



Digital Archivist

Candidate Brief
May 2026

About the BDA

The British Deaf Association (BDA) is the UK's national representative organisation for Deaf people who use British Sign Language (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL)—the first or preferred language of approximately 87,000 Deaf people.

We exist to advance human rights and equality for Deaf people. Working in partnership with our members and stakeholders, we influence governments and drive systemic change to achieve sign language equity across the UK.

The BDA has played a pivotal role in securing legal recognition for sign languages, including the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015, the BSL Act 2022, and more recently the BSL (Wales) Act 2026 and Northern Ireland Sign Language Act 2026. These landmark achievements recognise BSL and ISL as protected minority languages—an important step towards addressing long-standing inequality and enabling Deaf people to participate fully as equal and valued members of society.

We are proudly Deaf-led: all of our Board of Trustees and 88% of our staff are Deaf, and our working languages are BSL and ISL. Our lived experience shapes everything we do, and we invest in sign language development across our workforce, including a comprehensive and inclusive onboarding programme.

As a membership organisation, we are deeply rooted in Deaf communities across all four UK nations. This ensures our work is informed, representative, and responsive to the communities we serve.

Trusted by Deaf communities and respected by governments, the BDA is a leading voice for change—protecting and promoting the language, culture, community, diversity, and heritage of Deaf people across the UK.

Representation

Founded in 1890, the BDA has a long history of advocacy and leadership. We are an Ordinary Member of the [World Federation of the Deaf](#) (a United Nations consultative organisation) since 1957, and a founding member of the [European Union of the Deaf](#) (a participatory body of the Council of Europe) since 1985.

Our BDA Youth Committee represents young Deaf people at both national and international levels, including within the [World Federation of the Deaf Youth Section](#) and [European Union of the Deaf Youth](#).

As a Deaf-led membership charity, we are led by and represent Deaf signers. We advocate for the right of Deaf people to fully participate in society as equal and valued citizens.

The passage of sign language legislation across all four UK nations marks a defining moment in our history—and a foundation for future change. We are now delivering our 2022–2032 Strategic Vision, setting out our ambitions for the next decade and beyond.

Find out more: <https://bda.org.uk/strategic-vision/>.

Our work

Our work is delivered through four key programmes:

1. Community & Advocacy

We work alongside our members and the wider Deaf community to ensure their views are heard, valued, and acted upon. By bringing Deaf people together, we support collective action to challenge inequality and drive change.

Through training and workshops, we build confidence, leadership, and collective power—supporting Deaf people to influence decision-making and secure representation at every level.

At the heart of this work is a simple principle: *nothing about us, without us*.

2. Training & Consultancy

We deliver Human Rights and Capacity Building training to empower Deaf people with the tools to advocate for their rights.

We also support organisations to become BSL-inclusive through our flagship BSL Awareness training and tailored consultancy, helping participants develop a deeper understanding of BSL and Deaf culture.

We established the independent BSL Alliance, a coalition of Deaf organisations working together to strengthen and promote BSL across the UK.

3. Human Rights & Equality

As the representative body for Deaf people in the UK, we equip Deaf people with the knowledge and strategies to claim and defend their rights, including:

- Recognition and respect for BSL/ISL and Deaf culture
- Securing equitable access and opportunities across all areas of life

Through the BSL Charter, we connect Deaf people with public services—enabling them to raise concerns, influence service delivery, and access clear, accessible information.

We work with Deaf leaders and policymakers to implement key frameworks, including the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and UK sign language legislation. Alongside this, we deliver Equality & Rights training and lead national advocacy to drive systemic change.

4. Sign Language & Culture

We promote and celebrate BSL and ISL through campaigns, events, and national initiatives.

Our work includes leading the award-winning *BSL Act Now!* campaign and launching *BSL in Our Hands*, calling for free access to sign language for families of deaf children.

We host annual events including the BSL Conference and AGM Weekend, and lead national and global campaigns such as Sign Language Week and the International Week of the Deaf—bringing communities together and raising awareness of Deaf culture and rights.

“The BDA is the Deaf community.”
– Roundtable participant, 2022

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job title: Digital Archivist

Salary: Circa £50,000

Hours: 21 – 35 hours per week

We welcome applications from both full-time and part-time candidates; final hours and structure to be determined based on the successful candidate/s.

