



Heritage Manager

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: Heritage Manager

Salary: Band D £30,000 - £37,000

Hours: 21 – 35 hours

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

Location: Manchester with some UK travel

Contract: Permanent

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

Reports to: Head of Income Generation

Overview

The Heritage Manager's central role is the preserving, interpreting and promoting of Deaf Heritage, culture and lived experience, initially through coordinating preparation for the production of a heritage archive website.

The postholder will produce a BDA Heritage Strategy; (and develop the Theory of Change) coordinate heritage projects, programmes and collections that reflect Deaf history; ensure they are documented, accessible and meaningfully shared with Deaf and hearing audiences; and lead community consultation and partnerships, initially and specifically with regard to the creation and inclusion of BSL videos in the heritage archive website.

This role works closely with Deaf community members, partner organisations and volunteers to ensure that heritage practices are culturally appropriate, inclusive and aligned with Deaf-led perspectives.

The Role:

Heritage and Collections

- Research and draft a Heritage Strategy for managing Deaf history, defining the role of the Deaf History Museum and future heritage activities.
- Coordinate the documentation, preservation and management of Deaf heritage materials, including objects, photographs, films, artworks and digital content.
- Support the Digital Archivist in the development and maintenance of collection records, archives and heritage databases.
- Build relationships with other Deaf collections and collaborate on inclusion on the website.
- Assist with research into Deaf history, culture and community narratives.
- Support heritage assessments, conservation needs and ethical collection practices.
- Research website requirements, including digitisation priorities, access, copyright, technical needs, costs, and long-term preservation.

Programmes and Interpretation

- Coordinate community and promotional events including heritage-based exhibitions, programmes, and other public activities.
- Work with curators, educators and heritage groups to ensure Deaf perspectives are central to storytelling and interpretation.
- Assist with digital content. i.e. social media.

Community and volunteer engagement

- Build and maintain strong relationships with Deaf community members.
- Respond to heritage enquires from the community, researchers and the public, and provide access to the Museum through tours, etc
- Recruit volunteers; coordinate and support volunteers and community members especially in the production of BSL videos for inclusion in the new collection.
- Develop outreach activities to engage the public and raise awareness. This will take the form of:
 - Online interactive posts and updates (website and social media) through BDA and London Archive platforms
 - UK 'roadshow' – taking presentations and display materials to Deaf Clubs, community centres, libraries
 - Exploring and planning options for BSL video creation with members of the Deaf community

Governance, Ethics & Compliance

- Ensure compliance with data protection, copyright, safeguarding, and ethical standards.
- 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 in heritage, museum, cultural or community-based roles.
- 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.
- Strong organisational skills.
- Ability to manage multiple projects with attention to detail and cultural sensitivity.

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).
- 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

