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To: Scottish Public Bodies



18 December 2015

Dear Colleague,

BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2015 – THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTATION

As I'm sure you know, the Scottish Parliament voted unanimously in favour of the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act on 17th September 2015, which has now received Royal Assent. This means that Scottish Ministers must publish the first BSL National Plan by 22 October 2017, with listed authorities (including local authorities and territorial NHS boards) publishing their own plans a year later.

The Scottish Government has supported the principles of the Bill from the outset, and worked closely with the member in charge to make its provisions more focused and action oriented, while at the same time reducing the administrative burden on the public sector. One of our amendments sought to extend the scope of the National Plan, which means that it will cover all national public bodies who are directly answerable to Scottish Ministers, rather than requiring each one to publish their own plan. We believe that this enables us to take a more strategic, co-ordinated approach at the national level, while also streamlining the bureaucracy. **Annex A** explains which public bodies will be covered by the National Plan, and which are required to publish their own plans.

The Scottish Government Equality Unit will be co-ordinating the National Plan, and is keen to ensure that all the public bodies covered by the National Plan have the opportunity to contribute, so that what is reflected is appropriate and can be delivered within their varying operational contexts. The Equality Unit plans to work through existing public sector networks such as the Non Departmental Public Bodies Equality Forum and the NHS Equality and Diversity Group and others to take this forward and initial discussions have already taken place. If you would like to help us to develop our approach, please contact Hilary Third 0131 244 7326 or Hilary.Third@gov.scot

While the legislation has the potential to make a real difference to the lives of Deaf / Deafblind people who use BSL, we recognise that many public bodies will value support and guidance to help them to implement the legislation. For this reason we have created the Deaf Sector Partnership which has two main roles:

- 1) to support direct engagement between public bodies and the Deaf / Deafblind BSL users they serve; and
- 2) to help public bodies improve the way they understand the needs of Deaf / Deafblind BSL users, and respond to their needs.

The attached leaflet sets out more information about the Deaf Sector Partnership (DSP), and the support it can offer. Because the National Plan has to be published a year before listed authority plans, the DSP will concentrate on providing support to the Scottish Government and national public bodies in the first instance. But the DSP has already begun to develop information, advice and resources which will be available for all public bodies, and these can be accessed through the website. I would encourage you make contact with the DSP so that you can benefit from the help they are able to offer. Please email admin@deafsectorpartnership.net for more information, or visit the website <http://deafsectorpartnership.net>.

One of the specific activities the Deaf Sector Partnership are delivering is a series of half day BSL Awareness sessions. The aim of the training is to support and enable national public bodies to understand how to improve their performance and services for people who are Deaf and Deafblind who use BSL. This is free of charge for public bodies covered by the Act, and can be booked by contacting learn@deafaction.org.

Finally, I have announced today that we will be setting up a BSL National Advisory Group to inform the first BSL National Plan. The group will be made up of Deaf BSL users and public bodies and will ensure that the BSL National Plan focuses on the priorities of Deaf / Deafblind people who use BSL. The appointment of the BSL representatives is now underway and I expect to confirm membership of the group in early March. For more information about the recruitment exercise, please go to <http://deafsectorpartnership.net/nag/>.

I hope that this information is helpful, and I look forward to working with you as we implement this important piece of legislation.



ALASDAIR ALLAN

ANNEX A

BSL (SCOTLAND) ACT 2015 – PUBLIC AUTHORITIES TO BE COVERED

Proposed list of public authorities to be subject to the BSL (Scotland) Bill.

Original number of bodies (including the Scottish Government): 117

Revised number of bodies (including the Scottish Government): 156 (an increase of 39)

PUBLIC AUTHORITIES COVERED BY THE NATIONAL PLAN (41)

Bodies with a national focus and are directly accountable to Scottish Ministers

- The Scottish Government, including eight Executive Agencies (1)
- Non Departmental Public Bodies (27) – see section 1 for details
- NHS Special Boards with a national remit (8) – see section 2 for details
- Other significant/listed bodies (5) – see section 3 for details

PUBLIC AUTHORITIES REQUIRED TO PRODUCE AUTHORITY PLANS (106)

Bodies with a local/regional focus whose principal route of accountability is through engagement with local BSL users or national bodies which are not accountable to Scottish Ministers

- Commissioners and Ombudsmen (7) – see section 4 for details
- Further and Higher Educational Institutions (48) – see section 5 for details
- Local Authorities (32) – see section 6 for details
- NHS Territorial Boards (14) – see section 7 for details
- Non Ministerial Departments (2) – see section 8 for details
- Other significant national bodies (3) – see section 9 for details

PUBLIC AUTHORITIES COVERED BY THE NATIONAL PLAN

Proposed list of public authorities to be subject to the BSL (Scotland) Bill. Additional bodies not included in the Bill as published are indicated by use of an asterisk (*)

The Scottish Government (1)¹

¹ The Scottish Government includes:

Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service

The executive agency known as Accountant in Bankruptcy

The executive agency known as Disclosure Scotland

The executive agency known as Education Scotland

The executive agency known as Historic Scotland

The executive agency known as The Scottish Prison Service

The executive agency known as The Scottish Public Pensions Agency

The executive agency known as The Student Awards Agency for Scotland

The executive agency known as Transport Scotland

1. Non Departmental Public Bodies (27)

Architecture and Design Scotland
Care Inspectorate
Cairngorms National Park Authority
Children's Hearings Scotland
Creative Scotland
Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority
National Galleries of Scotland
National Library of Scotland
National Museums of Scotland
The Parole Board for Scotland
The Royal Botanical Garden Edinburgh
The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (Historic Environment Scotland (HES) – 1 October 2015)
The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
The Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission
Scottish Enterprise
The Scottish Environment Protection Agency
The Scottish [Further and Higher Education] Funding Council
The Scottish Futures Trust
The Scottish Legal Aid Board
The Scottish Legal Complaints Commission
Scottish Natural Heritage
The Scottish Qualifications Authority
The Scottish Social Services Council
Skills Development Scotland
Sportscotland
VisitScotland

2. NHS Special Boards (8)

The Common Services Agency constituted under section 10 of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978 (c.29) and known as NHS National Services Scotland

The Special Health Board constituted under section 2(1)(b) of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978 and known as the Scottish Ambulance Service Board

The Special Health Board constituted under that section of that Act and known as NHS 24

The Special Health Board constituted under that section of that Act and known as the National Waiting Times Centre Board

The Special Health Board constituted under that section of that Act and known as the State Hospitals Board for Scotland [SHRC]

The Special Health Board constituted under that section of that Act and known as NHS Education for Scotland

The Special Health Board constituted under that section of that Act and known as NHS Health Scotland

The Special Health Board constituted under that section of that Act and known as Healthcare Improvement Scotland

3. Other significant national bodies (5)

The Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland

Scottish Canals

Scottish Water

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

The Scottish Police Authority

PUBLIC AUTHORITIES REQUIRED TO PRODUCE AUTHORITY PLANS

4. Commissioners and Ombudsmen: accountable to Scottish Parliament (7)

The Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland

The Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life

The Scottish Human Rights Commission

The Scottish Information Commissioner

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

The Standards Commission for Scotland

Police Investigations and Review Commissioner

5. Further and Higher Education Institutions (48)

A post-16 education body (as defined by section 35(1) of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005 (asp 6)

Universities (19)

- University of Aberdeen
- Abertay University
- University of Dundee
- University of Edinburgh
- Edinburgh Napier University
- University of Glasgow
- Glasgow Caledonian University
- Glasgow School of Art
- Heriot-Watt University
- University of the Highlands and Islands
- Open University in Scotland
- Queen Margaret University
- Robert Gordon University
- Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
- Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)
- University of St Andrews
- University of Stirling
- University of Strathclyde
- University of the West of Scotland

Further education colleges (29)

- North East Scotland College
- Ayrshire College
- Borders College
- Dumfries and Galloway College
- Edinburgh College
- Fife College
- Forth Valley College of Further and Higher Education
- Glasgow Clyde College
- City of Glasgow College
- Glasgow Kelvin College
- Argyll College UHI
- Highland Theological College UHI
- Inverness College UHI
- Lews Castle College UHI
- Moray College UHI
- NAFC Marine Centre UHI
- Perth College UHI
- The North Highland College UHI
- Orkney College UHI
- Scottish Association for Marine Science
- Shetland College UHI
- West Highland College UHI
- New College Lanarkshire
- South Lanarkshire College
- Dundee and Angus College
- West College Scotland
- West Lothian College
- Newbattle Abbey College
- Sabhal Mor Ostaig

6. Local Authorities (32)

A council constituted under section 2 of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994 (c.39).

- Aberdeen City Council
- Aberdeenshire Council
- Angus Council
- Argyll & Bute Council
- Clackmannanshire Council
- Dumfries & Galloway Council
- Dundee City Council
- East Ayrshire Council
- East Dunbartonshire Council
- East Lothian Council
- East Renfrewshire Council
- Edinburgh City Council
- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council)
- Falkirk Council

- Fife Council
- Glasgow City Council
- Highland Council
- Inverclyde Council
- Midlothian Council
- Moray Council
- North Ayrshire Council
- North Lanarkshire Council
- Orkney Islands Council
- Perth & Kinross Council
- Renfrewshire Council
- Scottish Borders Council
- Shetland Islands Council
- South Ayrshire Council
- South Lanarkshire Council
- Stirling Council
- West Dunbartonshire Council
- West Lothian Council

7. NHS Territorial Boards (14)

A Health Board constituted under section 2(1)(a) of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978.

Territorial Health Boards

NHS Ayrshire & Arran
 NHS Borders
 NHS Dumfries & Galloway
 NHS Fife
 NHS Forth Valley
 NHS Grampian
 NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
 NHS Highland
 NHS Lanarkshire
 NHS Lothian
 NHS Orkney
 NHS Shetland
 NHS Tayside
 NHS Western Isles

8. Non Ministerial Department (2)

The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator
 The Scottish Housing Regulator

9. Other significant national bodies (3)

Audit Scotland
 The Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service
 The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body