

Implementing the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015

Deaf Sector Partnership



**Effecting change, equality
& access for BSL in Scotland**

October 2016

Introduction to the Deaf Sector Partnership (DSP)

The **Scottish Government Equality Unit** currently funds five deaf organisations to support the implementation of the **British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015**.

Our work will focus on these primary outcomes:

1. To support the development of the **BSL National Advisory Group** (the BSL NAG);
2. To support **people whose first or preferred language is BSL** (including Deaf BSL users, Deafblind BSL users, Deaf/Deafblind people from equality and diversity groups whose first or preferred language is BSL, and people with additional language/support needs whose first or preferred language is BSL) **to be as involved as they want** to be in the development of the **first BSL National Plan**; and
3. To support **public bodies** to be more inclusive of people whose first or preferred language is BSL and **to support them to meet their duties** under the BSL (Scotland) Act.

Each organisation, while being funded separately, will collaborate and work in partnership with the other four organisations as well as the Scottish Government and the Voluntary Action Fund. The organisations are the **BDA Scotland, Deaf Action, Deafblind Scotland, National Deaf Children's Society (Scotland)** and the **Scottish Council on Deafness**.

If you would like to find out more about how we can support your organisation or if you are a Deaf / Deafblind BSL user who wants to get involved, please contact: admin@deafsectorpartnership.net

For more information about Deaf Sector Partnership, you can visit our website: www.deafsectorpartnership.net or contact us: 0141 248 2474

About the Deaf Sector Partnership (DSP) Partners

British Deaf Association (BDA) Scotland

Established in 1890, BDA Scotland is a Deaf-led British Sign Language (BSL) organisation. Through the BSL (Scotland) Charter, they can provide **support and practical guidance** on making sure Deaf BSL users have the same quality of provision, information and standards and the same right to be consulted as everyone else.

Within the Deaf Sector Partnership, BDA Scotland are responsible for engaging with Deaf BSL users via a team of Deaf outreach workers. They are supporting the Deaf BSL National Advisory Group representatives. They also support the Scottish Government and other organisations to ensure information is **translated into BSL** and **shared**, for example, through the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015 Facebook Group which BDA Scotland administer on our behalf:

British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015

www.facebook.com/groups/1470165406637765/

Deaf Action

Established in 1835, Deaf Action provides a wide range of services to deaf¹ people in several regions across Scotland and works to raise awareness of the needs and rights of deaf people, challenge discrimination and promote independence and quality of life.

Within the Deaf Sector Partnership, Deaf Action work around **participation and citizenship** with **young people** who are Deaf BSL users, support the Youth BSL National Advisory Group representatives, support the Youth NAG which is the consultation group for young people who are Deaf BSL users, and provide **BSL awareness training to public bodies**.

¹ deaf = Deaf BSL users, Deafblind, Deafened and Hard of Hearing people.

Deafblind Scotland (DbS)

Deafblind Scotland is a charity operating since September 1989, with the vision of "A society in which Deafblind people have the permanent support and recognition necessary to be equal citizens". Deafblind Scotland is one of the Disabled Persons User Led Organisations (DPULO) in Scotland with 60% of their trustees being Deafblind.

Within the Deaf Sector Partnership, Deafblind Scotland will provide **Deafblind expertise and awareness** to public bodies. This includes information about the special measures needed to ensure Deafblind BSL users are included in consultation on draft BSL plans and so that they benefit from the Act. Deafblind Scotland is **supporting Deaf BSL users** in raising awareness; supporting the Deafblind BSL representatives on the BSL National Advisory Group; and supporting the Deafblind NAG which is the consultation group for Deafblind people who are Deaf BSL users.

National Deaf Children's Society Scotland (NDCS Scotland)

National Deaf Children's Society Scotland (NDCS Scotland) is dedicated to creating a world without barriers for deaf children and young people. NDCS Scotland delivers information and advice services, and a range of learning and activity events for deaf children, their families and the professionals who support them.

Within the Deaf Sector Partnership, NDCS Scotland offers the **Family Sign Language programme**, which provides parents, carers and families with the opportunity to learn British Sign Language (BSL) in a way that is appropriate for everyday family life. The project also provides **parenting support** to build confidence, knowledge and resilience of parents and carers. NDCS Scotland support the parent representatives – one Hearing, the other Deaf - on the BSL NAG and provide support to the Parent NAG which is the consultation group for parents of Deaf children whose first or preferred language is BSL.

Scottish Council on Deafness (SCoD)

Scottish Council on Deafness (SCoD) is the Deaf Sector umbrella organisation, which was established in 1927, and represents members in the Third, Public and Private Sectors. SCoD members include organisations who work with and on behalf of deaf people, and individuals who have an interest in deaf issues or are deaf themselves.

SCoD provides the co-ordination for the Deaf Sector Partnership and is the **first point of contact** for any enquiries about the partnership and our work. The Deaf Sector Partnership Co-ordinator also provides support to the Secretariat for the National Advisory Group – the Scottish Government’s Equality Unit. SCoD provides the monitoring and evaluation function for the partnership and hosts the **information hub** for the Deaf Sector Partnership. SCoD is working with and supporting the public bodies while they prepare to implement the Act.

The Scottish Government Equality Unit

The Scottish Government Equality Unit funds all the projects in the Deaf Sector Partnership. It also provides direction to our work. The Equality Unit provides the Secretariat to the BSL National Advisory Group and will be drafting the BSL National Plan. The Scottish Government provides the meeting space for the BSL National Advisory Group.

The Voluntary Action Fund (VAF)

The Voluntary Action Fund (VAF) is a long-established independent grant-making body which invests in voluntary organisations and community groups across Scotland. VAF’s core work is making grants to the Third Sector. The grant programmes fall into two main categories: grants that VAF manages on behalf of other funders and grants that are open for application.

As part of the Deaf Sector Partnership, VAF will provide **monitoring and grant management support; development support; and overall co-ordination.**

British Sign Language (BSL) (Scotland) Act 2015

This Act was passed by the Scottish Parliament on Thursday 17th September 2015 and received Royal Assent on Thursday 22nd October 2015.

The British Sign Language (BSL) (Scotland) Act 2015 aims to promote the use and understanding of British Sign Language (BSL), principally by means of BSL plans, which are to be published by Scottish Government Ministers and specified public authorities. These plans are to be reviewed and updated at regular intervals and reported on via progress reports.

The National Plan will be published by Scottish Government Ministers and will include the authorities that report straight to Scottish Government Ministers. The other listed public authorities will produce their own plans. The National Advisory Group (NAG) will advise Scottish Ministers on the National Plan and the listed public authorities on the publishing and review of their plans.

For more information about the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015, please check website:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/11/resources>

BSL Awareness Training

The Deaf Sector Partnership is providing BSL Awareness training for public bodies. The second stage of this training is for the strategic planners and BSL Plan leads.

The BSL Awareness training shall be facilitated by Deaf Action on behalf of the Deaf Sector Partnership. For more information, please contact the Deaf Sector Partnership on admin@deafsectorpartnership.net.

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BSL users can contact us using contactSCOTLAND-
BSL: <http://contactscotland-bsl.org/>