Reports to: Heritage Manager

Location: London or Manchester

Contract: Fixed term 12 months. We will consider secondment placements.

Holidays: 25 days a year plus 8 Bank Holidays (pro rata)

Pension: BDA operates a contributory pension scheme and will auto-enrol you into the scheme in accordance with its auto-enrolment obligations

Overview

The Digital Archivist will lead the development, management, and safeguarding of the BDA's digital heritage collections. This includes the digitisation, cataloguing, preservation, and access of Deaf heritage materials such as BSL films, photographs, documents, oral histories, artefacts, and community records.

The role is central to ensuring Deaf heritage is preserved **by Deaf people, for Deaf people**, and made accessible in **British Sign Language** as well as written English, in line with best practice in digital preservation and inclusive archiving.

The role

Digital Archiving & Preservation

- Provide a digital archivist lead for the Heritage Lottery Fund 'Deaf Heritage Sorted' project.
- Lead the digitisation, cataloguing, and long-term preservation of Deaf heritage collections, including audiovisual BSL content, photographs, manuscripts, and born-digital materials.
- Implement and maintain digital preservation standards, workflows, and metadata frameworks appropriate to mixed-media and sign language collections.
- Ensure collections meet recognised archival, museum, and heritage standards while reflecting Deaf cultural values and lived experience.

Collection Management & Documentation

- Develop and manage digital asset registers, catalogues, and collection management systems.

- Create and maintain metadata in both English and BSL, ensuring accessibility and cultural accuracy.
- Support accessioning, rights management, licensing, and ethical use of archival materials.

Deaf-Led & Community-Centred Practice

- Assist the Heritage Manager to work collaboratively with Deaf communities, historians, artists, and organisations to identify, document, and preserve heritage materials.
- Support community-led collecting, co-curation, and participatory archiving approaches.
- Ensure that Deaf people are meaningfully involved in decisions about how their heritage is preserved, described, and shared.

Access, Engagement & Learning

- Support the development of accessible digital platforms, exhibitions, and online resources for Deaf and hearing audiences.
- Contribute to public engagement, education, and research use of collections, including support for exhibitions, events, and learning programmes.
- Work with communications and policy teams to ensure Deaf heritage content is shared responsibly and widely.

Governance, Ethics & Compliance

- Ensure compliance with data protection, copyright, safeguarding, and ethical standards.
- Contribute to policies on digital preservation, access, collections development, and risk management.
- Support funding applications, reporting, and evaluation relating to heritage and digital projects.

This list is not to be regarded as exclusive or exhaustive, as there may be other duties and requirements associated with the post, which BDA may call upon the post-holder to perform from time to time.

Person Specification

Essential

- Degree or equivalent experience in Archives, Digital Preservation, Library & Information Studies, Heritage, or a related field.
- Proven experience working with digital archives, audiovisual collections, or heritage collections.
- Knowledge of digital preservation standards, metadata, and collection management systems.
- Strong understanding of inclusive access, ethics, and rights management in heritage contexts.
- Commitment to Deaf culture, language, and community-led practice.
- Ability to work collaboratively with a wide range of stakeholders.

Desirable

- British Sign Language (BSL) skills.
- Experience working with Deaf communities, sign language collections, or minority language heritage.
- Experience of heritage funding environments (e.g. Heritage Lottery Fund or similar).
- Knowledge of audiovisual digitisation workflows and accessibility standards.
- Experience contributing to exhibitions, digital platforms, or public engagement projects.

Values & Accessibility

At the BDA, our values shape how we work, collaborate, and lead change. We are committed to creating an inclusive, empowering, and values-driven organisation that puts the Deaf community at the heart of everything we do.

