the BSL National Plan every year. The BSL users or working groups meet with their council leads every quarter of a year.	Local Authorities are provided with information on BSL issues annually through COSLA. They engage with their local BSL users or working groups every quarter of a year.
4.	Video Remote Interpreting	BSL users in rural areas are provided with appropriate devices and trained on how to use VRI.	Local Authorities provide VRI and are trained on how to use this service.
5.	Ongoing funding for delivery of actions for BSL Authority Plan and BSL translation work	BSL users in Scotland are trained and employed to do translation work and teach BSL Awareness and BSL Levels 1 – 6.*	Local Authorities provide BSL translation work on their websites, Facebook pages and local events.
6.	Engagement (BDA Scotland supports the engagement events)	BSL users collaborate with council leads and attend local events and panel meetings provided by Local Authorities.	Local Authorities provide BSL access on their websites, Facebook pages and local events. They reach out to their local BSL communities and attend BSL events or clubs as well as consultation events.
7.	Commitment	BSL users including Deaf young people are employed by Local Authorities and involved in promoting the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015.	Local Authorities collaborate with other public bodies and engage with their local BSL communities. They employ BSL users to promote BSL Authority Plans and lead good working practices.

* BSL Teachers will need to have achieved a standard equivalent to BSL Level 3, or above, in order to teach BSL Levels 1 onwards.

8. BSL COVID-19 Weblinks

The following is a list of Local Authorities' information about COVID-19 in BSL:

Aberdeen City

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/people-and-communities/british-sign-language>

Aberdeenshire

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/covid-19/>

Angus

https://www.angus.gov.uk/community_empowerment/equality_diversity_and_human_rights/equality/covid_19_resources_for_bsl_users

Argyll & Bute

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/coronavirus-help-and-advice>

Clackmannanshire

<https://www.clacks.gov.uk/coronavirus/guidanceforyou/>

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

None

Dumfries & Galloway

<https://supportdg.dumgal.gov.uk/article/20829/Accessible-information>

Dundee City

<https://www.dundeeecity.gov.uk/covid-19-information-in-bsl-easy-read-%26-community-languages>

East Ayrshire

<https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/CouncilAndGovernment/Coronavirus/British-sign-language-videos.aspx>

<https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/CouncilAndGovernment/Coronavirus/Coronavirus-useful-links.aspx>

East Dunbartonshire

None

East Lothian

None

East Renfrewshire

<https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Edinburgh City

<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/coronavirus-4/british-sign-language-coronavirus-advice>

Falkirk

<https://falkirk.gov.uk/covid19/useful-links.aspx>

Fife

<https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/health-and-social-care2/coronavirus-covid-19/community-groups>

Glasgow City

<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/covidbs/>

Highland

None

Inverclyde

<https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/covid-19>

Midlothian

https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/670/have_your_say/315/contact_us

<https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200296/coronavirus>

Moray

http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_132517.html

North Ayrshire

<https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/councilwide-coronavirus-covid-19-updates.aspx>

North Lanarkshire

<https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=34980>

<https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=34915>

<https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=34955>

Orkney Islands

<https://www.orkney.gov.uk/Council/C/coronavirus.htm>

<https://www.orkney.gov.uk/Council/C/coronavirus-covid-19-community-support-hub.htm>

Perth & Kinross

<https://www.pkc.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.pkc.gov.uk/article/21675/Coronavirus-Hearing-aid-batteries>

Renfrewshire

<http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10182/Coronavirus-information-in-BSL-other-languages-and-Easy-Read>

Scottish Borders

<https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/coronavirus>

https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20056/disabilities/161/deaf_deafened_or_hard_of_hearing

Shetland Islands

None

South Ayrshire

<https://beta.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/coronavirus>

South Lanarkshire

https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200228/health_and_medical_information/1863/coronavirus_covid-19_advice

Stirling

<https://www.stirling.gov.uk/planning-building-the-environment/emergencies-emergency-planning/coronavirus/>

West Dunbartonshire

<https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/coronavirus/latest-advice/>

West Lothian

<https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/56641/Accessible-information-on-COVID-19>

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 and ISL.

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 and ISL.

- 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 and ISL as a human right. As such, BSL and ISL 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 and ISL community.

About the BDA

Founded in 1890, the British Deaf Association (BDA) is a national Deaf-led organisation that works directly with Deaf people who use British Sign Language (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL). Our work concentrates on campaigning for equal rights on a national level and working at a local level empowering Deaf people to achieve access to their local public services. This is carried out through projects delivering individual and community advocacy. We also work to ensure BSL/ISL is included by public bodies by delivering a public commitment through signing the BSL and ISL Charter.

Our Board of Trustees are all Deaf (we use the capitalised 'D' to denote the fact that we have a separate language and culture), and, 80% of our staff are Deaf.

Many Deaf people who use BSL/ISL lack access to education, health services, employment and other public services. Our work is designed to empower Deaf people and to improve access to general information and public services. We seek to achieve this by working with Deaf people at the local level through setting up forums to lobby public bodies and supporting Deaf people individually.

This is in line with the overall BDA objectives, which are: **D**eaf **E**quality, **A**ccess and **F**reedom of choice.



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

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