

Information for the BSL Members of the National Advisory Group

For NAG1 meeting on Monday 25 April 2016

1. The BSL (Scotland) Act 2015

The **BSL (Scotland) Act 2015** was passed in the **Scottish Parliament** on **Thursday 17 September 2015** and received **Royal Assent** from the Queen on **Thursday 22 October 2015**.

The BSL (Scotland) Act puts a **duty** on **Scottish Ministers** to promote **the use and understanding** of British Sign Language (**BSL**) and requires **Scottish Ministers** to **prepare and publish BSL national plans**. **The first national plan must be published by Sunday 22 October 2017**.

A draft of the national plan will be **published in BSL** and in English for consultation and this must be **accessible to BSL users and those who represent them**, including **Deafblind people** who use BSL. The **final version of the national plan** which will also be **published in BSL** and in English must and **take into account** the views gathered through the consultation.

Scottish Ministers must also **publish national progress reports**. The progress report is to **include measures taken and outcomes achieved**; examples of **best practice**, and examples, if there are any, of **poor performance**.

The **first progress report** must go to the Scottish Parliament within the **3 years** from the **date when** the first **National Plan** is **published** (so by October 2020) and will report on progress **across the Scottish public sector**. This report will also be published in **BSL** and in English.

The **references made to BSL** in the Act **refer to** both **the visual form** of British Sign Language and to **the tactile form of British Sign Language** used and understood by some **Deafblind people**.

2. BSL Plans

The British Sign Language (Scotland) **Act 2015** calls for **Scottish Ministers** to **publish the first BSL National Plan** by **Thursday 22 October 2017**. The **National Plan** will cover **most national public bodies**. **National plans** have to be published every six years.

The **BSL National Plan** will **reflect the views/needs** of the **BSL Community in Scotland** and what the **Scottish Government** and **national public bodies** can **realistically deliver**. It will also indicate what other public bodies who have to publish their own plans should include. The national plan will **be published** in **BSL** and in English.

After the first National Plan has been published in October 2017, other **public bodies** such as **local councils, health boards** and **other public bodies**, and **universities and colleges** – will have to publish their **“authority” plans** by **October 2018**. **These plans** will have to **include the views of people whose first or preferred language is BSL** in their own areas. **These plans** should **follow the lead** taken by the Scottish Government on the **National Plan** and use a **similar template**.

The **Deaf Sector Partnership (DSP)** has a role in **supporting** these **public bodies** to **consult with local BSL users** on their draft plans. **Local plans** will **all be published in BSL** and in English.

3. The BSL National Advisory Group – membership and co-chairs

After the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 was passed, **Scottish Ministers** decided to set up a **BSL National Advisory Group (BSL NAG)** to help develop the **National Plan**. There will be a **majority of people whose first or preferred language is BSL** on the **National Advisory Group (NAG)**, so that the **National Plan** would make a **real difference** to their lives.

The **BSL National Advisory Group** is known by the shortened term “**NAG**”.

The **BSL National Advisory Group** is made up of **ten (10) Deaf** people whose **first or preferred language is BSL**, **one (1) Hearing parent** of a **Deaf child**, whose **first or preferred language is BSL**, **one (1) Scottish Government** representative and **nine (9) Public Body** representatives who have to implement the BSL (Scotland) Act.

The **BSL representatives** on the **National Advisory Group** all went through an **application**. They submitted an application which went through a **shortlisting process** and then people **were invited to an interview**. Those who were successful were **offered a place** on the NAG. The **young people** who are **BSL representatives** were **elected to represent** the young people on the **Youth NAG** and in the **wider community**.

The BSL National Advisory Group will be co-chaired by the **Scottish Government** and one of the **BSL representatives**.

The **role** of the **co-Chairs** is to **make sure**

- that **people stick** to the **agenda**;
- the **meetings** do **not take longer** than is stated on the **agenda**;
- **everyone** gets a **chance** to make **their points**;
- there is an **agreement** on **the way forward**; and
- if there is **no agreement**, find a **way** that is **fair for all**.

The **co-Chairs** need to **work together** in a confident way to give **leadership** to the National Advisory Group.

The **Scottish Government Equality Unit** will act as **secretariat** to the BSL National Advisory Group.

This means that the SG Equality Unit will provide administrative support to the BSL National Advisory Group.

This admin support will be providing **information** for each meeting in **BSL** and in **English** before each NAG meeting. This will include

- the **agenda** for each meeting,
- the **note of the previous** of meeting,
- **briefing information**, for example, on issues raised by YNAG and DBNAG and others
- **draft BSL National Plan**.
- **feedback from the consultation** on the draft National Plan, and
- **Final BSL National Plan**

All the information provided to the BSL National Advisory Group meetings will be made **public**. **Notes** of meetings will be published when they have been checked with **all NAG members** to **make sure** they are a **true record** of what happened at **the meeting**.