- **Purpose-driven** – We believe in what the BDA stands for and are motivated by a shared commitment to advancing Deaf people's rights and equality. <https://bda.org.uk/history/what-we-stand-for/>
- **Community-led** – We recognise that Deaf people's lived experiences of inequality, injustice, and marginalisation must inform our strategies, campaigns, and services.
- **Collaborative and engaging** – We work together, share knowledge openly, and build strong partnerships and alliances to maximise our impact.
- **Courageous and independent** – We value our independence, enabling us to challenge poor practice, policy, stigma, and discrimination with confidence and integrity.
- **Inclusive and respectful** – We create an environment where people feel valued, supported, and able to be themselves, respecting diverse perspectives and experiences.
- **Empowering and accountable** – We support others to contribute their views, take ownership of our actions, and learn openly from our mistakes.
- **Driven by impact** – We are passionate, proactive, and committed to making a meaningful difference for the Deaf community.

The BDA is a Deaf-led organisation. We actively encourage applications from Deaf and disabled candidates. We are committed to providing reasonable adjustments throughout the recruitment process and in the workplace.

BSL users are welcome to submit applications in BSL (video format), and interviews will be fully accessible.

How to Apply

Please submit:

- A CV (or equivalent experience statement)
- A brief supporting statement (max 1 side A4, min font 11) explaining how you meet the role requirements OR a video statement in British Sign Language
- Deadline 22nd June 9am
- Send to recruitment@bda.org.uk
- To discuss the role, please email Rebecca Mansell, CEO on rebecca.mansell@bda.org.uk

Applications in British Sign Language are welcomed.

The BDA's Vision and Mission

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

Mission

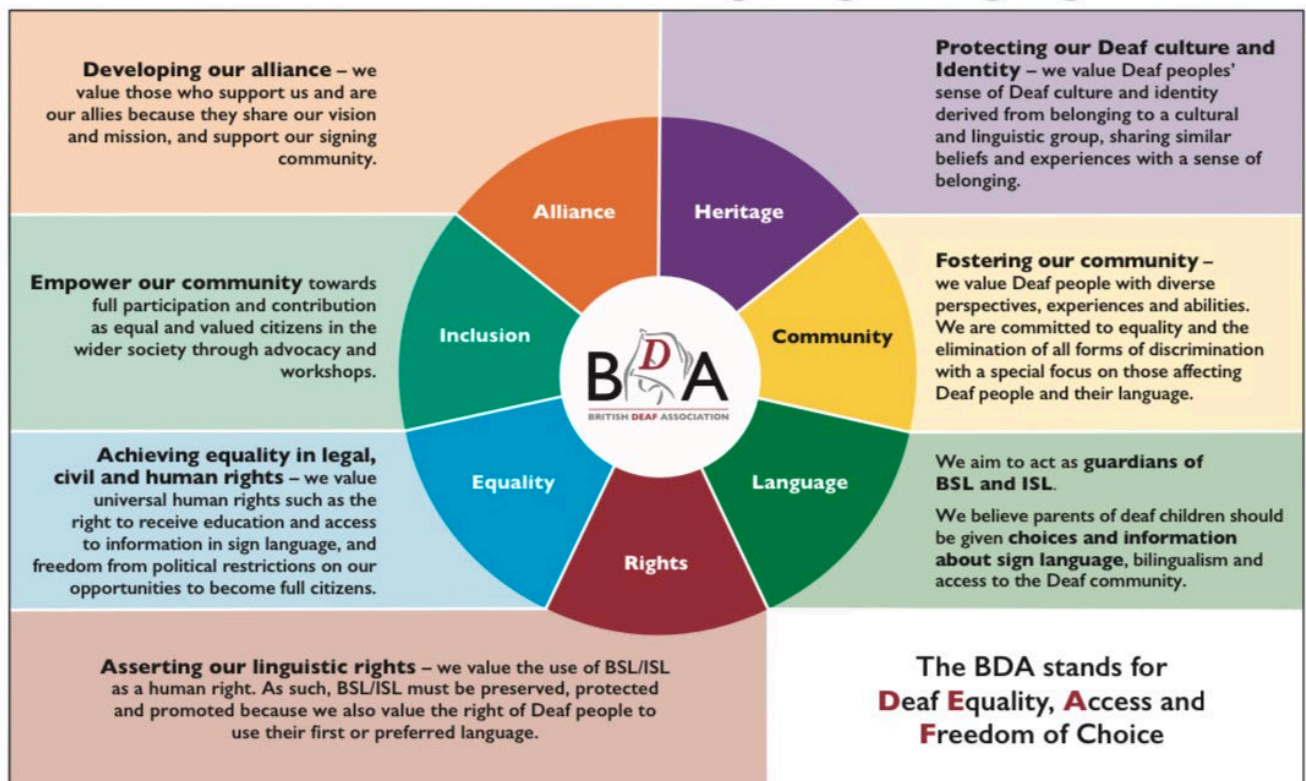
Our Mission is to ensure a world in which the language, culture, community, diversity, and heritage of Deaf people in Great Britain and Northern Ireland is respected and fully protected, ensuring that Deaf people can participate and contribute as equal and valued citizens in the wider society.