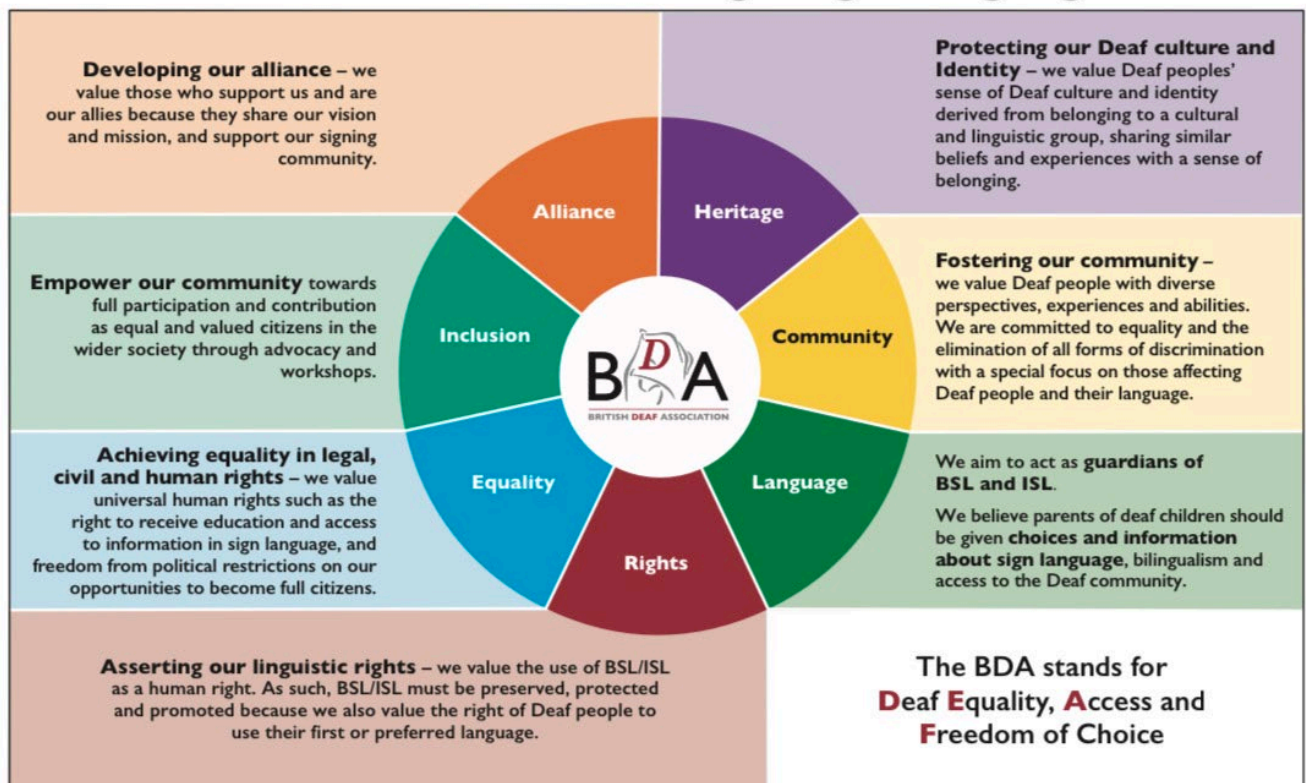
Our Mission is to ensure a world in which the language, culture, community, diversity, and heritage of Deaf people in Great Britain and Northern Ireland is respected and fully protected, ensuring that Deaf people can participate and contribute as equal and valued citizens in the wider society.

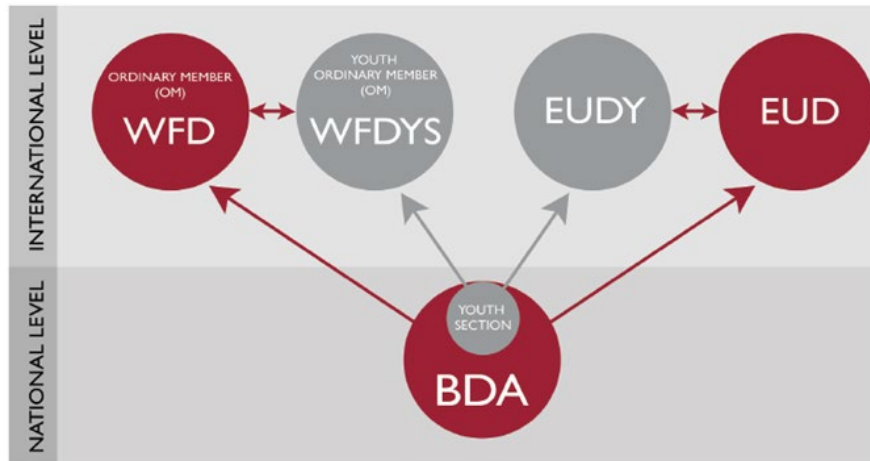
This will be achieved through:

- 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>

We are a Living Wage Employer.
Registered Charity in England and Wales (1031687) and Scotland (SC042409)
Company No: 2881497 (England and Wales)