4. The BSL National Advisory Group – role and remit

The **role** of the first **BSL National Advisory Group (BSL NAG)** is to **advise** Scottish Ministers on the **development of BSL National Plan**.

The **remit** of the first **BSL National Advisory Group** is to

1. **Reflect the views** of the **BSL community/public bodies** in **developing** the national plan.
2. **Discuss/comment on/agree/sign off** outputs at **key stages**, including:
 - a. **List of possible priority areas** to discuss with BSL community
 - b. **Approach to engagement** with BSL community
3. **Draft** the **National Plan** and **consultation** questions and decide how the consultation will be conducted
4. Make **recommendations** for National Plan **based on consultation** responses, and
5. **Finalise** the **first BSL National Plan** before it is **published**.

5. Expectations of BSL National Advisory Group members

Members of the NAG have a **duty** to help the **group** achieve its **purpose**. The **purpose** is to **inform** the **development** of the first BSL **National Plan**. Being a **member** of the group is an **important role** and **everyone** will be expected to **act** with **honesty** and **integrity**. This means:

Everyone will be **asked** if they have **any conflicts of interest** before the meeting starts. A **conflict of interest** could be that there is a **need to discuss** something about a **particular council**. If there is a **NAG member** who works for **that council** or whose **partner or child works** for that council, then **taking part** in that discussion could be a **conflict of interest**.

Another **conflict of interest** could be that a **member of the NAG** is a **Director of a public body** being **discussed** at a meeting.

Each **member** must be **motivated** solely by **public interest** and **must not act** in order to **gain financial** or other **material benefit** for themselves, family or friends.

Everyone must **respect** all other **members** of the NAG and their **role** in the group, **treating** them with **courtesy** at **all times**.

Working like this will help to **maintain and strengthen** the **public's trust** and confidence in the **role of the NAG** and its members.

6. Inclusive meetings

All the **information** for the BSL National Advisory Group **meetings** will be available in **both BSL and English**. If anyone needs the **information** in a **different format**, this will be **provided**.

If anyone needs **support to understand** the information or to **put together** your own **information** before meetings, this is **available from** workers in the **Deaf Sector Partnership** organisations.

Each meeting will be in **BSL and English**, with **hands on BSL** for those who need it.

There will be **BSL/English Interpreters** and **hands-on BSL/English Interpreters** provided at every meeting. The room will have a **working hearing loop system** in it. All rooms will be **wheelchair accessible**, including toilets.

Everyone will have a **name plate** in front of them to **help** with **communication**.

All the **meetings** will use accessibility **ground rules**. These are **all of equal importance**.

The **co-Chairs** will go over the **ground rules** at the **start** of each **meeting**:

1. Turn your mobile phones off.

If you are expecting a call/SMS that must be answered or responded to, then please turn your phone to silent. If the call/SMS comes through, please leave the room to deal with it.

2. Keep to the agenda.

The co-Chairs will help to keep all the discussion to the items on the agenda. If you think something is missing from the agenda, please tell the co-Chairs at the start of the meeting.

3. Start and finish on time.

The co-Chairs will keep the time, but each person at the meeting has a responsibility to help this happen.

4. Give everybody time to express their views. No one person's opinion should be heard more than anyone else's. Only one person will sign or speak at a time.

- 5.** Raise your hand if you do not understand something or want something repeated.
Raise your hand if you want to say something. Don't butt in – it is rude.
- 6.** Speak slowly.
Use simple language. Don't use jargon or acronyms – for example, SPS is used for the Scottish Prison Service, but not everyone knows this is what it means.
- 7.** Let other people express their views, and respect them.
Do not have private conversations with the person next to you during the meeting.
Everything signed or said during the business of the meeting will be interpreted.
- 8.** Keep confidential information in the room.
This means you cannot tell your friends, colleagues or family what is signed or said at the meeting.

7. The Deaf Sector Partnership (DSP)

The Deaf Sector Partnership (DSP) is funded by the Scottish Government Equality Unit to support implementation of the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015.

It has **two main roles**:

1. to **support** direct **engagement** between **public bodies** and the **Deaf/Deafblind BSL users** they serve; and
2. to **support public bodies** improve the way they **understand the needs of Deaf/Deafblind BSL users**, and **respond** to their **needs**. It is also helping the Scottish Government Equality Unit to **run the National Advisory Group** and to support **BSL representatives on the NAG**.

For more information please go to DSP website: www.deafsectorpartnership.net or

DSP email: admin@deafsectorpartnership.net

DSP Facebook: **British Sign Language (Scotland) Act (2015) Facebook Group**