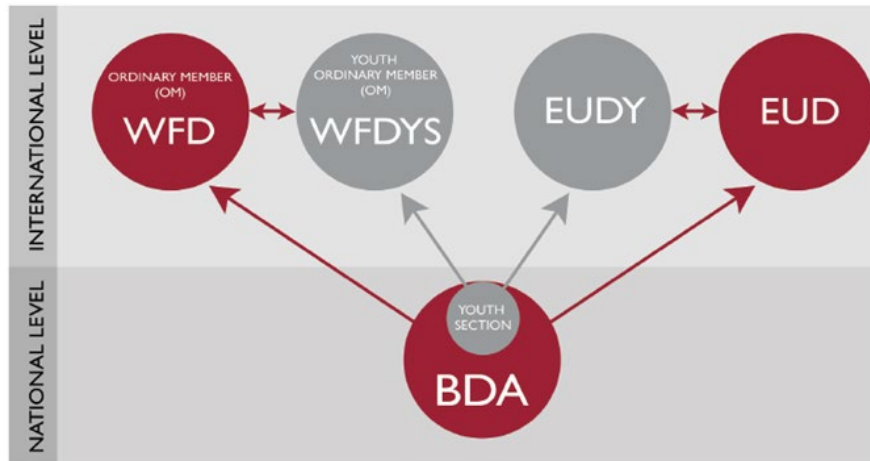
This will be achieved through:

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

Our social values

Our Social Values through Sign Language





The BDA has been an Ordinary Member of the World Federation of the Deaf ([WFD](#)) since September 1957, and a Full (and founding) Member of the European Union of the Deaf ([EUD](#)) since 1985.

WFD is an International Non-Governmental Organisation in official liaison with ECOSOC (Economic & Social Council), UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), ILO (International Labour Organisation), WHO (World Health Organisation) and the Council of Europe (CoE). It also has a consultative status in the United Nations (UN) and is a founding member of the International Disability Alliance (IDA).

EUD is a supranational organisation representing Deaf people at European level and is one of the few ENGOS representing associations from all of the 27 EU Member States, in addition to Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. EUD aims to establish and maintain EU level dialogue with its relative institutions and officials, in consultation and co-operation with its member national associations of the Deaf (NADs). EUD is a full member of the European Disability Forum (EDF) and is a Regional Co-operating Member of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) to tackle issues of global importance. It also has participatory status with the Council of Europe (CoE).

The BDA remains a permanent member of EUD; the UK's withdrawal from the EU has had no impact on BDA's membership of the EUD, which is not limited to member states of the European Union.

BDA Youth is a committee of the BDA which represents young Deaf people across the UK and is a member of the World Federation of the Deaf Youth Section ([WFDYS](#)), and European Union of the Deaf Youth ([EUDY](#)).

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2006 and ratified in June 2023 by 186 UN Member States, is the latest international human rights convention emanating from the UN. It is also one of the most ratified conventions in the UN legal system.

The motto of the CRPD, **“Nothing About Us Without Us.”** places persons with disabilities, including Deaf people, and their representative organisations - national associations of Deaf people - at the forefront of the decision-making processes related to them.

CRPD Article 4.3 requires national governments to actively consult and collaborate with national representative associations of Deaf people regarding any legislation, programme or policies related to Deaf people and national sign languages. The BDA is the official National Representative

Organisation of the UK representing the Deaf and BSL/ISL community, and holds this status at WFD, WFDYS, EUD and EUDY.



Read more about the WFD's Guidelines for Achieving Sign Language Rights here:
<https://wfdeaf.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Guidelines-for-Achieving-Sign-Language-Rights.pdf>

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